

South Somerset District Council

Settlement Profile: Wincanton

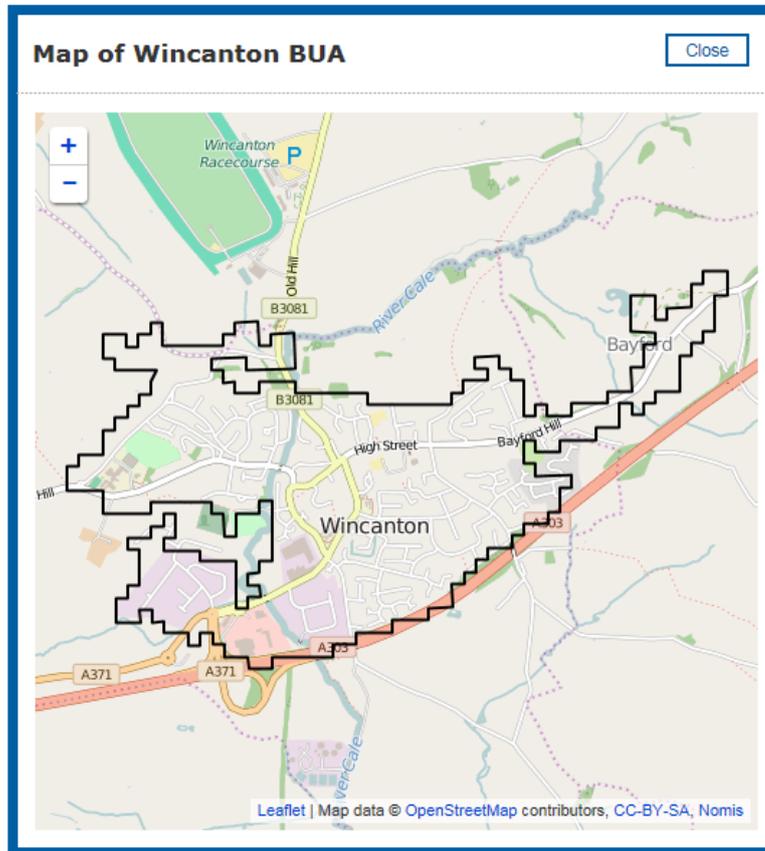


October 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Settlement Profile has been produced using 2011 Census data for the 'Built-up Area' (BUA) of Wincanton (Figure 1.1) unless clearly stated.

Figure 1.1: Map of Wincanton BUA



Source: Partnership Intelligence Unit, Somerset County Council

- 1.2. Wincanton is located in the east of South Somerset and is often seen as a gateway into Somerset from the east. It has a history of being the focal point for the east of South Somerset district.
- 1.3. The A303 trunk road defines the southern edge of the settlement. It is close to the Dorset and Wiltshire borders and has links with the market towns of Castle Cary in South Somerset (approximately 7 miles away) and Gillingham in North Dorset District (approximately 8.5 miles away).
- 1.4. The town's location means that it has functional relationships with Wiltshire, North Dorset and Mendip, as well as the rest of South Somerset, pertaining to travel to work patterns, and housing markets, and other economic-related functions.

1.5. The Wincanton Neighbourhood Area was designated in March 2014. Plan preparation has reached the examination stage¹. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development but has the following objectives:

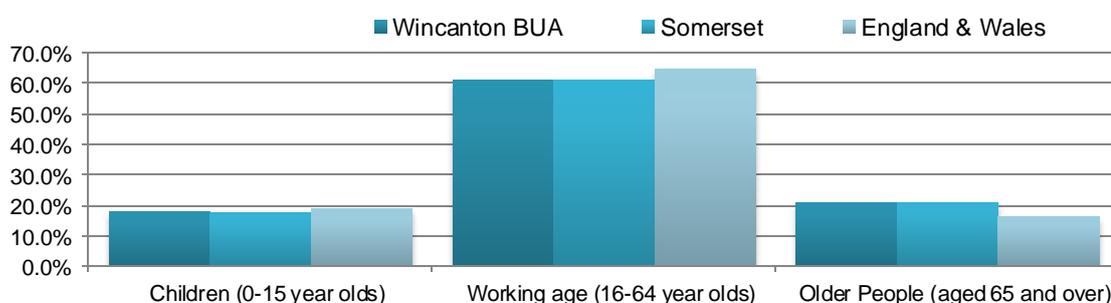
- Identifying the most sustainable locations for development
- Housing suitable for Wincanton’s population
- New employment space near the A303
- Make the town centre more attractive to users
- Protect open spaces & improve walking & cycling routes

2. POPULATION

2.1 Figure 2.1 shows the age profile of Wincanton’s resident population, assessing the number and percentage of residents in each of the following groups: children; working age; and older people. It then compares the percentages against those for Somerset, and England & Wales.

Figure 2.1 Wincanton’s Age Profile Compared to Somerset, and England & Wales

	Wincanton BUA		Somerset	England & Wales
		%	%	%
Total resident population	5,435	100.0	100.0	100.0
Children (0-15 year olds)	978	18.0	17.8	18.9
Working age (16-64 year olds)	3,319	61.1	61.1	64.
Older People (aged 65 and over)	1,138	20.9	21.1	16.4



Source: Partnership Intelligence Unit, Somerset County Council, using 2011 Census statistics from ONS

2.2 Wincanton has a resident population of 5,435 and a similar age profile to Somerset; both have a lower proportion of ‘Working age’ residents and noticeably more ‘Older People’.

2.3 The settlement profile is fairly well balanced when compared to Somerset. However, both Wincanton and Somerset has an elderly population and lower proportion of working age people which is likely to place a greater pressure on services for the elderly.

¹ The Neighbourhood Planning (General Regulations 2012 (as amended) Regulation 17

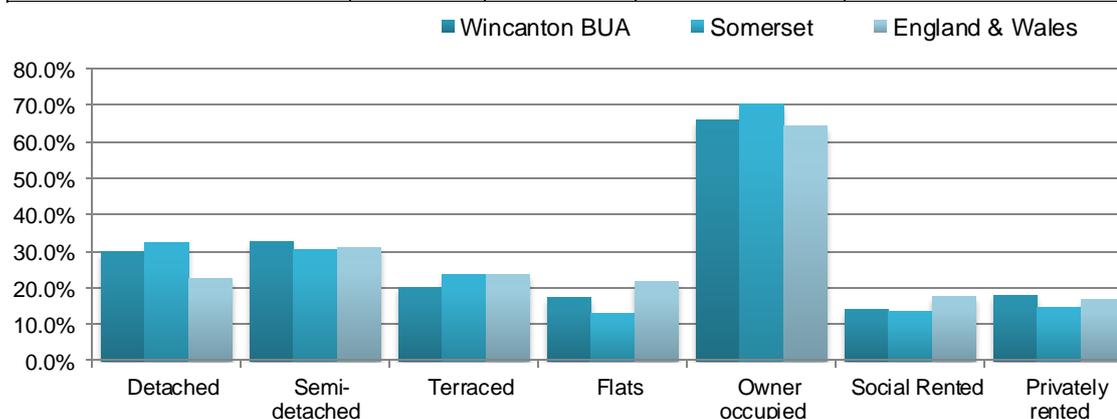
3. HOUSING

3.1 Policy SS5 sets Wincanton a target of delivering 703 new dwellings by 31st March 2028. Between 1st April 2006 and 31st March 2017, Wincanton has delivered 638 dwellings and had 306 commitments², suggesting that it should exceed this target.

3.2 Figure 3.1 shows the number and percentage of dwellings by dwelling type and households by tenure. It also presents a comparison of dwelling types and tenure profiles for Wincanton, Somerset, and England & Wales.

Figure 3.1: Wincanton's Accommodation and Household Profiles Compared to Somerset, and England & Wales

	Wincanton BUA		Somerset	England & Wales
Accommodation		%	%	%
Total no. of dwellings	2,569	100.0	100.0	100.0
Detached	770	30.0	32.3	22.6
Semi-detached	837	32.6	30.4	31.1
Terraced	517	20.1	23.7	23.6
Flats	445	17.3	13.0	21.6
Tenure		%	%	%
Total no. of households	2,408	100.0	100.0	100.0
Owner occupied	1,588	65.9	70.2	64.3
Social Rented	338	14.0	13.5	17.6
Privately rented	430	17.9	14.7	16.7
Average household size	2.2			



Source: Partnership Intelligence Unit, Somerset County Council, using 2011 Census statistics from ONS

3.3 Figure 3.1 demonstrates that Wincanton offers a good range of accommodation types. The mix of housing types in Wincanton generally reflects the rest of South Somerset; although the number of flats is noticeably higher in the settlement. This suggests that Wincanton has a wider choice of housing at the less expensive end of the market.

² South Somerset District Council Monitoring Database

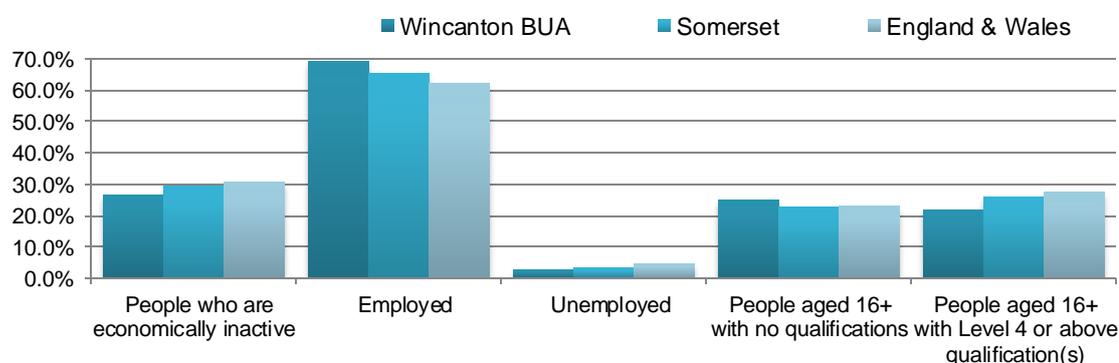
- 3.4 Wincanton's proportion of privately rented accommodation is higher than the county and national averages, though it remains a fraction of the owner-occupied dwellings. Both the Wincanton and Somerset levels of affordable housing are noticeably below the English & Welsh levels.
- 3.5 Overall, the settlement maintains a good variety of housing types, including a higher number of flats. This suggests better affordability than the Somerset average, though both Somerset and Wincanton fall short of the national levels of social rented housing.

4. ECONOMY

- 4.1 As Figure 4.1 shows, the residents of Wincanton appear to be in a good position, economically. The data shows that of the proportion of economically inactive people in Wincanton is low, with the proportion in employment above the county and English & Welsh averages.
- 4.2 On the other hand, a high proportion of residents aged 16+ have no qualifications. Similarly, the proportion of residents with Level 4 or above qualifications is low (Figure 4.1). This suggests that, proportionately, the residents of Wincanton are less qualified than Somerset and English & Welsh residents.

Figure 4.1: Wincanton's Economic Activity Compared to Somerset, and England & Wales

	Wincanton BUA		Somerset	England & Wales
		%	%	%
Total number of people aged 16 to 74	3,843	100.0	100.0	100.0
People who are economically inactive	1,014	26.4	29.2	30.3
Employed	2,652	69.0	65.2	61.9
Unemployed	99	2.6	3.0	4.4
People aged 16+ with no qualifications	1,101	24.7	22.4	22.7
People aged 16+ with Level 4 or above qualification(s)	960	21.5	25.6	27.2



Source: Partnership Intelligence Unit, Somerset County Council, using 2011 Census statistics from ONS

- 4.3 The main employment areas in Wincanton are located at:
- Wincanton Business Park
 - Bennetts Field Trading Estate
 - The Tythings
- 4.4 The SSDC Monitoring Data base shows that Wincanton has delivered 1.40 hectares net land and 11,400 sq. m net floorspace since 2006/7. No losses of floorspace have been to residential use, with much of it being to alternative economic uses.
- 4.5 Figure 4.2 shows the employment for the Wincanton Ward, specific to 18 industry groups.

Figure 4.2: Employment Provision in Wincanton, 2015

Sector	Wincanton		South Somerset
	No of Jobs	%	%
1 : Agriculture, forestry & fishing (A)	0	0.0	n/a
2 : Mining, quarrying & utilities (B,D and E)	0	0.0	0.9
3 : Manufacturing (C)	300	10.6	20.3
4 : Construction (F)	175	6.2	5.5
5 : Motor trades (Part G)	150	5.3	(All G) 18.8
6 : Wholesale (Part G)	250	8.8	
7 : Retail (Part G)	600	21.1	
8 : Transport & storage (inc postal) (H)	350	12.3	3.5
9 : Accommodation & food services (I)	100	3.5	6.2
10 : Information & communication (J)	25	0.9	2
11 : Financial & insurance (K)	10	0.4	0.9
12 : Property (L)	20	0.7	1.4
13 : Professional, scientific & technical (M)	125	4.4	7
14 : Business administration & support services (N)	150	5.3	5.5
15 : Public administration & defence (O)	35	1.2	2.3
16 : Education (P)	225	7.9	7.8
17 : Health (Q)	225	7.9	14.1
18 : Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services (R,S,T and U)	125	4.4	3.9
Total	3,000		

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, NOMIS, 2015

The BRES data does not include farmagriculture (SIC subclass 01000) data at settlement level; it is only available at region and country level. This is Open Access data that has been rounded to make it publishable; as such, the figures do not tally to an exact 100%.

- 4.6 Of the industries, the primary employer within the settlement is retail (21.1%); the second and third largest employers are Transport & storage (12.3%), and manufacturing (10.6%).
- 4.7 The settlement provides approximately 3,000 jobs, meaning that for every resident aged 16 to 74 the settlement provides around 70-80% (78% subject to rounding) of a full-time equivalent job.

Town Centre

- 5.1 The centre is a relatively attractive market town, with a number of historic buildings. It meets a localised retail and service need, and has a mix of convenience and lower order comparison shopping and services. There are a number of convenient and public car parks located in close proximity to the Town Centre.
- 5.2 On the other hand, the centre has a very low proportion of national multiple retailer and higher order comparison offer. As such, it attracts a limited market share of comparison goods spending within the District.
- 5.3 The Study also states that Wincanton has the fewest units amongst the Market Towns, and has a high vacancy rate when compared with the national average, a rate which is increasing overtime.
- 5.4 Locally, there is a desire to improve the retail offer within the town centre to make it more attractive to shoppers and visitors. To improve the town centre offer, the settlement's capacity to deliver retail growth (Figure 4.3) should be met through the reoccupation of vacant units, consolidating the centre before expanding. However, there are options for longer-term growth.

Figure 4.3: Projected Retail Floorspace Capacity in Wincanton

Type	By 2024	By 2029	By 2034
Convenience	1,740	1,884	2,022
Comparison	129	304	481
Food and Beverage	76	224	367
Total	1,945	2,412	2,870

- 5.5 Improvements could also be made to Mill Street and parts of High Street that have narrow pavements, as pedestrian movement in close proximity to traffic can detract from the overall shopping environment.
- 4.8 Overall, despite low qualification levels, Wincanton is in a relatively strong economic position in terms of the proportion of employed residents. It also provides a fairly high proportion of jobs relative to its population of economically active residents.
- 4.9 The settlement is producing employment land mostly in A, C, mixed, and Sui Generis uses; yet it still holds a large share of B-use employment.
- 4.10 The settlement has a good range of services and facilities, though the town centre offer could benefit from an improved offer, particularly to address its high vacancy rate.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE

- 5.6 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) shows that the development proposed for Wincanton in the Local Plan is unlikely to result in abnormal or fundamental infrastructure constraints relating to transport, flood risk and drainage, utilities, telecommunications, waste and recycling, and emergency services.
- 5.7 New housing does generate a need for additional open space and outdoor play space, sports, community, and cultural facilities; although the timing of this is not fundamental to delivering development.
- 5.8 The Wincanton town centre has both national chains and independent stores, mostly in retail use, but with financial/professional services, and health and non-residential institutions, including opticians, dentists, and clinics.
- 5.9 Wincanton has benefitted from a new primary health care centre and pharmacy, but the local press³ has since expressed concerns regarding the capacity and service received. These concerns with the NHS and not exclusive to Wincanton.
- 5.10 The settlement has churches, a town hall with community offices, and a library. It also has leisure facilities including a swimming pool and sports hall, a skate park, multi-use games area, and a children's playground.
- 5.11 Wincanton has three schools: Wincanton County Primary School, current undergoing an expansion to provide an additional 8 classrooms; Our Lady of Mount Carmel Primary School; and King Arthur's Community School. There are also nursery and adult education facilities.
- 5.12 Overall, no infrastructural issues have been identified that would impede the growth of the settlement to the Local Plan targets.

³ <http://www.westerngazette.co.uk/Wincanton-health-centre-struggling-cope-demand/story-26750231-detail/story.html> (23rd June 2015)

6. TRAVEL

- 6.1 How the residents of a settlement travel is an indication of its sustainability.
- 6.2 Wincanton's position next to the A303 makes it a desirable location for residents and businesses. The planned improvements to the A303 are likely to make it even more desirable.
- 6.3 As shown by Figure 6.4, the settlement is reasonably well served by public transport.

Figure 6.1: Public Transport Provision

Buses		
Operator	Principal Destinations	Frequency (Approx.)
Buses of Somerset ⁴	58/ 58A: Yeovil - Sherborne – Wincanton via Milborne Port - Henstridge – Templecombe	2-hourly
Nippy Bus ⁵	667: Street – Castle Cary - Wincanton	90 mins
Berry's Coaches ⁶	London Superfast	2 x daily
Train Services		
Operator	Service	Frequency (approx.)
Great Western Railway (GWR)	London Paddington to Penzance line (Taunton – Exeter) Castle Cary Station – 7 miles north-west	2- hourly (after 10.30hrs westbound)
Great Western Railway (GWR)	Weymouth to Bristol Line (Heart of Wessex line) Castle Cary Station – 7 miles north-west	2 hourly
South Western Railway (SWR)	(London Waterloo – Exeter Line) Templecombe - 4 miles south Gillingham – 8.5 miles east Sherborne Station – 7 miles south- west	Hourly

- 6.4 The Memorial Hall car park serves as the as the drop off and pick up point for Berry's Superfast coach to London (Hammersmith). The nearest railway station is at Templecombe, 4 miles to the south.
- 6.5 The current timetable on the GWR Paddington to Penzance line is not conducive to local commute journeys e.g. to Taunton. An expansion of the car park at Castle Cary Station (IDP 2) would facilitate this.

⁴

<https://www.firstgroup.com/somerset/planjourney/timetables/?operator=31&service=57/58/58A/59&page=1&redirect=no>

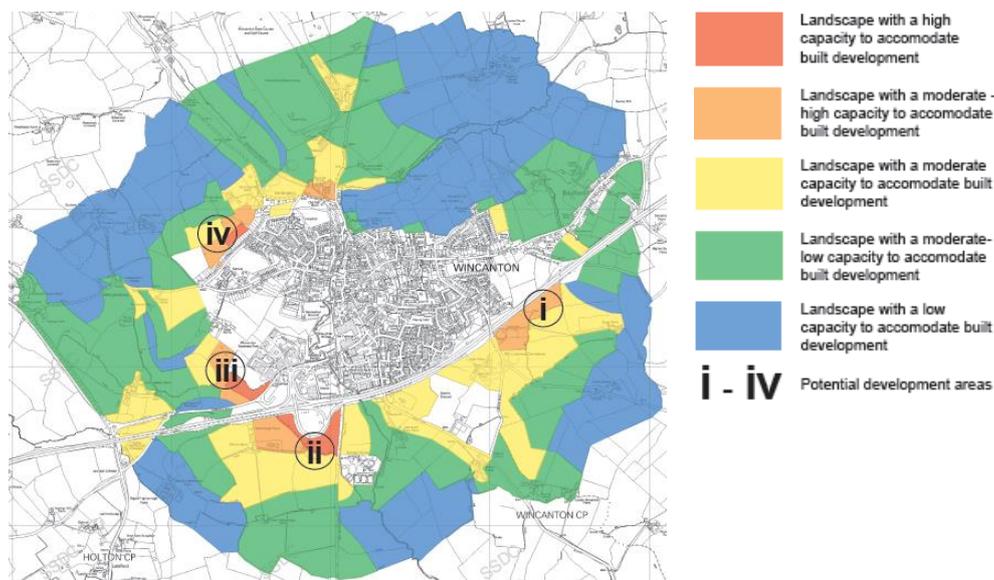
⁵ <http://www.nippybus.co.uk/services.php>

⁶ <http://www.berryscoaches.co.uk/london-superfast>

7. ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1 The Peripheral Landscape Study⁷ shows that, from a landscape standpoint, there is suitable land to accommodate growth.
- 7.2 Other factors will inform any judgements on future growth allocations for the settlement.

Figure 7.1: Wincanton Landscape Capacity



Source: Peripheral Landscape Study (2008)

- 7.3 Whilst landscape potential is important, other factors and constraints are also necessary to understanding the growth potential of the settlement.
- 7.4 Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land (Grades 1, 2 & 3a)⁸, is a key environmental constraint, according to the NPPF⁹. Loss of BMV will have to be considered as part of the planning balance for future growth. As Figure 7.2 shows, BMV is located solely to the north of the A303.

⁷ Peripheral Landscape Assessment, March 2008: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/evidence-base/district-wide-documents/peripheral-landscape-studies/>

⁸ Defined in the NPPF, (DCLG) 2012 – Annex 2

⁹ DCLG, 2012

Figure 7.2: BMV Land around Wincanton



Source: WebMap, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Data

7.5 Another environmental constraint to growth is flood risk, shown below in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3: Wincanton Flood Map (Flood Zones 2 and 3)



Source: Environment Agency data on WebMap

7.6 The map shows that river flooding is a constraint primarily to the south of the A303, with some acute Flood Zone 2 and 3 land line from with the River Cale – from the north-east to the south-west of the town.

7.7 There is one county geological site located by the A303, and one county wildlife site to the west (Appendix). Due to their locations they are unlikely to significantly constrain growth.

7.8 There are three archaeological sites either in or on the periphery of the town. The archaeological sites are unlikely to significantly constrain the growth of the town.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Wincanton has delivered a good level of housing, showing that it has a strong housing market. It also benefits from a good jobs density and a strategic position on the A303, and there appears to be suitable development land, suggesting that Wincanton's ability to accommodate future growth is good.

Key Issues

8.2 The key issues that will need to be taken into account in planning the future of Wincanton include:

- The high delivery of housing
- Relatively good provision of jobs in the settlement
- The need for town centre improvements - occupation of vacant units to increase retail offer and public realm improvements.
- Whilst currently growth is concentrated to the north of the A303, the option of developing south of the trunk road may require more serious consideration.