

The quality of the shopping environment is more positive in Chichester city centre than the surrounding retail and leisure parks

Introduction



Chichester is a small Cathedral city in the south of England, in the county of West Sussex, with a population of about 25,000. It is the administrative centre of the Chichester district, a largely rural area with a population of over 100,000. It is close to the seaside town of Bognor Regis, and is also

twinned with cities in France and Italy. Chichester is a constantly developing city with great accessibility from major roads, such as the A27 which passes through Chichester on toward Portsmouth, Brighton and London. There is also good accessibility from public transport. There is a major station at Chichester where trains can be caught to go to Cardiff Central, Bournemouth and London. Also there is a bus station which has buses running frequently to many of the local towns and villages. The city is known for being very historic and was built by the Romans. Chichester cathedral is dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and contains a shrine to Saint Richard of Chichester. Its spire, built of the weak local stone, collapsed suddenly and was rebuilt during the 19th century. Within the nave of the cathedral can be seen the remains of a Roman mosaic pavement. The Cathedral is unusual in the UK in having a separate bell tower a few metres away from the main building, rather than integrated into it. The city is home to the world-renowned Chichester Festival Theatre whose annual summer season attracts the highest calibre of actors, writers and directors and is widely considered one of the most important annual events in British theatre. I aim to answer the question 'is the quality of the shopping environment more positive in Chichester city

centre than the surrounding retail and leisure parks? I will do so within the following Sub-Headings:-

- What are retail parks and where are they located?
- What are leisure parks and where are they located?
- Does Chichester city centre provide a wider range of shops than the surrounding leisure/retail parks?
- Does the city centre have a better environment?

I aim to collect a range of data about Chichester city centre and the retail/leisure parks by creating land use surveys, sphere of influence maps, questionnaires and bi-polar analyses. I will also use a pedestrian count to see if the amount of people varies in each area. These will allow me to collect satisfactory data to decide if Chichester city centre has a better shopping environment than the surrounding parks.

What Are Retail Parks? And Where Are They Located?

A retail park is a grouping of three or more retail warehouses with associated car parking. Retailing consists of the sale of goods/merchandise for personal or household consumption either from a fixed location such as a department store or kiosk, or from a fixed location and related subordinated services. They are usually located near town centres but not within the actual centre they usually lie around the city itself, this allows them to provide large areas of free parking without the worry of people using it to access the centre of town, without a hefty walk. They also have larger warehouses so stock is plentiful and a lot of different items can be sold in the same place. Typically they host a range of chain stores, including supermarkets such as Tesco or Sainsbury, electrical superstores such as PC world or Comet, and DIY stores such as B&Q.

What are leisure parks? and where are they located?

Leisure parks are places where there are amenities available to the general public for their personal leisure, Chichester gate is a good example of a leisure park. It has lots of different leisure aspects, e.g. Cineworld where all the latest films can be watched on the big screen and there is a bowlplex, Lakeside bowlplex. Often fast food is a feature of a leisure park, offering either a snack before cinema or bowling or maybe a treat meal for the family. Leisure parks are often located, not in the city centre but just on the outside, so that both parties are looked after, people

can access from the town centre if they wish, and people can drive there with free parking available.

Does Chichester city centre provide a wider range of shops than the surrounding leisure/retail parks?

Chichester city centre offers a wide variety of shopping opportunities, it has a vast range of different shops, there is clothing, household appliances, technology, hair and beauty and many other types of shops, the surrounding retail park offers technology, grocery shopping, household furnishings and vehicle repair shop. As you can see each offer totally

centre
hair and
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different types of merchandise, the sells clothes and has beauty opportunities as the retail park has mechanical shops, shopping and household furnishings. There differences but ones, if the town had shops selling

household furnishings, for example, sofas and beds, then delivery of the item is a must as there is no easy access for their own vehicle where as at the retail park there is plenty of available room so that customers can take the item home themselves saving money on delivery costs. Also vide versa, if in the retail park a hair and beauty shop opened then they would deprive themselves of customers because most people would not want to drive to their local city just for one reason, they would much prefer, after receiving treatment to be able to go shopping in the centre of town so this is automatically stopped by being on the outskirts of a major city centre. To answer my question of Does Chichester city centre provide a wider range of shops than the surrounding leisure/retail parks? I would say yes, but a retail park is not meant to have a wider range of shopping opportunities it is meant to be cheaper and easier for the customer.

Does the city centre have a better environment?

The Bi-polar analysis shows what I thought of the 4 areas in which I have studied. I judged each area on 6 different aspects, which are as follows -

- ❖ Accessibility
- ❖ Pollution
- ❖ Attraction
- ❖ Cleanliness
- ❖ Noise
- ❖ Tranquillity

My results showed me that Chichester gate scored highest out of all the areas tested, , being the most peaceful, accessible, attractive and clean. I think this is



mostly because it is used for the entertainment side of the city, there is a Cineworld, and there are restaurants (above). There are also a few night clubs in this leisure park, these are open until 11pm so that there is less congestion at the local stations and taxi ranks. This is also more appealing for 2 further reasons: -

1. The area needs to be appealing so that it can draw business away from the centre of town.
2. It is a new complex and all the amenities are newly furnished in a modern way.

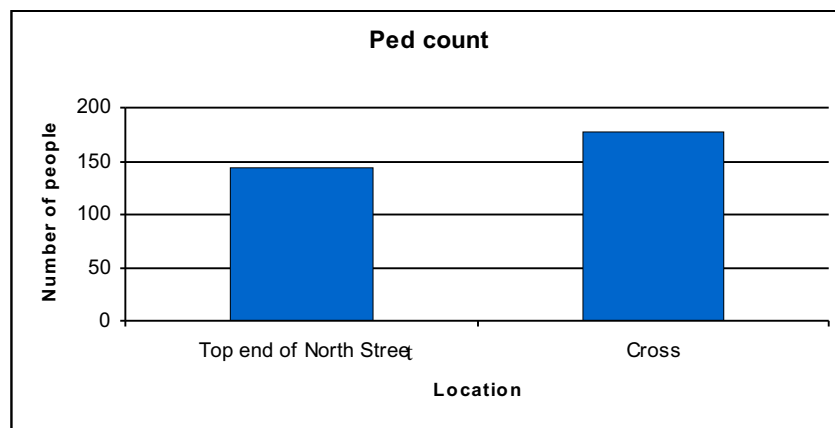
The top end of North Street was the least attractive. It was quite dirty and loud. However this is not as important because there are fewer shops and fewer things to do so less people are around this area for a long time they are mostly just walking through. There is also a main road that passes right through that end of North Street, which increases pollution of that area.

Portfield also resulted low on my bi-polar analysis. Despite being accessible and moderately clean it was loud, polluted and very unattractive. The main road, A27, runs right around the Portfield area and is very busy most of the time, especially in peak times. The cars add to pollution and the noise levels and there is a distinct lack of plant life or anything agricultural. This could deter customers away and affect the income on the shops in the retail park.

Finally, Chichester city centre. This scored highly on my bi-polar analysis. It was by far the least polluted, and one of the most attractive of the places I analysed. However it was very busy. As this is where most of the shops are, the area must be attractive and easily accessible. The cobbled streets however may make it harder for disabled people to travel around the centre of the city. If it were not as attractive then Chichester's sphere of influence would be greatly affected for the worse.

Overall, Chichester gate was the most appealing over the 6 fields that I analysed through and has the best scenario making it the finest place to be. It has the most lucrative future and plenty of space to expand into.

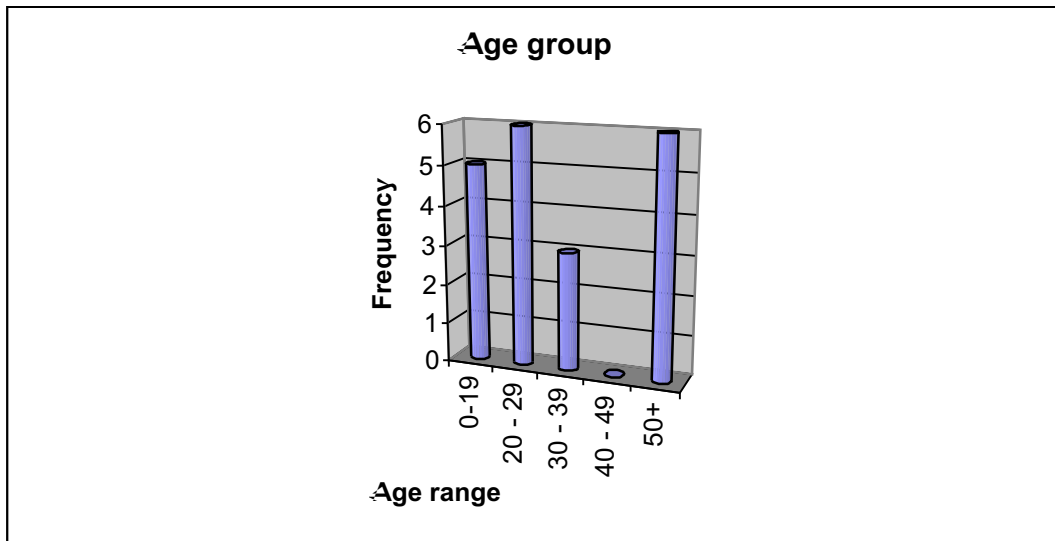
Pedestrian count



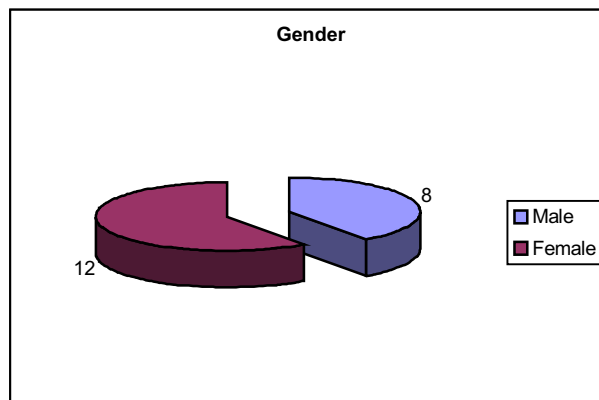
My pedestrian count shows that more people walk past the cross-end of North Street than the top end of North Street. This shows that the centre has more to offer the general public and a better range of facilities than the far end. Also the cross end of North Street is where all the other streets cross as well so there will be people from the other streets passing by as well. It also shows that my Bi-polar analysis was correct. It shows that it is more attractive and lures the people into the area, and has a nicer atmosphere for shoppers.

My questionnaire results represented by the graphs told me a lot about the various aspects of Chichester.

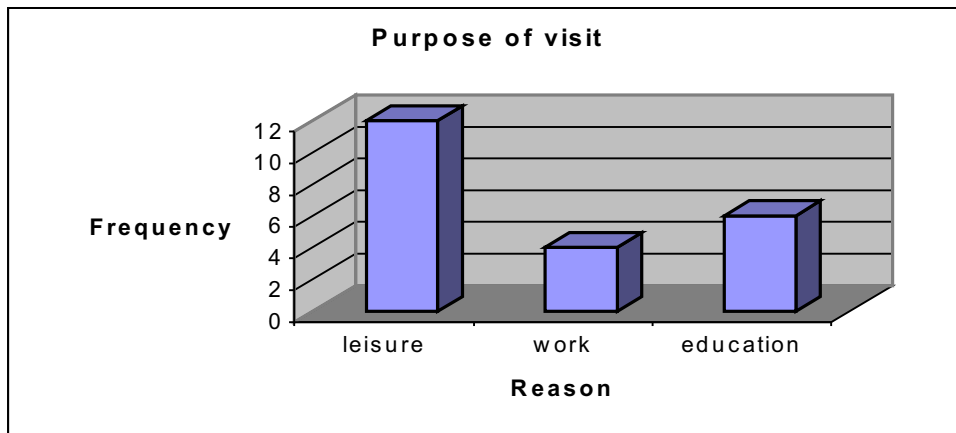
Analysis, Conclusion & Evaluation



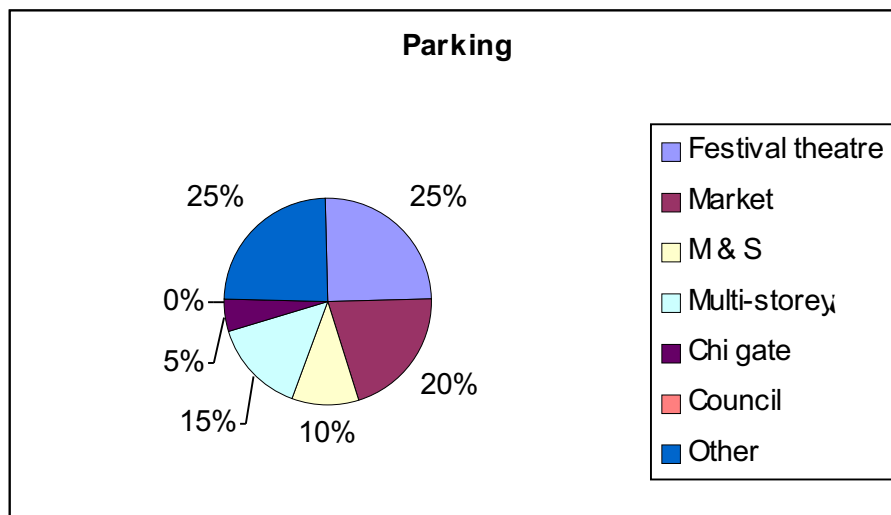
In graph 1 the results of our questionnaires shows that the main proportion of people in Chichester town Centre are between the ages of 10 and 29 and above the age of 50. This is because the people between the ages of 10 and 29 are most likely to be in higher education at Chichester College or Chichester University or are possibly unemployed. The people of 50+ are more likely to be in the centre of Chichester because they are shopping as they are probably retired or in part term jobs. The 30-49 age bracket was probably the least popular age group because they are most likely to be in full time employment.



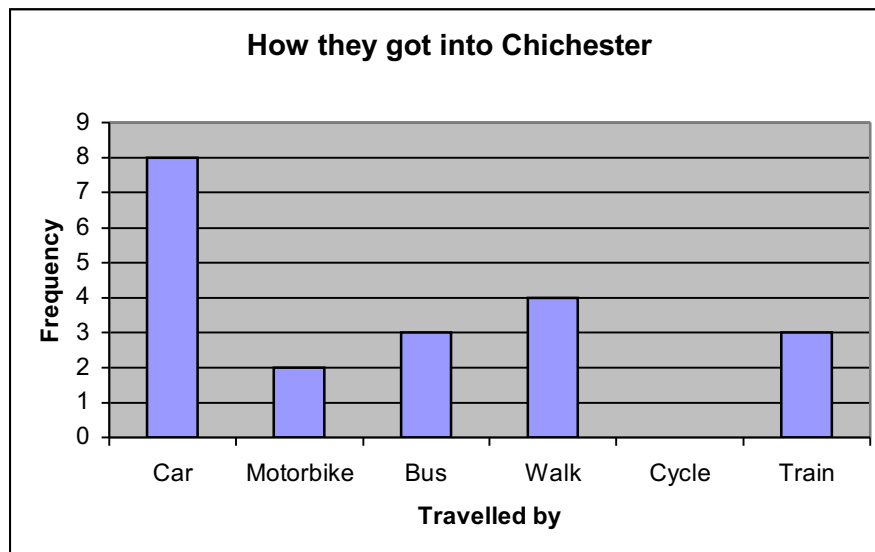
Graph 2 shows a majority of people to be female. This may be because there are mothers with their children for the upper end of the scale for graph 1, the 10-29 groups which was the majority group number for the questionnaires. The reason men were less common may be because men are generally in permanent jobs because women have taken time off to look after their young children.



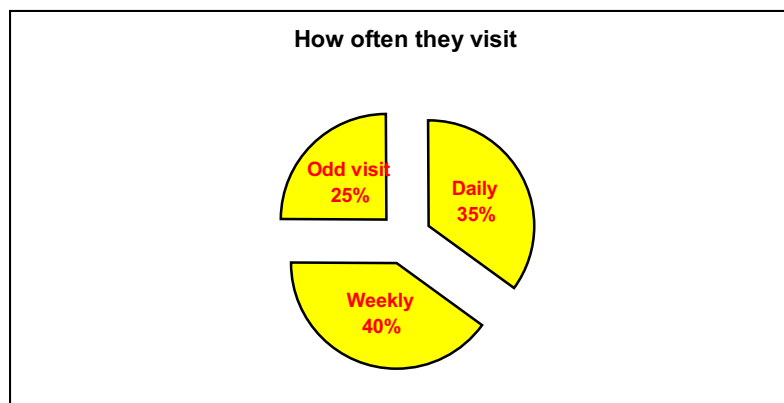
Graph 3 represents purpose of visit, the highest frequency was leisure, second was education and work was last. This would give the impression that more people are in Chichester city centre for leisure than for work thus backing up what I said previously that the people who work, are actually in work at the time of the questionnaire.



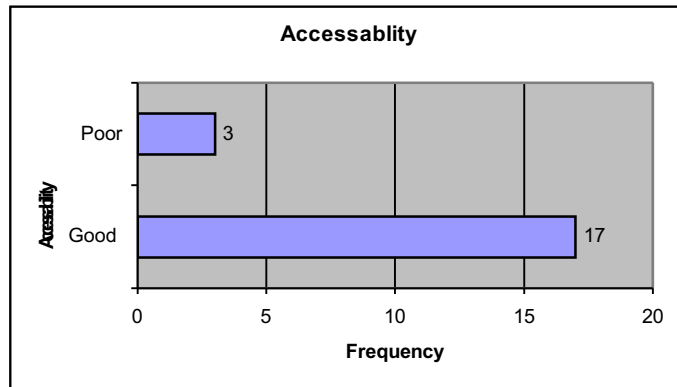
Graph 4 shows the different areas of Chichester car parks that are used by the general public. 25% of the people we surveyed used the festival theatre car park which is situated near the top end of North Street. I conducted a bi-polar analysis of this area previously in my report.



The graph shows that the predominant amount of people that go into Chichester use their car. And it also shows the amount that public transport is used for people to get into the city centre. Also because of the A27 it is hard to cycle in to Chichester unless you live there, so that is possibly why no body cycles into Chichester.



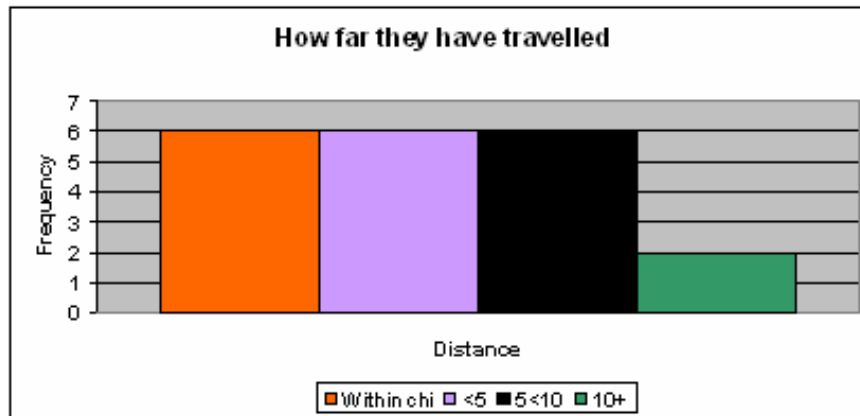
This graph shows that 25% of people make an odd visit, 35% visit daily and 40% visit weekly. This would suggest that from the people that were surveyed most of them are not people that work in Chichester every day, but people who come in to either shop or for the day out. Just under 2/3 of the people surveyed don't come into Chichester on a regular basis.



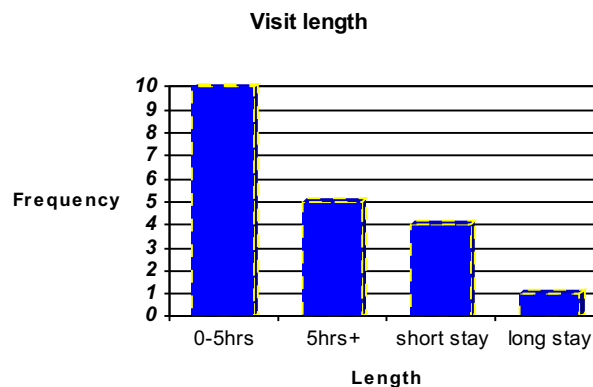
For this section of the questionnaire we asked the public whether or not they thought that the accessibility of Chichester was good or not for their needs. We got a major difference in results with 85% of people saying that yes accessibility is good and just 15% of people saying that the accessibility is not good enough for their needs, but this is still good for Chichester as it shows that the majority of people are pleased with their visit.



This graph shows the frequency of people that think the layout of Chichester is good or whether it is insufficient for their ideal needs. We got a really positive reaction from the public and found that again 85% of people were satisfied with the layout of Chichester, and only 15% of people were not satisfied and believe something should change, although change with these results is not what should happen.



This graph illustrates the distance that each person had to travel to get to Chichester, roughly. As you can see there is an exact even amount of people that travel either, from within Chichester, less than 5 miles or between 5 and 10 miles. And only 2 people travel for more than 10 miles. This shows that people are willing to travel up to 10 miles away quite happily to come to Chichester which means that it must be quite appealing to them.



In the above graph the information displayed shows that 50% of people that come to Chichester stay for less than 5 hours, this is probably because if they come for grocery shopping then they don't need 5 hours, or if they have come for clothes shopping then they could well have finished within the 5 hour timeslot. Also 25% of people are there for short and long stays which are all over a day, this is good as it shows that Chichester are bringing in people from far away to stay there over night.

Evaluation

My land use surveys, maps and questionnaire results have helped me understand exactly what each part of Chichester is used for and who it is used by. I found that the leisure park of Chichester Gate was mainly used for entertainment purposes, because it boasts 2 restaurants, 2 fast food services, a cinema, a bowling alley all within the Chichester gate complex. This on the other hand shows that it not very good for shopping because it has no shops. However its environment and atmosphere is very good for the entertainment side of it because of the dining and the bowling give off positive family vibes to the complex, but there is also the places within to support adults, e.g. Chicago rock, which is a club that only over 21's can enter along with the seating and suitable agricultural developments making it an attractive place to be with either family or friends.

Chichester's retail park, Portfield, has more shops than Chichester gate mostly consisting of home furnishings and electrical shops. The dual carriageway A27 runs right past the site making it very easy to access. There are also 2 grocery stores on the site and 2 fast food restaurants, McDonalds and Pizza Hut so drivers have the option of having something to eat whilst they are within the Portfield retail park. However this is not just a positive place, the environment here is not good enough. There is very little agriculture and although there are a few shops they are all very similar in what their selling. Portfield does not attract as many different people because the majority of these shops are specific stores, only used for one purpose. And there are more than 1 shop selling the same type of merchandise, This means that people will not go just to look around but go for a purpose and decreases their chances of attracting more people, however when someone enters the store, the shop assistants know that if the shop has what they want they could get a sale easily. This could also affect the threshold population of that area. If too few people support the services there then it could result in a decrease in the profit margins and possible negative profits which will bring the closure of shops affecting the whole area.

Finally, in the town centre, where the majority of shops are located. Within North Street there is a wide range of shops from general shops to jewellers to clothes. This makes it the ideal shopping environment. This range of shops attracts lots of people because it gives them the ideal range of shops, which therefore attracts the widest range of audience. Also the benches and agriculture give people somewhere to sit and a take a break, to look at what they have bought or if they wish they can go into a coffee shop and have a drink in one of central Chichester's great coffee shops. There are also lots of little side alleys and streets which may appeal, as it gives the feeling of a historical town with lots of potential and positive feel. This wide range of shops also creates a larger sphere of influence attracting people from further away.

Conclusion

In conclusion, from all the evidence I have gathered and presented I feel that The quality of the shopping environment is more positive in Chichester city centre than the surrounding retail and leisure parks, I believe this because although in the surrounding retail and leisure parks there are great opportunities and great locations, this report is not asking for that, it is asking whether the city centre had a better shopping environment than the retail and leisure parks, and this is why I feel that it does. In everything that I have derived to do with shopping directly, I feel that I can safely say that the centre of Chichester has a better shopping environment. This is proved by my graphs showing layout and accessibility, on both graphs 85% of people said that they were satisfied with the layout, and all of the questionnaires were asked within North Street. Also by the first graph which shows that most people at that time were there for leisure which would suggest 2 things:-

1. They were either, unemployed, retired, or not working on that day, so were in Chichester city centre shopping, and had obviously chosen not to go to Portfield or Chichester Gate
2. On their break from work, and had come into the centre of Chichester to possibly buy lunch from one of the small sandwich shops or possibly go for a drink at a coffee shop.

I feel that the information that I have provided has clearly answered my hypothesis of, the quality of the shopping environment is more positive in Chichester city centre than the surrounding retail and leisure parks . In the future Chichester will inevitably develop its city centre range of shops to further increase the quality of the shopping environment and combat a ny development of the retail and leisure parks.

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