

AWARDS 2026

INTRODUCTION

Herts & Beds CE Club are delighted to announce the return of our Annual Awards (#HBCEC2026) which focus attention on some of the most important issues in the construction sector and showcase the organisations, teams and projects across this area that are delivering excellence, driving change and inspiring others to adopt new and better ways of working.

All types of organisations enter the awards each year including private and public sector, micro, SME and large contractors, designers, consultants, clients and suppliers; in fact, anyone who is part of our industry's extended family.

Our judges will select the very best submissions as winners in each category who will then go into the East Regional Awards and, ultimately, if they win at this stage, to the National Constructing Excellence Awards later in the year.

BENEFITS TO YOUR BUSINESS

Our awards are about showcasing what our industry does well, driving up standards and ultimately leading to positive change. Off the back of a few turbulent years, we think it is more important than ever that businesses make noise about what they have achieved:-

- Raise awareness of the work you do and how it contributes to improving the wider reputation and image of the sector.
- Demonstrate excellence in your market, showcasing your organisation to key regional and national influencers and helping you to win more work.
- Show your customers (and your competitors) that you are committed to keeping standards high.
- Gain external validation for your company values.
- Celebrate your team's success, boost morale and help you to attract and retain the best industry talent.
- Focus your internal strategy to embed a culture of best practice throughout your business.
- Align your business to the Constructing Excellence brand and it's key drivers for a better industry.

ENTRY NOTES

There is no cost to enter the Constructing Excellence Awards, and you can enter as many projects for as many categories as you like. Also, you do not need to be a Constructing Excellence or Herts & Beds Club member to be able to enter.

THE CATEGORIES

Building Project of the Year
Client of the Year
Sustainability
Delivering Value
Social Impact
Infrastructure Project of the Year
Innovation
Integration & Collaborative Working
People and Culture
Regeneration and Conservation
Retrofit
Residential Project of the Year
SME of the Year

DATES

Opening date: 13th January 2026
Closing date: 5pm on 27th March 2026
Awards ceremony date: 11th June 2026

PROJECT OF THE YEAR

Celebrating inspirational projects that deliver outstanding outcomes. We are looking for projects that exemplify the Constructing Excellence principles, which fully align with the collaborative work. Projects should demonstrate the successful implementation of better ways of working and so help to provide a template for others to learn from.

- Commercial practices that reward and incentivise the supply chain through collaborative procurement and delivery, and fair payment practices.
- High levels of productivity and a rigorous approach to measuring performance.
- A robust digital strategy, embedded within the project.
- A positive culture that embodies respect for people and an excellent approach to health safety and wellbeing.
- High levels of sustainability including demonstrable actions to cut carbon.
- Strong commitment to social value.
- A drive to change the culture of the industry.
- Adherence to the principles of the Building Safety Act and implementation of the Golden Thread
- Excellent levels of client satisfaction, delivering against client outcomes and expectations

CLIENT OF THE YEAR

We are looking for a construction client that has been actively involved in delivering the construction programme and developed strategies for encouraging and rewarding excellence. It goes without saying we expect a culture of collaboration and transparency to be at the heart of how the client operates and empowers the wider team.

- Effective leadership
- Fair and prompt payment to all involved (at every level)
- A drive for continuous improvement.
- Commitment to building with the future in mind.
- Effective communication.
- A procurement strategy that puts fairness and transparency at its heart.
- Decision-making based on quality rather than price.
- Support those involved to bring their best ideas and enable collaboration on every level.

SUSTAINABILITY

We all have a responsibility to deliver a sustainable built environment. It is a key driver behind many innovative tools, techniques and processes and impacts everything we do. Projects or organisations that seek to deliver a positive impact, or a reduced negative impact, on the natural environment and demonstrate whole life sustainability in their approach to construction.

Successful applicants will exemplify the use of organisational culture, high quality design, effective procurement practices and innovative tools and techniques to provide improved environmental performance and outcomes.

- Readiness and progress to move towards zero emission vehicles and onsite plant.
- Commitment to reducing waste and transport to sites via improved logistics and MMC.
- Use of low carbon manufacture, transport, heating, lighting, or processing solutions.
- Measurements or metrics to evaluate carbon and enable informed decision-making for carbon reduction.
- Use of circular economy.
- Use of innovation to reduce impact on the natural environment or enable positive environmental outcomes.
- Support of the development of low carbon materials and solutions.

DELIVERING VALUE

To unlock better societal outcomes, we need to take an informed view of value and not simply make decisions based on cost. Clients need to work with their stakeholders to consider how to unlock wider benefits throughout the construction project and the lifetime of the asset. Tools such as the Value Toolkit enable clients and design teams to take a more informed view of value across four capitals - Produced, Natural, Social and Human.

Whilst value can mean something different to everyone, what it shouldn't be is solely focused on cost. We are seeking projects that clearly demonstrate value-based decision making and the benefits it can bring.

- A robust approach to defining value with buy-in from stakeholders leading to a clear definition of the outcomes and values the project is seeking to achieve.
- A delivery team empowered to come up with the right solutions to deliver those outcomes.
- Successful delivery against the outcomes and value the client wanted.

SOCIAL IMPACT

This award aims to celebrate organisations and projects that take an active role in delivering a positive impact for the communities and stakeholders they work with, placing the society they serve at the heart of what they do.

We are looking for organisations and projects that demonstrate a measured impact on societal outcomes, fair and responsible employment practices, progression opportunities and a commitment to their local communities.

Applicants should demonstrate strategies that serve as a model for the future of the organisation and/or future projects to continue improving outcomes for society.

- A positive impact on society such as labour practices, human rights, community relations and customer satisfaction.
- Initiatives to deliver assets that support communities to thrive e.g. mobility, creation of well-used community spaces, etc.
- A drive to provide high quality employment to those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Work with stakeholders and supply chain to develop awareness of local community needs.
- A plan to identify and tackle societal challenges.
- A range of measures to evaluate and understand the social impact delivered and how to improve upon in the future.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT OF THE YEAR

The Project of the Year category celebrates inspirational projects that deliver outstanding outcomes. We are looking for projects that exemplify the Constructing Excellence principles, which fully align with the collaborative work we are undertaking with the Construction Leadership Council. Projects should demonstrate the successful implementation of better ways of working and so help to provide a template for others to learn from.

- Commercial practices that reward and incentivise the supply chain through collaborative procurement and delivery and fair payment practices.
- High levels of productivity and a rigorous approach to measuring performance.
- A robust digital strategy, embedded within the project.
- A positive culture that embodies respect for people and an excellent approach to health safety and wellbeing.
- High levels of sustainability including demonstrable actions to cut carbon.
- Strong commitment to social value.
- Excellent levels of client satisfaction, delivering against client outcomes and expectations.

INNOVATION

Successful applicants will demonstrate how they foster a culture for innovation and systematically solve quantified problems with new or repurposed tools and techniques used by other sectors or organisations - to deliver quantified better productivity, profitability, sustainability or any other critical element with the use of an innovative product or approach that can/will be repeatedly used within the organisation or wider sector.

- Proven improvement in outcome through innovation.
- Clear ambitions, strategies and action plans which intentionally drive positive change.
- Progressive procurement policies to enable and reward supply chain innovation.
- Outreach programmes that actively seek out different approaches from very different sectors with the intent to find better solutions or processes.
- Clear evidence of action taken, and results achieved, that show a positive significant step change in performance compared to previous years and most others in the sector.

INTEGRATION AND COLLABORATIVE WORKING

Integration and collaborative working are key to overcoming challenges, managing risk and delivering better outcomes. We are looking for projects and practices that exemplify this approach with evidence of how all parties have been engaged, from clients to contractors and all across the supply chain. Applicants must demonstrate the benefits that have been achieved through a collaborative and integrated working.

- Better decision making through effective collaboration.
- Use of collaboration to overcome challenges and manage risk.
- Use of collaborative delivery models.
- Early supply chain involvement.
- Clear supply chain strategy and good supply chain management.
- Fair supply chain practices.
- Prompt payments.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE

“Our people are our greatest asset” - so attracting, motivating, supporting, developing and retaining the most diverse of human talent to our organisations and the sector is critical to ensure we totally understand and meet our customers' and wider communities' needs. Strong constructive cultures, effective leadership, health & wellbeing, and psychological safety at every level are vital to ensuring we positively challenge and continuously improve, as is Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and ensuring functional competence through progression pathways and continuing professional development.

- Clear strategies.
- Effective implementation of plans.
- Clear evidence of success. Measures are likely to include staff motivation scores and retention data, time and cost invested in people development plans (in-house activities, external programmes or other) at all levels of the organisation or project.
- Community engagement activity that attracts the most talented people to our sector's diverse roles.

REGENERATION AND CONSERVATION

The Regeneration & Conservation Award aims to highlight projects or programmes that apply the Constructing Excellence principles to deliver better outcomes for an existing asset. These principles include procurement, innovation, collaboration, culture/people, productivity, client satisfaction, HS&W and Digital. Applicants must demonstrate how they achieve improved outcomes against these principles. Applicants should demonstrate the use of specialist skills and techniques, where appropriate, to ensure any works are in keeping with existing historic/ heritage features.

- Successful delivery of client / community goals and expectations.
- Improved performance of the existing asset.
- Collaborative practices within the delivery process.
- Use of digital through the project.
- Employment of innovative techniques.
- Use of traditional/specialist skills, where appropriate.
- Measured impact of the solutions and end result.
- Excellent outcomes and high standards in the repair, re-use and revitalisation of sites and buildings.

RETROFIT

The UK has Europe's oldest building stock and retrofit is crucial to deliver a net zero built environment and the high-quality homes and buildings our society needs. The Retrofit Award aims to highlight projects or programmes that apply the Constructing Excellence principles to deliver better performance of an existing asset. These principles include procurement, innovation, collaboration, culture/people, productivity, client satisfaction, HS&W and Digital. Applicants must demonstrate how they achieve improved performance against these principles.

- Successful delivery of client / community goals and expectations.
- Improved performance of the existing asset.
- Collaborative practices within the delivery process.
- Use of digital through the project.
- Employment of innovative techniques.
- Measured impact of the solutions and end result including reduced carbon emissions.

RESIDENTIAL PROJECT OF THE YEAR

This award celebrates inspirational projects that deliver outstanding outcomes. We are looking for projects that exemplify the Constructing Excellence principles, which fully align with the collaborative work we are undertaking with the Construction Leadership Council. Projects must demonstrate the successful implementation of better ways of working and so help to provide a template for others to learn from.

- Commercial practices that reward and incentivise the supply chain through collaborative procurement and delivery and fair payment practices.
- High levels of productivity and a rigorous approach to measuring performance.
- A robust digital strategy, embedded within the project.
- A positive culture that embodies respect for people and an excellent approach to health safety and wellbeing.
- High levels of sustainability including demonstrable actions to cut carbon.
- Strong commitment to social value.
- A drive to change the culture of the industry.
- Adherence to the principles of the Building Safety Act and implementation of the Golden Thread
- Excellent levels of client satisfaction, delivering against client outcomes and expectations

SME OF THE YEAR

Small to Medium Enterprises encompasses; micro (less than 10 employees and an annual turnover under £2 million), small (less than 50 employees and an annual turnover under £10 million) and medium-sized (less than 250 employees and an annual turnover under £50 million) businesses.

SMEs are a core part of the supply chain and are the backbone of the construction industry. Constructing Excellence are seeking to showcase examples of organisations that embody best practise. Applicants should model the Constructing Excellence principles of procurement, innovation, collaboration, culture/people, productivity, client satisfaction, HS&W, Digital.

- Continual professional development i.e. training, developing competence, pathways to progression, leaderships & successor development.
- A culture of inclusivity, psychological safety and mental health support.
- A safety-first culture, with the correct culture, systems and processes in place.
- Good staff retention and team satisfaction - recognised as being a good place to work.
- Commitment to addressing the skills shortage - actively encouraging diverse new entrants to the industry and nurturing emerging talent.
- Financial sustainability with a future focus and strategy.
- Engagement with the community, providing support and getting involved with events and initiatives.

HOW TO ENTER

- All forms can be downloaded from <https://hertsandbeds.constructingexcellence.org.uk/> or we can send them to you by email.
- All entries should be submitted electronically, via email to marion@rdtarchitects.co.uk by 5pm 27th March 2026. Please include with your submissions high resolution logos for ALL organisations involved in the project/scheme/entry (jpg or eps format preferable).
- All entries WILL receive a receipt confirmation via email. If you have submitted an entry and not received a receipt email please contact us on 01582 461060 to check we have received your submission.

ENTRY GUIDELINES

- An application can be made for an organisation, project, process, product or a service. There is no limit. You can submit as many projects for as many categories as you like but you MUST fill in a separate form for each one. Multiple submissions are encouraged.
- All nominations and submissions should relate primarily to work carried out between January 2025 and December 2025. A project DOES NOT have to be completed to be entered but you must be able to demonstrate how it fulfils the criteria of the category you are entering.
- Where a project is being submitted, the project must have been based in Hertfordshire or Bedfordshire and you must have the approval of the owner of the building/project. Clients must also be made aware in advance of any entries that refer to them. Where a company, process, product or service is the subject, the nominating organisation/divisional office should be based in Hertfordshire or Bedfordshire.
- Images are helpful and should be used. All images/logos must also be sent in a separate file along with your entry. These are used to promote your project in any marketing materials in the run up/on the night itself. However, If you wish to use an image to illustrate a point you are making in the text then please also embed it in the forms. Permission of the copyright holder must have been given for any image/videos.
- Video is accepted but again it must be supplementary to the information in the form, NOT a substitute for.
- A précis of shortlisted entries will feature on the HBCEC website and elsewhere. Shortlisted entrants may be asked to participate in HBCEC related events programmes. Every project entered will be considered for Demonstration Project status.

JUDGING

- The organisers reserve the right to feature any submitted material in any editorial or promotional work relating to HBCEC website and social media.
- The panel of judges will consider each submission against the category criteria.
- All awards are made at the discretion of the judges and HBCEC. The right is reserved not to make an award in a particular category.
- The judges have authority to move entries into more applicable categories. Their decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into following the awards.
- Information supplied by the judges or discussed between the judges and entrants will be treated in complete confidence, and confidentiality on the part of the entrants if requested.
- In line with national Constructing Excellence judging, appendices will NOT be taken into consideration. Supporting images, graphs, tables that you wish to include in support of your application should be embedded within the entry form. Within reason, captions can be included in addition to stipulated word count. Short Videos are the ONLY additional content that will be taken into consideration.

Winners will be announced at the Herts & Beds Constructing Excellence Club Awards Ceremony from 12.00 noon to 3.00 pm on Thursday 11th June 2026 at Tewinbury.

SPONSORSHIP

We are actively looking for sponsors for both the Award categories and a headline sponsor for the 2026 Awards Ceremony. If you are interested in learning more, please contact marion@rdtarchitects.co.uk

HINTS AND TIPS

The Constructing Excellence Awards 'recognise the best and inspire the rest'. It is important you think about the following:-

WHAT MAKES YOUR SUBMISSION SPECIAL?

We want to know if you are doing something new or different or doing something common to the industry but better than anyone else. It could be how you manage a specific process or a wide-ranging programme. It doesn't need to be technologically cutting edge, but it does need to be exemplary.

CAN YOU DEMONSTRATE REAL BENEFITS?

We want data. You needn't submit all your data, but we need to know that you have changed or achieved something through some measurable information. Did you do it better or with increased satisfaction to your clients? Testimonials from key stakeholders are also welcome and are useful for demonstrating impact. (Testimonials do not form part of the word count).

IS IT HONEST?

We are not looking for the glossy PR version of your project. We want real stories which give an honest summary of all the issues that you have overcome to deliver. Don't be afraid of saying what went wrong!

ENSURE YOU...

...ANSWER THE QUESTION BEING ASKED

Take time to read the question and understand exactly what information is required.

...USE PLAIN LANGUAGE

Avoid using buzzwords, this makes the entry harder to read for the judges. The best entries stick to the facts. State what you did, why you did it and why it benefitted the clients and end users.

... THINK ABOUT THE READER

Keep your points succinct but make sure your entry displays passion, has a flow and engages the reader within the first minute of reading. This will help your form to stand out if the scores are really close (which they generally are). Consider how your form reads to a lay person. Your submission will probably be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary team so try not to use specialised phrases.

...THINK ABOUT 'IMPACT'

The standard is generally very high and submissions that have the edge are the ones who go on to define impact. Think about how the impact has been taken forward; e.g. shared with the supply chain. Size doesn't matter, a small project important to a locally community can have just as much impact as a global initiative. If your project has a great story, then tell us it. Our judges always have one eye on the project being a national winner, so tell us what the wow factor is.

...THINK ABOUT PROBLEM SOLVING

How did you overcome problems you had during the build?

This information is interesting to the judges as construction and engineering is all about problem solving!

...THINK ABOUT THE 'EXTRA'

In categories such as People Development and Health, Safety and Wellbeing, a winning entry must demonstrate what you have done above and beyond the legal requirement. For instance putting someone on a course that is mandatory for their job does not count!

...THINK ABOUT RAISING STANDARDS

At Constructing Excellence, our key aim is to drive up standards and improve the image of the industry. Tell us how your project contributes to this.

CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any queries, please speak to the Herts & Beds CE Club Team.

Marion Clapp/Richard Tavener (Chairman)

T: 01582 461060

E: marion@rdtarchitects.co.uk

Web: <https://hertsandbeds.constructingexcellence.org.uk/>

GET SOCIAL

We will be building up to the event across HBCEC social media  

Join in using **#HBCEC2026** and **#CEEast2026**

GOOD LUCK!

The Herts & Beds Constructing Excellence Team