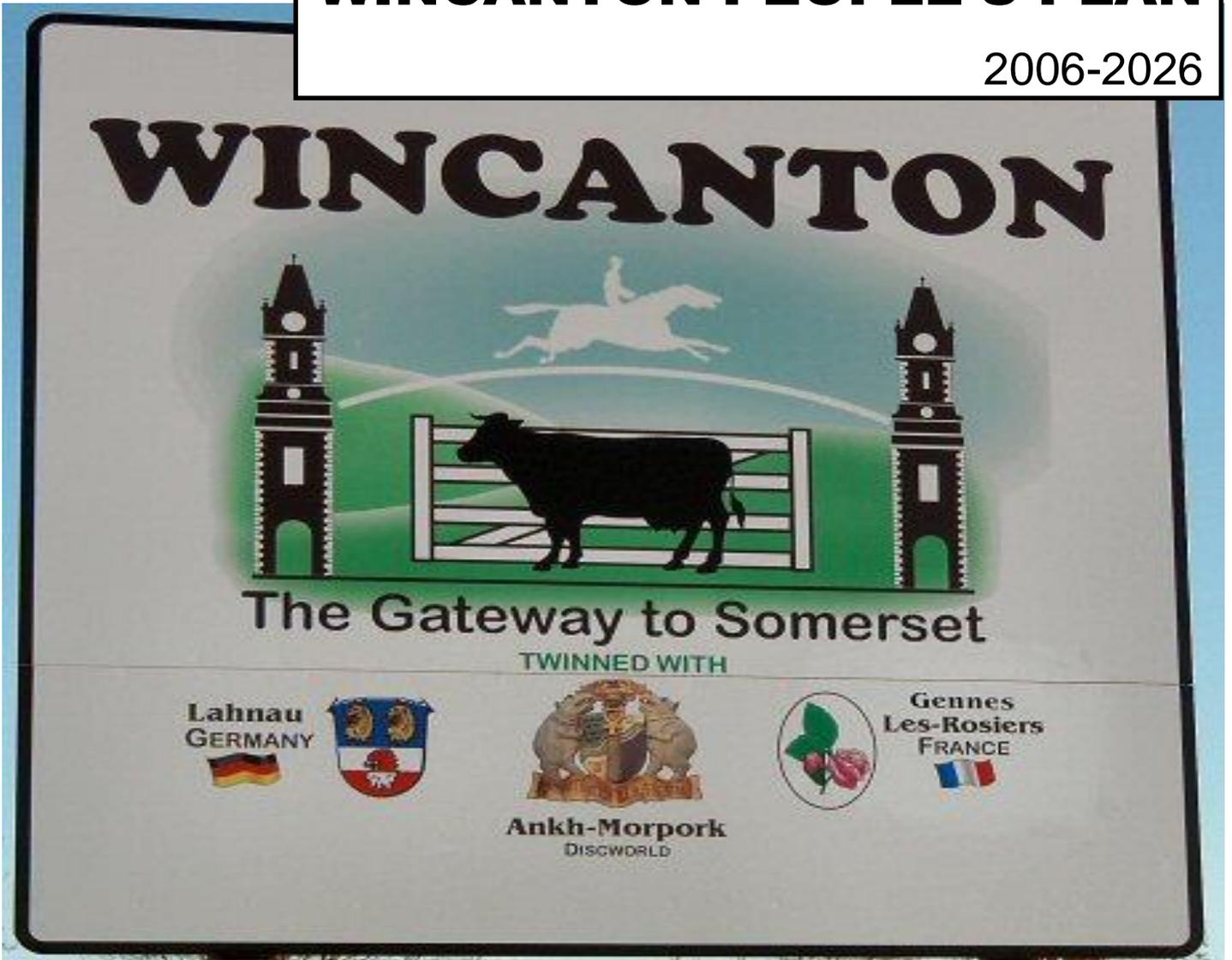
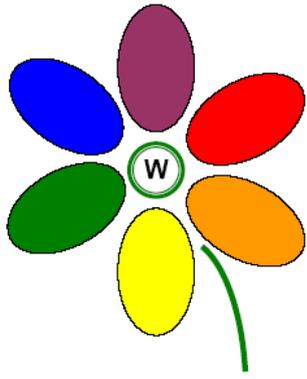




WINCANTON PEOPLE'S PLAN

2006-2026





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Market and Coastal
Towns Association

**Market and Coastal Towns Association,
in particular, Charles Coffin,
Community Facilitator (Somerset and
Wiltshire)**



South Somerset District Council



Wincanton Town Council

The people of Wincanton who have generously given their time and their views in order to make the Wincanton People's Plan their own.

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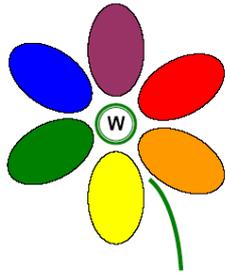
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Our Vision:

Wincanton - a welcoming, thriving, caring community

Our Goals:

- **EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESS** Full employment, well-paid jobs and thriving businesses.
- **SHOPS** A wealth of interesting shops in a bustling High Street.
- **HEALTH** A healthy population with well-resourced healthcare.
- **COMMUNITY** An active, caring and inclusive population with facilities for all.
- **HOUSING** Diverse housing to meet local needs; new build sympathetic to our heritage.
- **TOURISM & LEISURE** A vibrant market town that is a hub for visitors.

FOREWORD



Jonquil Lowe, consultant, and Colin Winder, Chairman, WPP Steering Group
© Muriel Cairns, 2006

The **Wincanton People's Plan** has evolved from an initiative started by a few people looking at the future needs of Wincanton.

It has widened and deepened into a detailed plan to help us ensure that, as we move forward, Wincanton retains the qualities we love, prospers as it grows and uses change as the springboard of opportunity.

Getting to this stage has involved taking stock of where Wincanton is now and asking you, the people of Wincanton and the surrounding area, where you

want us to be in the future. Building on what you have told us, we have been able to draw up a vision for Wincanton and a set of six goals that will make the vision reality. We have worked hard to identify strategies and, again with your help, individual projects that are the priorities to help us meet our goals and vision.

It has taken many months to get to this stage. Along the way, we have tried to get a wide variety of opinions from the people living and working in Wincanton and the residents of the surrounding villages who use the shops, clubs and facilities here. I would like to thank the very many people who willingly spared us a few minutes of their time to offer us their ideas for the future of Wincanton.

We have not stood still while we planned. When opportunity has arisen, we have been quick to implement the emerging projects. As a result, we have a new town sign at the entrance to Wincanton and new festive lights for our community Christmas tree. An initiative to make better use of closed circuit television (CCTV) within the town centre is well under way and we are also looking at a combined CCTV scheme with other local towns that has the support of both the local police and the district council. Steps to create a web-based local directory are also well in hand. But these are just a few of the 28 priority projects at the heart of the Wincanton People's Plan.

We now need to take the other projects forward, and we are looking to involve more people in planning, developing and implementing these projects.

We are looking for people, like you, with a passion for this town and this area.

We are looking for people with interest or involvement in particular issues, such as health, housing, community events, transport, the arts, tourism, business, opportunities for young people, and more.

We are looking for people who are enthused by the thought of an environmentally friendly wholefood supermarket, a community scaffolding project, a joint catering venture to ensure local businesses capitalise on big events that come to town, local fairs and food festivals, small community farms, safe cycle routes to all the schools and for leisure use. These are just some of the diverse projects that make up the Plan.

Drawing up the Wincanton People's Plan has been a stimulating first step. But the journey is just beginning. Making these 28 projects happen is exciting and visionary and we hope that you will want to be part of it.

You may be wondering who 'we' are. Those few people who first started the ball rolling asked others to join a Steering Group. The aim was to have a wide spread of people who would be knowledgeable about, and could speak for, as many sections of our community as possible.

The membership of the Group has varied as we have gone along and we are proud to say that 27 people in total have served on the Group as the Plan has evolved. I am grateful to every one of them. Each has brought their own particular knowledge and skills to bear and the Plan is the product of their work. I would like to offer special thanks to Jonquil Lowe for her expertise in analysing the data collected and producing the written plan and to June Ruthven and Muriel Cairns for their communication and organisation skills which have been invaluable in managing our way through this task.

Most of all, though, I want to say again: thank-you to you. This is truly the Plan of the people of Wincanton and its surrounding villages. You told us what you wanted and you have helped to shape the Plan. Now, let's make the Wincanton People's Plan happen!

**Colin Winder
Chairman, Steering Group
Wincanton People's Plan**

January 2007

Summary of the Wincanton People's Plan

Wincanton - a welcoming, thriving, caring community

Over the next 20 years, we will achieve this vision through the goals and projects set out here that make up the Wincanton People's Plan.

<p>EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESS</p> <p>Our goal: Full employment, well-paid jobs and thriving businesses.</p> <hr/> <p>Key projects that will help us achieve this goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research employment land needs and reasons why businesses don't locate in Wincanton. • Ensure employment land meets identified needs • Use regular business surveys that identify the needs of, and constraints on, local businesses to influence business policies. 	<p>SHOPS</p> <p>Our goal: A wealth of interesting shops in a bustling High Street.</p> <hr/> <p>Key projects that will help us achieve this goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the UK's first completely environmentally friendly wholefood supermarket. • Enhance Wincanton High Street. • Establish a community scaffolding project to help make renovating High Street premises affordable. • Work together with retailers to enhance the shopping experience. 	<p>TOURISM & LEISURE</p> <p>Our goal: A vibrant market town that is a hub for visitors.</p> <hr/> <p>Key projects that will help us achieve this goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand tourist accommodation. • Create new tourist maps. • Establish a joint catering venture. • Encourage local cafes to open longer. • Extend farmers' market to some weekends. • Re-establish a local fair.
<p>HEALTH</p> <p>Our goal: A healthy population with well-resourced healthcare.</p> <hr/> <p>Key projects that will help us achieve this goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research existing health provision to identify gaps. • Promote healthy eating through, for example, themed food festivals. • Establish allotment-plus schemes and 'future farms' to promote well-being and healthy eating. • Use planning gain to expand health facilities as the town grows. 	<p>COMMUNITY</p> <p>Our goal: An active, caring and inclusive population with facilities for all.</p> <hr/> <p>Key projects that will help us achieve this goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a well-lit footpath to the Sports Ground. • Create safe cycle routes. • Enhance the skate park. • Extend CCTV coverage. • Establish regular whole community events. • Expand the Linx Project. • Create a web-based community directory. 	<p>HOUSING</p> <p>Our goal: Diverse housing to meet local needs; new build sympathetic to our heritage.</p> <hr/> <p>Key projects that will help us achieve this goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimise our use of the New Barns Farm key site by locating more of the homes we need there. • Develop a flagship housing project to showcase quality and sustainability. • Increase affordable housing to meet local needs. • Create a quality-design framework.

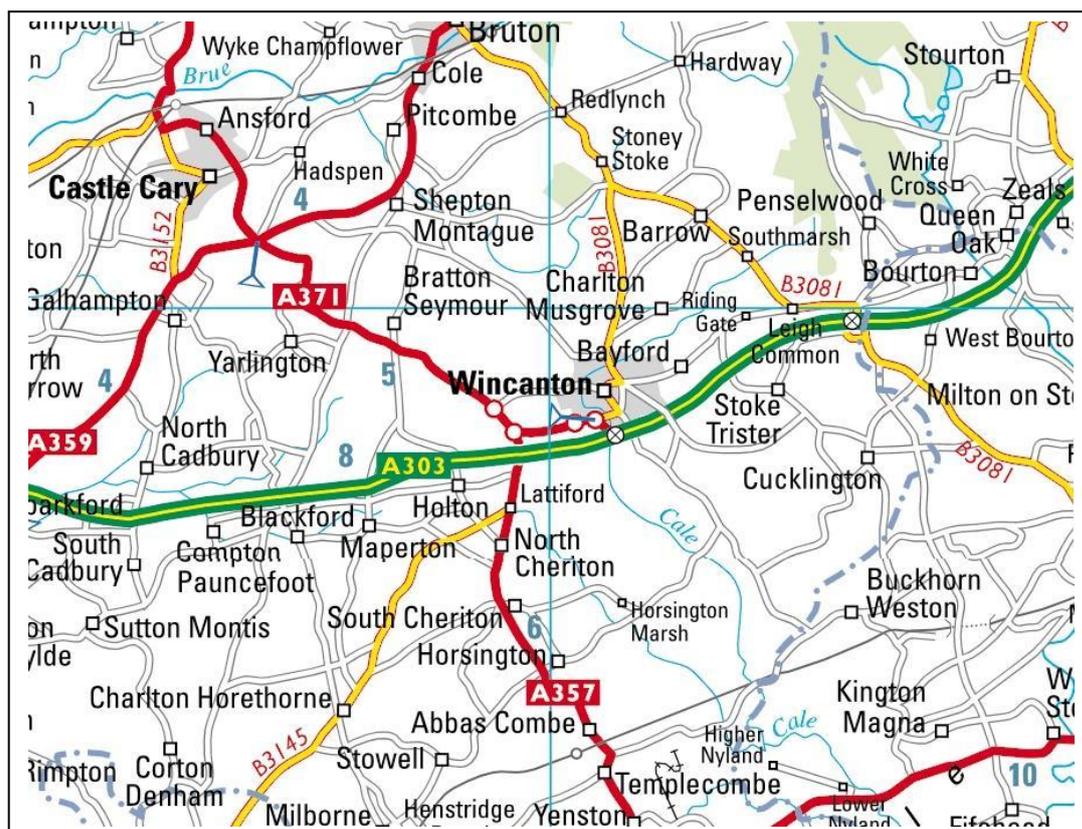
1 Wincanton and community planning

Wincanton - pleasant town on the Cale

Wincanton is a former market town pleasantly situated on a small river, the Cale, and hillsides overlooking the Blackmore Vale. It is immediately adjacent to a strategic road link from London to the West Country. The town's name is well known, having been adopted by a publicly quoted logistics company, Wincanton plc, which originated in the town and also as the home of a nationally renowned horse-racing course.

Despite this fame, Wincanton itself is relatively small with a population of around 4,600 at the last Census. However, it is also a service centre for at least another 3,500 people living in the settlements in the surrounding countryside, in particular, the neighbouring parishes of Abbas and Templecombe, Bayford, Bratton Seymour, Charlton Musgrove, Cucklington, Holton, Horsington, North Cheriton, Penselwood, South Cheriton and Stoke Trister.

Wincanton and the surrounding settlements



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Why does Wincanton need a community plan?

In any community, most people want to live in a safe, attractive, friendly environment, free from petty crime and with ready access to work, shops, healthcare, leisure and other facilities. We could just trust to luck and hope that our community delivers these broad ideals.

Alternatively, we can take the initiative and shape our towns and villages to meet the goals that we choose. It is tempting to set goals for everything, because everything seems important. But resources are scarce, so communities need to prioritise their aspirations.

A community plan takes stock of where a community is today, sets out where it wants to be in future and identifies strategies to make that future happen.

Wincanton's community plan is called the Wincanton People's Plan. It is being built from the grass roots up by the people of Wincanton and its surrounding villages through a process called the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative.

The Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTi)

The MCTi is a government programme that aims to help market towns - like Wincanton - and coastal towns, together with their surrounding communities, to identify priorities and implement a plan to shape their future.

The MCTi process is summarised in the chart opposite and is based on the principles set out in the Box below.

The MCTi principles

- The regeneration of communities should come from within those communities and be shaped by local people.
- Regeneration should be a sustainable process.
- Sustainable regeneration must draw on all aspects of community life so as to integrate economic, social, environmental and cultural opportunities and potential.
- Regeneration is a long-term process and cannot be rushed.
- Effective regeneration requires partnerships to be created between communities, charities, public agencies and private business, but always led by local people.

Source: Alan Caldwell Associates, 2004, *Planning for your community. A sourcebook*, Taunton, Market & Coastal Towns Association.

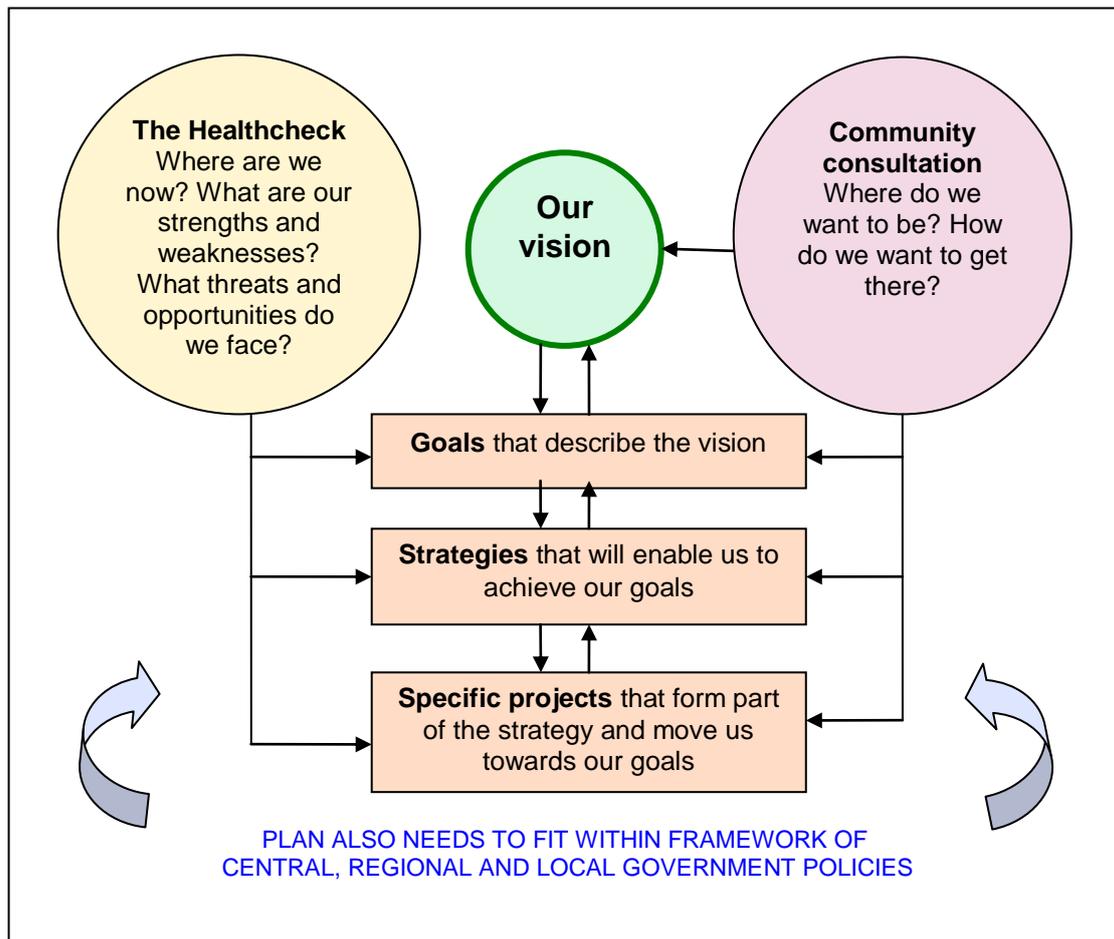
A plan for Wincanton

This is how the community is building Wincanton's plan:

- **The Healthcheck.** Taking stock of Wincanton today. People from Wincanton and its villages volunteered to join a Steering Group. This group investigated every aspect of Wincanton today. The results were published in the Healthcheck Report in January 2006
- **The vision.** The Steering Group organised extensive community consultations (see Annex A) to find out where you want Wincanton to be in future. Your views enabled the Steering Group to set out Wincanton's vision and goals for the next 20 years (see Chapter 2)

Key findings of the Healthcheck are reproduced in Chapters 3 and 4 of this document. You can get a copy of the full Healthcheck Report from www.wincantontowncouncil.co.uk or by calling 01963 31693

The MCTi process





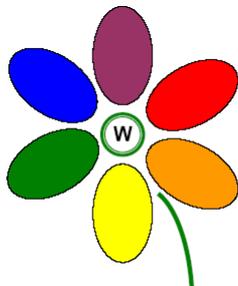
Consulting the community © Muriel Cairns, 2005

- **The plan.** Using the Healthcheck data and the results of community consultation, and working within the framework of wider government and local authority policies, such as protecting the environment, the Steering Group developed the strategies and specific projects that make the plan presented in the chapters which follow
- **Delivering the plan.** The next step is to make the projects identified in this plan happen. The projects are varied and exciting and we hope you will want to get involved in the ones that most interest you.

Quick wins

The Market and Coastal Towns Association (MCTA) has provided funding to Wincanton to develop this plan for our future. The MCTA has also provided funding for some 'quick wins'. These are small projects that we can see happening fairly quickly and help us on our way towards our goals. See pages 32 and 44 for details of our quick wins so far.

2 Our vision for Wincanton by 2026



Our Vision:

Wincanton - a **welcoming, thriving, caring** community

Our Goals:

- **EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESS** Full employment, well-paid jobs and thriving businesses.
- **SHOPS** A wealth of interesting shops in a bustling High Street.
- **HEALTH** A healthy population with well-resourced healthcare.
- **COMMUNITY** An active, caring and inclusive population with facilities for all.
- **HOUSING** Diverse housing to meet local needs; new build sympathetic to our heritage.
- **TOURISM & LEISURE** A vibrant market town that is a hub for visitors.

How the vision statement and goals were created

At the heart of the vision statement and goals is what you, the community, told the Steering Group through the community consultations.

The Steering Group wanted the vision statement to be attractive and visual. It chose the flower logo to represent Wincanton's rural nature and as a symbol of growth and renewal. The rainbow colours represent the diversity of people, opportunities and facilities that characterise the town. The 'W' represents Wincanton and its villages at the heart of our community's future.

The vision statement and the goals

Wincanton's vision and goals are set out on the previous page. The vision is that by 2026, Wincanton will be **a welcoming, thriving, caring community**. For this to happen, each of the goals must be met. In more detail, the goals mean:

Employment & business. Everyone who wants to work should be able to find work locally. The jobs should be well paid. Local businesses should be thriving, in order both to provide jobs and to make good returns for their owners.

Shops. Wincanton High Street should offer a wide range of interesting shops that meet local needs and attract visitors. The shopping area should be busy, thriving and vibrant - a fun place to be.

Health. The population of Wincanton and the surrounding area should enjoy good standards of health. When people do fall ill, well-resourced local healthcare facilities should be quickly and efficiently available.

Community. The community should be inclusive, caring and supportive, so that no-one needs to feel isolated or abandoned, but respecting individual rights to privacy. There should be a positive attitude with people taking an interest in the well-being of each other and the community as a whole. There should be a diverse range of cultural, educational, sporting and other facilities and activities available to meet the interests of people of all ages.

Housing. Everyone who wants to live in Wincanton should be able to do so. In particular, our young people should not be forced to leave because they can't afford a home here. This means having enough housing at affordable prices. We want our homes and other buildings to be good quality and in keeping with the historical heritage of our town.

Tourism & leisure. Wincanton sits in the heart of beautiful countryside and is surrounded by a wealth of tourist attractions. We want tourists and other visitors to choose Wincanton as their place to stay because of its welcoming, stimulating atmosphere and wealth of local facilities.

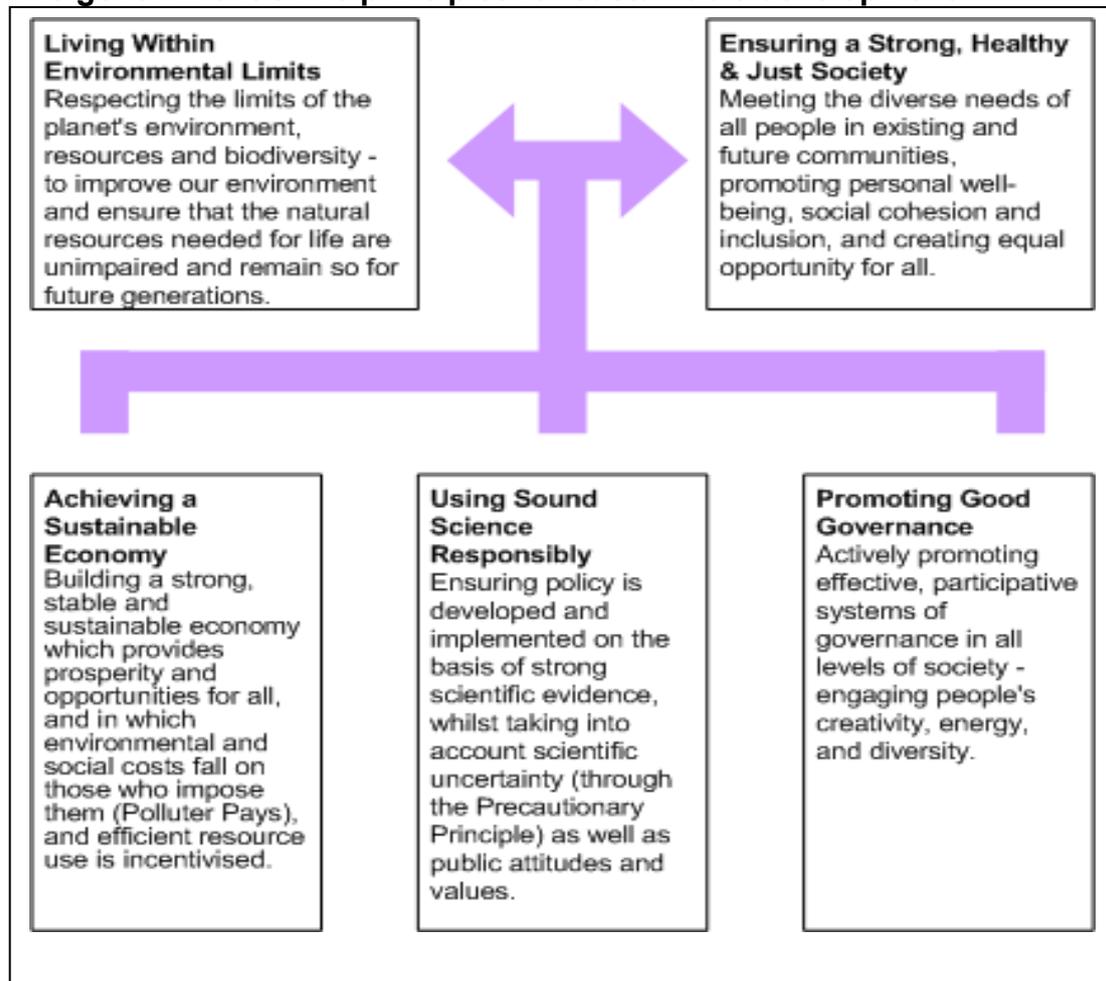
These goals and how we can achieve them are elaborated in Chapters 3 to 5.

Other elements that will shape our future

Wincanton is our local community but we are part of larger communities too: South Somerset, the county of Somerset, the South-West Region, the country as a whole and even the world community. Whatever goals we set for ourselves need to be in harmony with the aims and policies of these wider communities. There is a huge number of such policies but the key ones that provide a framework for the Wincanton People’s Plan are:

- **The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy.** This sets out a framework for achieving quality of life now without compromising the quality of life of future generations. The strategy is underpinned by five principles as shown in the diagram below and four priorities. The priorities are: sustainable consumption and production; tackling climate change; natural resource protection; and sustainable communities

The government’s five principles for sustainable development



Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2005, *Securing the future. Delivering UK sustainable development strategy*, Cm 6467, London, The Stationery Office, page 16.

- **Regional Economic Strategy for South-West England** and the **Regional Sustainable Development Framework**. The Strategy sets three high-level goals: successful and competitive business, strong and inclusive communities, and an effective and confident region. To deliver these goals it sets out eleven priority measures:
 - support business productivity
 - encourage new enterprise
 - deliver skills for the economy
 - compete in the global economy
 - promote innovation
 - improve participation in the economy
 - regenerate the most disadvantaged areas
 - plan sustainable and successful communities
 - improve transport networks
 - promote and enhance what is best about the region
 - improve leadership, influence and partnership.

- **Somerset Local Area Agreement**. This is a Somerset-wide three-year strategy addressing six-themed areas:
 - **children and young people**. Improve emotional, physical and mental health. Promote healthier and more enjoyable lifestyles. Improve expectations, aspirations and life chances for the most vulnerable
 - **healthier communities**. Promote and improve health and lifestyles. Reduce health inequalities. Increase capability of Somerset organisations to have an impact on health
 - **older people**. Prevent dependency, promote social participation, offer greater choice and control
 - **economic development and enterprise**. Increase investment and competitiveness. Increase growth and sustainability of small businesses. More sustainable rural economy. Reduce ‘worklessness’ and increase skills
 - **safer communities**. Reduce crime, harm caused by illegal drugs, reduce fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
 - **stronger communities**. Create a thriving and vibrant voluntary and community sector. Give local people greater influence over local issues. Maximise take up of specific welfare benefits. Maximise opportunities to meet affordable housing needs.

- **Local Plan and Local Development Framework**. The Local Development Framework is the new approach to development which will replace the previous South Somerset Local Plan. The Framework will consist of a portfolio of documents setting out aims and policies on land usage and development as they relate to housing, employment, leisure, retail, transport, heritage and so on. In the meantime, the South Somerset Local Plan as adopted in April 2006 remains the key development document.

3 Achieving our goals: business and economy

Our goals

Three of Wincanton's goals directly relate to its business sector and local economy:

- **EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESS** Full employment, well-paid jobs and thriving businesses
- **SHOPS** A wealth of interesting shops in a bustling High Street
- **TOURISM & LEISURE** A vibrant market town that is a hub for visitors.

The goal for housing is also relevant but is considered in Chapter 3 which looks at social and community themes.

Employment and business

Where are we now?

The Healthcheck found that employment in Wincanton is high with over two-thirds of adults aged 16 to 74 in work at the time of the 2001 Census and only 1.8 per cent classified as unemployed.

But a relatively high proportion of jobs in Wincanton are relatively low-paid. Average earnings for a man in Wincanton are just £21,211, compared with £24,231 for South Somerset and over £30,000 for Britain as a whole. The average for a woman is £15,506 compared with £19,180 for South Somerset and £21,730 for Britain. Several factors contribute to our low earnings:

- a relatively high proportion of the workforce is in manual, routine and semi-routine jobs
- a low proportion is in professional and managerial jobs
- a quarter of working women are in part-time work which, apart from delivering lower earnings because of fewer hours worked, tends also to be concentrated in low-paid jobs.

Key findings of the Healthcheck are summarised in this section. For full details, see the Healthcheck Report, available from www.wincantontowncouncil.co.uk or by calling 01963 31693

Our most important employment sectors are: wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles and manufacturing. We have a few big employers, such as Wincanton plc, The Natural Selection Company and Watchbell, but are not overly dependent on any one single employer.

Over half of Wincanton residents work locally. The rest commute out of Wincanton, but a larger number of people come into Wincanton to work. In other words we have more jobs than there are local workers.

We have at least 300 private sector businesses. Many are

local firms, some of which - like Rochford - have grown from small beginnings into significant UK concerns. A fifth of our private sector businesses moved to Wincanton from elsewhere outside Somerset, so we have a good past record of attracting businesses to our town.

Wincanton has a lot of good features that might attract businesses: high quality of life, good trunk road links to major destinations via the A303 (and indirectly via the M5), lack of congestion, good rail services nearby, competitive land prices, competitive wages, and conference facilities (at Wincanton Racecourse and the Holbrook House Hotel).

But Somerset as a whole, including Wincanton, suffers from a poor internal road network (especially for us, the North-South links), lack of grant aid and lack of higher education provision. It is perceived as an inaccessible county with a slow-paced, rural image.



Rochford: a growing local firm © JTL Financial Research, 2006.

Wincanton’s employment and business SWOT [1]

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High employment • Large base of businesses • No over-dependence on single sector or employer • Competitive land prices • Low wages which are therefore relatively competitive from employers’ point of view • Good trunk road links • Good rail services nearby • Lack of congestion • Conference facilities • Good lifestyle 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low earnings • Lack of suitable business premises and employment development land • Low skills of working population - not helped by educational weaknesses including lack of local sixth form and no higher education facilities • Poor internal road network, especially North-South routes • Lack of grants • Area may be perceived as slow and rural
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population - expands markets and labour supply • Ageing population - new markets, if wealthy incomers could increase average disposable income • Extensive housing development taking place and planned - expands markets and supply of labour 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing population - shifts demand for existing products, may squeeze out economically active population, might reduce average disposable income • Uncertain future for farming, especially dairy farming • Extensive housing development taking place and planned - could squeeze out existing and new employment land

[1] SWOT = Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Research shows that over half of firms that relocate cite land and premises as being the key factor. A third give highest priority to transport and infrastructure. Only a fifth say lifestyle issues (such as quality of environment) are most important.

Wincanton falls down on employment land and premises. Only 4 per cent of our existing businesses thought availability was good and not much extra land is earmarked for future employment. So we could be missing out on attracting larger businesses to Wincanton and may risk losing our existing businesses when they grow too big for their current sites.

In recent times, Wincanton has also lost employment land (for example, the two former Rochford sites in Station Road and the Cale House East site vacated by Wincanton plc) when businesses have relocated and the vacant land has been turned into housing.

Community consultation

Residents of Wincanton and the surrounding area made a range of suggestions concerning business and employment:

- **undertake research.** They felt more information was needed about why businesses fail, what is special about other towns and why they succeed, and the needs and aspirations of existing businesses
- **land and premises.** Ensure there is sufficient employment land for a variety of business types, create sufficient industrial land to keep prices competitive, consider creating more small manufacturing units
- **increase earnings.** Try to attract light engineering (especially ICT, aviation and electronics) rather than heavy industry, encourage more high tech and value-added employment, find a niche within the economy, exploit the surrounding wealthy catchment area
- **encourage businesses to move or start up here.** Create incentives to locate here, consider a 'business incubation' cluster with special support
- **marketing.** Provide support for the local Chamber of Trade to market the town, and form partnerships with other towns or the county as a whole to market Wincanton as part of a larger area
- **other.** Link job opportunities to young people - maybe with a link to food industry, develop a strategy for increasing the impact of Wincanton Racecourse on local businesses, develop the monthly farmers' market into a more regular event, consider performing arts as an economic driver.



Community Consultation © Muriel Cairns, 2006

Relevant framework policies

Wincanton needs to work within the framework of government and regional policies on sustainable development.

The primary aim is to enable people today to benefit from economic growth but without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. At a practical level this involves: choosing locations for businesses and employment that minimise travel; requiring and encouraging businesses to use resources efficiently - for example, through energy-efficient premises and resource-efficient processes; and ensuring that business development does not adversely impact on the surrounding environment.

The Somerset Local Area Agreement sets outcomes for economic development and enterprise. These include increasing workforce skills levels, promoting growth and productivity of small businesses, and encouraging e-adoption by small businesses.

The South Somerset District Council Local Plan is also relevant, especially Chapter 9 on employment and tourism. Policies include:

- **ME2.** This allocates employment land for new development. There are two sites to serve Wincanton and its surrounding area (2.1 hectares on the New Barns Farm key site and 0.9 hectares at Lawrence Hill)
- **ME3.** This enables other sites within the development area of Wincanton and most of the surrounding villages to be used for employment provided the use is of an appropriate scale. Scale will take into account availability of public transport and access for locally resident workers
- **ME4.** Small scale expansion of existing businesses outside development areas may be allowed provided need is demonstrated
- **ME5.** Well-conceived farm diversification can be permitted
- **ME6.** Alternative use (such as residential development) of existing employment land should not be permitted if it would adversely affect employment opportunities unless there is an overriding need or significant environmental benefit.

Possible business and employment strategies

Pulling together the evidence from the Healthcheck, the community views and the wider framework policies above, three strategic areas emerge as the foundation of this part of the Wincanton People's Plan as shown overleaf.

Strategies for business and employment

Retention of existing businesses	Attracting new businesses	Building on existing businesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular business surveys (say, every two years) to assess constraints and needs. • Ensure available employment land is likely to meet needs of existing growing businesses as well as businesses newly moving into area. • Ensure existing businesses are aware of all available grants and rate reliefs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide which business sectors/types to attract to Wincanton, with a view to increasing average earnings and starting young people on careers. • Assess needs of those businesses and work on ensuring Wincanton meets those needs. • Market Wincanton to those business sectors, where appropriate forming alliances with other towns, districts or county as a whole. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and encourage growth and/or new business linked to activities of Wincanton Racecourse (see also Tourism below). • Consider whether establishment of edge-of-town retail activities can be exploited to stimulate further retail growth (see also Shops below).

Specific projects

Working from the broad strategies, the Steering Group identified the following specific projects for employment and business as the top priorities for the next five years:

B1. Research employment land needs and reasons why businesses don't locate in Wincanton.

- **The aim** is to gather information that can then be used to make Wincanton a sought-after business location.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to include: recording the location and attributes of existing employment land available locally; surveying businesses that are already located here or have moved away; reviewing existing economic studies and commissioning new ones as appropriate; and gathering information about businesses that show an interest in locating here but then don't go ahead.
- **Key partners** in this project are likely to be South West Regional Development Agency, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce, local businesses and local developers.

B2. Ensure employment land meets identified needs.

- **The aim** is to ensure that Wincanton provides the quantity and variety of local jobs to meet the local population's needs and in particular to provide work and career opportunities for our young people. Informed by project B1 above, this will include ensuring that the supply of business land and premises matches demand in terms of location and attributes, and using effective lobbying to promote a consistent approach to planning applications.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to include surveying Wincanton and the surrounding settlements to identify suitable sites for different types of business, engaging with the local planning process and marketing the availability of sites to appropriate business sectors.
- **Key partners** in this project are likely to be South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce, local and other businesses and developers.

B3. Conduct business surveys at two-yearly intervals.

- **The aim** is to assess the needs of businesses (in addition to land requirements) and the constraints on business growth.
- **What's involved?** This project involves identifying appropriate survey methods, conducting surveys, analysing the results and ensuring results are effectively used to influence business-related policies.
- **Key partners** in this project are likely to be South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce and local businesses.

Shops

Where are we now?

The main retail area of Wincanton is centred in and around the High Street. There is a diverse range of small, independent retailers operating out of 57 shops and 37 other commercial premises. Important local shops include a post office and two pharmacies. There are no outlets of multiple chain stores.

The High Street has shrunk slightly over the past three years, with no new retail properties being created, five shops being converted from retail to other commercial use and three converted from retail to residential use. At the time of the Healthcheck, there were four vacant shops.

Key findings of the Healthcheck are summarised in this section. For full details, see the Healthcheck Report, available from www.wincantontowncouncil.co.uk or by calling 01963 31693



Wincanton Post Office © Elaine Fraser, 2006.

The High Street also hosts key community services, including the health centre, library and police station. These help to draw potential shoppers into the town centre.

As a shopping centre, the High Street area benefits from attractive buildings but relatively little planting. There is a legacy of unattractive lighting, from the days when the High Street was part of the trunk road to the West, and lots of signs, some of which are no longer needed.

Recently, some areas of paving have been enhanced. Some pavements (particularly near the HSBC Bank) are narrow. The town centre suffers from petty vandalism which results in frequently broken shop windows.

The town centre is within walking or cycling distance for most Wincanton residents, but has a higher level of pedestrian and cycling accidents than the norm for South Somerset. At the time of writing, shoppers benefit from free car parking.

Wincanton has an edge-of-town supermarket (Morrison's) with its own car park. A planning application to build a Lidl discount store next door was refused by the local planning authority, on the grounds that, contrary to planning policy, the proposed development was outside the existing town centre, need had not been established and it could harm the vitality and viability of Wincanton town centre.

A farmers' market is held on the first Friday of every month in Wincanton Memorial Hall. A country market, selling produce, plants and crafts, is held every Friday. So Friday mornings tend to be busy in the High Street.

Wincanton's shops SWOT [1]

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good range of shops • Good range of services in the town • Attractive buildings • Free parking • Community accessible transport scheme 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low earnings • Lack of planting and poor street furniture in High Street • Poor range of services in villages • High level of pedestrian and bicycle accidents • High level of criminal damage
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population • Ageing population • Extensive housing development taking place and planned 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population • Ageing population • Possible introduction of parking charges

[1] SWOT = Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Of the immediately surrounding villages, only two, Templecombe and Henstridge, have a food shop. Both also have their own post offices, as does Bayford.

Residents of surrounding villages not on a regular commercial bus route are eligible to use a community access transport (CAT) scheme, based in Wincanton to get into the town for shopping and other purposes. Wincanton residents with a disability are also eligible to use the CAT buses.

Community consultation

There were frequent comments about business rates being too high to be affordable out of the turnover of small shops and the unfairness of the High Street being treated as prime retail space as if it were in a larger town. There was also a widespread feeling that it was unfair for small High Street retailers to have to compete with the edge-of-town supermarket. Other comments addressed a variety of themes:

- **range of shops and shopping opportunities.** Need to encourage and support more speciality shops and more independent quality shops. The farmers' market could be developed into a more regular event. Strategies should be developed to increase the impact of Wincanton Racecourse on local businesses, including its shops
- **parking and access.** The community is strongly in favour of Wincanton retaining its free parking to support trade and ensure access to the town centre for older and less mobile residents. Partial pedestrianisation of the High Street would improve access to shops

- **attracting new consumers.** It was suggested that a broader mix of housing is required to ensure a good spending range for local shops. Local retailers need to exploit the surrounding wealthy catchment area
- **understanding shoppers' needs.** A shoppers survey was suggested
- **marketing.** Local retailers should cooperate to identify and market Wincanton's unique selling point. A 'buy local' campaign should be considered to help local retailers.

Relevant framework policies

Wincanton needs to work within the framework of central government and regional policies on sustainable development, as outlined on pages 13-14.

Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6) sets out central government's approach to promoting vital and viable town centres. It recommends accommodating growth through more efficient use of land and buildings within existing town centres and increasing the density of development. Town centres should provide high-quality and safe environments.

PPS6 requires a sequential approach to retail and related development with town centre sites being considered in preference to edge-of-centre sites and out-of-centre sites being the last resort. Both edge-of-centre and out-of-centre sites should have good connections to the town centre.

Chapter 8 of the SSDC Local Plan sets out policies on town centres and shopping. Statements and policies to note include:

- **towns as main location for services.** Wincanton, along with Yeovil, Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster is identified as a town and as such is to be the focus for services and new development
- **MC1.** Change of use from retail to non-retail on ground floors within primary shopping areas will not be allowed if it undermines the dominant retail function of the area
- **MC2.** New shopping proposals will be considered according to the sequential approach outlined in PPS6
- **MC3.** Where non-town centre development is approved, the planning authority can impose conditions to prevent the inclusion, or later addition, of post offices or pharmacies that would adversely affect other more easily available facilities (such as those in the town centre).

Wincanton is also affected by SSDC proposals to introduce car parking charges throughout the district.

Possible shops strategies

Based on the findings of the Healthcheck and the community consultation, the broad strategies outlined below could help us achieve our Shops goal.

Strategies for shops

To support the existing High Street	To profit from edge-of-town shopping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure local retailers are aware of all grants and rates reliefs available. • Support local retailers and/or Chamber of Trade in marketing Wincanton to consumers as a place to shop and to specialist retailers as a place to locate. • Retain adequate free car parking. • As town grows, try to attract at least one multiple chain assuming appropriate premises are available or can be developed. • Consider improvements to the shopping environment through, for example, planting, street furniture, and street art and performance. • Build on existing events, such as farmers' market to develop a Wincanton 'shopping experience'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider whether it would be beneficial to attract further retailers to edge-of-town sites adjacent to Morrison's and (if it goes ahead) Lidl. • Consider how edge-of-town shoppers can be drawn into the High Street shopping area, for example through free transport or an attractive walking route.

Specific projects

Drawing from the strategies, the Steering Group identified the following priority projects for the next five years for shops:

S1. Create the UK's first completely environmentally friendly wholefood supermarket.

- **The aim** is to create a unique selling point for Wincanton as a shopping destination. The goods sold would address healthy living and many could be locally sourced. But the building itself would use sustainable straw-build technology and be energy self-sufficient (through using, say, solar and wind power). In this way, the project targets not just the shops goal but also health and the environmental framework. The unusual nature of the project is also expected to attract visitors to the town and so incidentally to address the tourism goal. The project also addresses the business and employment goal both during its construction and when up and running.

- **What's involved?** The project is likely to involve identifying a suitable site, physical design, business skills, financing, engaging with the planning system, developing appropriate sustainable building skills and other skills locally.
- **Key partners** in this project are likely to be South West Regional Development Agency, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council, local farmers and food producers, local business people and environmental bodies.

S2. Enhance Wincanton High Street.

- **The aim** is to make Wincanton shopping centre an attractive location and enjoyable place to be.
- **What's involved?** It is likely to involve looking at ways to make the town centre more pedestrian friendly, addressing issues around planting, railings, adequate free parking, minimising yellow lines and resurfacing the High Street. (Some progress on resurfacing the High Street has already been initiated with improvements expected in 2007.)
- **Key partners** in this project are likely to be Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce and local businesses.

S3. Establish a community scaffolding project to help make renovating High Street premises affordable.

- **The aim.** The appearance of buildings in the High Street has a huge impact on the attractiveness of the town centre as a whole. While grants are from time to time available to help with the cost of renovation and repairs, owners must usually pay a large part of the cost. This project aims to reduce the cost by having community-owned (or leased) scaffolding that would be available either free or at a discounted rate.
- **What's involved?** The project is likely to involve business skills, financing and procurement.
- **Key partners** in this project are likely to be Wincanton Town Council, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce and High Street businesses and residents.

S4. Work together with retailers to enhance the shopping experience.

- **The aim.** High Street business owners could share skills and experience in presenting their businesses to the public (for example, through marketing, window-dressing, and so on) to give the High Street an integrated, marketing appearance. Businesses could also join together in staging and marketing promotional events, such as an annual food fair, pre-Christmas shopping, and so on, to draw shoppers into the town. Such events could also simultaneously address the health, community and tourism and leisure goals. To enable the High Street to benefit from edge-of-town shoppers, consider pony-and-trap rides - say, during the summer months - from the supermarket to the High Street.

- **What's involved?** These related projects are likely to involve establishing networking between local businesses, organising events and marketing.
- **Key partners** are likely to be Wincanton Chamber of Commerce, High Street and other local businesses, Wincanton Town Council, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, Somerset Food Links.

Tourism and leisure

Where are we now?

Wincanton has no natural or historic features of its own that would act as a major tourist draw and it is 40 miles from the nearest coast. However it is surrounded by a wealth of major tourist attractions including:

- **National Trust properties.** Stourhead, Montacute, Barrington Court, Lytes Cary, Tintinhull, and others
- **Other historic properties.** For example, Sherborne Castles, Sherborne Abbey, Longleat House and Safari Park
- **Museums.** Yeovilton Air Museum, Haynes Motor Museum.

There are several major events that take place close to Wincanton, including the Bath & West Show, Yeovilton Airday, Gillingham & Shaftesbury Show, Glastonbury Festival and Stourhead Fête Champêtre.



A centre for tourism © Amanda White, 2006.

Wincanton is an attractive town set on a hillside with beautiful views. The town is easily accessible via the A303 and offers free parking. It has a good range of facilities that tourists could use, including sports centre with dry-side activities and swimming pool, sports grounds including tennis courts and golf course. There is a good choice of pubs many of which serve food.

Key findings of the Healthcheck are summarised in this section. For full details, see the Healthcheck Report, available from www.wincantontowncouncil.co.uk or by calling 01963 31693

The town lacks evening entertainment (as it has no *regular* cinema, theatre or musical events).

A tourist information centre is located at the Town Hall. A new Wincanton tourist guide has recently been published.

Wincanton hosts a few events that draw large numbers of visitors to the town for a short period. These are Discworld® weekends, Wincanton Racecourse race meetings and the annual Carnival.

Tourist accommodation in Wincanton and the immediately surrounding area is generally insufficient to meet demand. The Healthcheck found there were 50 hotel and bed-&-breakfast beds plus a camping and caravan site.

Community consultation

The community suggested that Wincanton should do more to exploit travellers between London and the South West. It should improve rail and bus links, in particular addressing the way that bus services currently do not mesh with train times.

It was widely agreed that Wincanton needs to attract more tourists, particularly 'quality' tourism, perhaps by hosting events linked to local food or heritage.

There should be a concerted marketing campaign in conjunction with other South West towns.

Wincanton’s tourism SWOT [1]

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive built environment • Attractive location with views over scenic countryside • Easy access by road • Free parking • Close to rail stations • Proximity to major tourist attractions • Proximity to major events • Good range of services in the town • Excellent sports facilities • Lots of footpaths • Tourist Information Centre 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No tourist attractions in town itself • Insufficient tourist accommodation • Poor public transport links from rail stations • Lack of public transport links to tourist attractions • No direct link to national trails and cycle routes • Lack of circular walks • Lack of evening entertainment
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing population. Young retired tend to take more holidays and short breaks than working population 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible introduction of parking charges

[1] SWOT = Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Relevant framework policies

Wincanton needs to work within the framework of central government and regional policies on sustainable development (see pages 13-14).

Chapter 9 of the SSDC (draft) Local Plan sets out statements and policies concerning sustainable tourism. The focus is on tourism which does not damage our heritage or natural environment or add to traffic congestion. The Local Plan states that accommodation should be located in towns, but (policy ME10) new or improved tourist accommodation outside development limits - for example, in redundant farm buildings - will be allowed provided its scale is consistent with its rural location. Camping and caravan sites with five units or less do not require planning permission.

Tourism may be affected by SSDC proposals to introduce parking charges.

Possible tourism strategies

The strategies below can help Wincanton achieve its tourism goal.

Strategies for tourism

To attract tourists	To improve tourist facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on major events (eg Bath & West Show, Yeovilton Airday, race meetings and Discworld®). For example, market visitor packages with accommodation, transport to events and picnics showing off local foods included. • Focus on major attractions (eg National Trust properties, Glastonbury). For example, market packages with accommodation, transport to attractions, meal and entrance fees included. Or offer tourists staying in Wincanton ‘passport’ to local attractions. • Consider developing own major event(s), for example, relating to food. Build on success of Sports Ground in attracting major events (such as 2006 Honda Goldwing Treffen). • Market Wincanton jointly with other towns, such as Castle Cary and Bruton (‘Three Towns Breaks’) or as part of wider promotion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase tourist accommodation - promote expansion of B&B, support any planning applications for hotels or tourist cottages, ensure ready access to information for local people wishing to set up B&B or small campsites. • Ensure town is visually attractive to tourists through planting, street furniture, and so on. • Ensure visitor parking is sufficient and either free or cost not a deterrent. • Ensure facilities likely to be used by tourists, such as Wincanton Museum, are well publicised. This could be achieved, for example, through a visitor pack issued to all hotels, bed-&-breakfasts, campsites and available from tourist information centre, library, and so on. • Increase facilities available for tourists, for example, circular walking routes, cycle routes, craft markets, regular evening entertainment during the summer.

Specific projects

The Steering Group identified the following projects as the top priorities for the next five years for tourism and leisure.

T1. Expand tourist accommodation.

- **The aim.** This is seen as urgent to meet existing excess demand and also a prerequisite to expanding the tourist trade. The most immediate solution would be to encourage more local residents to offer bed-and-breakfast (B&B) accommodation. This could be targeted by producing an information leaflet making residents aware of what’s involved and the tax breaks on offer and expanding a local register of B&B premises.

- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve research, writing and design, publication skills, distribution, administration and marketing.
- **Key partners** are likely to be existing Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, B&B businesses, Wincanton Town Council and local information distribution networks

T2. Guide tourists with maps in the car parks.

- **The aim** is to promote local attractions (such as the museum) and provide an advertising opportunity for local businesses who wish particularly to attract tourists.
- **What's involved?** The project is likely to involve artistic/mapping skills or obtaining copyrights, selling advertising space, financing, procurement, liaison with car park owners and installation.
- **Key partners** are likely to be Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council and local businesses.

T3. Establish a joint catering venture so local businesses profit from local events.

- **The aim** is to encourage visitors to events (such as the Honda Goldwing Treffen in 2006) to buy food and drink, in particular, from local businesses. A way of doing this would be for local businesses to organise a joint catering venture that could respond to events.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve establishing networking between local businesses and ensuring businesses are aware of forthcoming events.
- **Key partners** are likely to be Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce and local businesses.

T4. Encourage local cafes to extend their opening hours.

- **The aim.** There is anecdotal evidence that visitors to the town often cannot find the refreshments they seek, especially in the late afternoon and evenings.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve gathering evidence of unmet demand (for example, through surveys of tourists and coach companies, local Tourist Information Centre feedback, B&B owners' views, and so on) and liaising with local businesses to show them that there is a commercial opportunity available.
- **Key partners** are likely to be Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce and local businesses.

Out-of-this-world visitors

Shortage of tourist accommodation has become particularly acute since 2002 when Wincanton twinned with Ankh Morpork (the fantasy city created by best-selling author, Terry Pratchett). Regular Discworld® events draw fans - many in costume - to Wincanton from all over the globe.

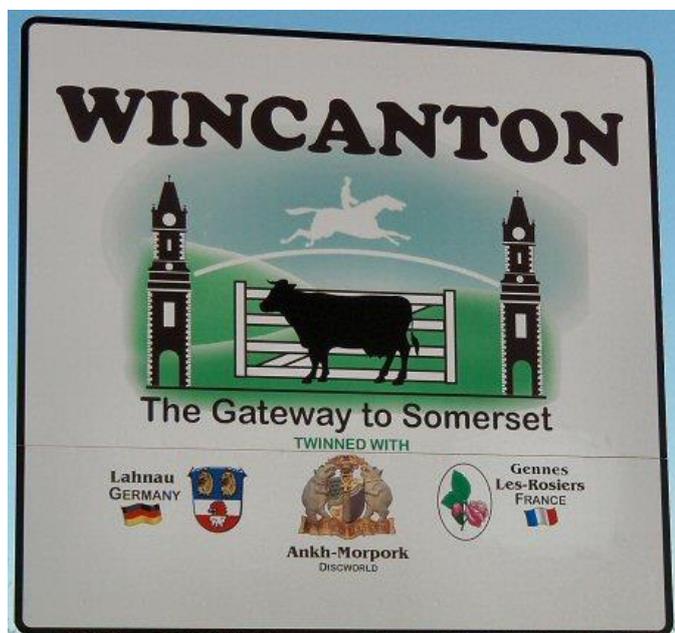
Wincanton Tourist Information Centre is already spearheading plans to ease the shortage by compiling a directory of all available accommodation within a seven-mile radius of the town.

T5. Extend farmers' market to some weekends.

- **The aim** is to enable people who are at work on Friday mornings to have the opportunity to buy from the local farmers' market.
- **What's involved?** The project is likely to involve negotiation with the organisers of the local farmers' market and marketing.
- **Key partners** are likely to be the farmers' market organisers, local venue suppliers.

T6. Re-establish a local fair.

- **The aim** is to resurrect a traditional custom of holding fairs - for example, at Michaelmas. As well as drawing visitors to the town, this would meet the community goal. If the theme of the fair were local food and/or healthy eating, it could also target the shops and/or health goals too.
- **What's involved?** The project is likely to involve organising events and marketing.
- **Key partners** are likely to be South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council, Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce, local businesses and Somerset Food Links.



Quick win: sign of the times

With assistance from South Somerset District Council, MCTA funding has allowed us to purchase a new sign for the Aldermeads entrance to the town. This 'Gateway to Somerset' sign incorporates images associated with the history of the town as well as our twinings, including that with the fictional Ankh Morpork. The sign has been well received with many favourable comments.

Wincanton town sign © Muriel Cairns, 2007.
The sign was based on a design by Bernard Pearson, a Wincanton resident.

4 Achieving our goals: social and community

Our goals

The remaining three goals that support Wincanton's vision all relate to the social and community aspects of the town. They are:

- **HEALTH** A healthy population with well-resourced healthcare.
- **COMMUNITY** An active, caring and inclusive population with facilities for all.
- **HOUSING** Affordable homes for all and new building sympathetic to our heritage.

Health

Where are we now?

A fifth of the Wincanton area population has a long-term limiting illness, This particularly affects the elderly who are generally in poorer health than other older people across South Somerset. Wincanton has a worrying level of hospital admissions for depression and self harm and a relatively high number of teenage pregnancies.

Wincanton has one doctors' surgery that serves the town and surrounding villages. The surgery has indicated that it is prepared to cater for an expanding population as the town grows.

There is a local hospital that offers a limited range of services, including physiotherapy and a walk-in treatment centre (formerly known as a minor injuries clinic) open 7am to 9pm (weekdays) or 10pm (weekends), but no accident and emergency or diagnostic facilities. However, it is intended to bring mobile diagnostic and treatment units to the hospital once improvements to the parking area have been made. Wincanton is 16 miles from the nearest main hospital (in Yeovil).

Key findings of the Healthcheck are summarised in this section. For full details, see the Healthcheck Report, available from www.wincantontowncouncil.co.uk or by calling 01963 31693

Wincanton’s health SWOT [1]

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctors’ surgery ready to cater for expanding population • Local hospital (but with limited services) • Healthy Living Centre • Good opportunities for walking and most sports • Ready access to good local foods 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively poor health of older people • High level of hospital admission related to mental health problems • High level of teenage pregnancies • 16 miles from nearest main hospital • Lack of facilities for safe cycling
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population • Ageing population 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population • Ageing population • Service provision might not keep pace with population growth

[1] SWOT = Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

We are fortunate to have a Healthy Living Centre - one of only 350 nationwide - that offers a very wide range of services to improve physical and mental health and quality of life.

A keystone of physical health is exercise. Wincanton has 52 footpaths around the town and linking it to the surrounding countryside, excellent sports facilities including a swimming pool and two riding stables in nearby villages. There are no dedicated cycle routes.

Friendly support

Wincanton’s hospital is undergoing a major refurbishment. Substantial financial help from local charity, the Friends of Verrington Hospital, will include helping to:

- upgrade the Athlone ward to give patients greater privacy and better facilities
- alter the car parking
- remove redundant buildings
- improve the hospital gardens.

Community consultation

There is a great fear in the community of losing its local hospital and overwhelming support for its retention and expansion of the services it offers. In particular local people want a round-the-clock minor injuries clinic.

There is concern that local health facilities will not expand quickly enough to keep pace with Wincanton’s planned expansion and the demands of an ageing population.



Wincanton Health Centre © Muriel Cairns, 2003.

Relevant framework policies

The main local health facilities are provided through the National Health Service (NHS) and are being developed in accordance with the NHS Plan 2000 and National Service Frameworks.

A key part of the NHS Plan was to devolve previously centralised NHS budgets to local health providers. As a result, the Somerset Primary Care Trust (PCT) is the budget holder for our local health services. It is responsible for steering the work of our GPs, providing community nursing and therapies, providing community hospitals such as Verrington and ensuring acute hospital care and specialist services are available when needed.

The NHS Plan includes requirements to improve accountability to patients, which includes having members of the public on the committees that make decisions about how local services are run.

The National Service Frameworks set out national standards and delivery strategies for specific health areas, such as mental health and older people.

The Somerset Local Area Agreement includes themes relating to the mental health of children and young people, the promotion of healthier communities and the difficulties faced by older people.

Possible health strategies

The evidence from the Healthcheck and the community's views suggest the strategies below as key ways to achieve our health goal.

Strategies for health

To promote good health	To promote good health services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote healthy living at all ages and from early age to reduce likelihood of health problems later on. For example, encourage exercise (eg dedicated safe cycle routes, circular walking routes, more health walks including outside normal work hours, ensure sports facilities retained and expanded as population grows), encourage healthy eating (eg in schools, residential homes, meals on wheels, lunch clubs, consider healthy eating festival (may also aid Tourism). • Investigate causes of mental health problems. Build on existing services, eg at Healthy Living Centre, to improve prevention and support. • Support local activities of organisations that aim to reduce teenage pregnancy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Verrington Hospital retained and work with local PCT to expand its services. This includes ensuring active and effective representation on relevant PCT committees. • Support expansion of doctors' surgery as town grows and creation of further surgery if this becomes necessary and viable. • Ensure good support and social inclusion for elderly infirm and others with limiting physical and mental conditions and their carers.

Specific projects

The Steering Group identified the following projects as the main priority for the next five years for health.

H1. Research existing health provision and identify gaps.

- **The aim** is to improve understanding of the many, existing health facilities and how they are responding to the growth of Wincanton.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve research, discussions with health providers and surveys of healthcare and social care users.
- **Key partners** are likely to be South Somerset Primary Care Trust, Verrington Hospital, local doctors, dentists and other health providers, Wincanton Healthy Living Centre (the Balsam Centre), Somerset County Council (social services department), local residents.

H2. Promote healthy eating through, for example, themed food festivals.

- **The aim** is, over time, to improve the health of the community as a whole. The idea is to achieve this by, in a fun way, informing people about, and encouraging them to make, healthy choices. This project overlaps with projects identified to meet the shops, tourism and leisure and community goals.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve organising events and marketing.
- **Key partners** are likely to be Wincanton Healthy Living Centre (the Balsam Centre), Wincanton Chamber of Commerce, High Street and other local businesses, Wincanton Town Council, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, Somerset Food Links.

H3. Promote healthy eating through allotments and 'future farms'.

- **The aim** is to create a source of high quality, fresh, organic food within walking and cycling distance, particularly for people in villages. There are two proposed models: 'allotment-plus' where allotment owners form a collective to sell locally the produce that they grow; and 'future farms' which are very small, local farms. These projects also address community and health aims by encouraging local people to become involved in gardening and farming and to meet socially at weekly produce markets. The farms, in particular, would also target environmental issues through, for example, production without chemicals, use of renewable energy and elimination of 'food miles'. A Wincanton-based farm could be operated alongside the environmentally friendly wholefood supermarket (see project S1 under Shops on page 25).
- **What's involved?** The allotment project is likely to involve: negotiating with town and parish councils (which have a duty to meet demand for allotments); and developing a viable plan for the sale of produce. The farm project is likely to involve: finding financial support at least for the early stages; negotiating with the planning authority; creating a viable business blueprint for the future farm concept; identifying suitable parcels of land (approximately 3 to 4 hectares per farm) on the edge of participating villages; deciding on a suitable form of farm ownership

Reuniting us with our food

Sue Place has run a 'future farm' in Henstridge for the last 15 years. It produces organically grown vegetables and lamb, which are sold at Saturday morning markets. By cutting out transport costs and wholesalers' mark-ups, the food is affordably priced. Local people are encouraged to volunteer and get involved on the farm, and the markets are a regular high spot of village social life. 'Local food is one of the biggest media messages of our time,' says Sue, 'Yet for most consumers, especially those economically disadvantaged and living in the countryside, fresh local food is neither affordable nor accessible.'

- for example, a community land trust: supporting individuals and communities in getting each farm off the ground.
- **Key partners** are likely to be town and parish councils; local landowners (including Somerset County Council which is currently selling of many of its own farms), South Somerset District Council, Somerset Local Strategic Partnership and Somerset Food Links.

H4. Use planning gain to expand health facilities as the town grows.

- **The aim** is to ensure that some of the profits from residential development are used to meet some of the cost of the infrastructure consequences of the resulting expansion in population.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve monitoring major planning applications, consulting healthcare providers, and negotiating with and lobbying developers and the planning authority.
- **Key partners** are likely to be healthcare providers, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council, developers.

Community

Where are we now?

Wincanton has a good range of facilities where people come together as a community. These include the Memorial Hall, several other venues that can be hired for events, Healthy Living Centre, six places of worship, eight public houses, a social club and a community office in the Town Hall. All of the villages, except Bratton Seymour, have a village hall, about half have a public house and most have a place of worship.

Less formal social contact is important too. For example, the monthly farmers' market, main shopping area in the High Street, post office and doctors' surgery are places where people often stop to chat.

There are lots of clubs and societies, including 15 sports clubs, 13 hobby-based organisations, nine support groups (related to health conditions, losing weight, and so on), and 13 youth groups. About a quarter of the population belong to at least one of the sports clubs.

There are two recreation grounds and other informal play areas. There is also a relatively new and successful skate park on the edge of town. But there is little organised entertainment for young people.

Key findings of the Healthcheck are summarised in this section. For full details, see the Healthcheck Report, available from www.wincantontowncouncil.co.uk or by calling 01963 31693

Some of the clubs relate to music and drama. But, whatever your age, there is a general lack of regular, professional cultural events. Over the last two years a film club has started up which shows films once a month throughout a ten-month season. But, in general, for cinema, live music or theatre, residents must travel to Yeovil (16 miles) or further afield.

A variety of community events take place throughout the year, including Remembrance Day parade, local flower shows, harvest festivals, pantomime and quizzes. Some of the villages (such as Bayford) have an annual village hog roast or similar event.

Wincanton is a relatively low crime area, but the town centre is plagued with petty criminal damage. Despite low actual rates of crime, a high proportion of residents are fearful of walking in Wincanton at night or during the evening.

Wincanton’s community SWOT [1]

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly town • Good range of services in the town • Healthy Living Centre • Extensive range of community organisations including many aimed at young people • Excellent sports facilities • Wide range of cultural associations and events • Community accessible transport scheme 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor range of services in villages • High level of criminal damage • Many residents fearful of going out on foot in evenings and at night • Lack of cultural events • Lack of events/activities for younger people
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population • Ageing population 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population • Ageing population • Service provision might not keep pace with population growth

[1] SWOT = Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Community consultation

What Wincanton people like best about their town is its friendliness and there is a strong desire to retain this even though the population is set to grow. Other community-related comments and suggestions included:

- **initiating events and activities.** There needs to be a good network of people to make things happen. Often it’s the same people taking the initiative, so maybe we need new ways to attract and enthuse volunteers



Community gathered to commemorate the crash of Old Faithful © JTL Financial Research, 2004

- **more activities and participation.** Need to ensure that our social and educational infrastructure expands to accommodate population growth. We need a new range of leisure facilities and activities. There is a lack of live professional music, drama and dance. There should be more organisations offering new activities, such as orienteering and pond-dipping and better information about existing groups and activities. There should be improved access to the countryside
- **young people.** Teenagers need a proper place to meet. The skatepark should be developed further with a covered area and better lighting. There should be more informal play spaces, with or without equipment. The council fails to fund youth - there is no youth club coordinator. Young people should be consulted about what they want, through the schools and using modes of consultation that appeal to them. They should be encourage to organise for themselves, using youth committees and maybe controlling their own project budget
- **safe community.** Crime and anti-social behaviour is of increasing concern. The problem is perceived to be with the nightclub and drugs culture rather than with youth culture. Older people need to be more tolerant of young people.

Relevant framework policies

The Wincanton People's Plan needs to be consistent with central and regional government's sustainable development strategies (see pages 13-14).

The SSDC Local Plan, Chapter 11, sets out policies specific to recreation and community facilities including:

- **CR1** which generally protects existing playing fields from being used for new development unless enhanced as a result or replaced by equivalent facilities
- **CR2** requires new housing developments generally to provide formal and informal play area at a rate of 1.8 to 2 hectares per 1,000 population for use by youth and adults and 0.6 to 0.8 hectares per 1,000 where for use by children.

The Local Plan notes the importance of public houses in villages as centres for a wide range of community activities and facilities.

The Somerset Local Area Agreement includes the themes of safer communities and stronger communities. Targets include tackling anti-social behaviour, reducing the harm caused by alcohol to individuals and communities, policing communities more visibly, increasing the proportion of services delivered by voluntary and community bodies, increasing the number and training of volunteers, and expanding the use of village halls.

Also relevant is central government's Crime Reduction Strategy and National Drug Strategy which are coordinated locally by the Government Office for the South West.

Possible community strategies

Drawing together the above snapshot of where we are now and your views on where we should try to be in future suggests the broad strategies below.

Strategies for community

<p>To retain and extend our friendly community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain existing clubs and societies, support their expansion and establishment of new societies (eg with venues, publicity, help accessing grants etc). • Help existing clubs cater for hard-to-reach groups eg through access to grants, transport, help creating websites etc. • Encourage more volunteering. Build on existing networks through Healthy Living Centre, Live At Home Scheme etc. Provide support - eg training, grant information, equipment - for volunteers setting up and running activities and events • Consider ways to bring high quality touring music, drama etc to Wincanton. 	<p>To provide more for young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and improve facilities for young people as alternative to drinking/drug culture, eg further development of skate park, youth shelter, barbecue hut, coffee bars. • Build on existing youth initiatives - eg increase support for and reach of Linx Project, as part of enterprise education in schools get young people to choose, design and implement own project. • Ensure good range of formal and informal recreation spaces especially as population grows. • Encourage events where people of all ages come together to foster understanding between young and older people. • Help young people to access facilities - eg providing footpath, safe cycling routes and lighting on access routes to Sports Ground. 	<p>To promote greater feeling of safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve lighting in areas where pedestrians feel particularly unsafe. • Extend CCTV coverage to promote reduction in fear of crime and improve deterrent effect and detection rates. • Encourage close relationship between community and its police to promote reporting of crime and identification of culprits.
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Specific projects

The Steering Group identified the following priority projects for the next five years for working towards the community goal.

C1. Develop a well-lit footpath to the Sports Ground.

- **The aim** is to encourage greater community use of Sports Ground, in particular by providing safe access for young people. This project also targets the health goal and addresses environmental issues by encouraging access without the use of fuelled transport.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to include negotiation and financing. Some progress has already been made in obtaining relevant landowners' permission for the path and initial commitment from relevant bodies towards funding.
- **Key partners** are likely to be Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council and the Wincanton Recreational Trust.

C2. Create safe cycle routes to schools.

- **The aim** is enable children to reach school without the use of a car via safe routes. This project simultaneously targets the community and health goals and addresses environmental issues.
- **What's involved?** The project is likely to involve identifying and mapping appropriate routes, negotiating with the local Highways department and landowners, promoting use of the routes, and ensuring schools have cycle storage facilities.
- **Key partners** are likely to be Somerset County Council, relevant landowners, local schools.

Safe cycling

Local resident, Richard Nicholl, is a member of the Steering Group and a keen cyclist. He has already undertaken a great deal of work to identify potential cycle routes both within and around Wincanton and also to link the town with national cycle routes. You can find an outline of Richard's proposals on page 105 of the full Healthcheck report.

C3. Enhance the skate park facilities and host contests.

- **The aim** is to provide a shelter and lighting for skate park users and generally to bring the facility up to a standard suitable for hosting contests with teams and individuals from other areas.
- **What's involved?** The project is likely to involve working with users to identify needs, financing and procurement.
- **Key partners** are likely to be skate park users, Wincanton Town Council and South Somerset District Council and possibly UK Skateboarding Association.

Park place

Abbey Manor Homes Ltd is the firm that has applied to develop the key site at New Barns Farm, Wincanton. The developer will donate a strip of land between the river and the recreation ground to the town. This will provide the space needed to enhance the skate park by including a shelter, lighting and other upgrades.

C4. Extend CCTV coverage.

- **The aim** is to increase residents’ safety and perception of safety, improve crime detection and deter crime.
- **What’s involved?** This project is already underway and involves working with other towns and local government.
- **Key partners** are Wincanton Town Council, town councils in Bruton and Castle Cary and South Somerset District Council.

C5. Establish regular whole community events.

- **The aim.** A sense of community depends in part on the participants sharing common experiences, such as arranging and taking part in local events. Steering Group suggestions included a summer event with a children’s carnival, a music/fun day, a pre-Christmas event and re-establishing the annual street market. Specific projects targeting the shops, health and tourism and leisure goals include suggestions for a Michaelmas fair, healthy-eating food festival or similar. There is considerable overlap between these ideas which could be tackled as a single project targeting multiple goals.
- **What’s involved?** This project is likely to involve organising events and marketing.
- **Key partners** are likely to be (depending on the type of event) local residents, local clubs, organisations and schools, local businesses, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce, Wincanton Town Council and local parish councils, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, Somerset Food Links, Wincanton Healthy Living Centre (the Balsam Centre).

	<p style="text-align: center;">Quick win: MCTi lights up the town</p> <p>With MCTA funding, we purchased new lights for the Town Christmas tree and these were used for the first time in 2005. They were a huge improvement on their predecessors.</p>
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C6. Expand the Linx Project for young people.

- **The aim** is to provide more activities and facilities for young people, building on the existing infrastructure.
- **What’s involved?** This project is likely to involve research with young people to establish needs and wishes and then taking forward ideas through negotiation, fundraising and organisation with relevant bodies.
- **Key partners** are likely to be young people, Linx Project, Somerset County Youth Service, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council and local parish councils.

C7. Create a web-based community directory.

- **The aim** is to enhance awareness of local organisations and activities. The Town Hall community office currently compiles a directory of all groups active in Wincanton and the surrounding villages. But the directory dates frequently and can be accessed only at the community office. By transferring the directory to the internet, both updating and access will be greatly improved and also print costs saved.
- **What's involved?** This project involves establishing and maintaining contact with local organisations, database and website skills, and publicising the existence of the directory. Work on compiling the directory has already started.
- **Key partners** are likely to be local organisations and Wincanton Town Council (which operates the community office and the hosting website).

Housing

Where are we now?

At the last Census (in 2001), Wincanton had 2,040 households. By 2006, this had grown to around 2,250 and is set to grow further to 3,040 by 2011. Wincanton's housing stock includes three sheltered housing schemes for the elderly and people with disabilities.

Seven out of 10 Wincanton households own their home outright or are buying it with a mortgage. 15 per cent rent from a housing association or the local council and 8% rent from a private landlord. A tiny proportion of homes (just 3 in 1,000) are being bought using shared equity schemes.

In general, it is hard for local people to get onto the housing ladder because the average house price is nine times average male annual earnings. Even a flat, the cheapest form of accommodation, costs five times earnings. This reflects a combination of low average earnings in this area and house prices above the national average.

Hardly any 'affordable housing' has been built in Wincanton in recent years but, if planned developments go ahead, around 95 affordable homes could be created in the next few years.

Key findings of the Healthcheck are summarised in this section. For full details, see the Healthcheck Report, available from www.wincantontowncouncil.co.uk or by calling 01963 31693

Some of the housing stock needs attention. For example, one in nine Wincanton homes has no central heating. If experience in Wincanton is similar to the rest of South Somerset, 70 per cent of homes owned by the over-60s are likely to need some immediate repair work.

In South Somerset, 2.1 per cent of homes stand empty at any one time, which is not particularly high (given turnover through death, relocation, and so on).

Wincanton’s housing SWOT [1]

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage of fine older houses • Past growth has avoided urban sprawl • Doctors’ surgery ready to cater for expanding population • 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low earnings • High average house prices • Some of housing stock in poor condition
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population • Ageing population • Extensive housing development taking place and planned • Increase in supply of social/affordable housing 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population • Ageing population • Extensive housing development taking place and planned • Housing development threatens visual links from town to countryside • Service provision might not keep pace with population growth

[1] SWOT = Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Community consultation

The community expressed three key concerns about housing:

- **growth.** Most people see housing growth as a threat rather than an opportunity. New jobs need to be created first otherwise there will be nowhere for new residents to work. The town’s infrastructure may be overwhelmed. An expanding population needs pedestrian-safe roads (maybe pedestrianisation), but where can all the extra traffic go? Some think there is too much high density development going on and planned and, that to attract high income employees, there needs to be a more ‘aspirational’ mix of housing. Others argue that providing ‘middle-management housing’ does not attract employment
- **affordability.** There is great concern that local residents, especially young people and low-income families, cannot afford local homes. This is a twin problem of low earnings locally and lack of social or affordable housing. There is anger that new homes are often unoccupied for a long time, new cheaper properties are snapped up by buy-to-let investors, second-home owners, the lack of rented social housing and that vacated social housing

is often slow to be reoccupied. Shared ownership schemes are seen as a desirable option

- **respecting and preserving our heritage.** New developments often don't fit with their surroundings. In the community's view, the Priory development worked well, but the original Bellway proposals for Deanesly Way showed poor design and quality. Planning decisions need to pay greater heed to community input. A historical buildings/environmental design framework should be adopted. Our existing historical buildings need to be improved but owners often can't afford to refurbish them.

Relevant framework policies

Central and regional government sustainability policies (see pages 13 to 14) are highly relevant. This should mean, for example, ensuring that all new developments are energy efficient and minimise the need for travel by car (by for example locating homes close to employment, schools, shops and services or on public transport routes).

The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy published by the South West Regional Assembly is also relevant. This is a strategic planning document for the whole of the South West that sets out the broad planning policy for the next 20 years. Policy RE5 is particularly relevant with regard to environmental issues:

'RE5 Renewable energy and new development. Large-scale developments will be expected to provide, as a minimum, sufficient on-site renewable energy to reduce CO2 emissions from energy use by users of the buildings constructed on site by 10%. developers will be expected to demonstrate that they have explored all renewable energy options, and designed their developments to incorporate any renewable energy requirements. Individual Local Planning Authorities may use lower thresholds for what constitutes a larger-scale development and set higher percentages for on-site generation, taking into account the impact on initial and lifetime affordability of homes.'

For the purpose of policy RE5, 'larger-scale development' generally means 10 or more dwellings or a site of 0.5 hectares or more.

Central government Planning Policy Guidance 3, *Housing*, is a key document that has a big impact on local planning decisions. For example, PPG3 sets out a normal density of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare for new housing. In effect, it sets a maximum 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling and encourages significantly lower provision in urban areas where public transport is available. (It should be noted that Wincanton does not have frequent public transport services.) Less prominence is given to PPG3's requirements that poor design should be rejected and that new housing should have regard, not just to neighbouring buildings but also the townscape and landscape of the wider locality,

The SSDC Local Plan, Chapter 10, conforms to PPG3 and sets out local policies. These include:



New housing development off Tout Hill © Muriel Cairns, 2006.

- **key site at New Barn's Farm.** 250 new dwellings (policy HG2)
- **housing density.** At least 30 dwellings per hectare but higher densities only in places with good public transport (policy HG4)
- **affordable housing.** 35 per cent of dwellings to be affordable housing in developments of 25 dwellings or more or 1 hectare or more in settlements over 3,000 population. In smaller settlements the 35 per cent quota is applied to developments of 15 dwellings or 0.5 hectares (policy HG7). In villages, development outside the development area may be permitted if there is local need for affordable housing (policy HG9).

The Somerset Local Area Agreement (stronger communities theme) includes a target of maximising opportunities to meet affordable housing needs, including better use of public-sector-owned land for affordable housing.

Possible housing strategies

The Healthcheck evidence and community consultation suggest the following strategies can help Wincanton to achieve its housing goal

Strategies for housing

Affordable housing

- For villages, argue for new build using the rural exceptions policy in PPG3 and the SSDC Local Plan.
- Ensure SSDC exercises its right to require 35% affordable housing with all new planning applications over 25 dwellings/1 hectare and implements its rule in a clear, transparent manner.
- Lobby SSDC to lower the size of development at which the affordable housing requirements are triggered from 25 dwellings to 8.
- Assess whether there is unmet demand for shared ownership schemes.
- Consider radically different approaches, such as purchase of land by community development trust which borrows to develop (often using green principles) and sells dwellings (but not land) on permanent shared ownership basis. (See Environment Trust for model.)
- Ensure all eligible claimants take up their rights to means-tested benefits, including housing benefit.

Integrate new with the old and promote sustainable development

- Consider drawing up a design framework that identifies key features of our built heritage and townscape to be taken into account by developers of new housing.
- Integrate into the design framework features to encourage energy and water efficiency, including for example micro-generation using solar and wind technology and rainwater harvesting.
- Ensure infrastructure growth keeps pace with housing growth, including key services and safe routes for pedestrians and traffic.

To help existing homeowners

- Ensure awareness of grants and loans available to low-income and other vulnerable homeowners to cover maintenance and some adaptations/improvements, including installation of central heating. See Foundations www.foundations.co.uk.
- Ensure owners of homes of historic significance are aware of any suitable grants (eg the previous Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme - HERS) and loans.

Specific projects

The Steering Group identified four priority projects for the next five years for housing as described overleaf.

HO1. Optimise our use of the New Barns Farm key site by locating more of the homes we need there.

- **The aim** is to use our land efficiently and retain our green spaces. Given that Wincanton has been designated for additional housing, it would be better to build more densely on the key site rather than lose more green space to development.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve negotiating with local government and possibly central government.
- **Key partners** are likely to be South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council and the developer of the key site.

HO2. Develop a flagship housing project to showcase quality and sustainability.

- **The aim.** There is much talk about quality design and environmental principles, but not always a consensus on what it entails or what is feasible in a commercial project. The aim is to showcase what can be done as a model for other developments.
- **What's involved?** This project may involve negotiation with developers, the local planning department and environmental organisations, but could involve the establishment of a local land trust and more direct involvement in the development. Once complete, the project should be widely marketed to stimulate similar developments
- **Key partners** are likely to be South Somerset District Council, Somerset Trust for Sustainable Development, Wincanton Town Council and developers.

HO3. Increase affordable housing to meet local needs.

- **The aim** is to ensure that young people in particular can rent or buy a local home rather than having to move out of the area.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve lobbying local government and negotiation with local developers, but could involve the establishment of a local land trust and more direct involvement in the development of affordable housing.
- **Key partners** are likely to be South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council and developers.

HO4. Create a quality-design framework for Wincanton and the surrounding area.

- **The aim** is to identify what high-quality design means in the context of our local heritage and environment and produce guidelines that developers should follow when implementing local developments.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve consultation with the public, architects, planners and developers, production of an illustrated document and distribution of the document to relevant people and organisations.
- **Key partners** are likely to be local residents, South Somerset District Council, Somerset Trust for Sustainable Development, Wincanton Town Council and developers.

5 Achieving our goals: transport and environment

Transport and the environment are not specific goals within the Wincanton vision. Nonetheless they play a part in most of the goals and are embedded in many of the priority projects as outlined below.

Transport-related projects within the Wincanton People's Plan

Employment & business

B2 and B3. Assess needs of and constraints on businesses and ensure Wincanton addresses these.

Shops

S2. Adequate free car parking.

S4. Consider how edge-of-town shoppers can be drawn into the High Street shopping area, for example through pony-and-trap rides to the town centre.

Community

C1. Develop a well-lit footpath to the Sports Ground.

C2. Create safe cycle routes to school.

Housing

HO2 and HO4. Develop a flagship housing project to showcase quality and sustainability and create a quality-design framework. Integral to both will be the management of traffic within the development and the minimising of car usage to and from the development.



View from Bayford Hill © Elaine Fraser, 2004.

Environment-related projects within the Wincanton People's Plan

Employment & business

B2. Ensure employment land meets identified needs in order to facilitate travel to work on foot and by bicycle.

B3. Conduct business surveys. These can be used to alert policymakers to unmet needs concerning, for example, energy- and water-efficient workspaces, micro-generation of energy for small businesses, recycling, and so on.

Shops

S1. Create the UK's first completely environmentally friendly wholefood supermarket. This will be a showcase of environmental best practice.

S2. Enhance Wincanton High Street.

S3. Establish community scaffolding project to help make renovating High Street premises affordable.

Tourism & leisure

T5. Extend farmers' markets to some weekends. This could expand the market for and access to food produced in sustainable ways.

Health

H3. Promote healthy eating through allotments and 'future farms'. This could expand the market for and access to food produced in sustainable ways. It also eliminates the 'food miles' that most of the food we eat has travelled before reaching our plates.

Community

C1. Develop a well-lit footpath to the Sports Ground. This will encourage access on foot and by bike rather than by car.

C2. Create safe cycle routes to schools. This will help to minimise car journeys.

Housing

HO1. Optimise the use of the New Barns Farm key site. The key site is being designed with sustainability in mind through, for example, mixing employment and residential land use and paying attention to traffic routes to, from and through the site. Building more densely on the key site will also help to save other green spaces.

HO2 and HO4. Develop a flagship housing project to showcase quality and sustainability. Create a quality-design framework. Environmental good practice will be central to both of these.

Environment, in its widest sense, is fundamental to the whole Wincanton People's Plan which to succeed must be sustainable and deliver not just for today's community but tomorrow's as well. All the specific projects will be developed against this framework and will be required to meet good environmental standards and practice.

6 Bringing it all together: the Plan

Chapters 3 to 5 have described the elements of the Plan and how they were arrived at. Overleaf, you'll find a table summarising all the projects and showing how they meet the goals in the Wincanton People's Plan and the wider framework policies.

The rest of this chapter brings together all the projects in one place as a reference resource. We hope that you are as excited by these projects as the Steering Group members are and will want to get involved in the projects that interest you most.

Chapter 7 describes how we will now take the Plan and its projects forward in order to achieve Wincanton's vision.



Wincanton Market Place © Elaine Fraser, 2006.

Our vision: Wincanton - a welcoming, thriving, caring community

Project	Our goals Project helps to meet this goal:						Framework policies Project meets the aims of this policy:							Other aims	
	Employment & business	Shops	Tourism & Leisure	Health	Community	Housing	Government Sustainable Development Strategy	Regional Economic Strategy	NHS Plan	UK Crime Reduction Strategy	UK National Drug Strategy	Somerset Local Area Agreement	SSDC Local Plan	Transport implications	Environment implications
B1. Research employment land needs and reasons why businesses don't locate in Wincanton	o						o	o				o		o	
B2. Ensure employment land meets identified needs	o						o	o				o	o	o	o
B3. Conduct business surveys at two-yearly intervals	o						o	o				o			o
S1. Create the UK's first completely environmentally friendly wholefood supermarket	o	o	o	o			o	o				o			o
S2. Enhance Wincanton High Street		o	o				o					o	o	o	o
S3. Establish a community scaffolding project to help make renovating high Street premises affordable		o	o				o								o
S4. Work together with retailers to enhance the shopping experience		o	o	o	o		o	o				o		o	
T1. Expand tourist accommodation	o		o				o	o							
T2. Guide tourists with maps in the car parks	o		o				o								
T3. Establish a joint catering venture so local businesses profit from local events	o		o				o	o				o			
T4. Encourage local cafes to extend their opening hours	o		o				o	o							
T5. Extend farmers' market to some weekends	o		o				o	o				o			o
T6. Re-establish a local fair		o	o	o	o		o	o				o			

Project	Our goals Project helps to meet this goal:						Framework policies Project meets the aims of this policy:							Other aims	
	Employment & business	Shops	Tourism & Leisure	Health	Community	Housing	Government Sustainable Development Strategy	Regional Economic Strategy	NHS Plan	UK Crime Reduction Strategy	UK National Drug Strategy	Somerset Local Area Agreement	SSDC Local Plan	Transport implications	Environment implications
H1. Research existing health provision and identify gaps				o			o		o						
H2. Promote healthy eating through, for example, themed food festivals	o	o	o	o	o		o	o				o			
H3. Promote healthy eating through allotments and 'future farms'	o			o	o		o	o				o			o
H4. Use planning gain to expand health facilities as the town grows				o			o		o						
C1. Develop a well-lit footpath to the Sports Ground				o	o		o					o		o	o
C2. Create safe cycle routes to schools				o	o		o					o		o	
C3. Enhance skate park facilities and host contests				o	o		o					o			
C4. Extend CCTV coverage					o		o		o						
C5. Establish regular whole community events	o	o	o	o	o		o	o							
C6. Expand Linx Project for young people				o	o		o					o			
C7. Create a web-based community directory					o		o					o			
HO1. Optimise our use of the New Barns Farm key site by locating more of the homes we need there						o	o					o			o
HO2. Develop a flagship housing project to show off quality and sustainability						o	o					o	o	o	
HO3. Increase affordable housing to meet local needs	o				o	o	o	o				o			
HO4. Create a design-quality framework for Wincanton and the surrounding area						o	o					o	o	o	

Summary of the projects

B1. Research employment land needs and reasons why businesses don't locate in Wincanton.

- **The aim** is to gather information that can then be used to make Wincanton a sought-after business location.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to include: recording the location and attributes of existing employment land available locally; surveying businesses that are already located here or have moved away; reviewing existing economic studies and commissioning new ones as appropriate; and gathering information about businesses that show an interest in locating here but then don't go ahead.
- **Key partners** in this project are likely to be South West Regional Development Agency, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce, local businesses and local developers.

B2. Ensure employment land meets identified needs.

- **The aim** is to ensure that Wincanton provides the quantity and variety of local jobs to meet the local population's needs and in particular to provide work and career opportunities for our young people. Informed by project B1 above, this will include ensuring that the supply of business land and premises matches demand in terms of location and attributes, and using effective lobbying to promote a consistent approach to planning applications.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to include surveying Wincanton and the surrounding settlements to identify suitable sites for different types of business, engaging with the local planning process and marketing the availability of sites to appropriate business sectors.
- **Key partners** in this project are likely to be South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce, local and other businesses and developers.

B3. Conduct business surveys at two-yearly intervals.

- **The aim** is to assess the needs of businesses (in addition to land requirements) and the constraints on business growth.
- **What's involved?** This project involves identifying appropriate survey methods, conducting surveys, analysing the results and ensuring results are effectively used to influence business-related policies.
- **Key partners** in this project are likely to be South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce and local businesses.

S1. Create the UK's first completely environmentally friendly wholefood supermarket.

- **The aim** is to create a unique selling point for Wincanton as a shopping destination. The goods sold would address healthy living and many could be locally sourced. But the building itself would use sustainable straw-build technology and be energy self-sufficient (through using, say, solar and wind power). In this way, the project targets not just the shops goal but also health and the environmental framework. The unusual nature of the project is also expected to attract visitors to the town and so incidentally to address the tourism goal. The project also addresses the business and employment goal both during its construction and when up and running.
- **What's involved?** The project is likely to involve identifying a suitable site, physical design, business skills, financing, engaging with the planning system, developing appropriate sustainable building skills and other skills locally.
- **Key partners** in this project are likely to be South West Regional Development Agency, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council, local farmers and food producers, local business people and environmental bodies.

S2. Enhance Wincanton High Street.

- **The aim** is to make Wincanton shopping centre an attractive location and enjoyable place to be.
- **What's involved?** It is likely to involve looking at ways to make the town centre more pedestrian friendly, addressing issues around planting, railings, adequate free parking, minimising yellow lines and resurfacing the High Street. (Some progress on resurfacing the High Street has already been initiated with improvements expected in 2007.)
- **Key partners** in this project are likely to be Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce and local businesses.

S3. Establish a community scaffolding project to help make renovating High Street premises affordable.

- **The aim.** The appearance of buildings in the High Street has a huge impact on the attractiveness of the town centre as a whole. While grants are from time to time available to help with the cost of renovation and repairs, owners must usually pay a large part of the cost. This project aims to reduce the cost by having community-owned (or leased) scaffolding that would be available either free or at a discounted rate.
- **What's involved?** The project is likely to involve business skills, financing and procurement.
- **Key partners** in this project are likely to be Wincanton Town Council, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce and High Street businesses and residents.

S4. Work together with retailers to enhance the shopping experience.

- **The aim.** High Street business owners could share skills and experience in presenting their businesses to the public (for example, through marketing, window-dressing, and so on) to give the High Street an integrated, marketing appearance. Businesses could also join together in staging and marketing promotional events, such as an annual food fair, pre-Christmas shopping, and so on, to draw shoppers into the town. Such events could also simultaneously address the health, community and tourism and leisure goals. To enable the High Street to benefit from edge-of-town shoppers, consider pony-and-trap rides - say, during the summer months - from the supermarket to the High Street.
- **What's involved?** These related projects are likely to involve establishing networking between local businesses, organising events and marketing.
- **Key partners** are likely to be Wincanton Chamber of Commerce, High Street and other local businesses, Wincanton Town Council, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, Somerset Food Links.

T1. Expand tourist accommodation.

- **The aim.** This is seen as urgent to meet existing excess demand and also a prerequisite to expanding the tourist trade. The most immediate solution would be to encourage more local residents to offer bed-and-breakfast (B&B) accommodation. This could be targeted by producing an information leaflet making residents aware of what's involved and the tax breaks on offer and expanding a local register of B&B premises.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve research, writing and design, publication skills, distribution, administration and marketing.
- **Key partners** are likely to be existing Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, B&B businesses, Wincanton Town Council and local information distribution networks

T2. Guide tourists with maps in the car parks.

- **The aim** is to promote local attractions (such as the museum) and provide an advertising opportunity for local businesses who wish particularly to attract tourists.
- **What's involved?** The project is likely to involve artistic/mapping skills or obtaining copyrights, selling advertising space, financing, procurement, liaison with car park owners and installation.
- **Key partners** are likely to be Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council and local businesses.

T3. Establish a joint catering venture so local businesses profit from local events.

- **The aim** is to encourage visitors to events (such as the Honda Goldwing Treffen in 2006) to buy food and drink, in particular, from local businesses. A way of doing this would be for local businesses to organise a joint catering venture that could respond to events.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve establishing networking between local businesses and ensuring businesses are aware of forthcoming events.
- **Key partners** are likely to be Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce and local businesses.

T4. Encourage local cafes to extend their opening hours.

- **The aim.** There is anecdotal evidence that visitors to the town often cannot find the refreshments they seek, especially in the late afternoon and evenings.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve gathering evidence of unmet demand (for example, through surveys of tourists and coach companies, local Tourist Information Centre feedback, B&B owners' views, and so on) and liaising with local businesses to show them that there is a commercial opportunity available.
- **Key partners** are likely to be Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce and local businesses.

T5. Extend farmers' market to some weekends.

- **The aim** is to enable people who are at work on Friday mornings to have the opportunity to buy from the local farmers' market.
- **What's involved?** The project is likely to involve negotiation with the organisers of the local farmers' market and marketing.
- **Key partners** are likely to be the farmers' market organisers, local venue suppliers.

T6. Re-establish a local fair.

- **The aim** is to resurrect a traditional custom of holding fairs - for example, at Michaelmas. As well as drawing visitors to the town, this would meet the community goal. If the theme of the fair were local food and/or healthy eating, it could also target the shops and/or health goals too.
- **What's involved?** The project is likely to involve organising events and marketing.
- **Key partners** are likely to be South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council, Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce, local businesses and Somerset Food Links.

H1. Research existing health provision and identify gaps.

- **The aim** is to improve understanding of the many, existing health facilities and how they are responding to the growth of Wincanton.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve research, discussions with health providers and surveys of healthcare and social care users.
- **Key partners** are likely to be South Somerset Primary Care Trust, Verrington Hospital, local doctors, dentists and other health providers, Wincanton Healthy Living Centre (the Balsam Centre), Somerset County Council (social services department), local residents.

H2. Promote healthy eating through, for example, themed food festivals.

- **The aim** is, over time, to improve the health of the community as a whole. The idea is to achieve this by, in a fun way, informing people about, and encouraging them to make, healthy choices. This project overlaps with projects identified to meet the shops, tourism and leisure and community goals.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve organising events and marketing.
- **Key partners** are likely to be Wincanton Healthy Living Centre (the Balsam Centre), Wincanton Chamber of Commerce, High Street and other local businesses, Wincanton Town Council, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, Somerset Food Links.

H3. Promote healthy eating through allotments and 'future farms'.

- **The aim** is to create a source of high quality, fresh, organic food within walking and cycling distance, particularly for people in villages. There are two proposed models: 'allotment-plus' where allotment owners form a collective to sell locally the produce that they grow; and 'future farms' which are very small, local farms. This project also addresses community and health aims by encouraging local people to become involved in gardening and farming and to meet socially at weekly produce markets. The farms, in particular, would also target environmental issues through, for example, production without chemicals, use of renewable energy and elimination of 'food miles'. A Wincanton-based farm could be operated alongside the environmentally friendly wholefood supermarket (see project S1 under Shops on page 25).
- **What's involved?** The allotment project is likely to involve: negotiating with town and parish councils (which have a duty to meet demand for allotments); and developing a viable plan for the sale of produce. The farm project is likely to involve: finding financial support at least for the early stages; negotiating with the planning authority; creating a viable business blueprint for the future farm concept; identifying suitable parcels of land (approximately 3 to 4 hectares per farm) on the edge of participating villages; deciding on a suitable form of farm ownership

- for example, a community land trust: supporting individuals and communities in getting each farm off the ground.

- **Key partners** are likely to be town and parish councils; local landowners (including Somerset County Council which is currently selling of many of its own farms), South Somerset District Council, Somerset Local Strategic Partnership and Somerset Food Links.

H4. Use planning gain to expand health facilities as the town grows.

- **The aim** is to ensure that some of the profits from residential development are used to meet some of the cost of the infrastructure consequences of the resulting expansion in population.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve monitoring major planning applications, consulting healthcare providers, and negotiating with and lobbying developers and the planning authority.
- **Key partners** are likely to be healthcare providers, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council, developers.

C1. Develop a well-lit footpath to the Sports Ground.

- **The aim** is to encourage greater community use of Sports Ground, in particular by providing safe access for young people. This project also targets the health goal and addresses environmental issues by encouraging access without the use of fuelled transport.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to include negotiation and financing. Some progress has already been made in obtaining relevant landowners' permission for the path and initial commitment from relevant bodies towards funding.
- **Key partners** are likely to be Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council and the Wincanton Recreational Trust.

C2. Create safe cycle routes to schools.

- **The aim** is enable children to reach school without the use of a car via safe routes. This project simultaneously targets the community and health goals and addresses environmental issues.
- **What's involved?** The project is likely to involve identifying and mapping appropriate routes, negotiating with the local Highways department and landowners, promoting use of the routes, and ensuring schools have cycle storage facilities.
- **Key partners** are likely to be Somerset County Council, relevant landowners, local schools.

C3. Enhance the skate park facilities and host contests.

- **The aim** is to provide a shelter and lighting for skate park users and generally to bring the facility up to a standard suitable for hosting contests with teams and individuals from other areas.
- **What's involved?** The project is likely to involve working with users to identify needs, financing and procurement.

- **Key partners** are likely to be skate park users, Wincanton Town Council and South Somerset District Council and possibly UK Skateboarding Association.

C4. Extend CCTV coverage.

- **The aim** is to increase residents' safety and perception of safety, improve crime detection and deter crime.
- **What's involved?** This project is already underway and involves working with other towns and local government.
- **Key partners** are Wincanton Town Council, town councils in Bruton and Castle Cary and South Somerset District Council.

C5. Establish regular whole community events.

- **The aim.** A sense of community depends in part on the participants sharing common experiences, such as arranging and taking part in local events. Steering Group suggestions included a summer event with a children's carnival, a music/fun day, a pre-Christmas event and re-establishing the annual street market. Specific projects targeting the shops, health and tourism and leisure goals include suggestions for a Michaelmas fair, healthy-eating food festival or similar. There is considerable overlap between these ideas which could be tackled as a single project targeting multiple goals.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve organising events and marketing.
- **Key partners** are likely to be (depending on the type of event) local residents, local clubs, organisations and schools, local businesses, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce, Wincanton Town Council and local parish councils, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Tourist Information Centre, Somerset Food Links, Wincanton Healthy Living Centre (the Balsam Centre).

C6. Expand the Linx Project for young people.

- **The aim** is to provide more activities and facilities for young people, building on the existing infrastructure.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve research with young people to establish needs and wishes and then taking forward ideas through negotiation, fundraising and organisation with relevant bodies.
- **Key partners** are likely to be young people, Linx Project, Somerset County Youth Service, South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council and local parish councils.

C7. Create a web-based community directory.

- **The aim** is to enhance awareness of local organisations and activities. The Town Hall community office currently compiles a directory of all groups active in Wincanton and the surrounding villages. But the directory dates frequently and can be accessed only at the community office. By transferring the directory to the

internet, both updating and access will be greatly improved and also print costs saved.

- **What's involved?** This project involves establishing and maintaining contact with local organisations, database and website skills, and publicising the existence of the directory. Work on compiling the directory has already started.
- **Key partners** are likely to be local organisations and Wincanton Town Council (which operates the community office and the hosting website).

HO1. Optimise our use of the New Barns Farm key site by locating more of the homes we need there.

- **The aim** is to use our land efficiently and retain our green spaces. Given that Wincanton has been designated for additional housing, it would be better to build more densely on the key site rather than lose more green space to development.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve negotiating with local government and possibly central government.
- **Key partners** are likely to be South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council and the developer of the key site.

HO2. Develop a flagship housing project to showcase quality and sustainability.

- **The aim.** There is much talk about quality design and environmental principles, but not always a consensus on what it entails or what is feasible in a commercial project. The aim is to showcase what can be done as a model for other developments.
- **What's involved?** This project may involve negotiation with developers, the local planning department and environmental organisations, but could involve the establishment of a local land trust and more direct involvement in the development. Once complete, the project should be widely marketed to stimulate similar developments
- **Key partners** are likely to be South Somerset District Council, Somerset Trust for Sustainable Development, Wincanton Town Council and developers.

HO3. Increase affordable housing to meet local needs.

- **The aim** is to ensure that young people in particular can rent or buy a local home rather than having to move out of the area.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve lobbying local government and negotiation with local developers, but could involve the establishment of a local land trust and more direct involvement in the development of affordable housing.
- **Key partners** are likely to be South Somerset District Council, Wincanton Town Council and developers.

HO4. Create a quality-design framework for Wincanton and the surrounding area.

- **The aim** is to identify what high-quality design means in the context of our local heritage and environment and produce guidelines that developers should follow when implementing local developments.
- **What's involved?** This project is likely to involve consultation with the public, architects, planners and developers, production of an illustrated document and distribution of the document to relevant people and organisations.
- **Key partners** are likely to be local residents, South Somerset District Council, Somerset Trust for Sustainable Development, Wincanton Town Council and developers.

7

Next steps

The preceding chapters have described the Wincanton People's Plan for the future. Now we need to make it happen.

Publicising the Plan

The first step is to make sure that everyone in Wincanton and the surrounding settlements knows about the Plan.

The Steering Group will be organising a launch event and will distribute a one-page summary of the Plan to every household in Wincanton and its surrounding area.

The Steering Group is organising a summary of the Plan as a computer-based presentation. We intend that you will be able to see this presentation at the Town Hall community office, the public library, in some shops and at other locations. You will also be able to view the presentation and the full Plan document online at www.wincantontowncouncil.co.uk.

Taking the Plan forward

Overseeing the Plan

The Steering Group will continue and it will oversee the plan as it develops. This will include:

- deciding on the programme of what to do
- acting as broker to identify the lead bodies for each project
- bringing together the stakeholders for each project.

The Steering Group's independence will be maintained by actively recruiting people with a wide range of interests and backgrounds onto the Group. The chairmanship of the Group will be regularly rotated.

Prioritising and reviewing the projects

Broad priorities for the next five years have already been identified by the Steering Group as explained in Chapters 3 and 4. But we need to take a pragmatic approach, so that projects are moved up the priority list if, for example, specific funding opportunities arise.

The Steering Group will take responsibility for generating new projects as the need arises and for retiring old projects if they are no longer relevant, informing its decisions through consultation with the community. There will be a formal review once the plan has been in operation for two years (see below). In addition, the Plan and projects will be monitored on a continuing basis to ensure they remain relevant and to identify where new projects are required to meet changes in circumstances or opportunities.

Making the projects happen

The Steering Group will not itself manage projects. It has decided that it can be more effective, flexible and responsive to the community if it keeps its present non-corporate structure and open membership. But this means the Steering Group itself will not be able to make contracts or handle funding.

Therefore, the Steering Group will identify the most suitable lead body for each project. This could be, for example, the Town Council, Wincanton Recreation Trust, the Balsam Centre, South Somerset District Council, the Chamber of Commerce to name just a few. This way, instead of 'reinventing the wheel', we can efficiently use existing organisations and structures.

The appropriate lead body will enter necessary contracts and undertake commissioning. The Steering Group will ensure projects develop along agreed lines by working with funding bodies and building appropriate conditions into funding agreements. Agreements between the Steering Group and other parties will be carefully documented and monitored.

Knowing whether the Plan is working

Evaluation

We need to evaluate the Plan and its projects as they progress so we can ensure we do move towards our vision. It may be that some projects are not as effective as we had hoped and so may need to be altered or even, in an extreme case, abandoned. Other projects will be more successful than we had expected and we may want to expand or extend them.

Evaluation is especially important because funding, volunteers and other resources are scarce. We want to make sure that the resources we have are used in the best way possible. By monitoring the progress of each project, we can quickly identify if resources would be better shifted to alternative uses.

Monitoring projects

The key to monitoring projects is to ensure that their expected and possible outcomes are expressed as measurable objectives - for example, if the aim of a project is to ensure that employment land meets identified needs, measurable objectives might be a target increase in the number of businesses located in Wincanton over a specified time period and a specified decrease in the proportion of local people commuting out of the area for work.

The Steering Group will work with lead bodies and will require them to build measurable objectives into projects. The Steering Group will either undertake the evaluation of each project itself or will outsource to a third party as appropriate.

Monitoring progress towards the goals and vision

The Steering Group will conduct a formal review of the Wincanton People's Plan after it has been running for two years and at regular intervals after that.

The review will consider objective evidence and community views in assessing progress towards the goals and vision. The review team will initiate research - for example, quantitative and qualitative surveys - as necessary to aid its evaluation. The findings of the review will be published.

In addition, the Steering Group will undertake more informal continuous monitoring.

Next steps and you

The Wincanton People's Plan is not a Town Council, District Council or government initiative. It is **your** plan and you are the people who can make it happen.

The projects that form the Plan are many and varied. If a particular project appeals to you or you have skills that are relevant to it or you would like to be trained in relevant skills, get involved. The first step is to call 01963 31693.

You can shape the future of Wincanton.
It is you who will create our vision:

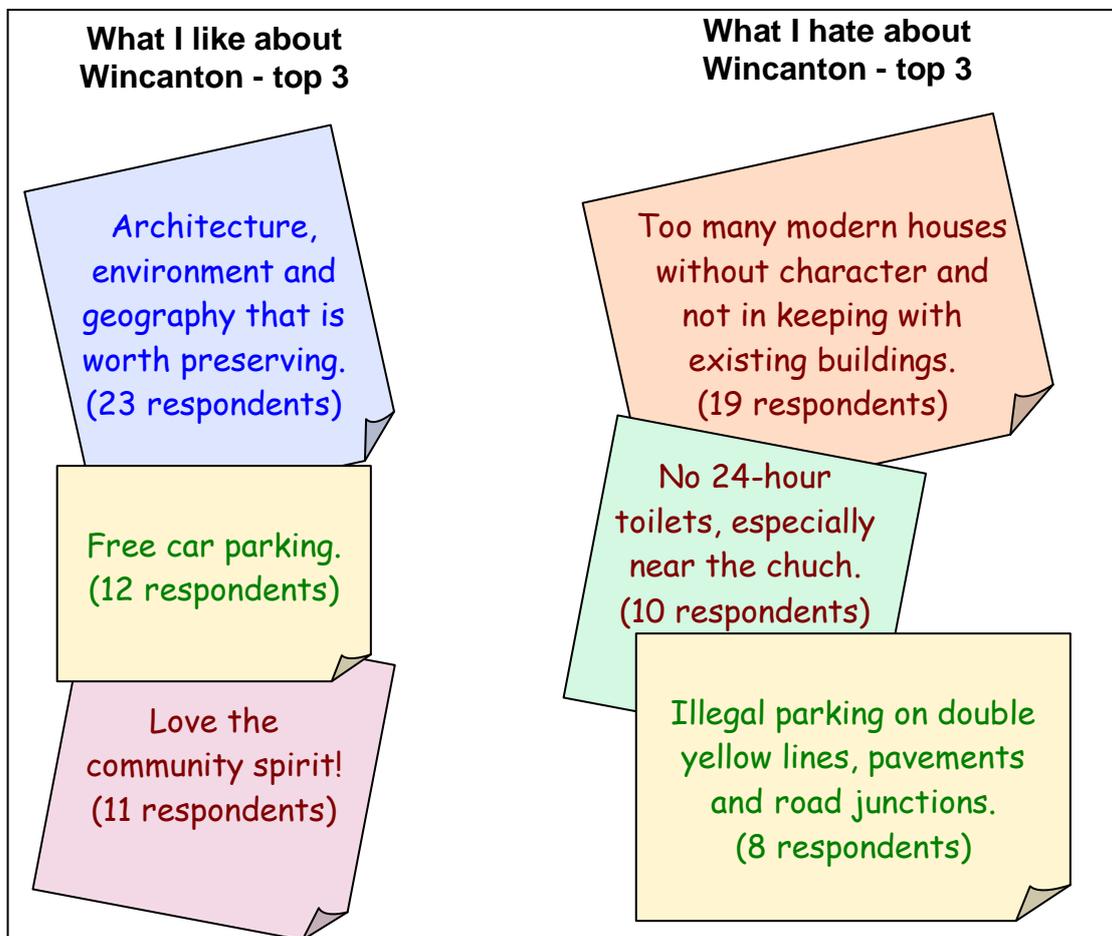
Wincanton - a welcoming, thriving, caring community

Annex A The community research

Gathering views

Research to identify the issues that Wincanton Community felt should be taken into account in the community’s plan was carried out at:

- **Community consultation event.** This spanned two days on 24 and 25 June 2005 at the Memorial Hall in the centre of Wincanton. Everyone was free to drop by to browse the exhibits and give their views through open comment on post-it stickers, a graffiti wall and other devices. The event included a video booth designed particularly to attract views from younger members of the community. A total of 862 responses were received from residents of Wincanton and its surrounding villages
- **Schools consultation.** This took place on 5 and 6 July 2005 at King Arthur’s Community School. 100 responses were gathered.



Analysis by Hannah Reynolds Associates Ltd, 2005

The results helped the Steering Group to structure the next stage of community research and provided ideas which have been valuable in identifying strategies and projects to carry forward.

Top ten Wincanton issues

Ranking	Issue	Number of respondents
1	Too much housing badly designed of wrong type without infrastructure	65
2	Improve bus services	58
3	Range of new leisure facilities and activities	57
4	Better shops, cafes, restaurants in town centre	46
5	Protect and improve environment of Wincanton	34
6	No parking charges	30
7	New cinema	26
8	Enforce parking regulations	26
9	Improve width and condition of footpaths and road surfaces	26
10	Protect and improve access to the countryside	21

Analysis by Hannah Reynolds Associates Ltd, 2005

Top ten issues for King Arthur's School students

Ranking	Issue	Number of respondents
1	A new cinema	18
2	Skate park with roof/shelter, swings, benches, no smoking, teenage youth shelter	14
3	More clubs for young people, youth club, café, night club	9
4	Pizza Hut, KFC, McDonald's	6
5	More shops, shopping centre, Tesco in Milborne Port	6
6	More facilities, nets in park, pavements to Sports Ground	5
7	Bowling Alley	4
8	More entertaining things to do, after-school activities	3
9	A graffiti board	2
10	Bigger recreation ground at Henstridge with equipment and facilities	2

Analysis by Hannah Reynolds Associates Ltd, 2005

Finding the vision

Three pieces of community research carried out by the Steering Group in 2006 focused, among other aspects, on the creation of Wincanton's vision:

- **Community consultation evening on 1 March 2006.** Among other exercises, participants used priority wheels to express their collective preference for a variety of views about Wincanton's future. Some of these views had been identified by the Steering Group as a result of the summer 2005 consultation. Other views were added to the list on the night by the participants. 96 people took part
- **Farmers' Market consultation on 7 April 2006.** People were invited to choose and prioritise up to three selections from a list of 19 views about Wincanton's future and, if they wanted to, to suggest other ideas. The 19 views listed were those which had figured most strongly in the results from the March consultation evening. 85 respondents completed the response sheets
- **Morrison's consultation on 28 and 29 April 2006** (and some further consultations using the same method). The method was the same as for the Farmers' Market except that people were invited to choose and prioritise up to five selections rather than three. 304 respondents completed the sheets.

For each of the three pieces of research, each view was given a score which reflected both the priority given to it by each respondent and the number of respondents selecting that view. The views with the highest scores were thus those which the participants collectively thought were the highest priority.

The tables which follow show the top ten priorities from each of the three pieces of research. By picking out those views which feature in all three sets of results, it is possible to identify those views which consistently featured as the top priorities. In the tables the views are coded as shown in the box below.

Codes used in the tables	
EMP = views concerning employment	HOS = views concerning Verrington Hospital
BUS = views concerning business	INF = views relating to the social, health, educational and other infrastructure
HOU = views concerning housing and/or development	TRA = views concerning traffic
HER = views relating to Wincanton's heritage and history	PAR = views about free car parking
SHO = views concerning the shopping and related facilities	YOU = views concerning facilities for young people
TOU = views related to tourism	SAF = views about perceptions of safety
COM = views related to community spirit and similar features	COU = views relating to the surrounding countryside

Top 10 choices from the 1 March 2006 research (the priority wheels)

Code (see p71)	Vision building block	Total score
EMP	Full employment/ more quality jobs, light industry etc/ more technical based employment/ jobs with higher earnings potential/ employment land/ encourage new employers into area before housing built	24
BUS	New business/ business thriving, successful, prosperous/ encourage more businesses to area to promote local economy/ more industrial units	22
HOU	Stop wrong sort of development/ template for new buildings to fit in, new housing blending with old/ higher quality housing with parking & gardens/ protect rural aspects and views in town from mindless development/ no more housing on industrial sites/ encourage good design and mix through planning process	21
HER	Enhance Georgian buildings in High Street/ make more of Wincanton's architecture	21
SHO	Healthy mix of retail, restaurants and pubs, greater variety of shops and more of them/ thriving shopping area with wide pavements and attractive trees/ attract people to town centre from Morrison's	20
TOU	Tourist hub/ gateway destination for tourists/ make better use of race course to bring in visitors/ improve facilities for visitors/ improve look of town and upgrade visitor facilities to promote tourism	18
COM	Friendly town/ classless town/sharing resources/ helping people/ community spirit	17
HOS	Improved hospital/ diagnostic facilities at Verrington hospital/ maintain access to hospital services/ ensure long-term future of local hospital	15
INF	Improve social and educational infrastructure if population to grow/ new school	15
TRA	Improve traffic management in town centre/ reduce traffic and better bus service/ less traffic	15

Number of participants: 96

Top 10 choices from the Farmers' Market research (3 choices)

Code (see p71)	Vision building block	Total score
SHO	Town Centre a healthy mix of retail, restaurants and pubs	64
PAR	Free car parking	61
HOS	Improved well-resourced local hospital	48
EMP BUS	Full employment with thriving businesses developed in the town centre	48
HOU	Affordable housing for our children	42
TOU	A vibrant English market town and tourist hub	41
COM	Good community spirit	36
YOU	Good facilities for young people	25
SAF	People not afraid to go out	18
COM	Friendly classless town where it is easy to make friends	17

Number of respondents: 85

Table 3: Top 10 choices from the Morrison's research (5 choices)

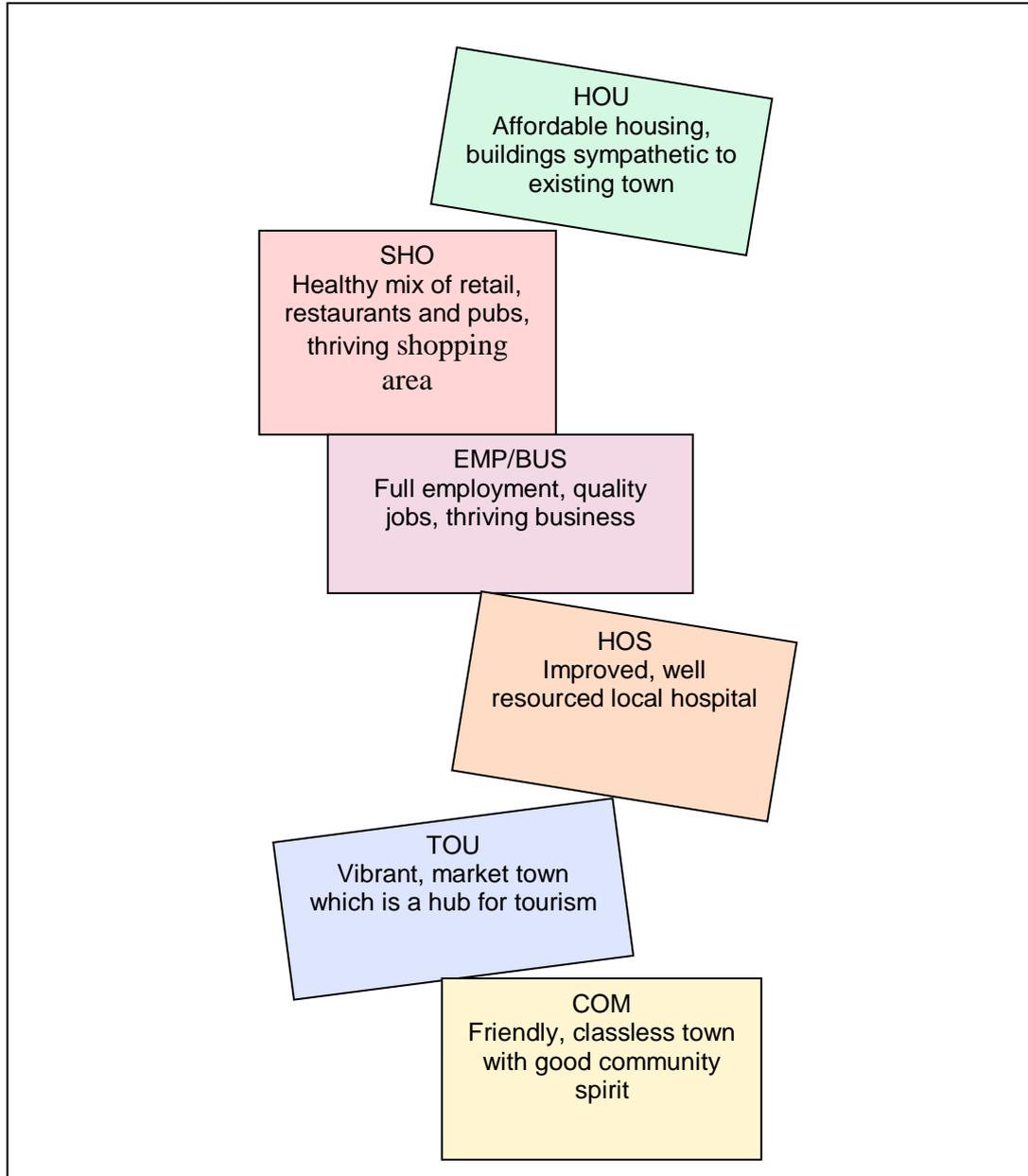
Code (see p71)	Vision building block	Total score
PAR	Free car parking	440
HOU	Affordable housing for our children	411
HOS	Improved well-resourced local hospital	410
SAF	People not afraid to go out	356
SHO	Town Centre a healthy mix of retail, restaurants and pubs	353
EMP BUS	Full employment with thriving businesses developed in the town centre	325
COM	Good community spirit	284
YOU	Good facilities for young people	266
TOU	A vibrant English market town and tourist hub	212
COU	Protected and improved access to countryside	168

Number of respondents: 304

The views that were common to all three response groups are shown in the diagram overleaf. They are shown in order of popularity with the highest priority themes shown at the top of the stack.

These six common themes were used by the Steering Group to construct the overall vision statement and its supporting goals.

Vision building blocks with wide community support



Identifying the strategies and specific policies

The 2005 and 2006 consultations gathered a wide array of more specific views from the community about how Wincanton could be improved. These detailed views, particularly from ‘carousel’ workshops held at the community consultation evening in March 2006, together with the results of the Healthcheck, enabled the Steering Group to identify the strategies and projects that will take Wincanton towards achieving its goals and vision.