

Durham University opens Orbit building to offer business support

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A centre run by Durham University to provide support to technology and science SMEs has been opened at a business park in the region.

The £1.4m Orbit area has opened at NETPark in Sedgefield. Businesses that become members will benefit from targeted guidance and support from Durham University's researchers and partners at Centre for Process Innovation (CPI) and Business Durham.

Companies will also have access to one of the 13 flexible, private or collaborative office spaces and will be able to be a part of networking events and skills workshops.

Jenny Taylor, head of economic development at Durham University, said: "We are really pleased to be leading this fantastic opportunity for businesses in the North East to collaborate and engage with Durham University.

"Orbit will enable us to support regional economic development by maximising opportunities for local business growth. Businesses can sign up for a private office, hot desk or virtual membership on flexible terms. Now that Orbit is open, we are encouraging business to get in touch and see how we can

support them to grow through tailored business development support.

“I would like to thank all of the agencies who worked with us to repurpose and refurbish part of our research institute at NETPark and create Orbit. It is a beautiful space that provides a welcoming environment for business and academia to work together.”

The project brought together several North East companies including Vest Construction, Space Architects, Identity Consult and Cundall.

Sarah Slaven, interim managing director at Business Durham, added: “Orbit is a fantastic addition to NETPark and we look forward to seeing many more spin-out businesses coming out of the university and following in the foot-steps of businesses such as Kromek who have gone on to enjoy huge global success.

“It is vitally important that we invest in providing the right infrastructure, support and academic expertise to encourage innovation in the county.

“Alongside our strategic partners Durham University and CPI, NETPark provides the right ecosystem to support businesses throughout their lifecycle from concept to commercialisation. Orbit is a welcome addition to NETPark that will help us widen those opportunities to businesses and maximise commercial opportunities with Durham University.”