



## Norwich Research Park

Norwich Research Park (NRP) aims to deliver solutions to the global challenges of healthy ageing, food and energy security, sustainability and environmental change. It is a community set in 230 hectares of parkland, accommodating over 80 businesses, 12,000 employees and 3,000 scientists, researchers and clinicians.

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## Background

The team at NRP were creating a new hub building called Centrum, intended to bring together the various Park Institutes within a core social and work networking space. NRP wanted a café/restaurant and hospitality service within Centrum, and sought expert advice on how this should be designed to best meet the needs of its community. It also needed to choose a catering operator to deliver the services and grow commercial opportunities.

## Brief

There were a range of existing catering facilities within individual buildings on the Park, but the management team realised that creating a dynamic new service may impact on the viability of these operations.

Litmus was therefore initially tasked with demonstrating the likely impact of opening the Centrum restaurant, and the role that the existing services could play in the future. This would require extensive stakeholder consultation with the individual business units and interrogation of trading data to provide an impact assessment.

The task was then to create a catering design that met the Park objectives for Centrum, which were:

- ▶ An all-day service that acted as a meeting and socialising hub for the Park community;
- ▶ An offer that uses sustainably sourced food;
- ▶ A business model that minimised cost and maximised revenue;
- ▶ A service that embraced technology to understand its customers and promote uptake; and
- ▶ A kitchen equipped and future-proofed to meet the wide range of stakeholder requirements.

## Approach

**Joe Parfitt, the Litmus Partnership, said:** "We began by consulting all stakeholders using the Litmus Consumer Insight focus groups and staff survey, which then helped us construct a business plan and food concepts. This involved analysing current trading patterns, sales mixes and dining preferences to create a projected trading scenario with Centrum operating alongside existing facilities. We then created a business plan for Centrum, which included an options appraisal for how the services might be operated and the likely cost/returns from each strategy.

"A kitchen and servery scheme was then developed which we used to go out to tender to equipment suppliers/installers. In parallel, we also competitively tendered the operating contract for Centrum and the other catering outlets, following the decision of the Park's management to continue outsourcing the services.

"We became part of the project team for the catering installation and also negotiated the contract terms with the operator. It was crucial throughout that we were sensitive to the opinions and requirement of all stakeholders that occupied the buildings."

## Outcomes

The Centrum service opened in 2014, and achieved the following outcomes:

- ▶ A contemporary kitchen and restaurant hub for Park users;
- ▶ Engagement of a service provider with a focus on customer engagement and delivery of a consistent, dynamic fresh food offer; and
- ▶ Improvement in the service delivery at the existing catering outlets.

Litmus was subsequently engaged for the design of staff dining services and public café spaces at the Park's new-build Quadram Institute.

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*Dr Nick Goodwin, Programme Manager, Norwich Research Park*



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