

# Wichelstowe, Swindon

## Key details

<b>Name</b>	Wichelstowe
<b>Location</b>	Swindon, Wiltshire
<b>Number of dwellings</b>	Up to 4,500
<b>Date first homes sold</b>	2009
<b>Homes delivered to date</b>	More than 700 in East Wichel
<b>Percentage of affordable homes</b>	30%
<b>Average house price</b>	£241,000 (in East Wichel)
<b>Parking provision</b>	In initial consent, no more than 1.5 spaces per household overall
<b>Land dedicated to vehicles</b>	40%
<b>Total site size</b>	309 ha, including 111 ha open space
<b>Housing density</b>	Parcel density expected to be around 43 dph; (gross density 15 dph)
<b>Walking distance to railway station</b>	42 minutes
<b>Planning guidance</b>	Initial consent subject to PPG3



## Background and context of development

Planning consent for Wichelstowe was originally received in 2005. This is a major development to the south of Swindon, which includes up to 4,500 new dwellings plus the restoration of former sections of the Wilts & Berks Canal. There are three main sections. East Wichel is mostly complete. It contains 800 dwellings, a pub and a section of canal. Middle Wichel will contain the district centre, but so far the only building completed in this zone is a large Waitrose store. West Wichel will contain the largest number of dwellings and construction here has not yet started.



The original masterplan included 111 ha of open space, 68,000 sq m of B1 (business) development in designated areas and 5,650 in mixed use areas, 6,900 sq m gross retail floor space, 4,330 sq m community use buildings including a library, 3 primary schools, 1 secondary school, a 1,000 space park and ride facility, 4,300 m of new canal and associated infrastructure, and construction of Phase II of the Old Town Southern Relief Road. The masterplan was based on the concept of walkable neighbourhoods, ensuring a high proportion of dwellings were within walking distance of play areas, schools, active open space and community facilities.



The Wichelstowe Design Code has created a varied appearance to the development. It states that no more than two adjacent houses should have the same external appearance, along with rules that most houses should have small railed front gardens, that each parcel must contain examples of particular housing types, and that external TV aerials and satellite dishes are not permitted.

The original planning consent was substantially altered in 2014. The new masterplan included a concentration of the neighbourhood centres, as opposed to the original plan which had contained extensive areas designated as 'Predominantly Residential Mixed Use Areas,' which were to contain

no more than 2.5% retail, 2.5% office uses and no more than 5% community uses. The consented floorspace for these different uses did not change.

In the new masterplan, the section of canal along the western boundary of the site is removed, as is the canal basin located in the centre of Middle Wichel. However, a SUDS strategy is introduced to deal with drainage, with swales, ditches and balancing ponds.

The retail provision is heavily dominated by a single large Waitrose store in what will become the centre of Middle Wichel. Of the no more than 6,900 sq m consented gross retail floorspace, 4,000 sq m is taken up by the Waitrose store, while 1,464 sq m of smaller premises are consented in East Wichel, leaving no more than 1,436 sq m remaining for Middle and West Wichel, where around 80% of the dwellings will be located.

## Public Realm

<b>Urban trees</b>	Few within the residential zone
<b>Grass verges</b>	Not on most streets
<b>Front gardens</b>	Yes, most houses have small railed front gardens
<b>Back gardens</b>	Parking courts occupy most of the area inside the blocks

## Public transport, walking and cycling accessibility



The original masterplan included a set of bus priority routes called Strategic Transport Arteries (STAr) passing through the centres of the main residential areas, with the main highways avoiding these areas. The first of these has already been built, with bus-only sections of East Wichel Way to the east and west of the residential zone. However, the new masterplan abandons this approach, opting for a more conventional integration of buses with other road traffic. The main strategic highways (the Croft Road Hay Lane Link or CRHLL and the Western Distributor Road) will now pass through the centre of Middle and West Wichel, and will act as the bus routes, allowing ‘major savings in infrastructure costs.’ Yet despite passing through the main residential areas, the majority of the CRHLL (apart from a central portion) is expected to have ‘no dedicated cycle or pedestrian facilities.’

A 1,000 space Park & Ride is proposed in the west of the site, close to M4 junction 16. Two further bus gates are proposed, one close to the district centre in Middle Wichel, and a second on Redposts Drive. The bus gate on Redposts Drive, the access point to the north of the site, will only operate during peak hours, to prevent congestion and delays to bus times.

There are tight restrictions on parking within East Wichel. According to the Wichelstowe Parking Statement, “roads have been designed with reduced widths to prevent on-street parking,” and a Restricted Parking Zone is in place. There is designated private parking for each dwelling, mostly located in parking courts behind the blocks. In addition 1,000 ‘visitor parking bays’ are provided around the development. However, the enforcement of the Restricted Parking Zone was relaxed after protest from local residents, and the council may now allow parking on East Wichel Way, which was originally designated a STAR route with bus priority measures and traffic restrictions.



The buses serving Wichelstowe are well-used. Census data for method of travel to work, from sites that were already in existence in 2011, shows that of the nine sites surveyed Wichelstowe has the highest bus usage at 9% and the highest cycle usage at (an admittedly low) 3.2%. National Cycle Network Route 45 passes along the northern boundary of the site, providing a link towards Swindon Old Town, although the path that connects to this has not been provided with lights. To the south, the pedestrian/cycle route to Wroughton has been upgraded.

Destination	Company	Route numbers	Weekday daytime frequency	Weekday evening frequency	Saturday frequency	Sunday frequency	Travel time	Location of bus/train stop	Last return time
Swindon Old Town	Thamesdown (11) and Stagecoach (9)	9 and 11	Every 10-20 mins	Every 20-30 mins	Every 10-20 mins	Every 15-30 mins	6 mins	Two within East Wichel	23:34
Bus station / Fleming Way (5 mins walk to railway station)	Thamesdown (11) and Stagecoach (9)	9 and 11	Every 10-20 mins	Every 20-30 mins	Every 10-20 mins	Every 15-30 mins	15 mins	Two within East Wichel	23:30

## Local Facilities



At the time of our visit in early 2017, the only completed building in Middle Wichel was the new Waitrose supermarket. With a 4,000 sq m gross floor area and a 250 space car park this is a major supermarket. This Waitrose is intended to form the ‘anchor’ of the forthcoming ‘district centre’ in Middle Wichel, with a footbridge across the canal from the supermarket to a range of other shops and community facilities. A primary school will also be located here. However, given that no more than 1,436 sq m additional retail is allowed in the whole of Middle and West Wichel, it seems that this single supermarket will remain very dominant.

Even if more retail floorspace was allowed in the ‘district centre’, the presence of such a large supermarket would likely make it more challenging for smaller independent shops to achieve commercial viability. East Wichel currently has a very limited number of retail establishments, which at present includes a hairdresser and a pub. Consent has been granted for 1,464 sq m of retail floorspace in East Wichel, but a pedestrianised square in the middle of East Wichel contained no shops at the time of our visit.

Type of facility	Plans and current state of progress within development	Built yet within site?	Closest example outside the development	Estimated time to reach nearest example outside development			
				Walking	Cycling	Driving	Public transport
Convenience store	An application to open a convenience store was approved in 2015 but the shop has not yet opened	No	Victoria News, Old Town	27 mins	10 mins	5 mins	8 mins (bus 9)
Café /	A row of shops is under	No	Dottys Cafe, Old	25 mins	9 mins	4 mins	9 mins (bus

restaurant	construction in East Wichel		Town				9)
Drinking establishment	The Bayberry opened 2012	Yes					
High street shops	Five shops under construction in East Wichel, more planned in Middle Wichel	No	Old Town	25 mins	9 mins	4 mins	9 mins (bus 9)
Supermarket	Waitrose in Middle Wichel district centre	Yes		13 mins	4 mins	2 mins	4 mins (bus 9, 11)
Nursery	East Wichel Community Primary School and Nursery	Yes					
Primary school	East Wichel Community Primary School and Nursery	Yes					
Secondary school	Secondary School planned in Middle Wichel	No	Commonweal School	14 mins	6 mins	6 mins	No direct link
Park	Lakes to the west of East Wichel	Yes					
Playground	Several playgrounds planned across site, very attractive one already built at Fernacre Road in East Wichel	Yes					
Playing fields	Planned close to East Wichel	No	Croft Playing Fields	20 mins	7 mins	7 mins	8 mins (bus 9)
Tennis courts	No plans known	No	Town Gardens, Swindon	23 mins	8 mins	5 mins	14 mins (incl. 10 mins walk)
Leisure centre	No plans known	No	Croft Sports Centre, Swindon	26 mins	9 mins	6 mins	12 mins (bus 11)
Swimming pool	No plans known	No	Health Hydro, Swindon	36 mins	12 mins	10 mins	20 mins (incl. 12 mins walk)
Wildlife area	Lakes to the west of East Wichel	Yes					
Community Centre	StoweAway Community Centre	Yes					
Daytime / evening classes	A few classes at StoweAway	No	Croft Sports Centre, Swindon	26 mins	9 mins	6 mins	12 mins (bus 11)
Medical facilities	May be provided in local centre	No	Hermitage Surgery, Old Town	28 mins	10 mins	6 mins	13 mins
Post office	District centre planned in Middle Wichel	No	Old Town	28 mins	10 mins	6 mins	8 mins
Library	Library in original planning consent	No	Old Town Library	28 mins	10 mins	6 mins	8 mins
Co-working space	Not known	No	Devizes Road, Old Town	24 mins	9 mins	4 mins	7 mins (bus 9)



## Developer contributions

*In August 2017, the following S106 contributions had been paid:*

Contribution	Total Sum	Total paid to date	Total outstanding
Off Site Traffic Calming Contribution	£400,000	187,859	200,000
Bus Subsidy	£3,723,000	1,309,878	2,428,000
Bus Shelter Maintenance Contribution	£30,000	0	30,000
Real time information contribution	£102,000	102,000	0
Off Site Footpath, Cycleway and Bridleway Contribution	£1,400,000	269,729	1,125,000
Green Travel Contribution	£230,000	120,040	110,000
Off-Site Bus Infrastructure Contribution	£4,447,867	234,824	4,197,867
Off Site Construction Haul Route Infrastructure Contribution	£340,000	376,336	0
Floodlit All Weather Sports Pitch Contribution	£480,900	0	480,900
Primary School Multi-Use Games Area Contribution	£217,080	0	217,080
Changing Room Contribution	£280,000	0	280,000
Grass Playing Pitches Contribution	£174,000	0	174,000
Grass Playing Pitch Car Parking Contribution	£179,000	0	179,000
Allotment Gardens Contribution	£340,000	0	340,000
Local Open Space Areas Contribution	£1,017,000	296,095	762,750
Major Open Space Contribution	£1,447,000	418,590	1,085,250
Nature Conservation Areas Contribution	£255,300	116,458	155,300
Interim Open Space Maintenance Contribution	£732,000	238,281	549,000
Open Space Areas Maintenance Contribution	£1,423,557	0	1,423,557
Canal Maintenance Contribution	£200,000	0	200,000
Off-Site Landscaping Contribution	£770,000	469,906	372,500
Heritage and Nature Conservation Interpretation Centre Contribution	£320,000	0	320,000
Secondary School and Sports Hall	£7,074,172	0	7,074,172

<b>Contribution</b>			
Westlecott Primary School and Community Centre Contribution	£2,944,997	3,429,694	0
South Leaze Primary School and Community Centre Contribution	£2,944,997	0	2,944,997
Library Contribution	£800,000	0	800,000
Community Service Contribution	£45,000	37,000	15,000
Sustainable Community Contribution	£75,000	97,656	0
Percentage For Art Contribution	£300,000	25,000	275,000
Emergency Services Fitting Out Contribution	£100,000	130,208	0
Regeneration Contribution	£6,500,000	756,979	5,850,000
First SDA Administration Cost Contribution	£40,381	40,381	0
Second SDA Administration Cost Contribution	£40,381	41,580	0
Third SDA Administration Cost Contribution	£40,381	43,368	0
Fourth SDA Administration Cost Contribution	£40,381	45,239	0
Fifth SDA Administration Cost Contribution	£40,381	44,752	0
SDA Administration Costs Balancing Contribution	£201,905	0	201,905
Recycling Contribution	£53,520	11,646	43,320
Nature Conservation Facilitation Contribution	£250,000	208,983	71,000

## Summary

This is a site with great potential, close to Swindon Old Town. So far, the use of the Design Code appears successful as the completed housing in East Wichel looks attractive, and the restoration of the Wilts & Berks Canal is a boon to the area. The buses here are frequent and well used, with some obvious bus priority measures in place. However, the alteration to the planning consent in 2014, with the scrapping of the bus priority STAR routes in future phases of Wichelstowe, could mean Middle and West Wichel turn out differently. The presence of a very large supermarket near East Wichel may also have delayed the establishment of smaller independent shops, contributing to the fact that streets and open spaces in East Wichel seemed quite empty during our visit, except at school closing time. Hopefully this will change as the area becomes more established.