

The Spatial Portrait for the Isles of Scilly

29. This describes the Isles of Scilly at the beginning of the plan period. Its purpose is to develop a clearer understanding of the area, how it functions and to identify key issues that need to be addressed. Without recognising the main features that characterise the islands, it would be difficult to effectively plan for the next 15 years.

Location and Physical Context

30. The Isles of Scilly is an archipelago 28 miles off the south west coast of mainland UK. Comprising five inhabited islands with their own distinct character (St Mary's, St Martin's, St Agnes, Bryher and Tresco) together with hundreds of smaller uninhabited islands and rocky outcrops, the Isles of Scilly has a population of 2,203 people (Census 2011). The total amount of land comprising the inhabited islands is around 6 square miles (15.5 km). This creates a general density of around 137 people per square kilometre (383 per square mile). Cornwall has a density of 153 people per square kilometre, and England has a density of 413 people per square kilometre (or 353 excluding London).
31. Their geographic isolation from mainland UK, the sparse population spread over five separate islands and the exceptional quality of the natural and historic environment, are at the heart of what is special about the Isles of Scilly. This exceptional environment is the mainstay of the islands' economy. The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2015–2020 highlights:
- 'The Isles of Scilly are the smallest AONB designation in the UK measuring only 16 km². However, the islands possess a diversity of scenery and designations that belies their small scale. The archipelago combines granite cliffs and headlands, sandy bays, hidden coves, shifting dunes and saline lagoons.'*
32. Despite their small domestic and rural scale, most of the settlements are referred to as 'Towns' (8 out of 13). Most of the population live on St Mary's and are concentrated in Hugh Town, the administrative centre, and Old Town. The landscape

and topography of the islands sets the context for the settlements and buildings, with the exception of Hugh Town where the townscape of streets provides the setting for individual buildings. Inevitably, with a small population across five islands, the size of the settlements is extremely small, and their scale domestic and rural.

33. Other than Hugh Town, Old Town and Porthloo, all on St Mary's, and New and Old Grimsby on Tresco, most of the islands' settlements are set back from the coast. Most of the settlements, whilst being grouped at intersections of lanes, are relatively loose-grained, in that there are only short streets with individual houses, or short terraces of no more than three or four houses.
34. The towns on St Martin's have the most compact character, whilst those on the other islands are a little more dispersed. Tresco's settlements reflect the 'estate' nature of the island in that they are slightly more formal in layout, often in short, regular terraces.
35. The Local Plan Scoping Report Consultation 2015 showed that residents of the Isles of Scilly enjoy and appreciate where they live. Key words that were particularly expressed included 'Beautiful', 'Environment', 'Community', 'Safe', 'Natural', 'Safety' and 'Sea'.

'Quiet unspoiled beauty with great views, unhurried pace of life in a currently unique environment'. Consultation Response 2015

Overview of Existing Constraints

36. The Isles of Scilly has a significant number of features of environmental and historic importance that require additional levels of protection.
37. **Conservation Area, AONB and Heritage Coast** In 1975 the islands were designated as a Conservation Area, and in 1976 designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and defined as a Heritage Coast. The Jellicoe and Coleridge report 'A Landscape Character for the Isles of Scilly', published in May 1956, provided the foundation for the designation as both an AONB and Heritage Coast. The Heritage Coast definition protects 64 km¹ of coastline around the islands, which is 23 square kilometres of foreshore, cliff and dune environments. The management of the Heritage Coast was originally undertaken by the Isles of Scilly Environmental Trust; it is now managed by the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust. The Conservation Area, AONB and Heritage Coast all overlap and cover all of the islands.
38. **Listed Buildings** The islands have a dense and rich historic environment that encompasses a Conservation Area and 128 Listed Buildings, which include four Grade I, eight Grade II* and 116 Grade II Listed Buildings. The first buildings were added to the Statutory Heritage List for England in 1959.

¹ CE03 [Review and Evaluation of Heritage Coasts in England](#) - Full Report (July 2006)

39. **Scheduled Monuments** There are a total of 238 Scheduled Monuments on the islands scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Out of the total for England (19,864 sites), this amount represents 1.2% of all Scheduled Monuments. These monuments include 119 cairns,² 16 Civil War batteries,³ and 86 prehistoric-related structures such as entrance graves, linear boundaries and regular and irregular field systems.
40. **Protected Wrecks** There are 5 Protected Wrecks around the islands, designated under the Protected Wrecks Act 1973 (52 in total nationally), which equates to 9.6% of all Protected Wrecks in England. These wreck sites are identified as Tearing Ledge, designated in 1975; Bartholomew Ledges, designated in 1980; HMS Colossus, designated in 2001; Wheel Wreck, designated in 2007; and the Association, designated in 2014.
41. **Registered Parks and Gardens** Tresco Abbey Garden is the only designated Registered Park and Garden on the islands, registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953. It was designated as Grade I in 1987, for the extensively planted garden with exotic species. The planted garden began in the early 19th century, together with a lake and woodland works; it was founded by the Lord Proprietor of the islands, Augustus Smith, who first secured a lease of the islands from the Duchy of Cornwall in 1834.
42. **Historic Environment Records (HER) and Archaeological Constraint Areas (ACA)** There are over 2,400 Historic Environment Records on the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record (HER), which includes the above statutory designations plus undesignated sites, findspots and 771 wreck sites. Additionally, in 1995, 174 Archaeological Constraint Areas across the islands were defined, with the intention to serve as a graphic aid to planning officers and others dealing with the management of the environment.
43. **Heritage at Risk (HAR)** The annual Heritage at Risk Registers are produced by Historic England and seek to track the state of any designated heritage asset, including improvements or continued decline. The Isles of Scilly are home to a remarkable historic landscape, in which many hundreds of well-preserved prehistoric monuments survive. By far the majority are cairns and chambered tombs of the early Bronze Age. Yet the beauty of the islands can make sites difficult to manage, with access limited by weather and tides. In 2018, seven remarkable cairns and tombs were added to the Register. The sites have been overwhelmed by scrub, bracken, and invasive species like New Zealand Flax. Incredibly, ten sites were removed from the register thanks to improved working relationships with the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust, and the volunteers of the local Community Archaeology group; these volunteers raise awareness of these features, clear them of vegetation and restore them as features in the landscape, for people to enjoy. A creative partnership between Historic England, the Isles of Scilly Council, and with the Cornwall

² A cairn is a mound of rough stones built as a memorial or landmark, typically on a hilltop or skyline location.

³ A battery is a military defensive structure comprising a fortified emplacement for heavy guns.

Archaeological Unit as the principal contractor, has also played a significant role, as have grants from Historic England and Natural England-funded Countryside Stewardship agreements.

44. **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** As of 2018 there are 26 SSSIs over 25 different sites on the islands, covering a mix of terrain environments. The natural environment designations covering 557.92 hectares of land across both the inhabited and uninhabited islands. The condition and status of each SSSI ranges from favourable condition, such as Big Pool & Browarth Point on St Agnes and Castle Down on Tresco, to unfavourable but recovering status, such as the SSSI on Annet, and Chapel Down on St Martin's (334.43 hectares in a favourable condition and 223.59 hectares in an unfavourable but recovering condition). The main habitats comprise earth heritage, neutral grassland, dwarf shrub heath, standing open water, fen, marsh and swamp, and supralittoral and sublittoral environments.
45. **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)** Special Areas of Conservation are sites that have been adopted by the European Commission Habitats Directive and formally designated by the UK Government. The Isles of Scilly Complex SAC designation covers an area of sea around the island archipelago measuring 26848.62 hectares. It includes waters around the islands as well as six component (terrestrial) SSSIs. The SAC is a European Natura 2000 site, with the primary reasons for protection being the sandbanks that are slightly covered by sea water all the time, the mudflats and sandflats not covered by sea water at low tide, reefs, and shore dock plant species. Grey seals are also included, but they are not a primary reason for site selection. The SAC is also known as a European Marine Site (EMS). The special features (habitats and species) of the SAC are listed below:

(1110) Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time;
(1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide;
(1170) Reefs;
46. **Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)** The Isles of Scilly Marine Conservation Zone are a collection of inshore sites located around the Isles of Scilly, consisting of 11 separate sites covering a total area of 30 km². The sites were designated in 2013 and span a broad range of physical conditions, which support an exceptionally high diversity of habitats and species. The depth of the seabed varies considerably across the 11 areas, extending from mean high water mark to depths of 70 metres in places. The sites encompass a wide variety of marine habitats and their associated species.
47. The importance of the marine environment has been previously recognised through the designation of the above Isles of Scilly Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and 10 of the 11 sites lie within this designated area. The Isles of Scilly MCZ complements the SAC by offering protection to species and habitats that are not protected by the SAC.
48. **Special Protection Area (SPA)** The purpose of a SPA is designed to protect rare or vulnerable bird species (as listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive);

and other regularly occurring migratory bird species. The Isles of Scilly Special Protection Area covers 394 hectares over 26 rocks and islands. The site is designated for the European storm petrel and lesser black-backed gull, as well as a breeding seabird assemblage. SPAs are designated under the European Commission Birds Directive 1979, and are strictly protected.

49. In 2018, the UK Government consulted on a proposed marine extension of the SPA (pSPA) for the Isles of Scilly.⁴ The proposed extended SPA would include the additional qualifying species of the European shag and great black-backed gull. At the time of writing the Local Plan, this has not been formally designated.
50. **Ramsar Site** The Ramsar wetland site on the Isles of Scilly encompasses extensive areas of undisturbed intertidal sandflats and sublittoral sandy sediments. The Ramsar Site overlaps with the SPA site and is protected through the Convention of Wetlands (Ramsar, 1971). Although the sites in and around Scilly are sheltered, the shallow sandy sediments include little mud or silt because the surrounding seas have a low suspended sediment concentration, resulting from the islands' isolation and the presence of fully marine oceanic water. The shallow sublittoral sediments are colonised by the most extensive and best-developed eelgrass *Zostera marina* beds in southern England (Hocking & Tompsett 2001). The Isles of Scilly are surrounded by reefs and rocky islets, some only extending into the shallow sublittoral, others extending well beyond 50 m in depth. The qualifying species of the Isles of Scilly Ramsar Site include the protected species of the European storm petrel and the lesser black-backed gull.
51. **Wildlife and Protected Species** The islands are home to a range of European protected species and UK priority species (BAP). Wildlife includes mammals such as the lesser white-toothed shrew, also known as the Scilly shrew, which is endemic; Nationally and internationally important numbers of breeding seabirds; species of bats, including the common pipistrelle; birds of prey including owls; and waders such as the greenshank and oystercatcher. The islands host globally endangered species of lichens, and nationally scarce rare flowering plants and ferns.

Population and Demography

52. The population of the Isles of Scilly is seasonal, reflecting the influence of tourism. The resident population is around 2,300 but increases to as much as 6,000 in the peak of summer. Much of the population is based on the largest Island, St Mary's with around 1,720. The Off-Islands have smaller resident populations; Tresco 175, St Martin's 136, St Agnes 85 and Bryher 84.
53. The population of the Isles of Scilly peaked in 2008. Any modest future growth proposed with this Local Plan will, in part, return to that peak. The 2017 estimate shows a population of 2259, which is 74 people fewer than the 2,333 population in

⁴ CE04 [Consultation on the Proposed marine expansion of the Isles of Scilly Special Protection Area 2018](#)

2008. This recent decline has fluctuated year on year and diverges from the overall trend since 1991, where there has been a growth of 10 people per year, in contrast with the 2008-2017 average being a loss of 8 people a year. This recent decline has clear and significant implications for the sustainability of the economy and services on the islands, should it continue.

54. Along with the loss of the younger generation (who leave due to educational needs or employment opportunities; and, due to the higher house prices and fewer career opportunities, are less likely to return), retirees migrate to the islands to take advantage of the beauty of the landscape and slower pace of life. This places an increased pressure on local services. The 2016 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) found that the most significant feature of demographic change is the ageing population. Whilst this is not significantly above the ageing rate of the mainland population, it will impact on demand for supported housing, health and local services, and will require adaptations that allow residents to remain in their own home.
55. The working-age population, which refers to those between the ages of 16 and 64, is set to decline from the current 65% of the population to 54% by 2030. This decline may have implications for the availability of people to fulfil key roles within the community and economy.

Island	Population	Area (square miles)
St Mary's	1723 (2011)	2.54
Tresco	175 (2011)	1.15
St Martin's	136 (2011)	0.92
Bryher	84 (2011)	0.74
St Agnes	85 (2011)	0.69
Total	2203 (2011)	6.04
	2300 (Est 2014)	

56. **Ethnic Diversity** The 2011 census recorded a population of 2,203, of which 98.8% were of a white (British, Irish or Other) background, with less than 2% of the islands' population being of Mixed, Asian or Black background. During the same period, the percentage of the overall UK population that identified as white British was 86%, and in the South West this was 95.3%. The South West is one of the least ethnically diverse of the nine regions of England, with the Isles of Scilly being at the extreme end of the diversity spectrum.
57. **Housing** The 2016 SHMA showed there to be 989 households on the Isles of Scilly, of which 412 are owned / shared ownership accommodation, 187 are social rented accommodation, and 390 are privately rented / rent-free. Households on the Isles of Scilly are much more likely to be in privately rented accommodation than in Cornwall or England and Wales, and less likely to own their own home. There are 195 second homes and 190 'other properties', which are assumed to be holiday lets

and time-shares. The SHMA has provided up-to-date information on the housing profile of the islands. Key findings confirmed many of the collective assumptions to be true, including much higher house prices than on the mainland, a lower-wage economy, a low availability of owner-occupied housing, and limited access to affordable housing.

58. **Housing Survey** This was carried out in November 2015, as part of the 2016 SHMA. This survey indicated that 32.5% of the islands' housing stock is owner-occupied (with a mortgage) and 11.1% is owner-occupied (no mortgage); that 30.1% is private rented accommodation and 11% is Council rented accommodation, while only 4.8% is rented by a registered provider; and with 10.5% being accommodation tied to a person's employment. The private rented sector is nearly three times greater than the national average of 13.2%. This group includes those renting from a private landlord or from a friend or relative. 15.8% of households are social housing tenants, which is lower than the national average of 17.7%. Around 44% of households are owner-occupiers, compared to 63.4% nationally. These figures highlight the specialised tenure situation of the islands.
59. **Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)** The IMD 2015 is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas (or neighbourhoods) in England. It can be summarised in a range of ways to describe relative deprivation among local authorities. The IMD ranks every small area in England from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area). It is common to describe how relatively deprived a small area is by saying that it falls among the most deprived 10 per cent, 20 per cent or 30 per cent of small areas in England (although there is no definitive cut-off point at which an area is described as 'deprived').
60. The IMD combines information from seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation. The domains are combined using the following weights: Income Deprivation (22.5%); Employment Deprivation (22.5%); Education, Skills and Training Deprivation (13.5%); Health Deprivation and Disability (13.5%); Crime (9.3%); Barriers to Housing and Services (9.3%) and Living Environment Deprivation (9.3%). In addition to the Index of Multiple Deprivation and the seven domain indices, there are two supplementary indices: the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index and the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index.

For the overall index of deprivation: the Isles of Scilly is ranked 21,789 out of 32,844, placing the islands among the least deprived 40% of areas in England.

Table 1 Source: 2015 Indices of Deprivation⁵

Isles of Scilly	Within Least Deprived				Within Most Deprived			
Income Deprivation	10%							
Employment Deprivation	10%							
Education, Skills and Training		20%						

⁵ CE05 [Indices of Deprivation](#)

Health Deprivation and Disability	10%									
Crime			30%							
Barriers to Housing and Services								30%		
Living Environment Deprivation										10%
Income Deprivation affecting Children	10%									
Income Deprivation affecting Old People		20%								
Overall IMD Score	40%									

Economy and Employment

61. The viability of the islands' economy has long been an important issue. As far back as the 1965 Jellicoe Report, it has been recommended that future developments seek to maintain a viable economy. Successive and subsequent economic surveys have been undertaken to establish whether this is possible and what is required to achieve a viable economy.
62. The latest economic assessment was carried out in 2014. The Island Futures Strategic Economic Plan recognised that Scilly has a high level of skilled trades and professional-level employment, which deliver the year-round and permanent services to the community, including healthcare, education and community support services. The largest business sector on the islands falls within the administrative and support services sector, closely followed by the accommodation and food sector. This reflects the dominance of 'tourism', which remains very significant to the islands' economy.
63. In September 2016, the Council agreed to incorporate the Island Futures Strategic Economic Plan (IFSEP) as part of the wider Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Strategic Economic Plan (CloSSEP). This decision was made to ensure that the wider overarching issues and priorities of the CloSSEP retained a local island focus.

'The future of Scilly is in the hands of the islanders. While there may be support and encouragement from elsewhere, essentially it is for the islands to determine and then deliver the future that they want. Given the exposed and remote position of Scilly and the small population, it may never be possible to have the level of services that are enjoyed on the mainland. However, Scilly has much deeper and more precious qualities that will underpin the success of the islands' economy.'

Making sure that the future is a bright one requires change. That change needs to bring about much closer and more supportive communities who will work together to create a shared future. That change needs to be focussed on the needs of the next and future generations and how they can survive and thrive. That change needs to be open to the ideas, investment and critical mass that new residents can bring - adding to the rich mix that is the Isles of Scilly.'

Isles of Scilly Strategic Economic Plan 2014