

Chichester Vision Project

Maximising the Student Economy



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Introduction

Chichester is a small city in West Sussex, England, surrounded by The South Downs and Chichester Harbour both Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Although small, with a population of 24,000 (Lambert, 2016) the city centre is a base for shopping and eating for locals and tourists. After the growth of Chichester College with 12,000 students, (Chichester College, 2016) and The University of Chichester with 5,446 students (University of Chichester 2016), the city also has a substantial student population providing a younger demographic for the city to cater for and market opportunities.



Chichester District Council are undertaking a new task called the Chichester Vision Project. Chichester’s Vision Project aims to help develop, improve and support the local economy to benefit residents, businesses and the area (CDC, 2015). To aid the project the aim of this report is to offer a fresh look at the opportunities that could maximise the student population. Previous research has highlighted the economic value of students to the local economy through direct spend but also through tourism activity, particularly in the form of VFR traffic. Key stakeholders in Chichester believe the city is not fully maximizing these opportunities, and have been keen to capture the voice of the student population as part of the visioning process.

The aim of the research undertaken was to fully capture the student voice on different aspects of Chichester.

This was done in the form of an online and written survey, which was filled in by 218 members of the University of Chichester student body, during a period of one week in March 2016. The survey was aimed at students from The University of Chichester, to be representative of students who are more likely to be living independently having moved to the area. It was felt that this student group would also generate the most tourism activity in the form of VFR, which had been identified as a key element of the economic value of students.

The objectives of this report is to uncover the students attitudes to Chichester and from this identify some of the main elements that Chichester could aim to improve under the following sections: (i) Shopping, (ii) Food and Drink, (iii) Nightlife and Entertainment (iv) Culture and Heritage.

In each section Chichester has been benchmarked against a number of similar cities, chosen for their comparative population and because they also have a university as seen below in **Figure 1**. This has been completed as it offers an insight into what Chichester could be offering their students. ‘The prime purpose of benchmarking is not solely to carry out marketing research identifying what customers like or dislike, the main purpose is develop strategies to provide better services.’ (Kozak, 2004)

	Chichester	Twickenham	Musselburgh	Winchester	Bangor	Lancaster	Inverness
City Population	24,000	52,396	21,900	45,184	18,808	59,325	46,870
Student Population	5,466	5,165	5,215	6,880	10,766	13,336	7,899

Figure 1. Benchmarking Analysis

Each section will examine what Chichester already has to offer, what other cities are offering their students, the captured student voice and results from the survey and finally a section of recommendations for Chichester District Council to take into consideration for their Vision Project.

Survey Demographics

Key profile questions were asked to identify the type of students taking part in the survey and therefore the factors that may influence their opinion. This was done to check that the survey had successfully reached the target audience and so opinions and attitudes towards Chichester would accurately reflect the student voice.

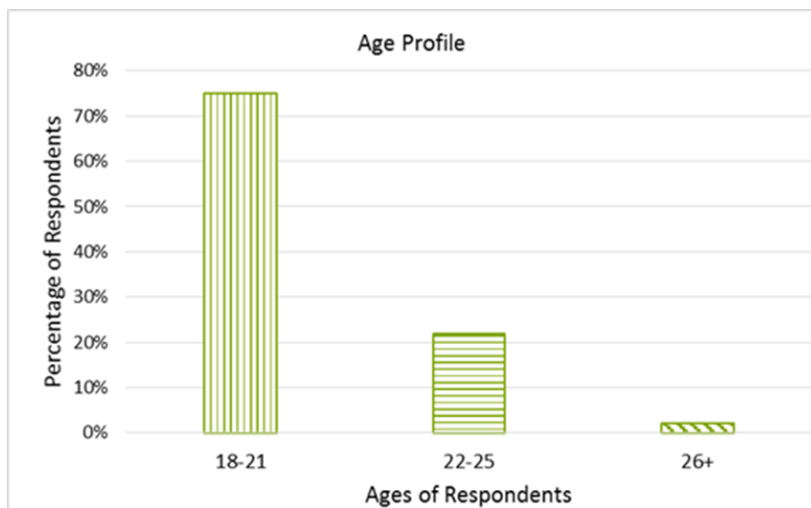


Figure 2. Survey Results: Which age range do you fall into?



Figure 3. Survey Results: Male or Female?

Figure 2 shows that overall the majority of students were aged 18-21 (75%), while 22% of students were aged 22-25 and 26+. This shows that the survey has reached students of all ages who will have a range of different opinions and attitudes towards Chichester as a student city.

As shown in **Figure 3** 54% of students were females and 44% of the students were male. As a result, the survey is nearly equally representative of both genders.

Students were also asked to identify whether they were in first year, second year, third year or postgraduates. **Figure 4** shows that the majority of students were from second or third year (80%), 19% of students were from first year and 1% of students were postgraduates. This shows a variety of students from different academic years were surveyed to get opinions from across the year groups. This also highlights that most students were able to accurately answer the survey, because they have been in the city long enough to be able to reflect on what Chichester offers the student population.

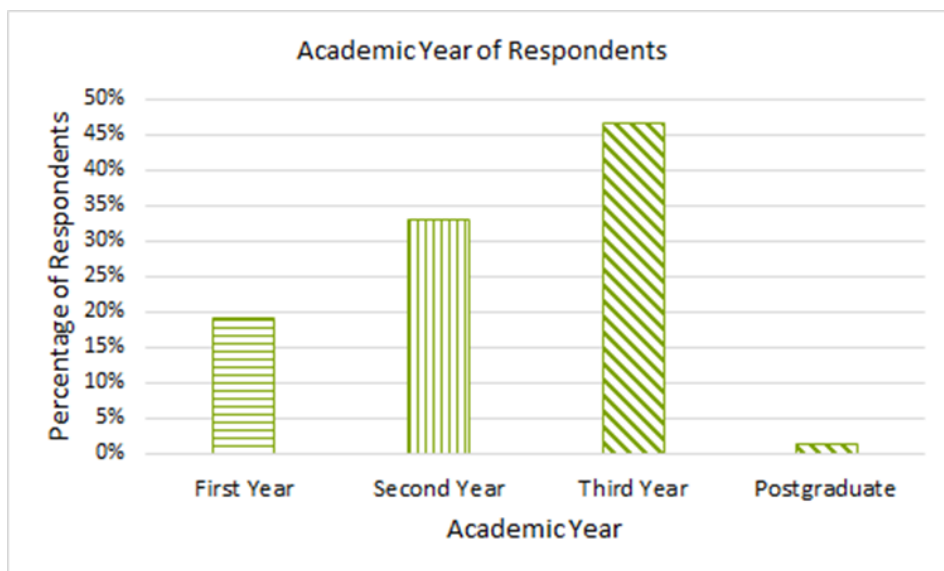


Figure 4. Survey Results: Which academic year students are in

The Students were asked what type of accommodations they lived in. This ranged from living at home, student houses in Chichester/Bognor or halls (BOC, BRC or Stockbridge halls).

The results in **Figure 5** show that the students surveyed live in or around Chichester, as the majority of students lived in student houses in Chichester (53%).

Figure 5 also shows that more students were surveyed who lived in halls within Chichester (13%) than those who lived in Bognor Regis halls (1%). Overall 19% of students lived at home.

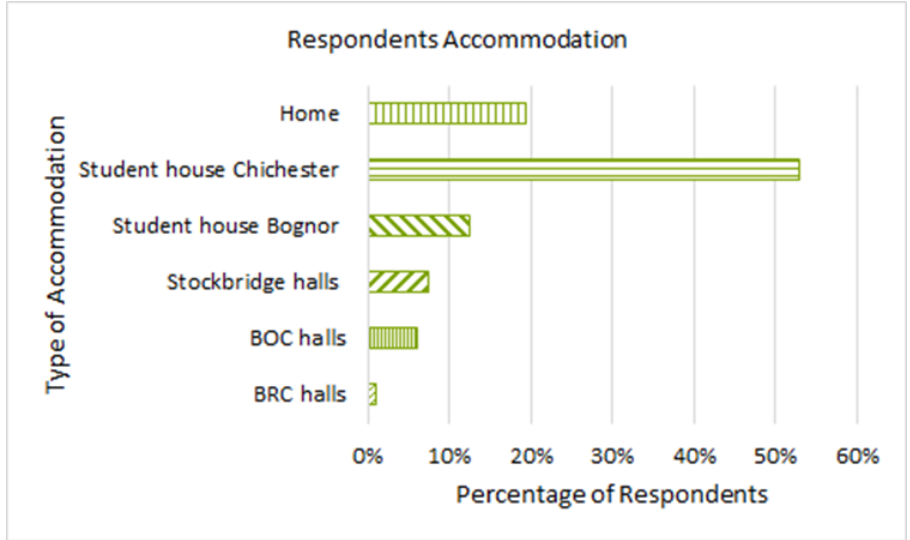


Figure 5. Survey Results: Where do you live?

Students were then asked to identify where they lived if they selected home. From this 10 students lived in Chichester, while the other 30 students lived in a range of places – often still near to Chichester, such as Brighton, Bognor Regis and Portsmouth. This means it is likely some students will have had prior knowledge of the area.

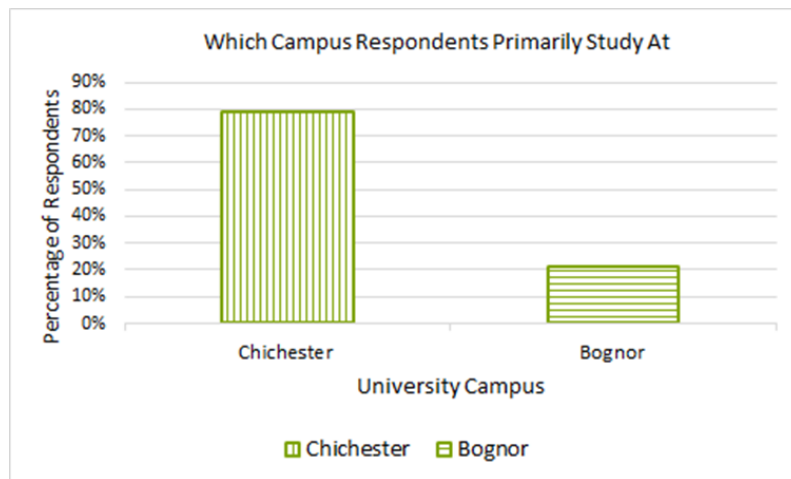


Figure 6. Survey Results: Which campus respondents primarily study at

Identifying which campuses students primarily studied at was also a question that was asked as seen in **Figure 6** to see how much time respondents were using the area for studying and therefore potentially visiting Chichester centre before or afterwards. Over all the Chichester campus had 79% of students studying there while Bognor had 21%. The results show that since the majority of students primarily used Chichester campus as their place of study, there should be a higher rate of students going into the city centre.

Students were also asked how often they visit Chichester (other than the campus) during the day, in order to understand how often they visit the city centre. The results in **Figure 7** show that majority of students (31%) who visit during the day are only visiting at least once a week, and that the majority of students (28%) who visit during the night are only visiting once a month. This shows very little engagement between the students and the city centre, as only 17% of students are visiting during the day every day and only 4% of students are visiting at night every night.

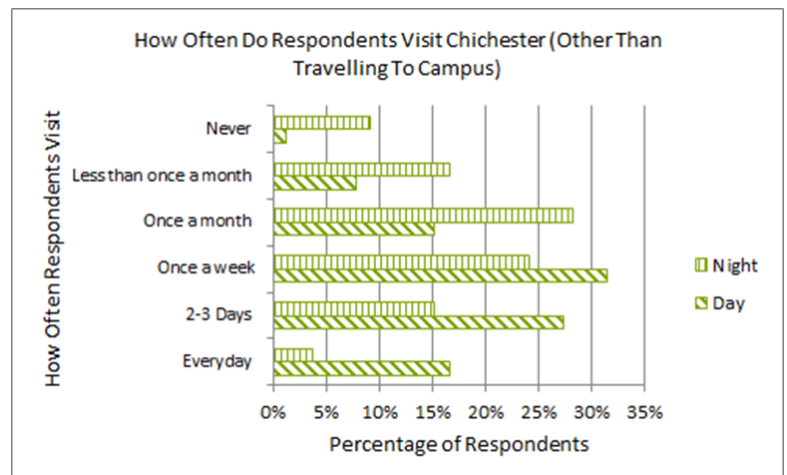


Figure 7. Survey Results: How often do you visit Chichester?

Shopping

The SWOT below in **Figure 8** shows the current situation of Chichester city centre as a shopping destination.

Strengths

Shops are spread over four main streets that lay in a cross formation (North, South, East and West Street) at the centre of Chichester (see **Figure 9**) The middle of these streets are marked by the Market Cross (a stone monument) – a popular meeting point. This layout is an advantage as it creates a shopping precinct where all the main high street and independent shops can be found easily next to each other. The means visitors can more efficiently shop for their items at one location and therefore are more likely to visit.

The formation of this popular central shopping location has given rise to this area being the central business district of the city. This creates an attractive location for new shops to set up, as there is already an established shopping culture and target audience for them.

The composition of shops is predominantly independent retailers with the addition of high street stores such as H&M, New Look, Next, M&S and the department store House of Fraser. This offers some variety to customers as well as the comfort of some well-established 'go to' stores.

Opportunities

Chichester is surrounded by many fields. With 'red tape' obliging, there may be opportunity to build a small shopping centre of more affordable shops, e.g. Primark, which would target the student population.

Existing shops in the city centre could target students with promotions for example 20% off discounts and student exclusive nights. This would appeal more to students and encourage spending and usage within the city.

Change car parks to pay on exist so that visitors to not constrained by time. Doing this means it is more likely visitors will stay longer than they initially planned, e.g. popping into Costa for a coffee before they leave.

Weaknesses

Due to the architecture of the city centre and small average building size some shop's only have small branches, such as Topshop, leading to limited stock. These tend to be the shops are favoured by students such as River Island & Accessorise. This reduces the variety of products and styles on offer, limiting the target audience to the small range available. This could influence visitors to shop elsewhere or prompt them to shop online instead.

The shops in Chichester are based at a medium to higher end price point and comprise of many individual and lesser known boutiques as well as high street names such as Pandora, White Stuff, Clarkes and Oasis. There are very few low priced shops e.g. Primark and Dorothy Perkins. For this reason, the shops in Chichester and the conservative style of clothes they stock appeal primarily to those aged 36+ missing out on the student market (target age range 18-22). (Experian a world of insight, 2015).

There is little parking in Chichester causing congestion at weekends. Parking is also pay on exit which may prevent visitors from staying longer in the city and spending more.

Threats

There are several competing shopping locations within an hour's drive of Chichester. These include Bognor Regis, Brighton, Portsmouth, Whitley and Southampton. Losing perspective buyers to competition greatly reduces expenditure in Chichester city.

Advances in technology have made it easier for buyers to shop online as an alternative to going in store in person. This is especially true for students as 'the cyber generation' (WWWMetrics, 2016). If a substantial proportion of perspective buyers from the student population go elsewhere it greatly reduces student expenditure in Chichester city.

Figure 8. SWOT Analysis for shopping in Chichester

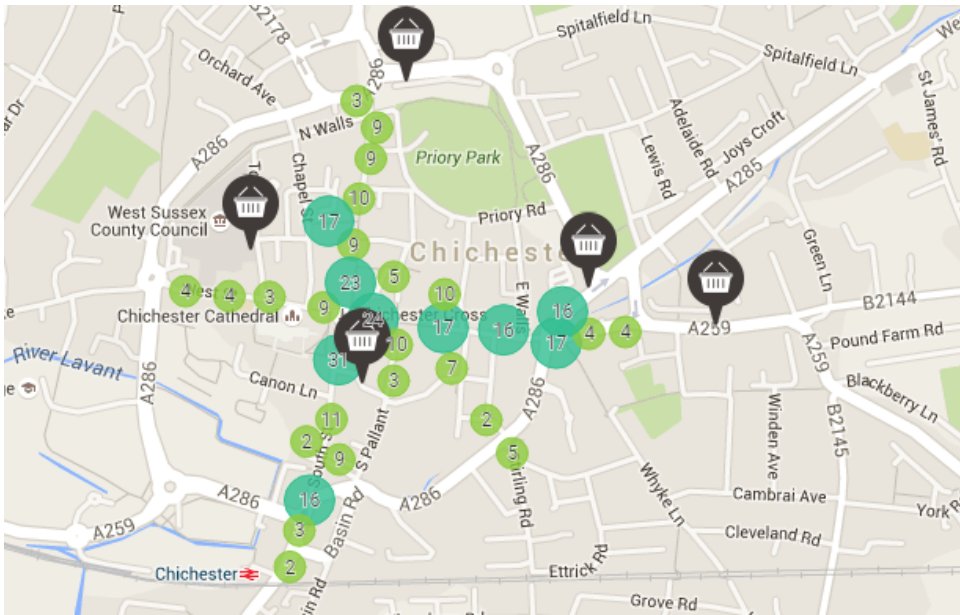


Figure 9. Map of shopping in Chichester

The SWOT has identified that the shops in Chichester lack appeal to the student market. As well as this, Chichester also suffers from close competition and therefore, needs to develop in order to retain customers and prevent them shopping elsewhere. As a way to beat this, the opportunities have uncovered a possibility to introduce more affordable shops with enticing promotions.



Benchmarking

The benchmarking analysis below compares a variety of cities that are a similar size to Chichester and also have a University.

Although Chichester has a variety of independent stores, there is no principal shopping centre. From **Figure 10** below you can see that many competing university cities provide between 1-3 shopping centres. This gives students who're usually on a low cost budget a large amount of variety. Furthermore 'University maintenance grants for lower income students in England and Wales are to be scrapped from September 2016, Chancellor George Osborne has said'. (BBC News, 2015) meaning students will have less disposable income to spend on luxury items and a greater need for affordable shops. This could also be another reason for students to shop elsewhere where there are cheaper shops.

Shopping					
Twickenham	Musselburgh	Winchester	Bangor	Lancaster	Inverness
2 shopping centres + independent stores	Small independent stores	1 shopping centre + independent stores	3 shopping centres + independent stores	2 shopping centres + independent stores	2 shopping centres + independent stores



Figure 10. Benchmarking Analysis

Student Voice

The following graph in **Figure 11** looks at how long students stay in Chichester during the day, to determine whether students are satisfied with the shops within the city.

The results show that 56% of students stayed between 2-4 hours during the day, 24% of students stayed up to an hour and only 11% of students stayed longer than 5 hours. This suggests that students tend to go into the city briefly for specific items and find there is nothing to keep them for a substantial or prolonged time in the city centre. This again adds to the reason behind students visiting other cities.

The students were asked on the level of priority of there being more mainstream shops such as Primark (which are more affordable). The graph in **Figure 12** shows that the development of affordable shops within Chichester is a high priority as 45% of students ranked this a 5 (the highest rating). Whilst 22% of students also ranked the priority as a 4. This does show that the student voice wants more shops to be catered to them.

How Long Do Respondents Stay In Chichester During The Day?

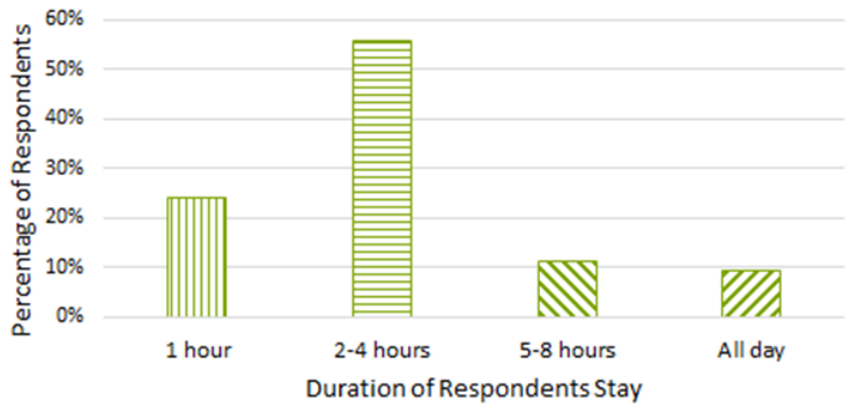


Figure 11. Survey Results: How long do respondents stay in Chichester during the day?

Ranking the following factors on level of priority (1-strongly disagree and 5-strongly agree), would more mainstream shops e.g. Primark encourage you to shop in Chichester more often?

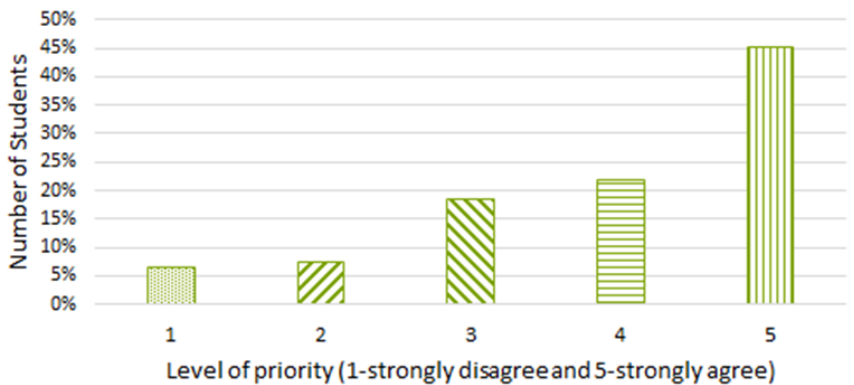


Figure 12 Survey Results: Would more mainstream shops encourage you to shop in Chichester more often?

Opportunities For Future Development

Overall the survey has shown a strong key theme. Students aren't staying in the city centre due to shops not having enough variety and being too expensive. While there may not be land available for a shopping centre, as exhibited by the benchmarking, a recommendation is to develop a larger quantity of affordable shops which match the disposable income levels of the student population. The student voice has shown a strong desire for this, especially considering the abolishment for maintenance grants. Creating more shops that fit the student lifestyle or student exclusive discount nights (MCR Student Night Out, 2015) would encourage students to stay in the city for longer. Thus increase student expenditure- a substantial benefit the University has to the city. It would also greatly improve the student experience and encourage more students to the University as a whole and to stay in the area after graduating.

Food and Drink

According to the benchmarking analysis below in **Figure 13** there are approximately 196 restaurants in Chichester. The SWOT below shows the current situation of Chichester city in terms of dining.

Strengths

Chichester has a significant amount of well-known chain restaurants such as Wagamama, KFC and Pizza Express, as well as chain coffee/sandwich shops including Costa and Subway. This fulfils the market for fast food and typical high street convince restaurants that are popular with students and tourists alike.

Chichester has a great variety of eating establishments as there are also smaller independent tea rooms, snack shops, pubs and hotel restaurants. This entices tourists as it gives more options for visitors who would like to try more local and individual food/drink.

A lot of these restaurants/ café's are situated in the centre of Chichester as some are shown in (**Figure 15**) on the next page. (Visit Chichester, 2016). This means visitors are able to shop and eat at the same location which creates a more substantial and interesting experience while in the city centre.

The Wordle in Figure 17 on the next page, shows the most common restaurants visited by students according to a question (Which restaurants do you visit in Chichester?) asked in our survey. Of these, the most popular restaurants all offer student discounts or discounted days, (shown in **Figure 16** on the next page). Many of them entail a NUS card, which a large majority of students own proving this a key and successful tactic in attracting restaurant business from students.

Opportunities

The exception to the above discount theory is Wetherspoon, Nandos, Frankie & Bennies and Wagamama, who don't offer discounts but are still highly popular. This is likely to be due to the standard low prices and relaxed attitude at these restaurants which appeal more to the student lifestyle. This means that there could be an opportunity in the market for more pubs like this to set up in Chichester.

Weaknesses

Although many chain restaurants offer discounts to students, most of the independent café/restaurants do not, such as Knife & Fork Café on South Street. This means that these independent businesses may struggle to attract the student market and therefore, are not benefitting from, or utilising the potential revenue that the student population could bring.

Results from our survey (**Figure 14**) showed that many students felt businesses were not advertised enough within the University. A lack of advertising could be a reason for why students don't tend to visit lesser known restaurants – as they simply don't know about them.

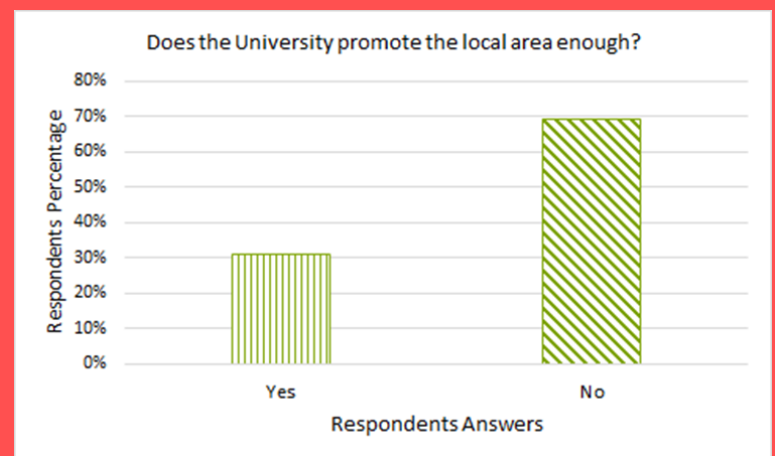


Figure 14. Survey Results: Does the University promote the local area enough?

Threats

There is currently no nightclub or evening venue in Chichester. But if one were to set up, there is a possibility that students would chose to eat at resturants less, in order to save their money for drinking in the evenings instead. This could result in some loss of trade from the student population in eating establishemnts in Chichester.



Figure 15. Map of restaurants in Chichester

The SWOT has identified that there is a great variety of eating establishments within Chichester. However, independent restaurants lack appeal to the student market due to fewer discounts/offers and lack of advertising within the University. This creates an opportunity for independent restaurants to tap into and benefit from the student economy.



Restaurant	Discount
Pizza Express	NUS Card Holders: 40% off Mondays and Tuesdays. 20% off Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.
Zizzi	NUS Card Holders: 40% off Monday and Tuesday. 25% off Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.
Mc Donald's	NUS Card Holders: Free McFlurry or Burger
ASK	NUS Card Holders: 40% off food bill Monday and Tuesday. 25% off Sunday, Wednesday and Thursday.
Belle Isle	Free drink with a Burrito on Mondays or Nachos on Thursdays.
Prezzo	NUS Card Holders: 25% off Sunday-Thursday
Slug & Lettuce	50% off food every Monday.



Figure 16. Food and Drink in Chichester

Benchmarking

The benchmarking analysis below compares a variety of cities that are a similar size to Chichester and also have a University.

As seen in the SWOT analysis, Chichester has approximately 196 restaurants. This is quite high compared to the other cities shown in **Figure 18**. Whilst researching into the other cities, it was evident that they too provide a large number of chain restaurants and a variety of independent restaurants. But, differently, their independent restaurants have also tapped into the student economy by offering students specific deals all through the week. For example Molly's Grill Pizzeria, (2016), in Lancaster, offers students a happy hour deal with discounted meals.

Food and Drink					
Twickenham	Musselburgh	Winchester	Bangor	Lancaster	Inverness
310	142	158	119	172	150

Figure 18. Benchmarking Analysis

Student Voice

The graph in (Figure...) was used to establish the University of Chichester's students satisfaction levels on the opportunities for eating out in the city (rated on a scale of one to ten, ten being the highest).

From this it was identified that most of the students (53) rated the opportunities as an 8, which suggests most students are satisfied with the opportunities for visiting restaurants and the variety of other food establishments in the city.

However, it is important to note that not every student was satisfied with the opportunities that were available as only 16 students rated the food opportunities as 10 (the highest satisfaction rating) and 38 rated below a 5. This shows there is still opportunity for future developments within the food and drink sector.

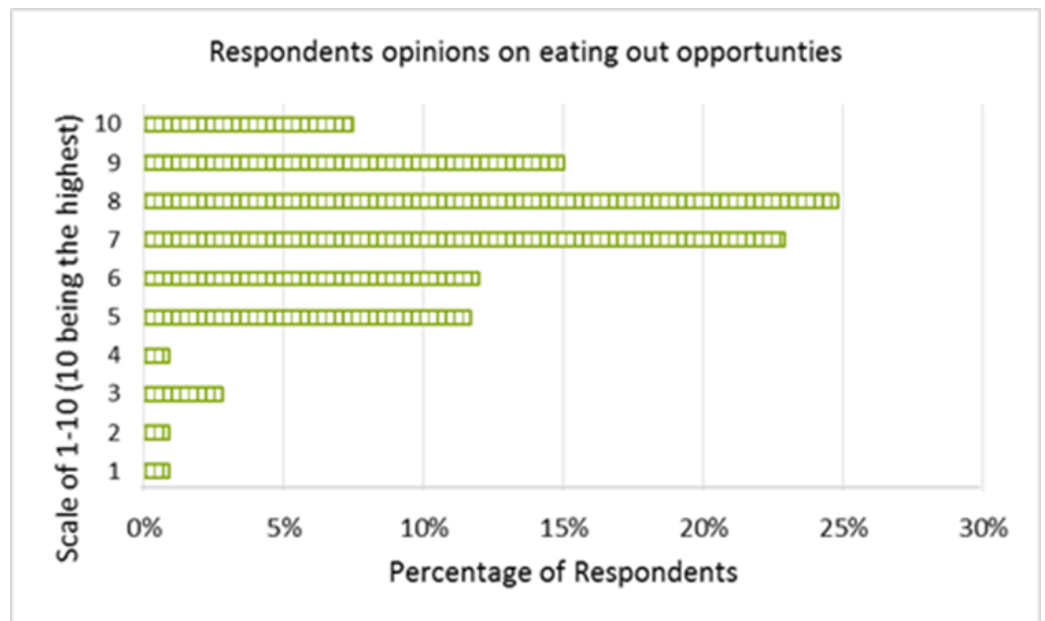


Figure 19 Survey Results: Respondents opinions on eating out opportunities



Figure 17. WORDLE 'What pubs and restaurants in Chichester have you visited?'

Opportunities For Future Development



As the majority of students are satisfied with eating out in Chichester, the survey has shown that restaurant development is a lesser priority as part of the vision project. However, to increase the student's satisfaction rating even further there is still room for independent food establishments to cater more for the student population and this could be central to developing a night time economy. Therefore, it is recommended that independent food establishments create inventive deals to entice students. This is shown to have worked in other cities in the benchmark. Doing this could enhance the student experience in the city as well as encouraging the student population to support the market for the local business establishments. (Biggar Economics, 2014).

Nightlife & Entertainment

Chichester Gate is the primary nightlife and entertainment venue in Chichester. As seen in **Figure 20**, it is a 5 minute walk from the centre of Chichester, and consists of a small complex of popular restaurants accompanied by a cinema and bowling alley. The restaurants include mid-priced franchises such as McDonalds, Nandos, Gourmet Burger Kitchen and Frankie and Benny’s. Most of these restaurants offer a reward loyalty card scheme to encourage customers to come back. The cinema (a Cineworld franchise) is open every day/evening and shows a variety of all the latest released films. The cinema, as well as the bowling alley offers discounted prices for students and large groups to encourage the student population to visit them.

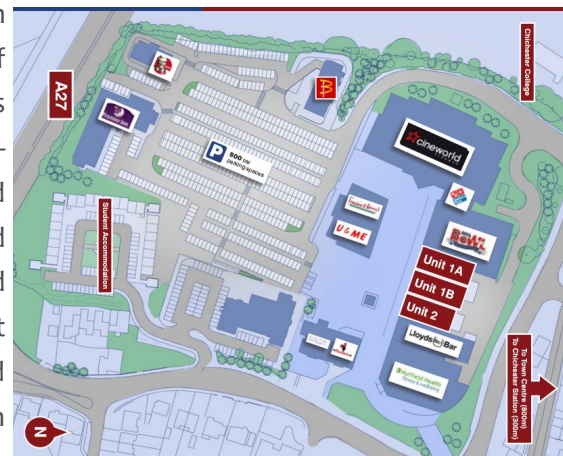


Figure 20. Chichester Gate Map

Westgate leisure centre is located half a mile’s walk from Chichester train station. The centre holds a swimming pool, a gym, a 6 court sports hall, 2 squash courts, dance studio and cafe. The gym also hosts a variety of exercise classes every day to suit all fitness levels. To encourage students to visit, the leisure centre offers a student membership fee of £32 per month, saving £7.95 on the standard adult membership price (£39.95). (Westgate Leisure Centre, 2016)

There is currently no nightclub in Chichester. However, there are 11 pubs/bars in walkable distance from the city centre that stay open until at least 12am. The pubs serve food and drinks at a mid-price point which reflects the disposable income of the locals. But there are also chains such as the Slug and Lettuce and Wetherspoon’s which offer meal deals and drinks for a more affordable price (Visit Chichester, 2016).

Benchmarking

The benchmarking analysis below compares a variety of cities that are a similar size to Chichester and also have a University.

As you can see in **Figure 21**, each city has a wide variety of nightlife and entertainment. Each city has at least 1 nightclub. As Chichester has none, it is weak in this area and is not competitive with the student nightlife found in the benchmark cities. As well as studying and sports, students often find nightlife to be a key factor when choosing a University. Therefore the lack of nightlife on offer may deter many students looking at studying in Chichester. It also is less appealing for friends and relatives visiting and therefore, the city may not benefit as much from the VFR knock on effect that other university cities encourage. (Hunter-Jones, 2008).

Nightlife and Entertainment

Twickenham	Musselburgh	Winchester	Bangor	Lancaster	Inverness
1-Nightclub 9-Bars 13-Pubs 2- Comedy Clubs 3-Leisure Centres 3- Bowling Alleys 3-Cinemas 2-Bingo	1-Nightclub 16-Bars 10-Pubs 1-Social Club 2-Leisure Centres 1- Bowling Alley 1-Cinema 3-Bingo	2-Nightclubs 11-Bars 12-Pubs 1- Comedy Club 1-Leisure Centre 1-Cinema	3-Nightclubs 9-Bars 7-Pubs 1-Leisure Centre 1-Cinemas 1-Bingo	4-Nightclubs 21-Bars 14-Pubs 1-Comedy Club 1-Adult Entertainment Club 3-Leisure Centres 2-Bowling Alleys 2-Cinemas 1-Bingo	1-Nightclub 9-Bars 8-Pubs 2- Comedy Clubs 2-Leisure Centres 1- Bowling Alley 2-Cinemas 1-Bingo

Student Voice

Students were asked on their perceptions of nightlife and entertainment in Chichester. They were asked whether Chichester having a nightclub has affected their degree experience and following on from this students were asked if Chichester needed a nightclub.

Overall 115 of the students surveyed said that not having a nightclub has negatively affected their experience. And as a result of this, 174 students who were in second or third year have negative attitudes towards their degree experience as a whole.

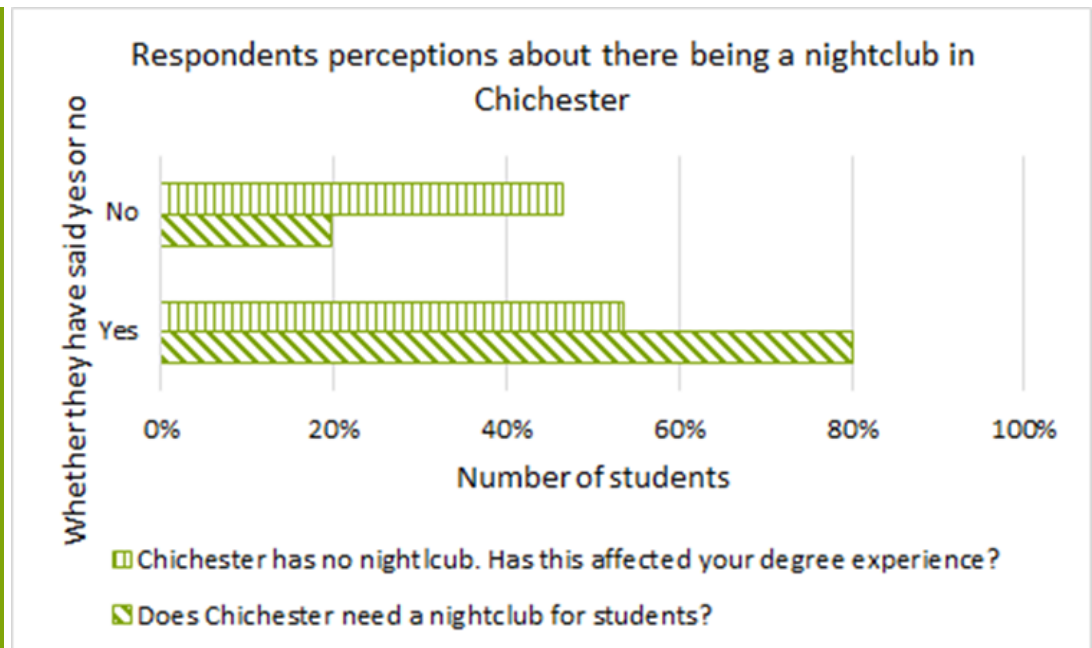


Figure 22. Survey Results: Student perceptions about there being a nightclub in Chichester

Following on from this the results identified that 174 students said yes to Chichester needing a nightclub. One student commented that “Nights out are important for the university overall experience, aiding you to meet new people and enjoy yourself away from the stress.” This was a key theme throughout as another student commented that they were not satisfied “Because it's part of the student experience having nights out.” Another theme from the students’ comments was that they only have the SU for nights out and this wasn’t enough. As one student commented that “The SU is repetitious and becomes very dull due to this”, and another comment was Chichester needs “a place for students to meet and have a good time without always having to go to the SU which provides the same experience week after week and attracts the same people.”

Opportunities For Future Development



The student voice shows a significant desire and need for a nightclub in Chichester. From the responses, it appears the addition of a nightclub would greatly enhance students experience and increase the social aspect of living in the city as well as encourage VFR. Until the summer of 2015 Chichester had its own nightclub, Thursdays. The nightclub closed due to the landlord reclaiming his premises, not due to lack of business (Gordon, 2015). This would suggest that there is sufficient local demand to support a nightclub in the city even when university students are absent during the summer months. Therefore, we recommend that as part of Chichester's vision, the creation of at least one nightclub is an essential development to the city in terms of satisfying the student population. In order to ensure that the business is sustainable it may be beneficial to consider the addition of a multi-purpose venue that caters for a wider audience. This space could be an innovative/creative hub for the whole community in Chichester and also provide a venue for performance, culture and exhibits. Better social opportunities will make Chichester a far more competitive city and provide much needed entertainment. Therefore, the survey has highlighted this as the highest priority improvement that will be particularly economically beneficial to the city, following full consultation with the community.

Culture and Heritage



Developed by the Romans into a strategic city in 44AD (Lambert, 2016), Chichester's identity is filled with history and heritage. Much Roman architecture is still visible and is an integral element of the tourism landscape. To present its history, Fishbourne Roman Palace and The Novium museum in the city centre exhibits artefacts, intriguing stories and historic information from Chichester District for visitors to see. In the surrounding area there is also Tangmere Military Aviation Museum, Weald and Downland Open Air Museum (100,000-130,000 annual visitors) (Weald and Downland, 2015) and Amberley Museum and Heritage Centre. By providing much opportunity for visitors to seek the heritage and history, Chichester District clearly utilises the area's past to make it of public interest.

Chichester Cathedral, dominating the architectural grandeur of city for 900 years, is also a place of significant heritage and attracts visitors to its services and different festivals throughout the year. As well as flower and light festivals, it holds events to do with worship, music, education and restoration – opening itself up to audiences with different interests. (Chichester Cathedral, 2016).

Furthermore, Chichester's surroundings have a high quantity of historic houses open to the public. These include Arundel Castle, Parham House & Gardens, Petworth House, Uppark House, West Dean Gardens, and Cowdray House. These are very popular days out for families and particularly attract the older wealthy demographic (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). They also offer student and group discounts on tickets to make themselves more accessible.

Chichester is also a keen area for arts and culture. Pallant House Gallery in the heart of the city houses one of the best collections of modern British Art in the country. Additionally, Chichester Festival Theatre has an international reputation for high quality work. It holds performances of different genres to appeal to all audiences throughout the year. For students- Both facilities encourage school groups and offer group discounts as well as student prices to make themselves more accessible to the student population.

Benchmarking

The benchmarking analysis below compares a variety of cities that are a similar size to Chichester and also have a University.

As you can see in **Figure 23** below, each city has a minimum of six significant attractions. Not all of them will be appealing to students, although a high number of them offer student discounts. For example The Royal Green Jackets Museum (2016), offers a discounted price for students, giving them an incentive to visit the attraction. A large number of the attractions below have free entry, but still aren't necessarily going to be appealing for the student community as they have different interests.

Culture Attractions					
Twickenham	Musselburgh	Winchester	Bangor	Lancaster	Inverness
Twickenham Museum	Musselburgh Race-course	Winchester Castle	Ulster Folk and Transport Museum	Lancaster Castle	Inverness Cathedral
Twickenham Stoop	Newhailes	Marwell Wildlife	Ward Park	Ashton Memorial	Urquhart Castle
Twickenham Rowing Club	Brunton Theatre	Wolvesey Castle	Bangor Marina	Judges' Lodgings	Cawdor Castle
Twickenham Stadium	Inveresk Lodge Gardens	Royal Green Jackets Museum	Bangor Abbey	Lancaster Priory	Eden Court Theatre
World Rugby Museum	Musselburgh Links	Winchester City Mill	Scrabo Tower	Lancaster City Museum	Clava Cairn
Marble Hill House	Dolls Museum Musselburgh	Winchester Cathedral	Bangor Castle	Grand Theatre Lancaster	Ness Islands
	Jungle Gemz	Adventuredome		Lancaster Cathedral	Chanonry Point
		Old Minster, Winchester		The Storey	Inverness Castle
		The Gurkha Museum		The Gregson Centre	Plodda Falls
				Lune Millennium Bridge	Vastle Stuart

Student Voice

To gather student's perspectives on this topic a question was asked to see which tourist attractions were engaging students in the city. The graph in **Figure 24** shows that the majority of students have not visited many of the attractions. The tourist attraction that has the most student visitors was Chichester Cathedral. 140 students out of the 218 surveyed had visited this attraction. This could be because the attraction is located in the city centre which means it is easily accessible for the students. Another rationale could be because there is no cost for many of their services and they regularly hold events. However, the least visited attraction by the students is the Pallant House Gallery with 193 students not having visited. This could be because the attraction charges a student rate of £5.50 and students would not part with this much money unless they have a true interest in visiting. However, this outcome is surprising as the University runs a fine art degree and therefore, it would be expected that more University of Chichester students would be interested in this attraction.

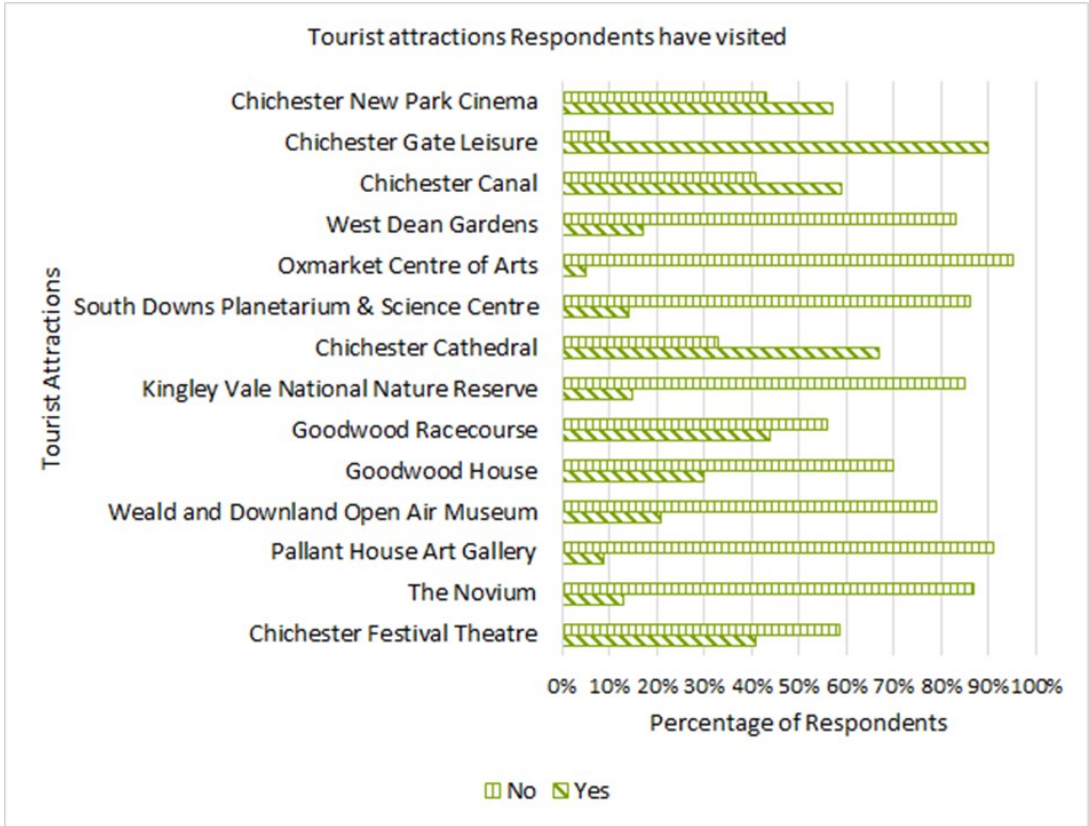


Figure 24. Survey Results: Have you visited these tourist attractions?

Opportunities For Future Development



Chichester has a lot of cultural and heritage attractions in the form of museums and historic buildings similarly to our benchmarking cities. However, it is apparent that this type of attraction is not appealing to the student population. Nonetheless, they are popular with the local/older demographics' and meet tourists interests; as typically heritage/cultural attractions attract ages 35+ with higher disposable income. (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, 2007).

For this reason, as well as being very in keeping with the style of the city, we believe that these cultural/heritage attractions should not be changed for students as part of the Chichester vision project, as many of the attractions already offer incentives and discounts to students. Therefore we would suggest that there is a need to focus on how to draw students into these attractions, perhaps marketing them as days out that they can enjoy with their VFR's. However, we suggest prioritising other areas that this report highlights for improvement, such as entertainment and nightlife. This will be more efficient in enhancing the city for students.

Conclusion

Aims and Objectives

The aims of the research stated in the introduction was to capture the student voice. The aim has been met due to the 218 students who were surveyed, which successfully captured a range of student demographics, and also due to the range of questions that were asked about the Chichester area.

The objectives for the report were to uncover student's attitudes to Chichester and identify what could be improved within these sectors: (i) Shopping, (ii) Food and Drink, (iii) Nightlife and Entertainment and (iv) Culture and Heritage. The objective has been met as recommendations have been stated in each section throughout the report.

The recommendations were formed by highlighting the student voice captured from the survey, taking into consideration the SWOT of what Chichester already has to offer followed by the benchmarking of other Universities.

The highest priority recommendations identified in the report were:

To develop the nightlife and entertainment of the city.

To create more affordable shops.

This will greatly increase positive impacts of the University to the city by creating a more substantial student economy. Doing this will not only improve the experience for students at The University of Chichester (increasing its competitiveness) but also make a more entertaining location for visiting friends and relatives – further contributing to expenditure into the local economy.

Visiting Friends and Relatives

To further enhance the VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives) engagement between the city council and the University of Chichester to work with the Business Innovation Department to showcase the city more within open days and by providing information packs on what's available for the student during their induction week, so the city businesses to benefit more from the student population. This could be done where the BID manager is notified by the University on open day's dates and also the induction week dates, so that business can create discounts and benefits to attract students (as well as their families) into the city.

Further Research

International Students

Our research only captured student data from Chichester University students, where only 2% of the student population are International Students (What Uni, 2015).

However, there is a large international community at Chichester College, who form a significant number of the student population in Chichester.

A specific survey to capture the International student voice is recommended as a recent report commissioned by the University of Sheffield recognises the benefits of international students. The research evaluated both the financial contribution and costs of international students and concluded that the net benefit to Sheffield's economy is £120 million, and to the wider region of up to £176 million. The report also suggests that 8.9% of international students in the city go on to work in Yorkshire and Humberside following graduation. (Davis, 2013). Therefore, it is worth similarly seeing how Chichester can most increase benefits from its international student population.

Employment

West Sussex County Council produced a Local Economic Assessment for West Sussex in 2010/11. This showed that the employment rate in Chichester was 80.3%, which was higher than the average for West Sussex at 76.3%. Unemployment in Chichester was estimated at 2.7%, which was much lower than the county average of 6.1%. (West Sussex County Council, 2010).

For student employment during studies, the Complete University Guide (2016), which publishes university related league tables, has identified that two thirds of students are now working part time to help fund their studies and student lifestyle. This could be due to course fees increasing. The amount of students who work part time could increase even more in September for when students are no longer permitted the maintenance grant. Creating a greater need for available part-time jobs.

In the survey students were asked on their perception of employment opportunities within Chichester, to identify whether Chichester is contributing to the student employment statistics and also providing students and graduates with work.

The survey showed that 41% of students said that there is enough employment opportunities for students looking for part-time work. However majority of students (43% of them) have not even looked for employment opportunities within the Chichester area, and from researching part time job roles within Chichester on Indeed (job advertisement page) there are 991 jobs available in the area.

Findings from the Department for Business Innovation and Skills has identified that in England the employment rate for working age graduates is 87.5% which is the highest level of employment since 2007. The unemployment rate for young graduates (3.9%) has also declined since 2007 (Vanderpant, 2015). This shows that more graduates are now getting jobs after university.

Further Research

Despite these encouraging figures, the proportion of graduates who stay in Chichester is extremely low. This would suggest that the student perception of the opportunities available in the city is limited or affected by other factors such as the lack of nightlife or the cost of housing. When asked if students believe there is enough employment opportunities for graduates, 36% of students said no, while 16% said yes.

Therefore it could be interpreted that students are not going to stay in the area because of little employment opportunities negatively impacting the economy of Chichester. As one student commented “There aren't many graduate job opportunities in the area.” Therefore more development on graduates schemes are needed within the area, which could be done by Chichester Vision Project working with the University.

A further reason is that Chichester is set in the South Downs National Park and is a very desirable place to live. However, the District Council's own website suggests that ‘there is very high demand for housing in the district. Unfortunately, this demand for the district's housing has pushed houses prices up beyond the reach of local households’ (Chichester District Council, 2016) which includes graduates. There is a target to build 600 affordable homes between 2013-2018 (Chichester District Council, 2016). Perhaps the new homes as well as the benefits of living and working in Chichester need better promotion to the student population.

Therefore this shows that the University of Chichester should do more in engaging students with employment within the local area such as advertising the employment within the SU and social media outlets.



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