

**Demographics**

The overwhelming feature to note from this 2025 survey, is that under 18s make up 49% of the 944 people who responded. It is genuinely wonderful to have so many young people engaged in planning the future of their communities. **Percentages below are rounded to the nearest whole number.** Key quantitative points of note are:

- Males: 42%; Females: 55%; Preferred not to say: 2%;
- Out Skerries were the only area not to respond at all
- 27% of respondents were aged 45-64
- At 21% of responses, Lerwick looks to be underrepresented
- Only 71 respondents had completed the survey in 2016, 541 hadn't and 326 couldn't remember
- About half a dozen hard copy surveys were received – they are not included in this report

At this early stage of analysis, apart from the bias towards under-18s and females, the response rate looks to be broadly representative of the Shetland population.

Detailed comparison with the 2016 survey has yet to be made. It is clear however, that the contribution of the under-18s represents a significant difference. In 2016, 939 responses were received, with only 71 respondents aged 24 or under. ('24 or under' was replaced in 2025 with 3 options: Under 16; 16 or 17; 18-24;)

**The Scores**

There were only 14 themes in 2016 and there are 15 themes in 2025. A *Nature & Land Management* theme has been added to the Place Standard tool and, in another change, the *Facilities & Amenities* theme (2016) has been renamed *Facilities & Services* (2025). **Score data has been rounded to 1 decimal place.**

The table below shows the average scores for all respondents across the 15 themes for 2025, together with the average scores for the under-18s and those 18+. The table also compares the overall average scores from 2016 and 2025\*. (\*NB there was a significant change in the demographic of respondents between 2016 and 2025 and only 71 respondents took part in both surveys.) Key points of note:

- *Natural Space, Facilities & Services and Social Interaction* scored the same for both age groups
- Except for *Play & Recreation*, in all other categories, the under-18s felt less improvement was needed
- The biggest difference between the age groups was recorded for *Moving Around, Public Transport, Housing & Community and Influence & Sense of Control*
- **The Place Standard tool is NOT designed for making comparisons over time.** However, the scores for most themes have improved since 2016. The notable exceptions are: *Feeling Safe* and *Natural Space*.

**Subtle but important:** Scores do NOT indicate how *happy* respondents are with a particular theme. A score of 1 means: A lot of *improvement* is needed; A score of 7 means: Little *improvement* is needed.

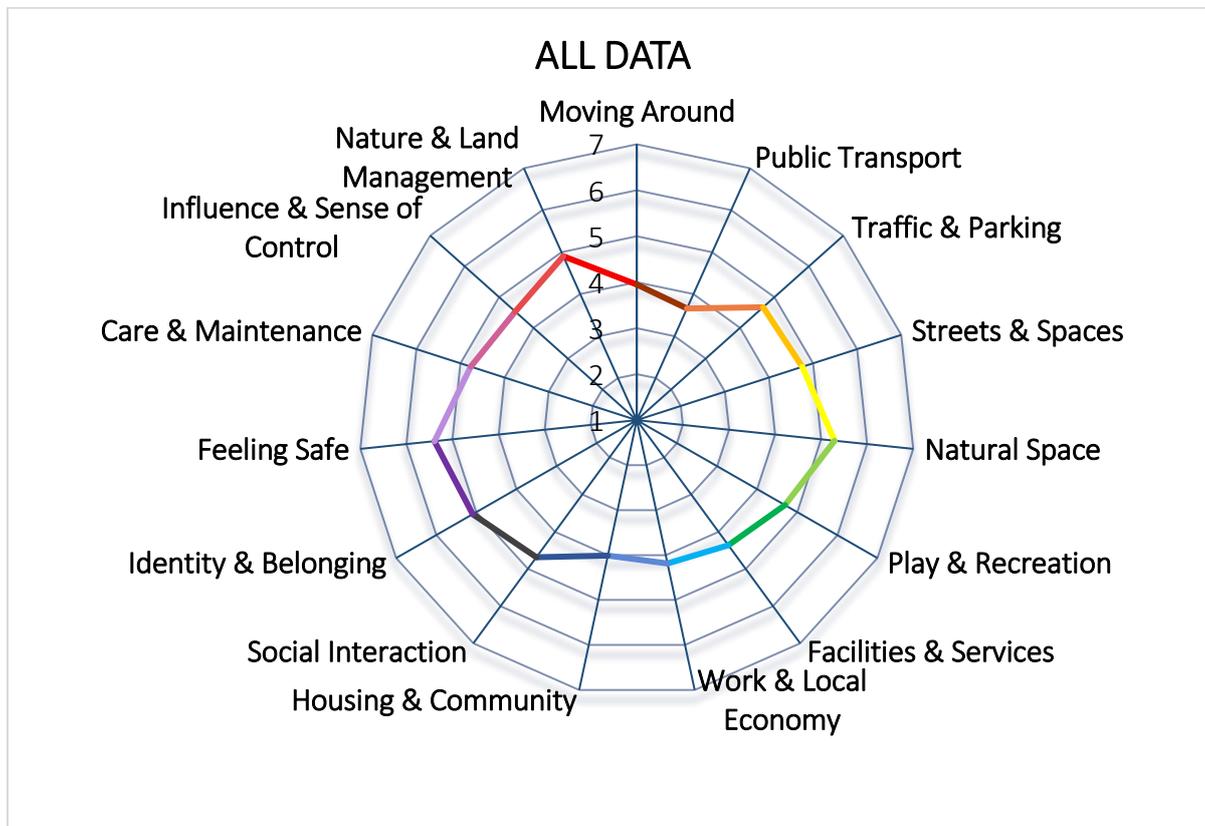
THEME	Under 18s	18+	All - 2016	All - 2025
Moving Around	4.5	3.4	3.6	3.9
Public Transport	4.1	3.3	3.6	3.7
Traffic & Parking	4.9	4.5	4.3	4.7
Streets & Spaces	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.8
Natural Space	5.3	5.3	5.6	5.3
Play & Recreation	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7
Facilities & Services	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4
Work & Local Economy	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.2
Housing & Community	4.6	3.4	4.0	4.0
Social Interaction	4.7	4.7	4.2	4.7
Identity & Belonging	5.2	5.0	5.0	5.1
Feeling Safe	5.5	5.3	5.8	5.4
Care & Maintenance	4.8	4.7	4.8	4.8
Influence & Sense of Control	4.8	4.3	3.9	4.5
Nature & Land Management	5.1	4.7	N/A	4.9
Average	4.8	4.4	4.5	4.6

0.5+ difference	0.1-0.4 difference	No difference	Higher score in 2025	Higher score in 2016	No change
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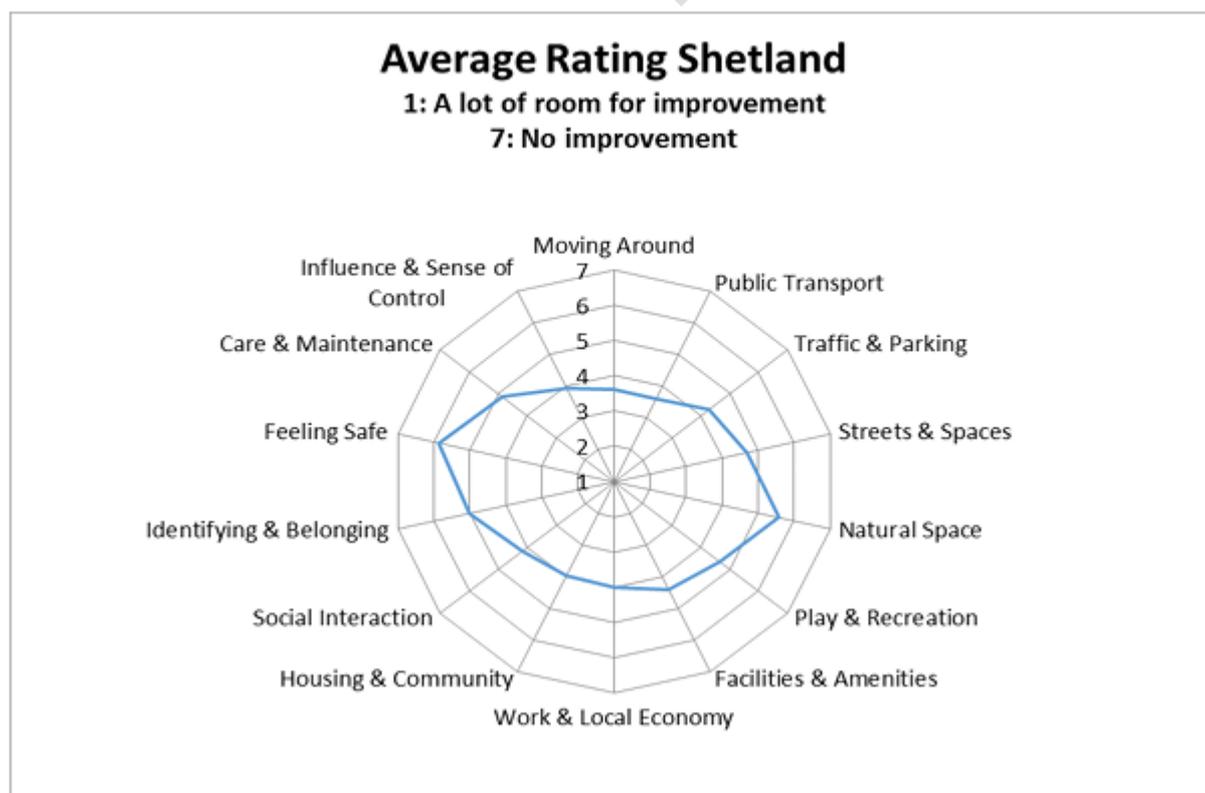
**The 'Spider' Diagrams**

Below, you will find the 'spider' diagrams for all respondents for 2025 and for 2016 as well as for the under 18s and those 18+ in 2025. **The diagrams show scores rounded to 1 decimal place.**

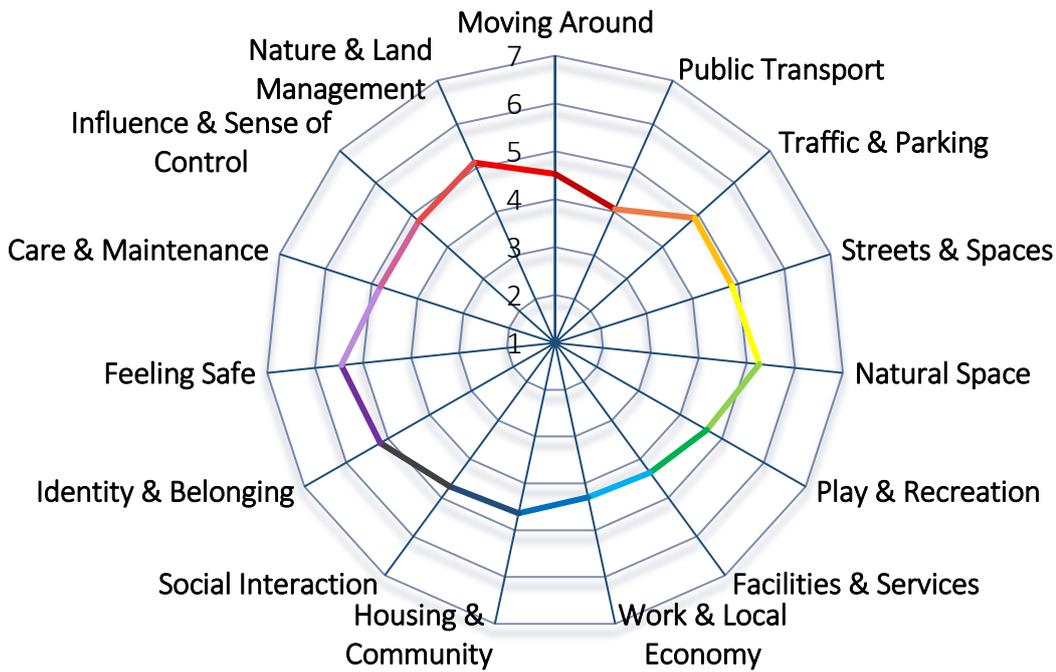
**2025**



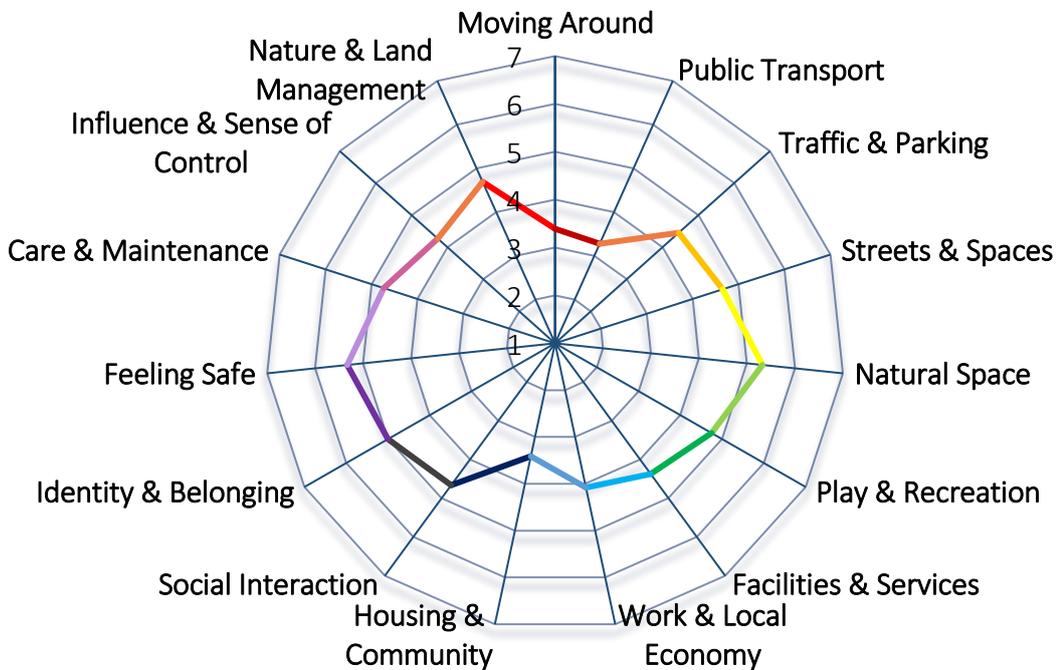
**2016**



## UNDER 18



## 18+



## Priorities for Change

Initial analysis of respondents' top three priorities for improvement show that the top priority was more polarised, with the third priority being more evenly spread between the themes and the second priority being somewhere between.

291 respondents put Public Transport as their top priority for improvement with a further 145 putting it as their second priority. 103 respondents put Facilities & Services as being their third priority for improvement.

When totalling all choices for top 3 priorities for improvement, the table looks as follows:

THEME	Top Priority	2 <sup>nd</sup> Priority	3 <sup>rd</sup> Priority	Total
Moving Around	104	88	78	270
Public Transport	291	145	99	535
Traffic & Parking	61	70	56	187
Streets & Spaces	39	62	48	149
Natural Space	33	56	46	135
Play & Recreation	51	79	90	220
Facilities & Services	54	90	103	247
Work & Local Economy	38	75	94	207
Housing & Community	112	89	87	288
Social Interaction	26	33	43	102
Identity & Belonging	4	7	17	28
Feeling Safe	37	38	47	122
Care & Maintenance	39	46	47	132
Influence & Sense of Control	14	26	28	68
Nature & Land Management	41	40	61	142
<b>Total</b>	<b>944</b>	<b>944</b>	<b>944</b>	

Further analysis will need to be carried out to see if/how priorities differ between age groups, gender and locality.

## Qualitative Data

The systematic deeper analysis of qualitative data has yet to begin. Three separate comment boxes were provided for each of the 15 themes. At 945 responses, there is the potential for a total of 42,525 comments - any of which could contain more than one element. From a visual check however, it looks like approximately 50% to 60% of the comment boxes have been used – so a maximum of around 25,000.

Again, from an initial scan, many of the comments cover similar issues. It is also notable that few of the under 16s have added comments.

We have used AI to provide a very basic and initial summary of the comments made:

<p><b>Moving Around</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Aspects: Low traffic levels, good paths.</li> <li>• Negative Aspects: Lack of pavements, fast cars, poor lighting, lack of bins for dog waste.</li> <li>• Suggestions for Improvement: Reduced speed limits, more paths, better lighting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Public Transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Aspects: Regular bus service, reasonable fares.</li> <li>• Negative Aspects: Limited services in sparsely populated areas, poor disability access.</li> <li>• Suggestions for Improvement: More frequent services, better information about disruptions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Traffic &amp; Parking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Aspects: Plenty of parking.</li> <li>• Negative Aspects: Need for safe crossing points, speeding issues.</li> <li>• Suggestions for Improvement: More parking spaces, better traffic management.</li> </ul> <p><b>Streets &amp; Spaces</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Aspects: Well-maintained roads.</li> <li>• Negative Aspects: Need for more shops, litter issues.</li> <li>• Suggestions for Improvement: More shops, better maintenance.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Natural Space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Aspects: Lots of open space.</li> <li>• Negative Aspects: Litter alongside roads.</li> <li>• Suggestions for Improvement: Walkways, better litter management.</li> </ul> <p><b>Play &amp; Recreation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Aspects: Good local hall.</li> <li>• Negative Aspects: Limited access to playparks during school hours.</li> <li>• Suggestions for Improvement: More accessible playparks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Facilities &amp; Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Aspects: Good facilities.</li> <li>• Negative Aspects: Poor access for people with disabilities.</li> <li>• Suggestions for Improvement: Better accessibility.</li> </ul> <p><b>Work &amp; Local Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Aspects: Plenty of jobs.</li> <li>• Negative Aspects: Housing availability issues.</li> <li>• Suggestions for Improvement: Strategic planning for job encouragement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Housing &amp; Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Aspects: New housing association properties.</li> <li>• Negative Aspects: Lack of starter homes.</li> <li>• Suggestions for Improvement: Revamp housing allocation criteria.</li> </ul>
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#### Social Interaction

- **Positive Aspects:** Opportunities to meet up.
- **Negative Aspects:** Not all opportunities are suitable for everyone.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** More inclusive social events.

#### Identity & Belonging

- **Positive Aspects:** Strong sense of community.
- **Negative Aspects:** Issues with inclusivity.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Better community engagement.

#### Feeling Safe

- **Positive Aspects:** Generally safe.
- **Negative Aspects:** Issues with litter.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** More community policing.

#### Care & Maintenance

- **Positive Aspects:** Good maintenance.
- **Negative Aspects:** Issues with litter.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Better litter management.

#### Influence and Sense of Control

- **Positive Aspects:** Opportunities for input.
- **Negative Aspects:** Feeling of being overlooked.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Better communication with community members.

#### Nature & Land Management

- **Positive Aspects:** Balance between crofting and natural environment.
- **Negative Aspects:** Concerns about turbine development.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Less development, better litter management.

### Next Steps

Consideration will be given to drawing up an *Analysis Plan* to give direction and shape to the deeper analysis of the survey findings. Any such *Plan* would need to include objectives and goals for guidance - as well as addressing timescales, milestones and dissemination.

### Conclusion

At this early stage, both the 'spider' diagram and the priorities for improvement for the whole community are available. An initial, AI-generated summary of the thousands of comments made is also available.

The 2025 survey slightly exceeded the response in 2016. However, with nearly 50% of responses coming from under 18s, the buy-in from adults was significantly lower than in 2016.

Deeper analysis will hopefully give us insight into areas where the younger generation feel change and improvement are needed. Further analysis may also help give some insight into changes since the 2016 survey.

For the Planning Service, the data represents an important starting point for further conversations with communities as part of both the Local Development Plan and Local Place Plan processes. It is to be hoped that the wider Shetland Partnership and other Council Departments will find it equally useful.

The initial findings possibly raise more questions than answers, but further analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data will hopefully help enrich the picture rather than confuse it.