

University of Nottingham

The University of Nottingham has three campuses, University Park and Jubilee which are adjacent to the city centre, and Sutton Bonington located approximately ten miles south of University Park.

There are approximately 33,500 students and 7,000 staff.

Background

Gleeds were appointed by the University to manage a strategic Masterplan project. The task was to provide a 'Development Framework' with the aim of efficiently structuring the University's Built Environment requirements for the next 20 years and beyond.

Gleeds appointed The Litmus Partnership to develop the catering and hospitality elements of the Masterplan document.

The project ran from October 2019 to January 2020.

During the period of the review we also conducted two review/options projects directly for the University.

- ▶ The feasibility of implementing a café or restaurant offer in a new student hotel on the main campus
- ▶ A study to determine the most appropriate food offers and outlet configuration for the Engineering and Science zone of the main campus

Brief

- ▶ Conduct a review of the current catering model to identify opportunities for service improvements and revenue growth
- ▶ To utilise the results of consumer research to inform potential changes to the catering and retail offers
- ▶ To assess the future food and beverage requirements against the forecast student numbers and consider any changes in space allocation, styles of service or improvements to facilities that may be required
- ▶ Taking account of the above, along with the University's sustainability, wellbeing and commercial objectives, conduct an options appraisal to determine the most appropriate strategy and service delivery model for the future
- ▶ To produce the catering elements of the overall report in line with the agreed report structure

Approach

The review and options appraisal were carried out between February and April 2019.

In order to deliver the project objectives, we carried out the following research and analysis:

- ▶ Interviewing a cross section of stakeholders – 15 in total
- ▶ Holding a focus group with the Students' Union Board
- ▶ Visiting the catering outlets and supporting kitchens at each campus
- ▶ Observing a number of services during different day parts
- ▶ Analysis of financial trading information and staffing structures
- ▶ Measuring the University's key financial metrics against HE sector benchmarks using data we have assembled from more than 50 UK universities
- ▶ Reviewing the University's strategy
- ▶ Conducting a SWOT Analysis
- ▶ Conducting an options appraisal
- ▶ Liaison with the other project workstreams (particularly sustainability, transport and estates/property development) to ensure a coordinated and coherent set of overall recommendations

Outcomes

Our recommendations were as follows:

- ▶ Continuation of the mixed economy model under a single manager or management team to ensure a coherent catering strategy that meets the needs to the diverse University community – historically this had not been the case as the in-house and outsourced elements were managed by two separate departments
- ▶ Consideration to be given to forming a joint venture company, with Board representation from the Students' Union and the University, to manage catering
- ▶ The creation of a central food hall at the heart of campus alongside student services, cafés and bars to encourage students and staff to spend more time together on campus to facilitate socialising and group study
- ▶ Satellite cafés to be strategically located in faculty and teaching buildings
- ▶ The University planned to refurbish its halls of residence and retain catered hall places; we recommended that the refurbished halls were serviced by four hubs adjacent to clusters of halls; there will be a common menu but the food will be produced by a central production kitchen to ensure consistency of quality and efficient management of costs

We also put forward a number of future initiatives for the University to consider around the following themes:

- ▶ Community engagement
- ▶ Student engagement
- ▶ Central production kitchen
- ▶ Professionalisation of food and beverage procurement
- ▶ Application of technology



For more information about Litmus get in touch:

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