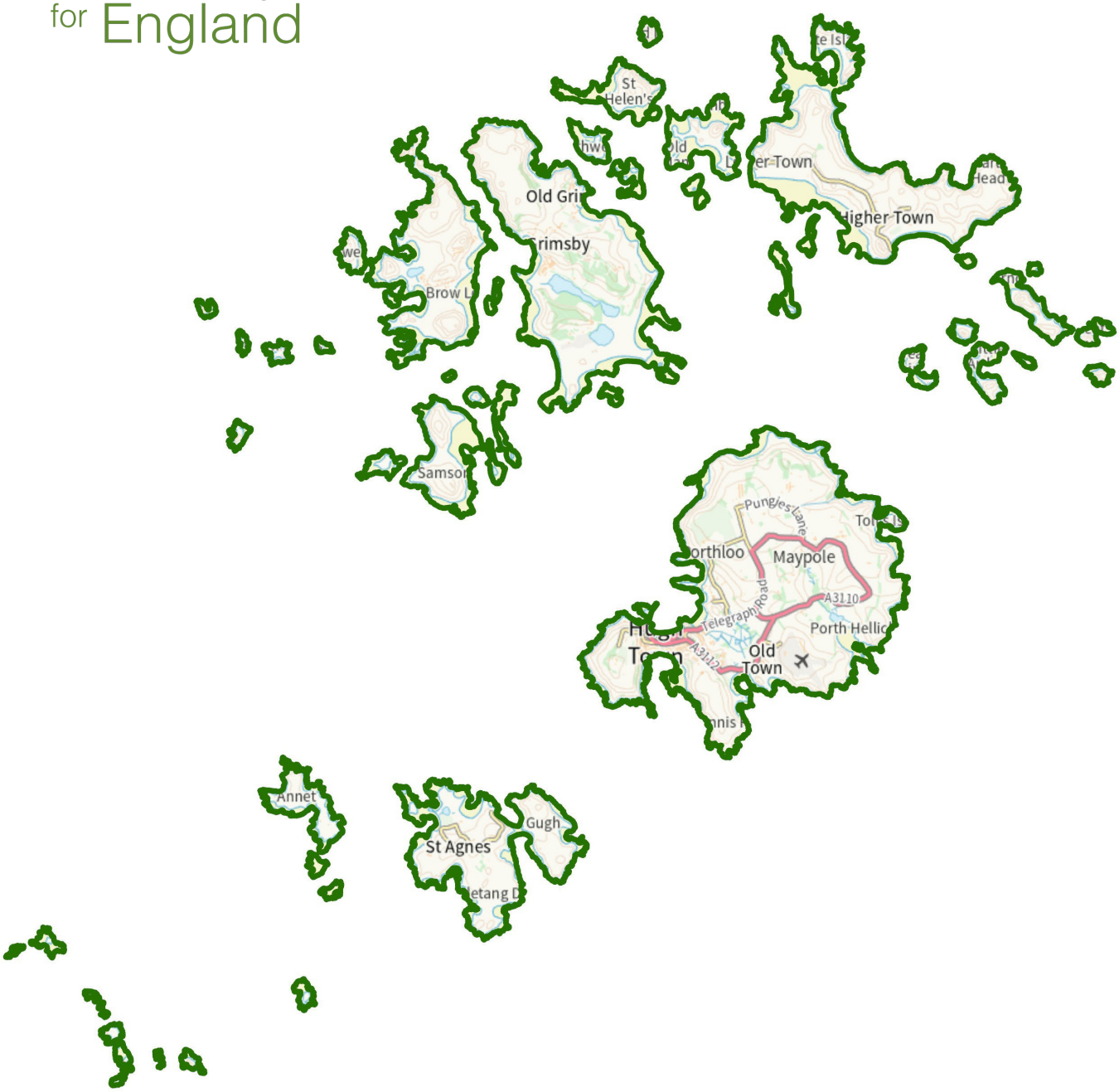
The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England



New electoral arrangements for the Council of the Isles of Scilly

Final Recommendations

November 2026

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A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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Introduction

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament.[1] We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

2 The members of the Commission are:

- Bev Smith (Chair)
- Andrew Scallan CBE (Deputy Chair)
- Dame Gillian Guy
- Wallace Sampson OBE
- Liz Treacy
- Janet Waggott
- Ailsa Irvine (Chief Executive)

What is an electoral review?

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed.
- How many wards there should be, where their boundaries are and what they should be called.
- How many councillors should represent each ward.

4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5 Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

[1] Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

6 More detail regarding the powers that we have, as well as further guidance and information about electoral reviews and the review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why the Isles of Scilly?

7 We are conducting a review of the Council of the Isles of Scilly ('the Council') as its last review was completed in 2016, and we are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council in England 'from time to time'.[2] Additionally, some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. We describe this as 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible while balancing this with our other statutory criteria.

Our proposals for the Isles of Scilly

8 The Isles of Scilly should be represented by 16 councillors, the same number as there are now. It should also have five wards, the boundaries of which should all stay the same as they are now.

How will the recommendations affect you?

9 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in and which communities are in that ward. Your ward name may also change.

10 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the authority or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or house insurance premiums, and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

[2] Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 56(1).

Review timetable

11 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for the Isles of Scilly. We then held a consultation with the public on warding patterns for the islands. The submissions received during consultation have informed our final recommendations.

12 The review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
18 August 2026	Number of councillors decided
25 August 2026	Publication of draft recommendations; start of consultation
19 October 2026	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
24 November 2026	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

13 Legislation[3] states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors[4] there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

14 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

15 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2026	2031
Electorate of the Isles of Scilly	1,564	1,559
Number of councillors	16	16
Average number of electors per councillor	98	97

Submissions received

16 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

17 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2031, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2026. These forecasts predicted that the electorate would remain largely the same by 2031.

18 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our final recommendations.

Number of councillors

19 The Council currently has 16 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council in its submission and have concluded that keeping this number the same will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

[3] Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
[4] Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

Draft recommendations consultation

20 Our draft recommendations were based on the Council's submission received during the preliminary period, which recommended retaining the existing arrangements for the Isles of Scilly.

21 Our draft recommendations were for one 12-councillor St Mary's ward and four one-councillor wards – one for each of the off-islands.

22 We received 11 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included seven submissions supporting our recommendations, three which suggested alternative arrangements, and one which queried the forecast electorate for 2031. Five submissions considered arrangements for the entire authority, four were focused on St Mary's, one covered the off-islands and one was specifically related to St Martin's.

Final recommendations

23 Our final recommendations are the same as the draft recommendations with no modifications. Although some submissions suggested allocating fewer councillors to a St Mary's ward, we do not consider that reducing the overall number of councillors for the authority would enable it to effectively carry out its duties effectively. Our recommendations are therefore still for one 12-councillor St Mary's ward and four one-councillor wards, one for each of the off-islands. We consider that our final recommendations reflect the community identities and interests identified by the Council and residents, while also allowing for effective and convenient local government that matches the natural geography of the islands.

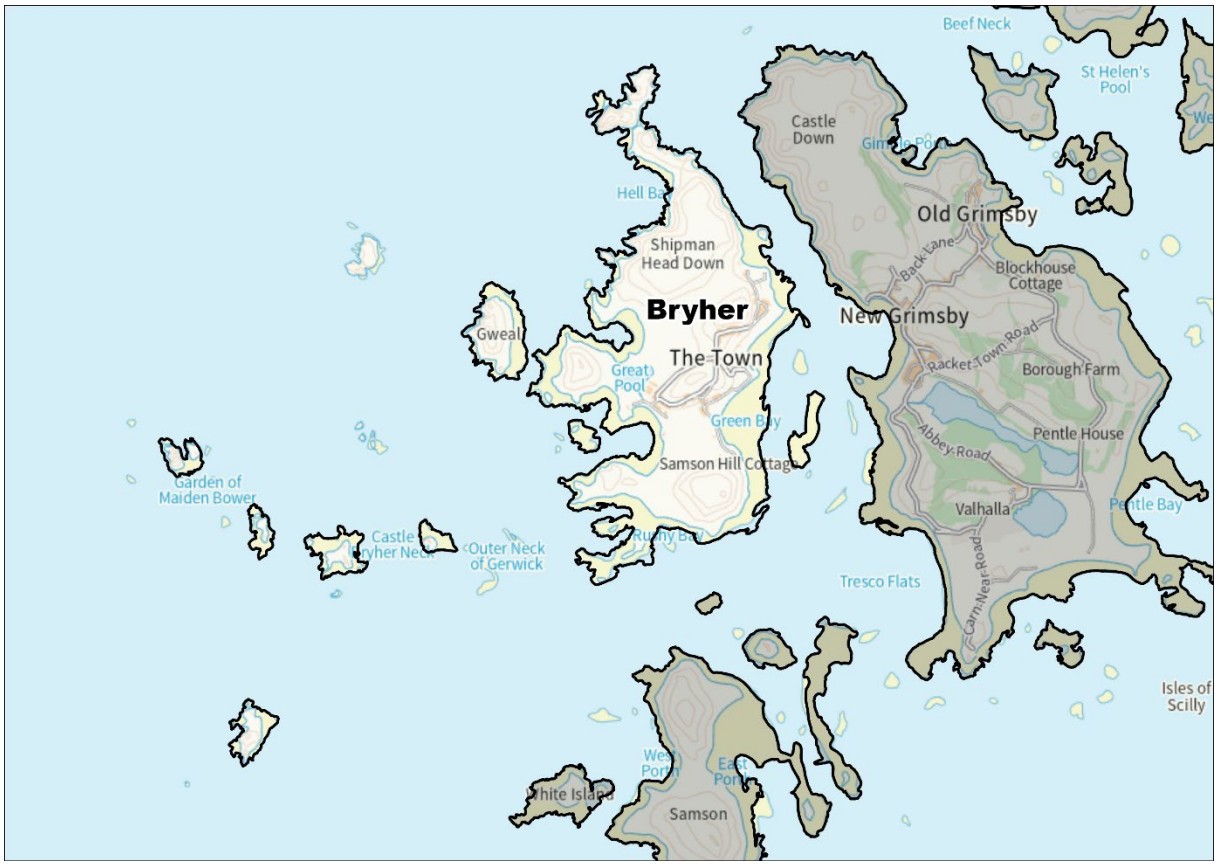
24 The tables and maps on pages 7–13 detail our final recommendations for each of the islands. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory[5] criteria of:

- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

25 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 21 and on the large map accompanying this report.

[5] Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Bryher



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Bryher	1	-25%

Bryher

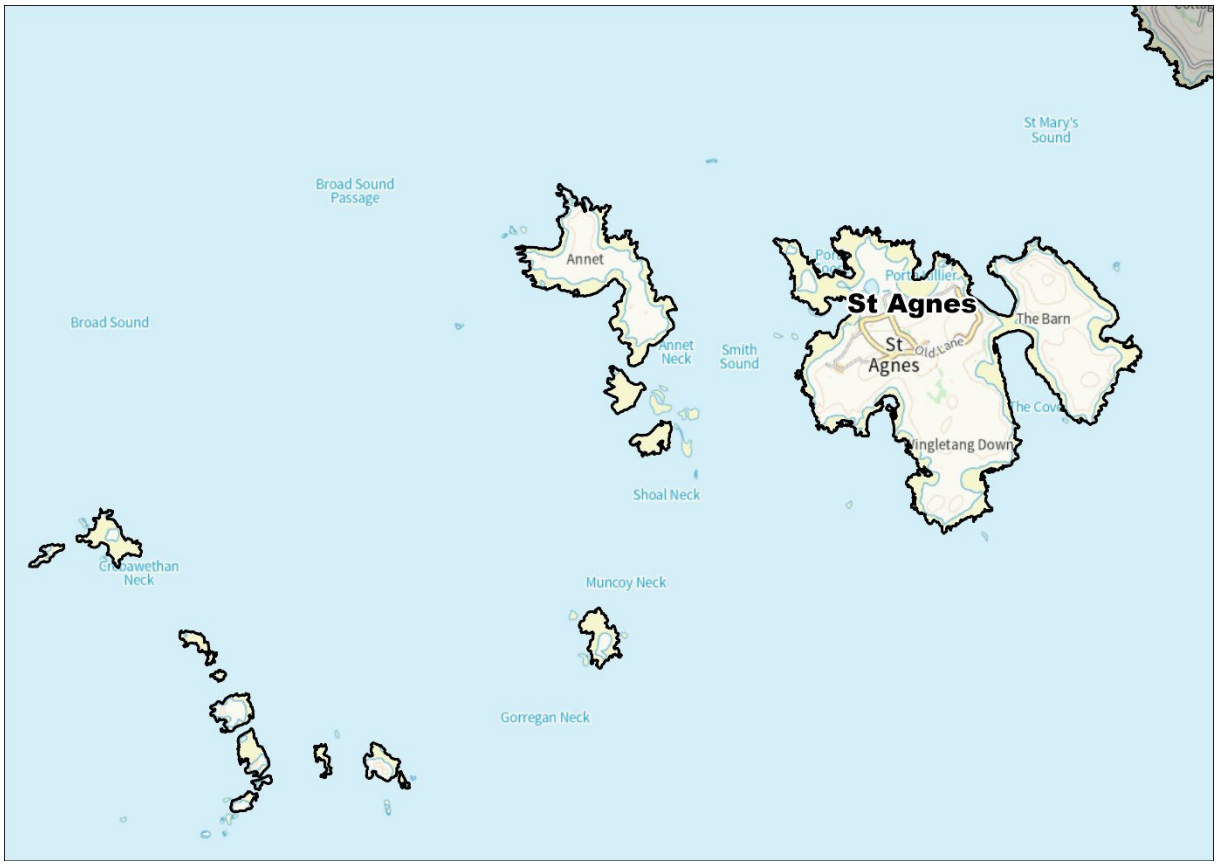
26 We did not receive any submissions specifically in reference to Bryher, which we proposed retaining as a single-councillor ward.

27 One respondent suggested that all the off-islands should be represented by two councillors each. They suggested that a 'small increase in the number of councillors' would 'encourage greater participation in local governance' as well as addressing the issue of 'too many people on too many committees' at present.

28 We consider that the Council comprehensively addressed the number of councillors in its initial submission, when it considered an increase but dismissed this approach noting that not all positions would be filled. It also noted that 'the streamlined committee system adopted in May 2017' (after the last electoral review reduced the number of members to 16) has been a 'success' because 'it is more efficient than the more expansive committee system that preceded it, reducing duplication and making fewer demands on limited officer resource'.

29 Noting these comments as well as the other submissions received during our draft recommendations consultation which supported a retention of the existing arrangements across all islands, we propose retaining a single-member Bryher ward as part of our final recommendations.

St Agnes



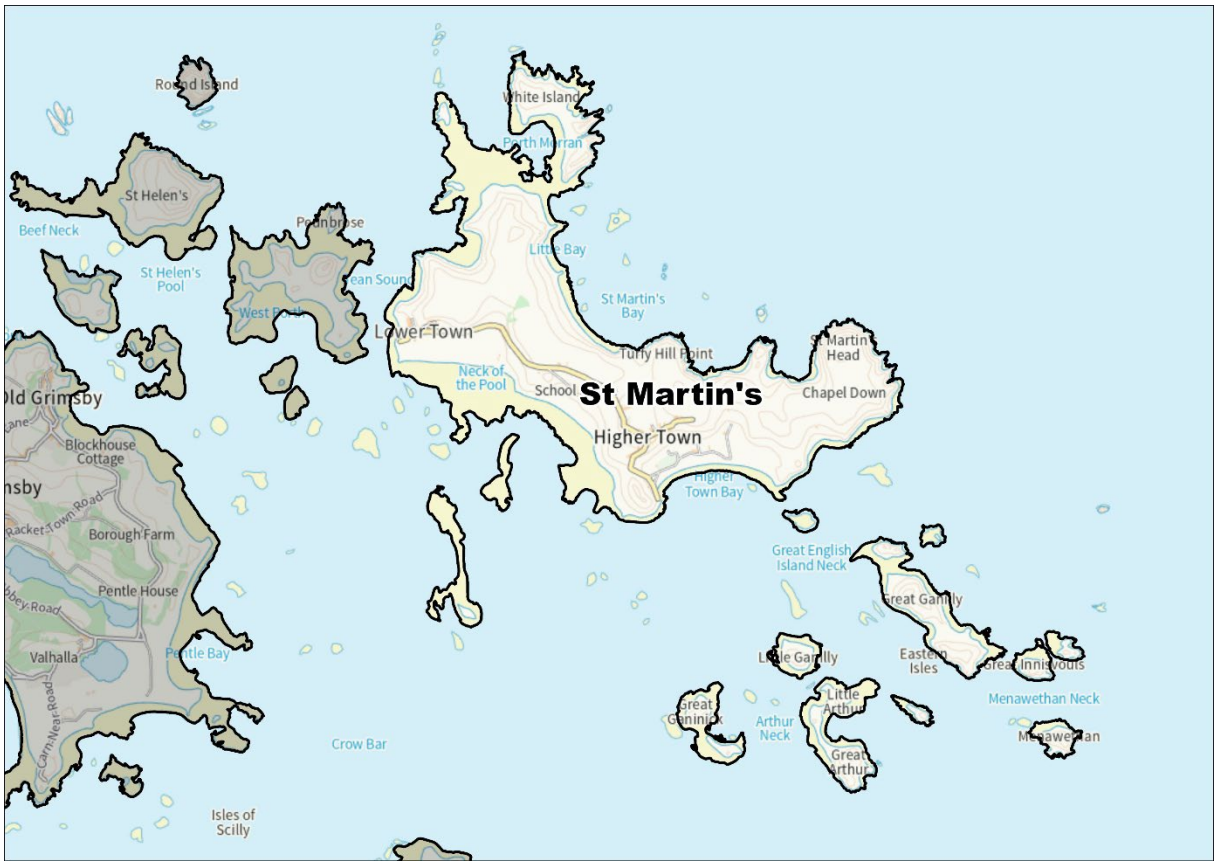
Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
St Agnes	1	-34%

St Agnes

30 We did not receive any submissions regarding St Agnes in isolation, which we proposed retaining as a single-councillor ward. All of the off-islands were considered by one respondent who suggested increasing their allocation to two councillors each. As noted above, we consider the Council has previously addressed the effectiveness of single-member off-island representation both as it relates to the governance of those islands and as an overall number of councillors for the Council to function successfully.

31 Considering both the Council's appraisal of single-member off-islands, as well as the comments from other respondents who supported a retention of existing arrangements across the authority, we propose a single-member St Agnes ward as part of our final recommendations.

St Martin's



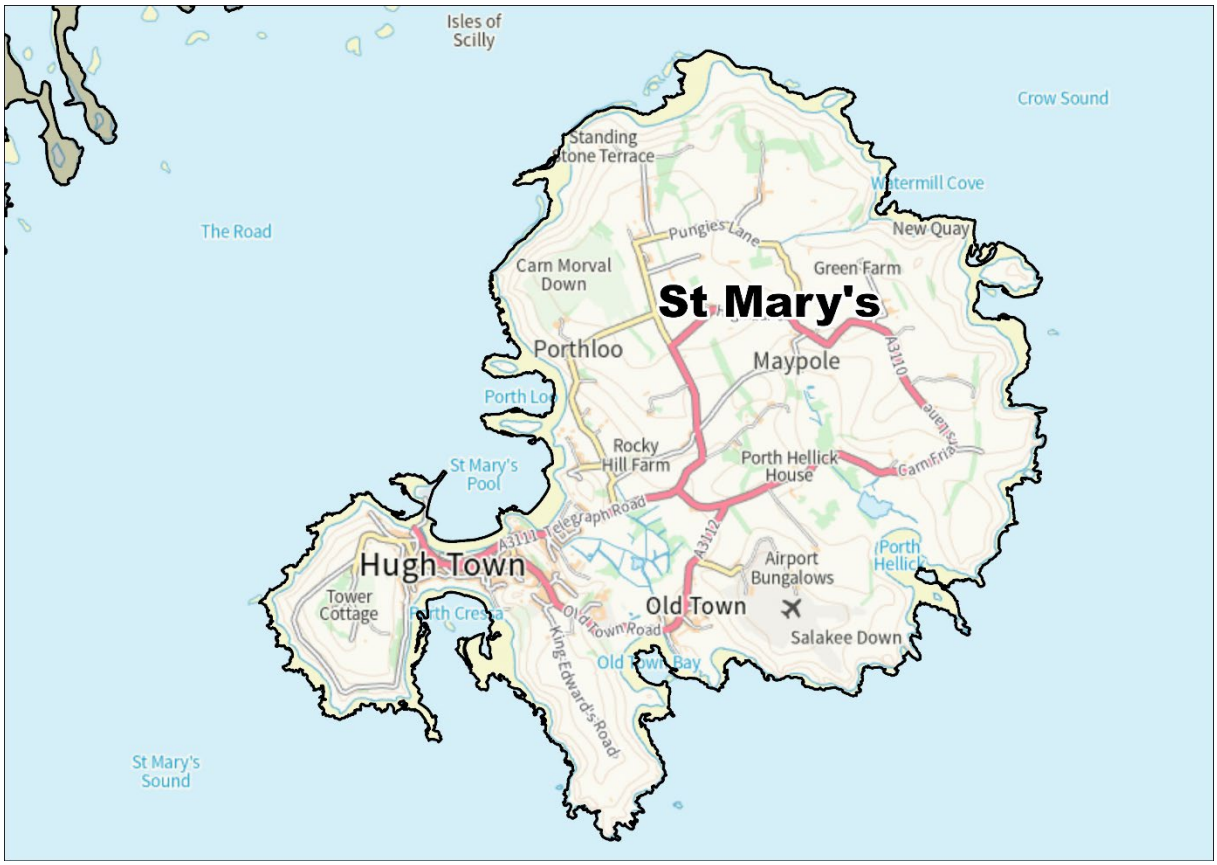
Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
St Martin's	1	16%

St Martin's

32 We received one submission from a resident of St Martin's who supported our draft recommendations to retain one councillor for the island. As noted above, we consider that single-member representation for the off-islands reflects our criteria as articulated by the Council in its original submission on councillor numbers.

33 We additionally note that there was general support for a retention of existing arrangements for all wards in the Isles of Scilly, and we therefore propose retaining a single-member St Martin's ward as part of our final recommendations.

St Mary's



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
St Mary's	12	4%

St Mary's

34 We received four submissions specifically relating to St Mary's, which we proposed retaining as a single 12-member ward. Two of these submissions supported our recommendations, noting that arrangements work well as is, while two others suggested a reduction in the number of councillors for the island.

35 One further respondent questioned our electorate forecast for 2031 for St Mary's, suggesting that housebuilding on the island will result in an increased electorate. Our forecast figures were provided by the Council and we are satisfied that these projections are the best available, noting that the modest amount of development forecast for St Mary's is not likely to materially impact the electorate.

36 One resident suggested that St Mary's should have six councillors, resulting in an overall number of councillors of 10 for the authority. They suggested that in future 'there will be more open posts than councillors to elect' and that 'the number of councillors we have feels a little over the top considering that there are fewer than 1,300 people living here'.

37 A separate respondent suggested that St Mary's should be represented by eight councillors, noting that 'St Mary's could easily lose four members and still be effective' and favouring an overall number of councillors of 12 for the authority.

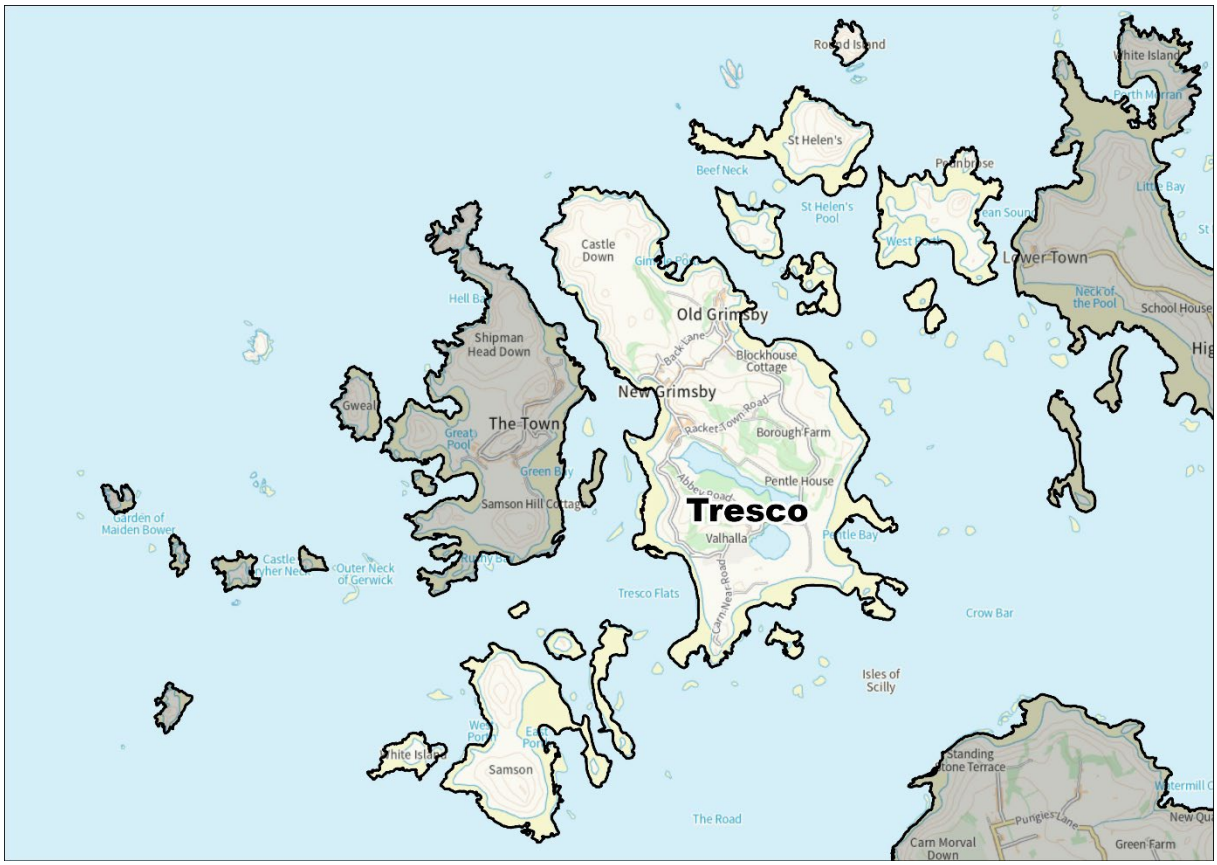
38 We note that an eight-member St Mary's ward with 12 total members for the authority would result in a forecast variance of 17% for St Mary's by 2031. A six-councillor St Mary's ward with 10 total councillors would have a forecast variance of 30% by 2031. Both of these would also result in even greater electoral inequality for the off-islands, with all wards falling outside of an acceptable variance range.

39 We additionally note the comments of the Council when it considered decreasing the number of councillors as part of its original submission; it stated that 'the wide-ranging responsibilities of the Council of the Isles of Scilly in terms of Strategic Leadership, Accountability and Community Leadership' mean that 'a reduction in the number of councillors could leave the organisation too small to discharge its functions'.

40 In addition to the supporting comments related specifically to St Mary's, two respondents with comments covering the entire authority supported the existing arrangements (and therefore our draft recommendations). Councillor D. Marcus, of St Mary's ward, noted that 'the current setup works for the islands' because 'each island is different, and has different issues'. The Rt Hon the Lord Berkeley OBE noted his agreement 'with the Council's assessment of the representative numbers for each island'.

41 We consider that the Council and several respondents have effectively established both why the overall number of councillors for the Isles of Scilly should remain at 16 and why St Mary's should continue to be represented by 12 members. We do not consider that reduction in the number of councillors representing St Mary's would result in electoral equality or effective and convenient local government, and we therefore propose retaining our draft recommendations for St Mary's, namely that it remains as a single 12-member ward.

Tresco



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Tresco	1	0%

Tresco

42 We did not receive any submissions specifically related to Tresco, which we proposed retaining as a single-member ward. We received one response which suggested that each of the off-islands would be better represented by two councillors, as they were before the Commission's previous review of the Isles of Scilly. As noted above, we consider that retaining both an overall number of councillors of 16 for the authority, and single-member representation specifically for each of the off-islands, better reflects our statutory criteria and is well reflected in the Council's original submission on councillor numbers.

43 We therefore propose retaining Tresco as a single-member ward, noting also the general support for the existing arrangements we received during consultation on our draft recommendations.

Conclusions

44 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in the Isles of Scilly, referencing the 2026 and 2031 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found in Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided in Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2026	2031
Number of councillors	16	16
Number of electoral wards	5	5
Average number of electors per councillor	98	97
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	3	3
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	2	2

Final recommendations

The Council of the Isles of Scilly should be made up of 16 councillors serving five wards: one 12-councillor ward and four single-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for the Isles of Scilly.
You can also view our final recommendations for the Isles of Scilly on our interactive maps at www.lgbce.org.uk

What happens next?

45 We have now completed our review of the Isles of Scilly. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in 2029.

Equalities

46 The Commission is satisfied that it complies with its legal obligations under the Equality Act and that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Final recommendations for the Isles of Scilly

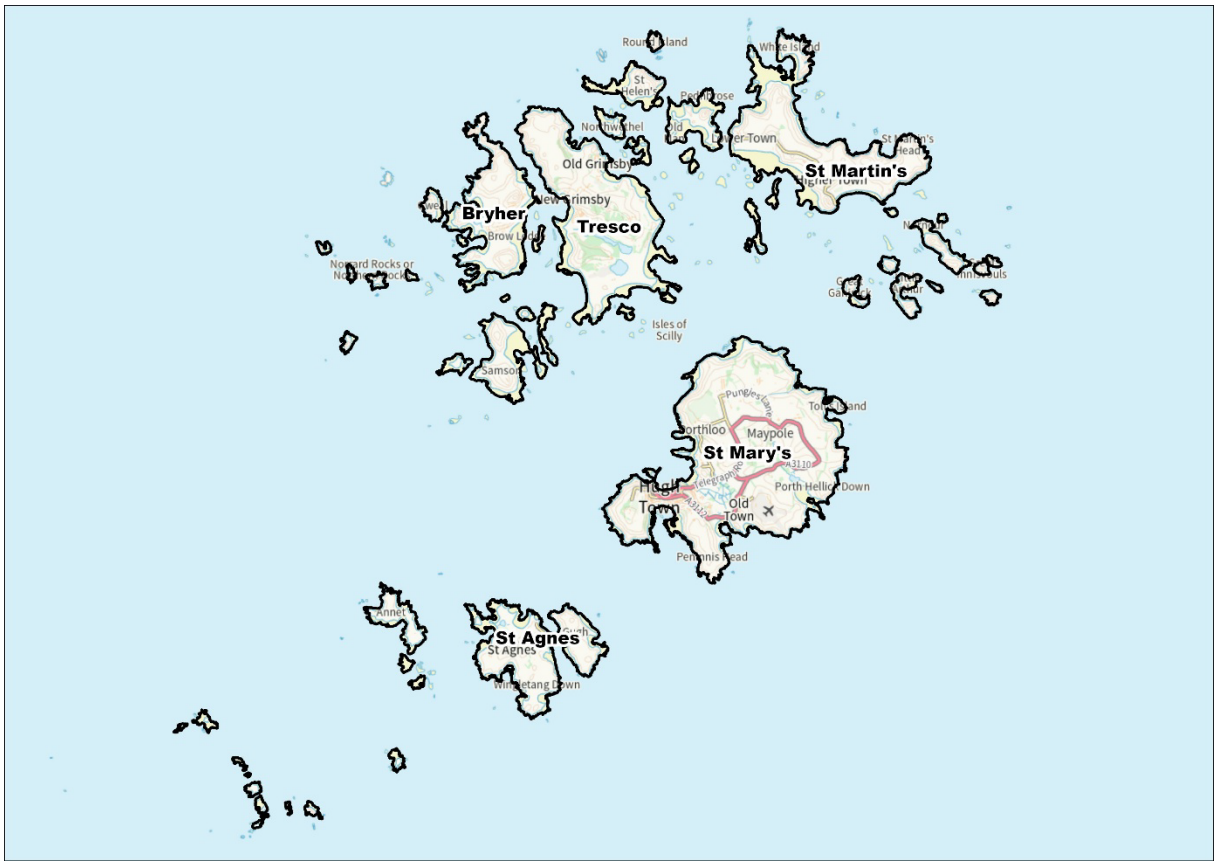
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2026)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2031)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bryher	1	72	72	-26%	73	73	-25%
2	St Agnes	1	61	61	-36%	64	64	-34%
3	St Martin's	1	111	111	14%	113	113	16%
4	St Mary's	12	1,218	102	4%	1,212	101	4%
5	Tresco	1	102	102	4%	97	97	0%
	Totals	**16**	**1,564**	**–**	**–**	**1,559**	**–**	**–**
	Averages	**–**	**–**	**98**	**–**	**–**	**97**	**–**

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by the Council of the Isles of Scilly.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the authority. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Outline map



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk/isles-scilly

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at: www.lgbce.org.uk/isles-scilly

Local authority

- Council of the Isles of Scilly

Councillors

- Councillor D. Marcus (Council of the Isles of Scilly)

Members of Parliament

- The Rt Hon the Lord Berkeley, OBE

Local residents

- Nine local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Changes Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority.
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was set up by Parliament, independent of Government and political parties. It is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government.

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