

ADEPT President's Awards 2025

Entry form

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Award category Innovation in Place-shaping

Project Title Gull Wing Lowestoft

Local authority entrant Suffolk County Council

Headline summary (150 characters max.)

The Gull Wing project across Lake Lothing has used advanced technology and engineering to deliver a transformational, iconic project for Lowestoft.

Please note we need at least one supporting image per award submission. Upload your image/s below.















Innovation in place-shaping: How has this project used digital innovation and/or the imaginative use of new or existing technology? (150 words max.)

Digital technology has been used extensively. The Gull Wing team created 3D computer (BIM) and simulation models which were used throughout the planning and design of the scheme. The Contractor enhanced this model to develop scheduling and visual staging of the more complex elements such as the bascule installation, creating a 4D model. The Project also adopted a cloud based digital collaboration software package to manage all contract correspondence between the project team and supply chain. This was especially valuable with disparate teams during the pandemic. The bridge itself is a feat of modern engineering and has cleverly re-imagined the functional counterweight of the opening bascule span - normally hidden - to make a dramatic visual impression that will shape Lowestoft as a place for inward investment and regeneration. The Project purposefully uses advanced technology to provide a uniquely striking structure exemplifying exceptional design and construction quality, adhering to the highest standards.

Innovation in place-shaping: How has this project shown evidence of improved outcomes for users? (150 words max.)

Until the Gull Wing Bridge was opened in 2024, Lowestoft in Suffolk was a severed community – north-south movements disrupted by 2 low level bridges across Lake Lothing which opened for marine vessels multiple times daily. The Gull Wing's design of a high level third crossing that opens less frequently has been warmly embraced, transforming local journeys, dramatically alleviating traffic congestion and giving a reinvigorated sense of identity and pride. The project has delivered an iconic structure that enhances the aesthetic and cultural environment of Lowestoft, providing a catalyst for regeneration and growth. All of this adds up to a better quality of life for residents, through improvement in air quality due to less standing traffic, better connectivity for walking and cycling routes, and more reliable bus services. A new access road and drainage scheme has also been provided to unlock adjacent brownfield land for development.

Innovation in place-shaping: How has this project shown evidence of the transformation of a service/department/organisation by changing behaviours, delivering savings or improving ways of working? (150 words max.)

This was described as a 'once in a generation' infrastructure project for Suffolk County Council. Due to its

scale, a bespoke project delivery team was set up that could deliver a major infrastructure project. This included the creation of new governance structures and Boards, a key external stakeholders group, rigorous project and contract management controls, and a dedicated communications resource to manage social media, mainstream media and liaise with stakeholders. Social Value targets were explicitly incorporated into the main construction contract which resulted in STEM outreach into local schools, support for local charities and local employment opportunities. Much closer working and collaboration with external agencies and stakeholders has resulted in improved relationships which can benefit other projects, and the image of the Council within the Lowestoft area community is greatly improved and enhanced as is SCC's capability and reputation to deliver large infrastructure projects such as this in the future.

Innovation in place-shaping: How can the innovation/technology in this project be applied in multiple sectors/areas? (150 words max.)

Numerous lessons can be learned from the governance model and rigorous project/ contract management controls that were applied. Gained knowledge and experience can be applied to improve controls on many other Council projects which would result in better delivery outcomes and the realisation of benefits. The innovative approach to communicating to the general public and key stakeholders using social media, live webcams etc should also be adopted as good practice by projects across the Council. Extensive use of digital BIM models and cloud-based project management software enabled disparate teams to work closely together - hugely important on such a technically challenging project where construction tolerances were sometimes less than 5 millimetres. This project has demonstrated how major infrastructure projects can bring immediate and long lasting benefits to communities, and brings a track record that can be leveraged for future funding of other similar schemes in other areas of the County.

Innovation in place-shaping: How does this project demonstrate scalability and resilience - the ability to use technology in a wider scope and in a way that encourages longevity of use? (150 words max.)

This project found ways to deliver a technically challenging major infrastructure scheme during a period of time spanning the pandemic. The need for detailed collaboration from disparate and remote locations across the UK and Europe led to greater reliance on technology, including BIM and cloud-based systems. The project's success shows that this approach can provide lasting benefits if applied consistently across other projects. As an illustration, the main bascule span was designed in the UK, the steelwork was fabricated in Belgium, final pre-assembly was in Holland, components were fabricated in France and Turkey. The pre-assembled bridge was transported to Lowestoft by sea and floated into position on a barge. Due to size and shape there were numerous tight tolerances and allowances for temperature, wind etc that needed detailed discussions by the teams involved. The 4D BIM model and the collaborative management software were invaluable... and it fitted perfectly first time.

All categories: please add anything else that supports your award entry

The Gull Wing is a technically demanding and challenging project which involves innovative design and construction techniques throughout. It is the largest lifting bridge of its type in the world. The delivery of this project could not have been possible without detailed collaboration between project teams, designers and constructors. The fact that it was delivered during a pandemic makes it an even greater achievement and the project adopted technological approaches to overcome the unique challenges of working disparately and remotely. During its planning, it was decided that the community in Lowestoft deserved and needed a unique and visually striking design so that it not only solved the town's traffic problems but also made a statement about Lowestoft and its ambition for its own future. The lasting benefits will be the renewed sense of pride in place and the regeneration and investment opportunities that having a truly iconic bridge will bring to transform the town.