



An update on Nort Natters

Working together: new ways of addressing shared challenges

8th December 2022



'Nort Natters'

This document is an update on 'Nort Natters', a community engagement project that took place in the north mainland of Shetland in November 2022.

December 2022

Nort Natters: what happened?

To better understand what communities in Shetland's north mainland **want and need, now and in the future**, a range of partners across education, health and care, emergency services, enterprise, housing, and community and voluntary organisations **co-designed** a shared community engagement effort. This was supported and facilitated by [People Powered Results](#) (a Nesta Specialist Enterprise). This co-design approach brought people together to:

- Co-create a **shared vision** and [design principles](#) for community engagement in the north mainland, based on the group's collective expertise of the local context;
- Deliver a **shared community engagement approach**, drawing on the group's collective networks, relationships and knowledge, and shared design principles.

Find out more about our approach in our full report, which will be shared in due course.

The group then worked together to bring this shared community engagement approach to life, and over a three-week period in November 2022, more than **525 people took part** in Nort Natters. Nort Natters asked what people **liked** about living in the north mainland, what **changes** would make a difference for them and their loved ones and what would help these changes to happen.

People participated in four ways:

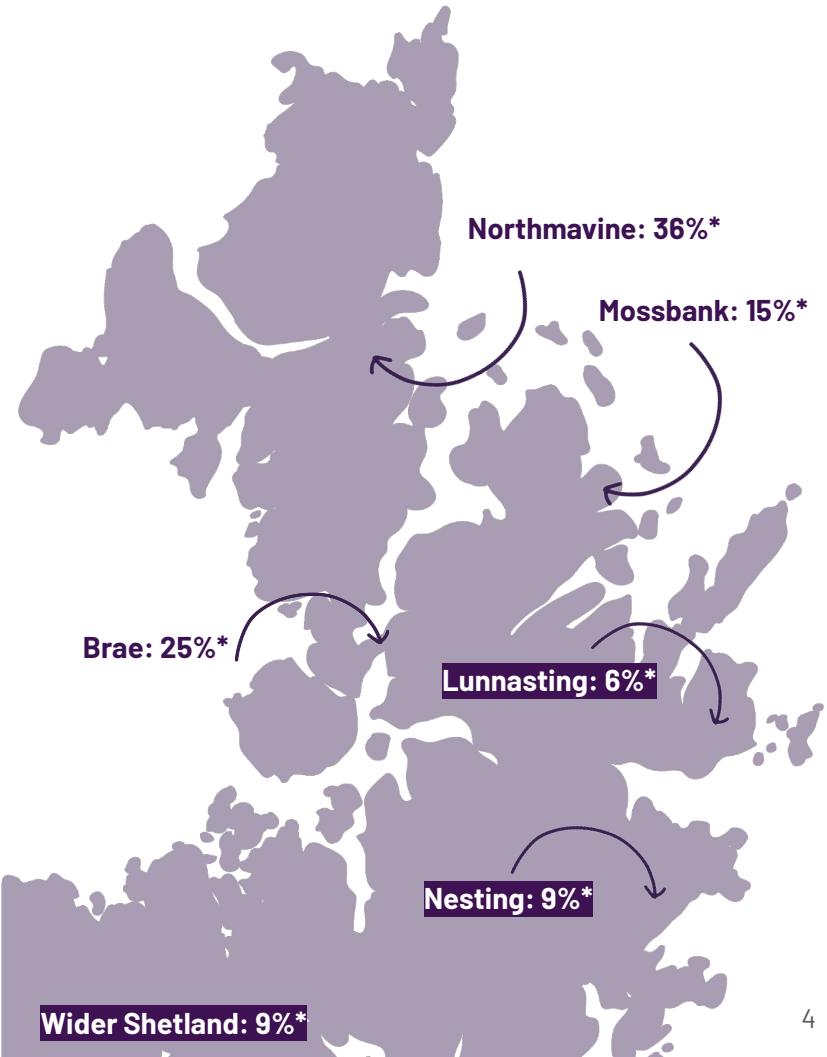
- **In-person sessions** in community spaces, including schools, clubs and scrap stores, as well as at a follow-up session where initial insights were shared and ideas for action were gathered
- **Locally-facilitated conversations** enabled by [Conversation Cards](#)
- **Minecraft** event held for children and young people
- **Online survey**

Who participated in Nort Natters?

525 people took part

305 were children and young people

20% had a disability or long-term health condition*



*Based on demographic data shared through online survey (n=67; 13%).

Overarching themes

Throughout this engagement, a number of overarching and interlinked themes emerged that span across conversations and topics, and underpin people's experiences of the north mainland. They are important to understanding the whole experience of living and working in the north mainland.

Moving around

Public transport and foot/cycle paths were one of the most prominent themes across conversations. They play an important role in making the most of local opportunities, and many people shared a desire to see more public transport and foot/cycle paths to better suit their needs.

More opportunities for young people

Across stakeholders, there was a common concern over opportunities for young people. It was clear that it is important to people to ensure that young people have safe spaces to be together, work and explore.

Community cohesion

It is clear that there is a strong community spirit across North Mainland, with many people sharing how the community comes together to overcome challenges. For example, there are many examples of ride sharing, grocery shopping for neighbours and a willingness to help others. There is opportunity to celebrate and build on this, with more skills and resource sharing.

Engagement with communities

A number of people shared a wish for more opportunities to have their voice heard. Generally, this engagement had very positive feedback, especially from young people, indicating a willingness to take part and work together.

Cost of living

Affordability and prices in North Mainland was a prominent theme and concern across responses, impacting how people experienced life in the north mainland, and their aspirations for the future.

Growth vs. peacefulness

We heard from many people how one of the things they most value about the area is the rurality, peacefulness and quiet. However, we also heard many wishes for more shops and amenities, and some suggestions to attract tourism. This sentiment was particularly shared by young people, who said that they would like to see a growth in well-known, high street shops.



We hope to be able to share the final report with
you early in the new year
