

Shetland Islands Council Local Housing Strategy Early Engagement Survey Results

Presented to:
Shetland Islands Council

Presented by:
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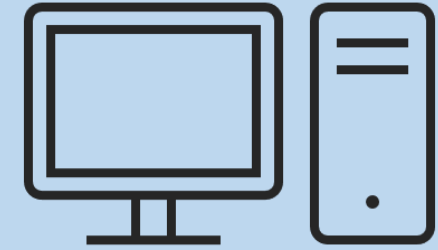
Date: 3rd November 2021

www.arneil-johnston.co.uk

Early engagement survey

Key elements of LHS Consultation Plan:

- Short electronic survey encouraging communities and residents across Shetland to express views on which local housing issues ‘matter most’
- Issued to LHS stakeholders, all SIC staff, Community Councils and all housing applicants
- Press and Radio Promotion
- Promoted and circulated across the council’s social media platform



Early engagement survey promoted across a wide range of Shetland Islands Council digital channels:

- Shetland Islands Council website
- Shetland Islands Council social media (to signpost and promote consultation activity)

Survey open for 5 weeks from 23/09/21 – 27/10/21

Purpose of the survey was to identify issues, options or key questions for further analysis and debate in the LHS process.

Respondents also offered opportunity to identify important local housing issues Survey questionnaire focused on following 6 questions:

1

To deliver a 'well functioning housing system' which characteristics are most important locally?



2

What would you say are the top 5 housing challenges facing Shetland?

3

What is the single greatest challenge facing the housing system in Shetland?

4

What's the potential short, medium or long-term impacts of Covid-19 pandemic on the housing system in Shetland?

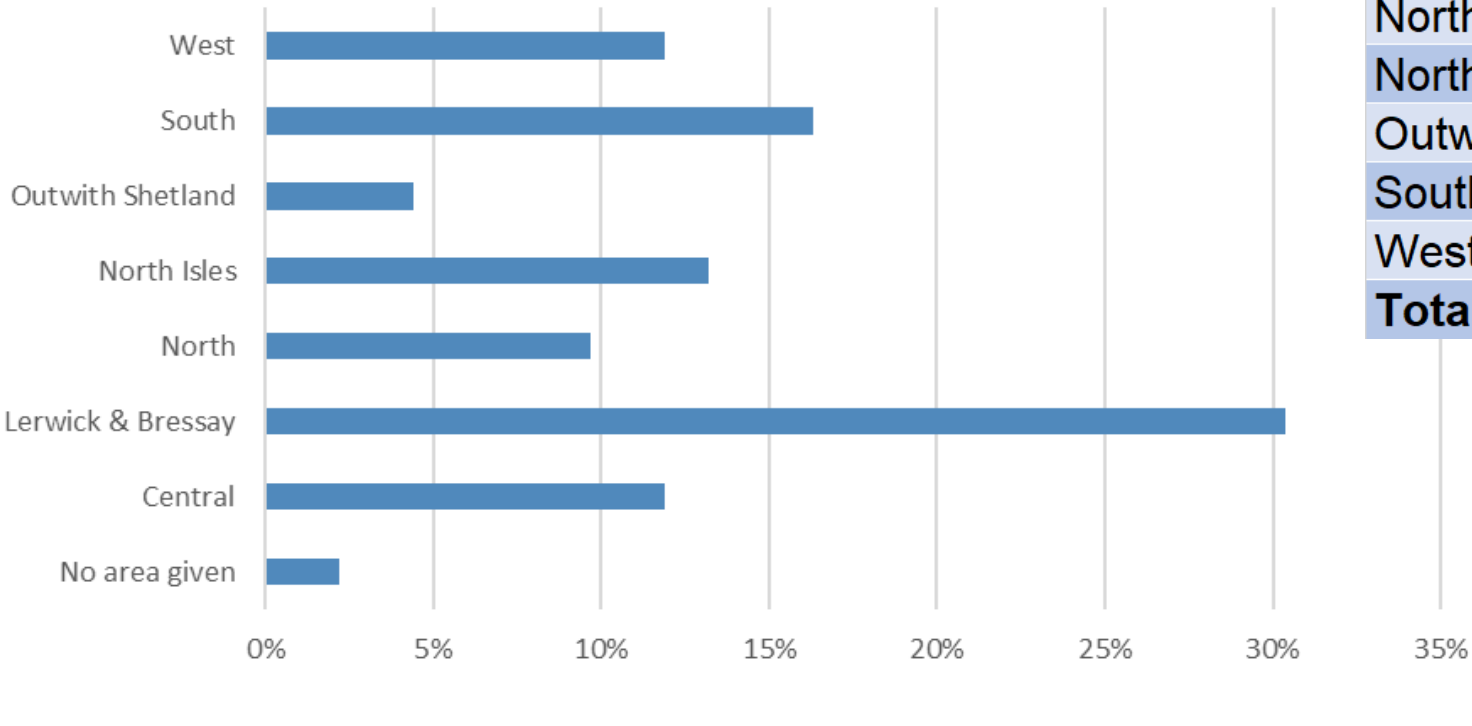
5

What should homes and communities look and feel like in Shetland in 2040?

6

What's the one action that would improve the local housing system?

**Shetland LHS Early Engagement Survey
Repondents by HMA**



Housing Market Area	Survey Responses No.	Survey Responses %
No area given	5	2%
Central	27	12%
Lerwick & Bressay	69	30%
North	22	10%
North Isles	30	13%
Outwith Shetland	10	4%
South	37	16%
West	27	12%
Total	227	100%

- **Total responses = 227**
- **98% of responses provided area they live in enable area analysis**

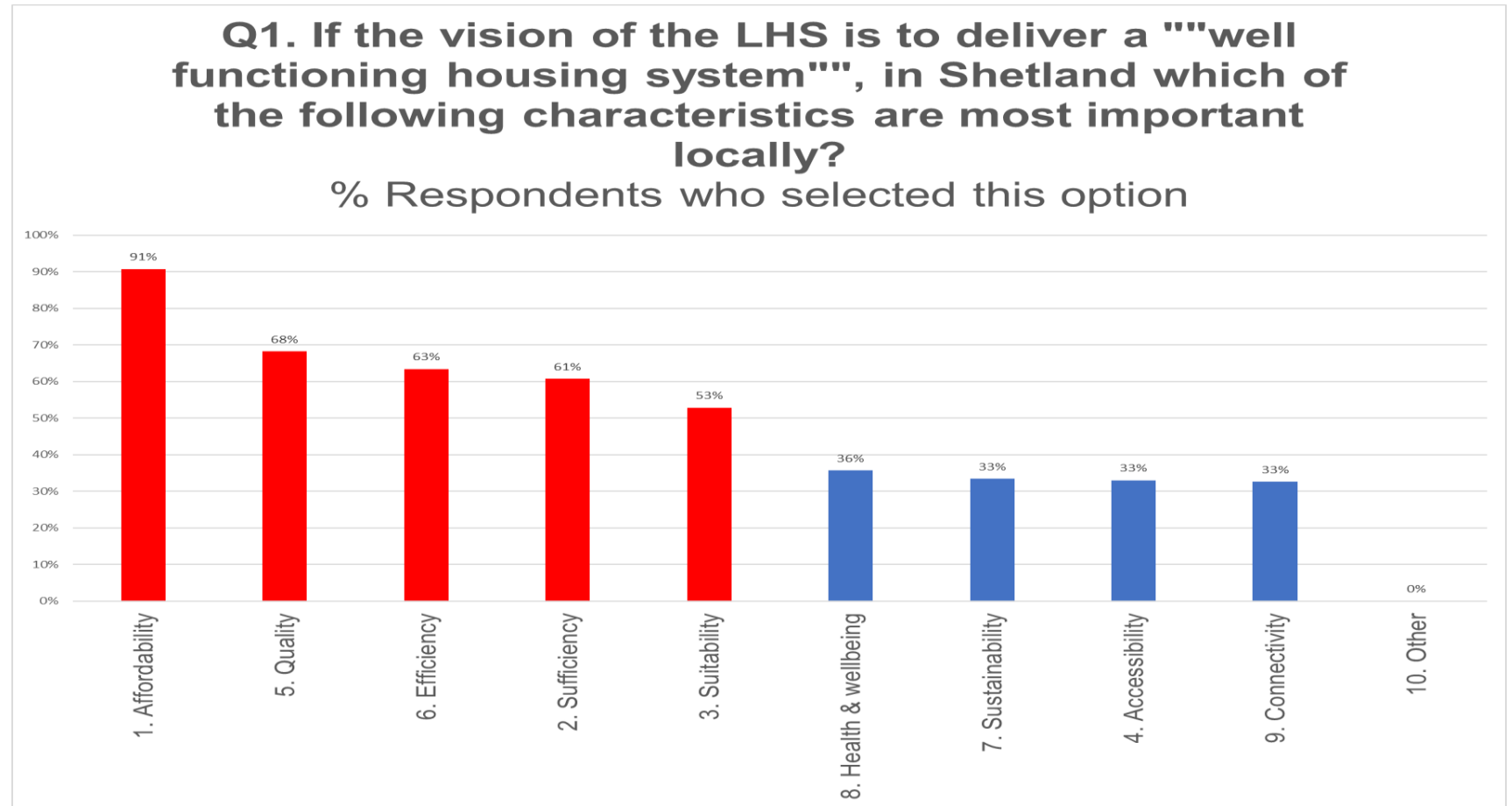
Q1	If the vision of the LHS is to deliver a ""well functioning housing system"", in Shetland which of the following characteristics are most important locally? Please tick up to 5 characteristics
1	Affordability – local residents should be able to afford to purchase or rent accommodation in the tenure of their choice and to heat and maintain their home
2	Sufficiency – there should be an adequate supply of accommodation available to meet identified local needs and, as far as possible, an element of aspirational demand
3	Suitability – housing should be of the right size and type and in the right location to meet local needs both now and in the future
4	Accessibility - a range of housing options and choices should be available for those seeking housing in the area
5	Quality - the condition of the housing stock offers well-maintained homes in good repair that are affordable to live in
6	Efficiency - the housing stock offers homes that are warm, affordable to heat and reduces carbon emissions
7	Sustainability - housing supply makes a positive contribution to the life and growth of communities and the local economy in Shetland
8	Health & wellbeing - housing options are available to support local people with health conditions and disabilities to live as independently and well as possible
9	Connectivity - homes and communities are located in sustainable places which are well connected digitally and in terms of transport
10	Other -please specify

Question 1



Question 1

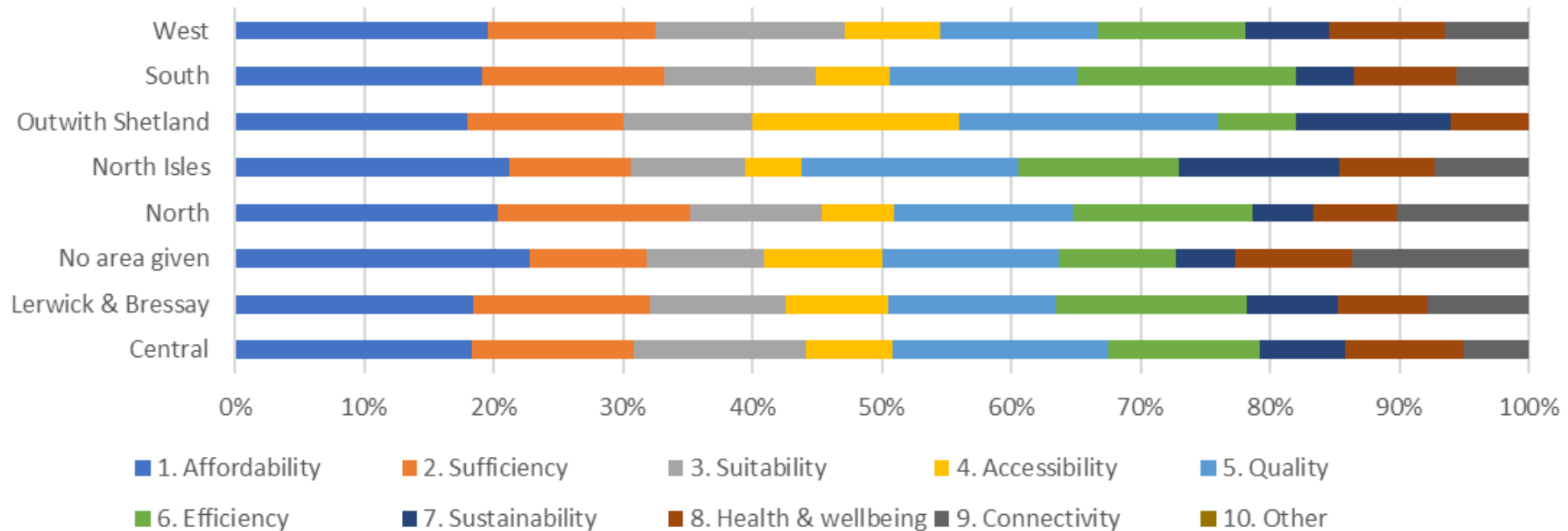
If the vision of the LHS is to deliver a "well functioning housing system", in Shetland which of the following characteristics are most important locally?



- Respondents were allowed to pick up to five options
- 91% said affordability was top housing system characteristic, followed by 68% for quality and 63% for efficiency

Q1. If the vision of the LHS is to deliver a "well functioning housing system", in Shetland which of the following characteristics are most important locally?

%age of respondents who selected this option



- Responses reasonably consistent across HMAs
- Affordability, quality and sufficiency key issue for almost all HMAs
- Accessibility features higher for those out with Shetland and sustainability more important in North isles and out with Shetland



Question 1: Other

owned by Shetland locals and not as summer residencies

Houses in Vidlin so young people can stay in Vidlin instead of having to move elsewhere.

Housing should be cheap to rent and a home for life without the pressure of feeling you have to buy to have a home for life.

Reserved homes for Shetlanders.

Insulation should be such that even in a fierce gale the house requires only back round heating

In relation to sustainability, there should be much thought given into building too many houses in Lerwick - pressure on facilities and impact on other areas in Shetland.

Well-maintained and crucially well insulated homes. Older housing stock should be regularly checked. Affordable heating very necessary.

Timeframe - is there enough housing to fill temporary / short-term needs e.g. 6 month employment contract; 12 months renting while looking to buy;

Homes should not be semi detached or flats as noise travels and for noise sensitive makes social housing a nightmare for their mental health and quality of living.

Emphasis should be on Local, there are far to many people arriving in Shetland, moving in with relatives and then declaring themselves homeless when relationships break down.

They should be a requirement to have been resident in Shetland for a number of years before you can be considered for housing.

There needs to be a fresh look at 'alternative' housing such as Tiny houses and self builds that can be much less damaging to the environment. A house of 40 square meters or less may not suit some regulations but the materials used, maintenance and energy required for heating lighting etc offer a much lower environmental impact than a standard property averaging well over 100m square. I could afford to buy a piece of land and build something for myself but if I stick to all the current regulations I may not. I have been looking at the possibility of building but with a budget of around £100,000 I can't risk it, planning might take a year or more, materials will probably go up in the intervening time and possibly I will find I have to give up half way through as some others have had to.

I feel that people who are always in trouble with the law should be housed well away from other residents.

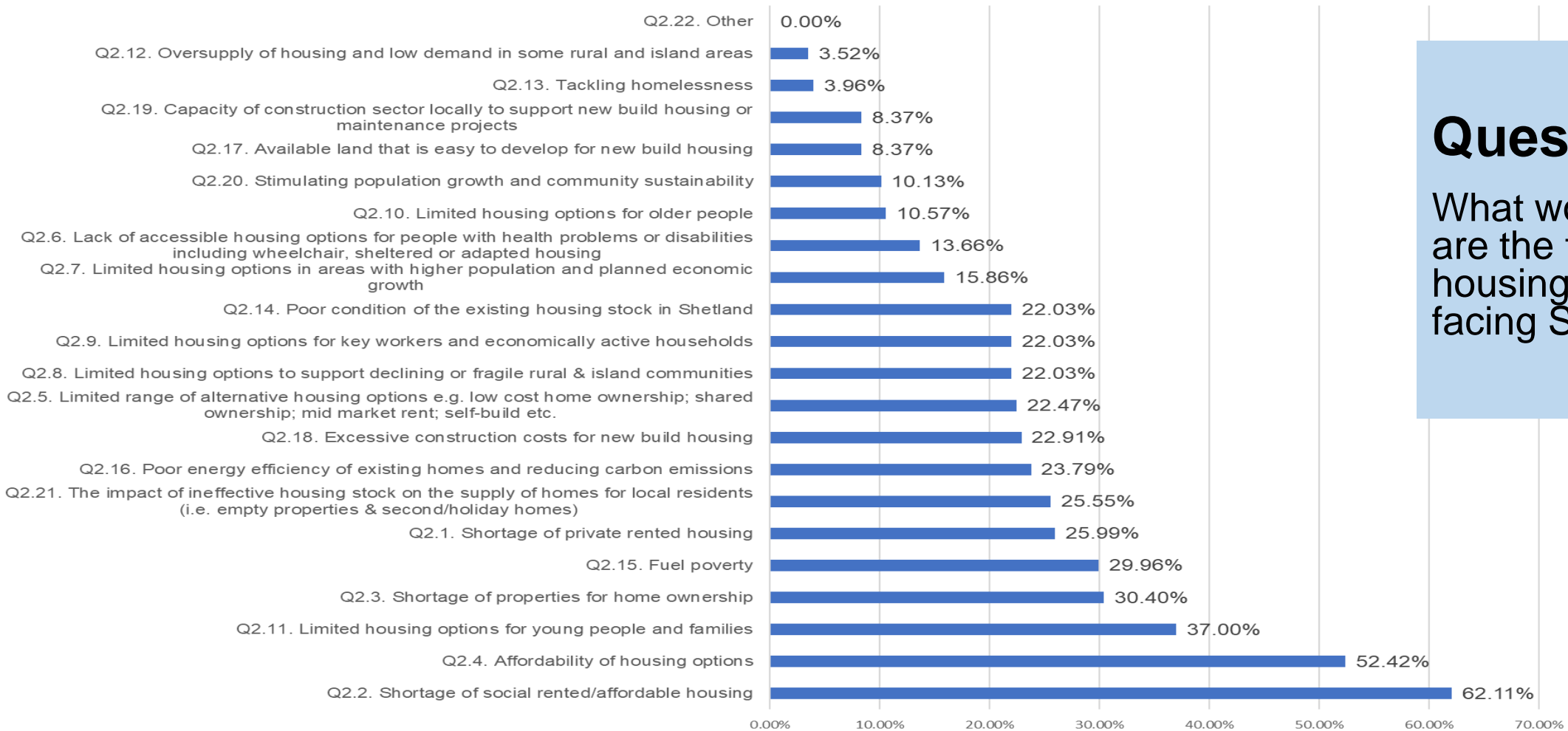
I feel that people working hard and doing their best, that have no problems, keep out of trouble, are at the bottom of the list for housing! I feel that is just not right!

I feel that people moving up from south should not be given housing before an honest, hard working, Shetland person!

Q2 What would you say are the top 5 housing challenges facing Shetland?	
1	Shortage of private rented housing
2	Shortage of social rented/affordable housing
3	Shortage of properties for home ownership
4	Affordability of housing options
5	Limited range of alternative housing options e.g. low cost home ownership; shared ownership; mid market rent; self-build etc.
6	Lack of accessible housing options for people with health problems or disabilities including wheelchair, sheltered or adapted housing
7	Limited housing options in areas with higher population and planned economic growth
8	Limited housing options to support declining or fragile rural & island communities
9	Limited housing options for key workers and economically active households
10	Limited housing options for older people
11	Limited housing options for young people and families
12	Oversupply of housing and low demand in some rural and island areas
13	Tackling homelessness
14	Poor condition of the existing housing stock in Shetland
15	Fuel poverty
16	Poor energy efficiency of existing homes and reducing carbon emissions
17	Available land that is easy to develop for new build housing
18	Excessive construction costs for new build housing
19	Capacity of construction sector locally to support new build housing or maintenance projects
20	Stimulating population growth and community sustainability
21	The impact of ineffective housing stock on the supply of homes for local residents (i.e. empty properties & second/holiday homes)
22	Other

Question 2

Q2. What would you say are the top 5 housing challenges facing Shetland?



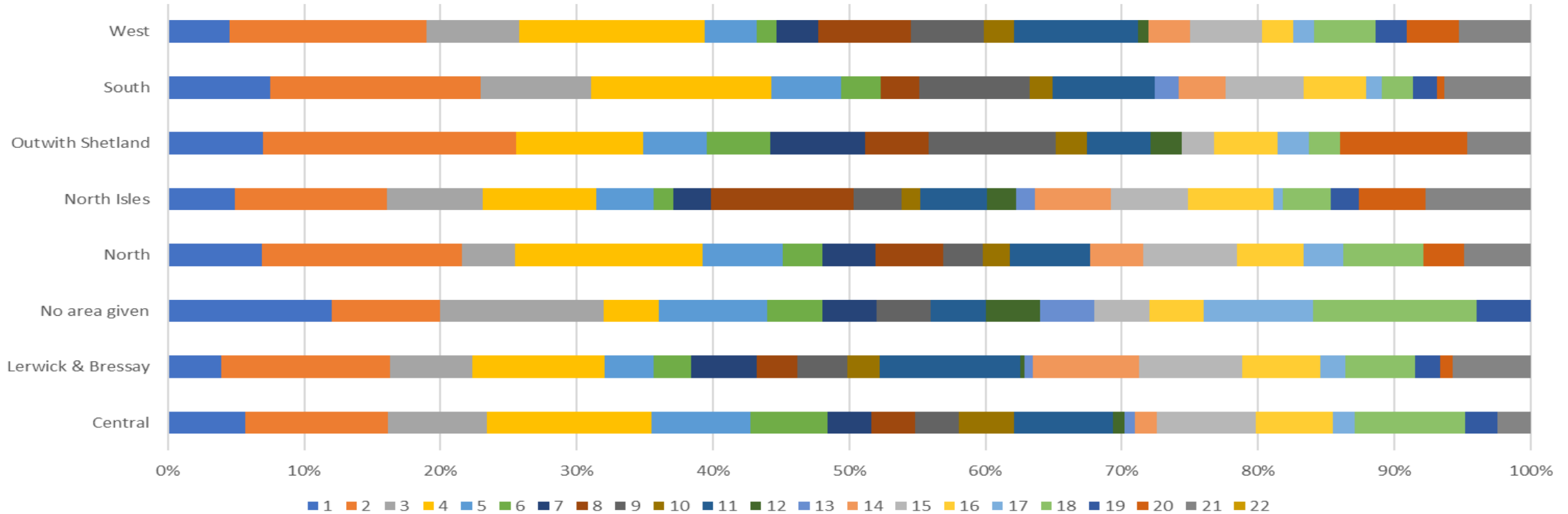
Question 2

What would you say are the top 5 housing challenges facing Shetland?

Top 3 Challenges

1. Shortage of social rented/affordable housing = 62%
2. Affordability of housing options = 52%
3. Limited housing options for young people and families = 37%

Q2. What would you say are the top 5 housing challenges facing Shetland? Analysed by HMA



- Shortage of social rented housing is a top 5 challenge across all HMAs as is affordability of housing options
- Limited housing options for young people and families is considered more of a challenge for people living in Lerwick and Bressay
- For respondents out with Shetland a top challenge is limited housing options in areas with higher population and economic growth



Question 2: Other

Housing of any type in rural

planning department - delaying new builds by years unnecessarily

High proportion of housing for tourist rental restricting amount of available housing

Lack of extra supported accommodation

Complete lack of available land and/or plots for self-build, or custom build.

Too many incomers pricing local young folk out of the market and also creating a ticking timebomb for too many retired economically inactive folk for the future

New Demand From People Moving Here.

Shortage of AFFORDABLE private rented accommodation as a viable option.

There is no problem having housing accommodation available if there are no proper employment opportunities.

Council properties being purchased, then used for airbnb. Takes away a council property that is needed. Should have a clause that council property purchased must be lived in by purchasers

Support and encouragement for families to get along, in the past up to 10 people could live together.

People coming up from south and buying homes way over the asking price - thus giving locals no chance.

too many 1 and 2 bed houses. build 3 and mainly 4 bed houses and loads of 2 beds will become free for people that need them

As someone looking to move to Shetland, I found the big businesses dealing with wind farms and space centre snapping up anything and everything, leaving nothing for the likes of myself to even consider. Due to this I've had to turn down employment. Again!

A lot of people arriving in Shetland and being given a 2/3 bedroom house whereas people are waiting months/years in Shetland and not getting anything!

Housing for people on benefits that is not in areas with high numbers of drug users! Not everyone on benefits is a drug user and should not be housed in rundown areas.

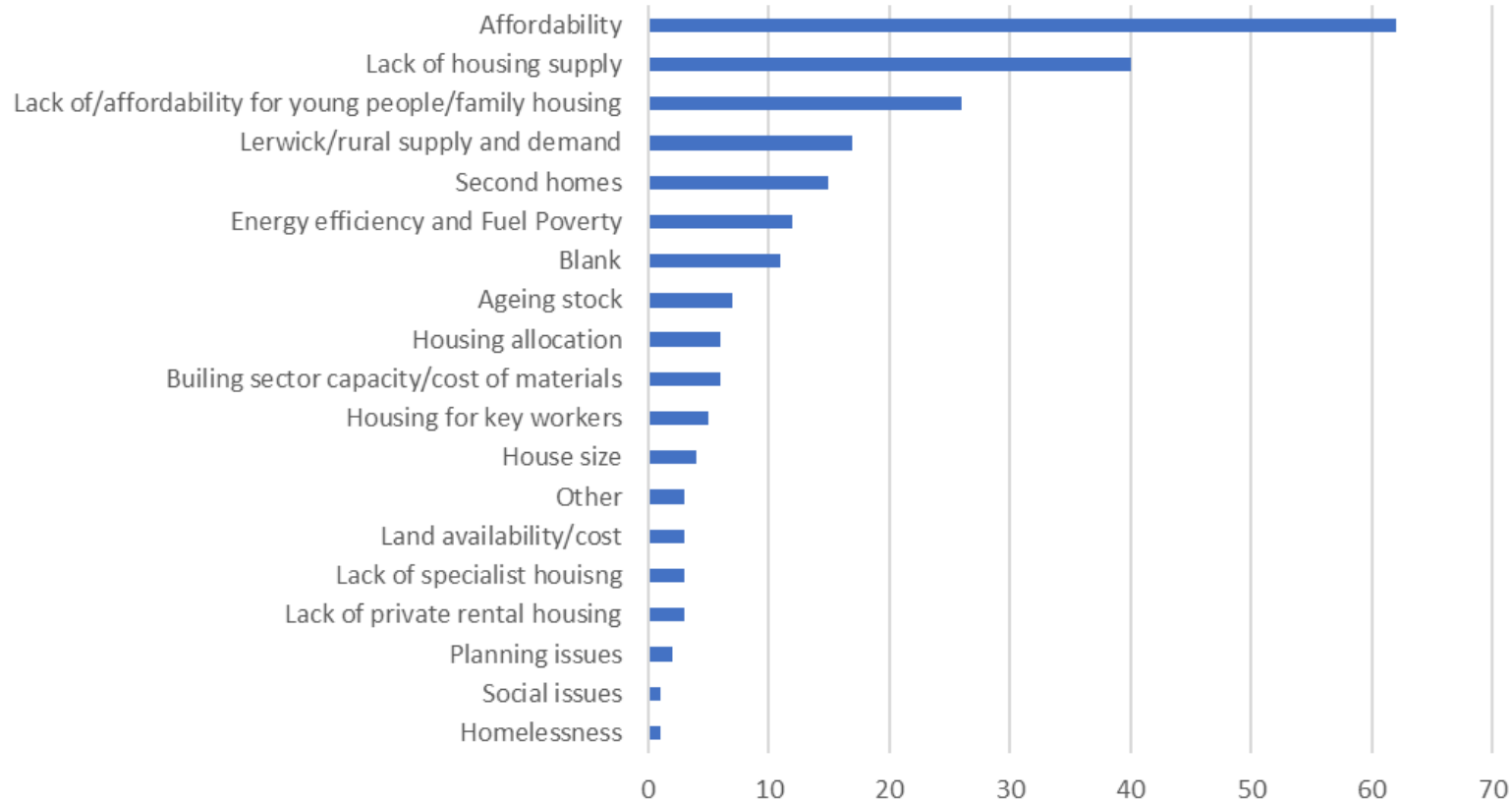
The biggest issue to access is where both previous public and private housing second home ownership has reduced stock for even a smaller population than 29 years ago. Multiple house ownership for tourism/ Air B& B needs to be addressed by substantial Council Tax increase for empty second, third, fourth and more house/properties to policy of use the housing or be penalised. There is a significant amount of second home ownership of people NOT resident in the Shetland communities. This kills communities or makes them increasingly unsustainable. A very small number of people and businesses are making excessive profit/ incomes at the expense of homelessness.

A halt house building in Lerwick, Scalloway, Sandwick and Brae, is required to boost more remote settlements with a significant improvement in affordable appropriately timetabled transport access employment in 'urban' areas to areas of economic activity - the aforementioned 'towns.

There is a flawed, fallacious assumption that Shetland is currently under-populated. The current unemployment figures tell us it is not. Any skills shortages need to be addressed by appropriate skill/ career development to fill skills shortages in the islands. The construction industry has been seriously over- heated and fuelled by public sector/ Council spending

What is the single greatest challenge facing the housing system in Shetland?

(AJ classification of free text responses, n=227)



Question 3

What is the single greatest challenge facing the housing system in Shetland?

Top 3 Greatest Challenges

1. Affordability = 62 (27%)
2. Lack of housing supply = 40 (18%)
3. Lack of housing/affordability for young people and families = 26 (11%)



Question 3: Selected comments

We have had a really difficult time buying a house in Shetland. My partner and I moved back after being away for several years. We are very lucky that we have family we can live with, if we did not I don't think it would have been possible for us to move back. Houses are going for substantially over the asking price and rents remain very expensive and in short supply.

Extremely inflated costs of houses on the market. Perhaps there should be schemes for self build houses to make building more achievable

Too many private landlords charging high rents buying up the available housing causing prices to rise beyond what many can afford

Cost of housing too high for local population, especially when people from south are prepared to pay way above guide price to move to Shetland.

The rising costs of construction alongside the increasing value (and sale price) of existing homes make accessing the property ladder increasingly difficult and impacts on demand for affordable homes.

Demand from people from out with Shetland moving here and either buying or renting property, at higher rates and costs.

Larger businesses either snapping up rentals or purchasing houses before anyone has a chance.

*Quantity. Shetland has masses of land that could be built on.
Affordability. First time buyers are priced out of the running due to greed, mainland buyers and extortionate valuations.*

I cannot afford to buy a house. I sold my house to move to Shetland for work at the hospital. There was limited housing available, so I had to live with parents. I don't want a housing scheme rent or council house. I want to buy a home but mortgage for key workers and the financial situation of the country makes this difficult

Not enough affordable properties available, especially for single people.

Lack of affordable housing in Lerwick. More people moving here for work and not being able to find accommodation.

Lack of housing options. There is a lack of affordable private rented accommodation in Shetland, meaning that many local people are priced out of this as an option. Even more people are priced out of the home-ownership option in Shetland, not only due to the increasing house prices but the amount people have to pay over the asking price. There are limited options for shared equity and shared ownership. This puts a greater strain on the social rented sector. I would like to see the collaboration between the council and private landlords to come up with solutions, as more landlords appear to be moving away from private residential tenancies, to Air BNB/holiday lets, which are less regulated (at the moment!) but also often mean properties may remain empty over winter months. I put it forward as the greatest challenge as I think it's the challenge which is most difficult to think of solutions to but we must.

Shetland's housing market is costly, yet the affordable housing stock is much too low. And what is available is often of poor quality/energy efficiency.



Question 3: Selected comments

Limited housing available for those looking to move to Shetland for employment, particularly those looking to relocate with pets and requiring rented or temporary accommodation.

Overall shortage of all types of housing in areas of high demand..

General shortage of housing which prevents locals from having their own homes and prevents the Islands ability to recruit staff.

The pure lack of housing, but there being plenty of property to rent for holidays.

Lack of housing in general in demand areas. Particularly 3/4 beds. Growing families are being stuck in small properties while bigger properties are over occupied. Homeswapper is not adequate to deal with this. It is poorly subscribed and not accessible for older tenants looking to downsize. The council should take responsibility for swapping tenants who want to swap to more suitable accommodation .

There simply isn't enough for the islanders here already

People from off island buying up homes at vastly inflated prices for use as holiday lets and holiday homes.
e.g. several weeks ago a house was on the market for £160,000, a couple from England put an offer in on the house for over £300,000 to use as a second home.

The level of second homes and homes rented as holiday accommodation means far fewer houses are available for private purchase which means many more families require social housing, where previously they may have purchased and freed up social housing for those in greater need.

Like Cornwall second home owners are killing communities. EG the council need a Joiner the successful applicant wants to come to the island but can't get social housing, the wages offered are low and wouldn't be able to get a mortgage (even if wife had a job) or rent private due to the price. So council still need a Joiner the properties are in need of repair but they have no staff to do the work..

Too many incomers pricing local folk out of the housing market. This will lead to many problems in the future when there is an excessive number of economically inactive folk who requires care. Also individuals who own and rent multiple properties

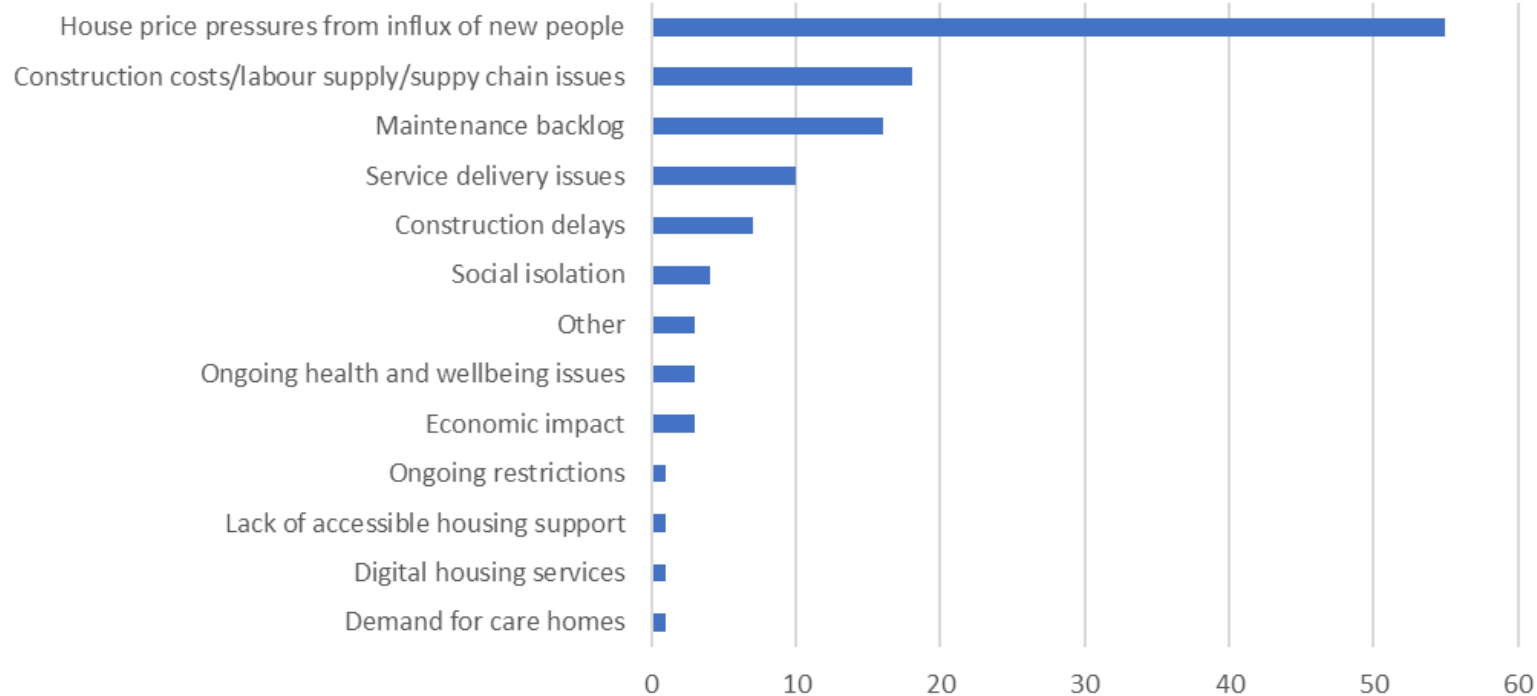
Young people living at home don't have a chance to get a council property. Private rent and house prices are shockingly high, meaning young people can't afford that.

Affordability of private sector rentals and lack of available housing for young couples starting out their lives together. Waiting lists and points system for young couple, with no health issues, no mental health issues, addiction, children or physical/mental abuse issues, is weighted so that they have little chance of getting a home and not all are in jobs that will allow them to pay private sector rent.

After the pandemic, Shetland is more appealing to people who have been stuck in cities. Some have huge wealth that local individuals/couples/young families can't compete with. The council and government are doing nothing to help with the crisis and it will push young people away from Shetland like it has already done in places like Harris and Lewis in the Western Isles.

Do you have any views on the potential short, medium or long-term impacts of Covid-19 pandemic on operation of the housing system in Shetland?

(AJ classification of free text responses, n=123)



Question 4



Do you have any views on the potential short, medium or long-term impacts of Covid-19 pandemic on operation of the housing system in Shetland?

Top 3 views on impact of pandemic

1. House price pressure from influx of new people to Shetland = 55 (45%)
2. Construction costs/labour supply. Supply chain issues = 18 (15%)
3. Maintenance backlog = 16 (13%)



Question 4: Selected comments

The lack of basic maintenance during lockdown and beyond will take years to catch up and is costing residents and housing authorities a fortune .

Housing needs to become actively involved along with rest of services which have returned to normality. Housing Support needs to start providing face to face support again, as other services cannot keep firefighting for them.

COVID + Brexit has caused issues in the supply and cost of building materials. Shetland is probably more adversely affected as the mainland as we are at the absolute end of the supply chain.

I think it might have the impact of demonstrating to many people that they could work from home, using technology in a beautiful community just as effectively as they could in the middle of a big city. We need to have the housing options available in our communities to be able to welcome them and benefit from their input in the years to come. We also need to guard against those people who have had a difficult time in the big cities spending some of their wealth buying up Shetland housing stock so that they can have a holiday home to escape to once or twice a year.

There have been a lot of people moving up to Shetland due to the Covid pandemic which makes it even harder for life long islanders to be able to have a chance of being offered a property.

Covid 19 has affected all areas but is now being used as an excuse for inaction in many areas. Organisations including SIC need to get back to as normal as possible and get on with things in all areas.

Due to the COVID19 pandemic and the TV series, incomers are flooding to Shetland.

Increase resource required to deal with the backlog of repairs, applications and enquiries.

Even harder to get materials, trades have all a lengthy backlog of projects. Many contractors are working on the wind turbine projects and so unable to service the smaller house builders.

I think the pandemic provides an opportunity for a review of operating the housing system in a more modern way in the digital age. A digital first approach

Question 5

What should homes and communities look and feel like in Shetland in 2040?



Question 5: Selected comments

Excellent range of housing choices for all Shetlanders, young and old, which are well-built, energy efficient and adaptable.

small villages with self contained communities, local services, but with access to larger shopping (Lerwick) via a well maintained infrastructure of good local transport and well maintained local roads.

Smaller housing schemes with air source heating and communal areas to encourage a sense of community and shared pride in keeping their area a pleasant place to live.

More affordable housing for the younger generation to try and stop them from leaving.

Built with affordable heating installed

Well connected communities, accessible services, appropriate choices of tenure and types of available homes. Sustainability and affordability needs to be at the heart of homes and communities across Shetland.

Compact energy efficient homes, clustered by transport links, parking limited so car ownership is not encouraged.

Basic community services within walking distance of homes, or accessible by public transport. Incentives for tenants to downsize to free up bigger houses for families.

Programmes to make sure garden space is preserved and can be used by wider community if tenants/owners do not require it. A view and a small amount of outside space for all.

we should have a very diverse, affordable and environmentally friendly housing stock which offers people a wide range of real choices in how they decide to spend their lives. We should have vibrant communities which support each other and work together, playing on each others strengths to improve Shetland as a whole. We should have the capacity to welcome new people in to our communities but still be able to prioritise access to the skilled workers, working families and young people who will help us all to thrive. Our housing stock should support people to be aspirational and find an excellent quality of life in our wonderful islands.

If there were fixed links, more employment, better digital connectivity to some of the rural areas then more folk would think to move there to live and work. This would spread the need for Housing throughout Shetland rather than be polarised in Lerwick. If there was employment or folk were encouraged to work from home more and transport issues were solved throughout Shetland then people would move to where the work and accommodation and land for building on are. Population more geographically spread.

Connectivity is key both digitally and physically. The pandemic has highlighted that broadband should be available to everyone wherever they live. The patchy availability of broadband speeds even on the same island is a source of great inequality that will only get worse as the world moves to be more and more on line.

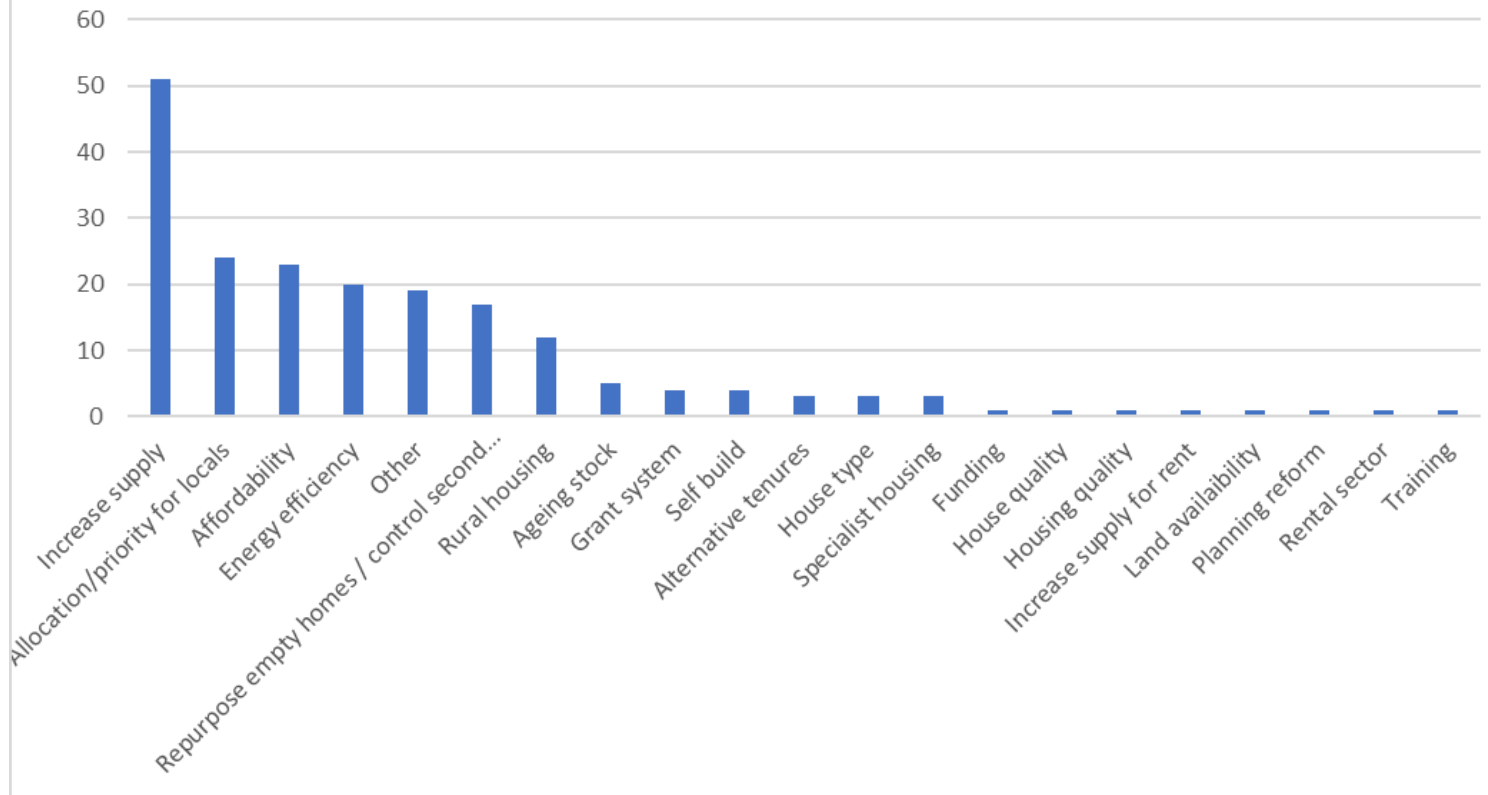
Good housing will encourage people to move and stay to keep communities across the whole of Shetland alive. Housing should not be concentrated in Lerwick and communities away from Lerwick should not be disadvantaged by decisions made regarding housing.

Question 6

If we could deliver one single action that would have a major and positive impact on the operation of the housing system in Shetland, what would it be?

Q6. If we could deliver one single action that would have a major and positive impact on the operation of the housing system in Shetland, what would it be?

(AJ Classification of responses n=196)



Question 6



If we could deliver one single action that would have a major and positive impact on the operation of the housing system in Shetland, what would it be?

Top 3 actions to deliver a positive and major impact

- 1. Increase housing supply = 51 (26%)**
- 2. Housing allocation system and priority for locals in social and private sectors = 24 (12%)**
- 3. Affordability of all tenure options = 23 (12%)**



Question 6: Selected comments

Investment in existing and new homes, build properties for families and to attract skilled workers who will be part of the community and make the island prosperous.

Adopt a strategy like Jersey and Cornwall nobody can purchase a property unless they have been a resident for 5 years or essential work, no second homes tourists come and stay in hotels and guesthouses which puts money into the local economy and creates jobs.

Encourage more house building and housing options in areas where the demand is, and allow communities to be sustained in the more remote areas.

Allow for Planning consent on derelict/old house sites.

People with multiple homes should be encouraged (very strongly!) and supported to maintain and rent their second home. There are hundreds of empty houses in Shetland which are being left to rot, or only being used for a few weeks during holiday times. This is unacceptable when we have hundreds of families requiring accommodation.

To prioritise the Shetland people and their family for affordable homes above all others to maintain the communities

Think of locals first, people that have lived here all their life and then their kids want to move out and can't as no practical housing

A massive increase in the amount of rental accommodation available throughout Shetland. Ideally this would be spread around the entirety of Shetland and not limited to Lerwick. As Lerwick attracts higher property prices, it should be more attractive to developers for private development, so the main focus should be to build in existing communities and provide robust transport links.

It would be good to see larger planned developments throughout Shetland as higher density housing will be easier to connect for active travel. Urban sprawl in areas such as Brae and Sandwick means that properties end up being a long way from the centre of the settlement, which promotes the use of cars for short journeys.

Prioritise and support Shetlanders/local residents and first time buyers for housing first to encourage local people to stay in Shetland (or come back) and encourage and enable communities to grow in population and thrive - more young people for example with families or looking to settle and start one will keep more rural schools open

Something needs to be done to control prices and keep them at a reasonable level in regards to average wage/ income. This goes for buying, renting and heating homes. I don't know this could/would be implemented or completed though.

Provision of affordable housing to buy & to rent - local people & keyworkers prioritised

More low cost options for housing, either rental or shared ownership schemes / allowing people to get on the property ladder easier. Easier access for lower cost rental properties.