

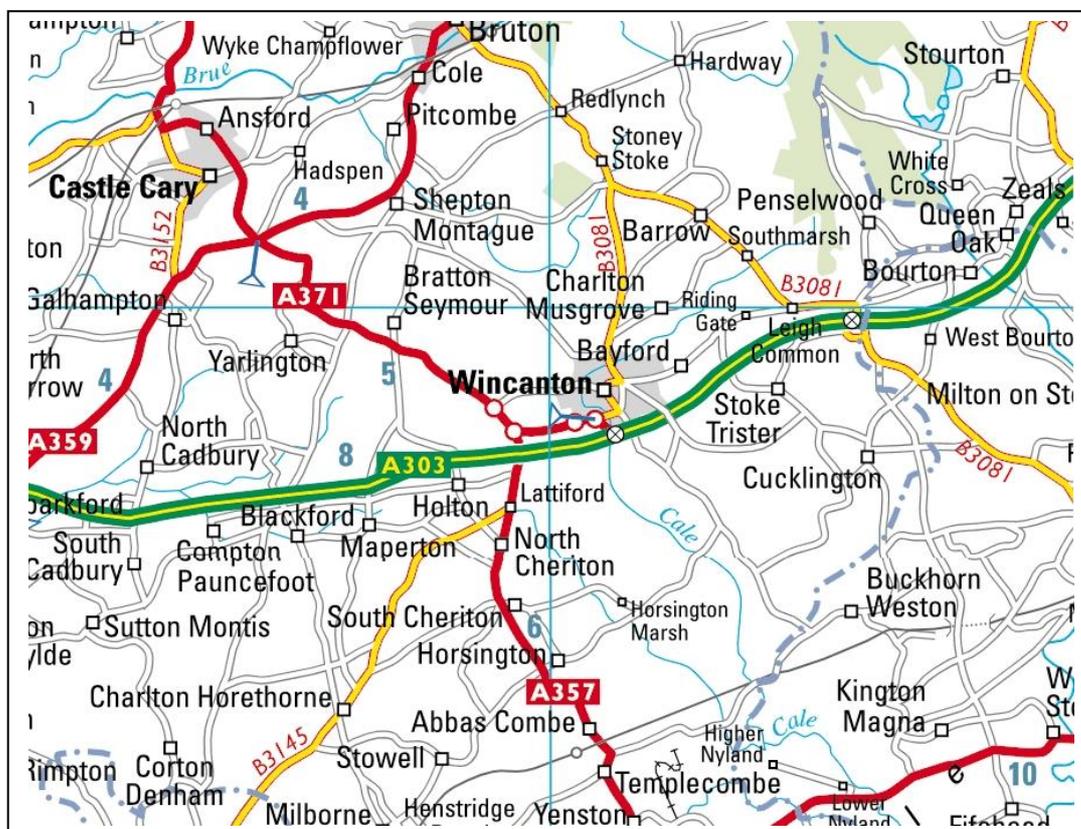
1 Wincanton and community planning

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.

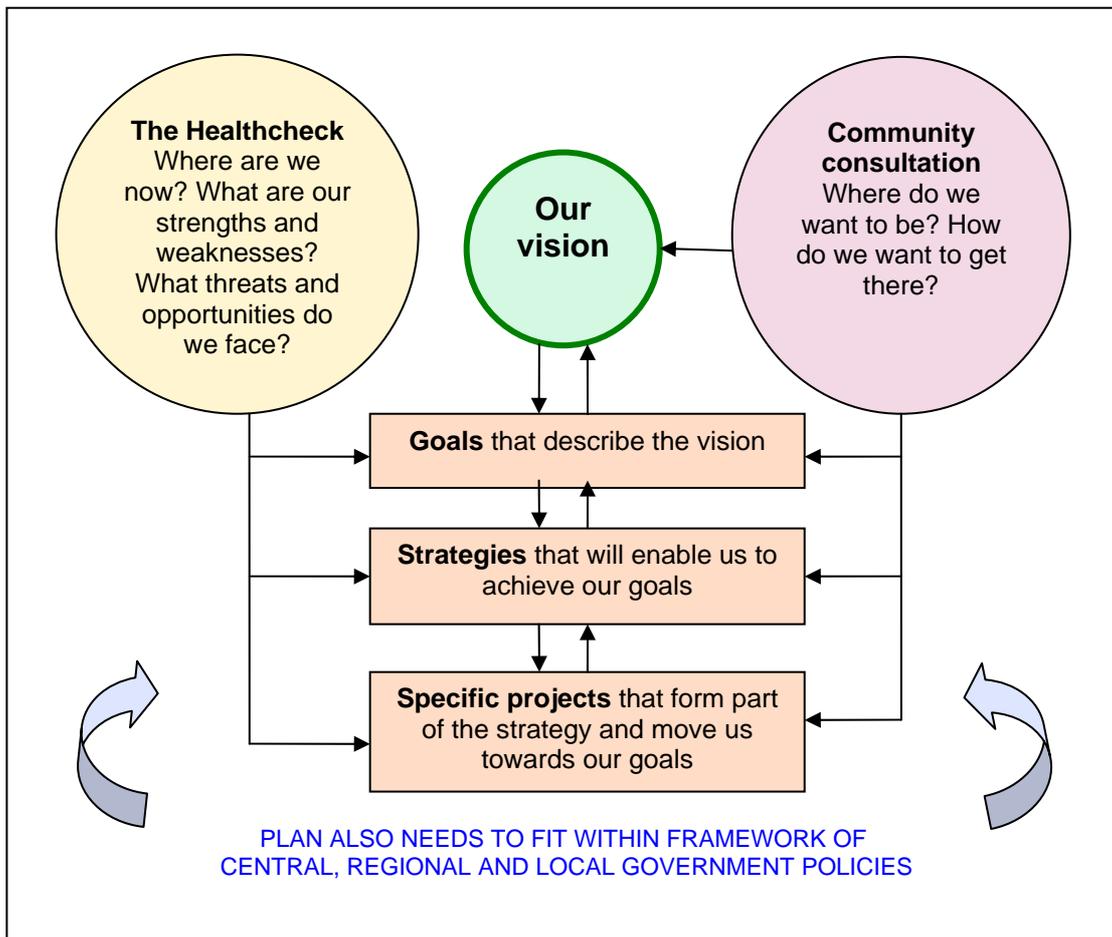
A plan for Wincanton

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.