

7 JANUARY 2026**FC AWARDS – AWARDS 2025 PROJECT CLOSURE AND FUTURE DELIVERY****Issue**

The first FC Awards ceremony took place on 1 October 2025.

Feedback confirms the event achieved its goal of recognising excellence and strengthening engagement across the organisation. It was well received and aligned with our values, with strong support for continuing the awards (see Annex A for feedback summary).

A framework is now in place to guide future delivery.

This paper outlines options for event frequency and delivery model, and seeks the Board's decision on:

- Whether to continue the FC Awards
- The delivery model and timelines for future events
- The allocated budget

Recommendations

The Board is asked to approve:

- **Event frequency.** Strong support for an annual event, building on the success of the first awards.
- **Venue.** Maintain Forestry Commission locations for future events to reflect our identity, while considering rotation across organisations to strengthen collaboration.
- **Timing.** Agree on the date, or estimated date, of the next event and begin planning at least six months ahead.
- **Budget.** Note the 2025 budget of £30,000 as the approximate cost going forward which remains value for money in terms of meeting FC goals regarding recognition.
- **Lead agency/business unit.** Nominate a new area to host the event in 2026.

Background

The Board is advised to consider:

- **Event frequency**

Feedback indicates that an annual event is preferred. The first awards were well received, and there is an appetite to repeat them next year. However, the Board may wish to explore a different cycle in future years to keep the awards fresh, avoid repetition, and allow recovery time between cycles.

- **Location**

There is strong support for continuing to host events at Forestry Commission venues. The venue must accommodate at least 80 guests for a seated dinner.

- **Delivery model and project host**

While the responsibility of organising the event should remain with the Commissioners' Office, the event location, however, could rotate across different parts of the country and/or be supported by FS/FR, i.e. after FE supported the Bedgebury event. This approach would strengthen collaboration, improve engagement, increase visibility, and showcase what makes each area unique.

- **Budget implications**

The 2025 FC Awards had a budget of £30,000. For planning purposes, we assumed an average travel cost of £200 per attendee, which was broadly found to be correct i.e. it is likely to be this approximate cost going forward. Given the value of the event in terms of recognition, it is assumed that this remains a value for money proposition going forward into 2026.

- **Timing and planning**

We recommend starting event planning, including the nomination process, at least six months before the ceremony. Taking into account that late July to September are challenging months for securing panel members to review nominations due to annual leave.

Holding the awards in a different month, such as November, would ease pressures and minimise time away from core responsibilities. This is because October is a busy period for senior leaders, given the Senior Leadership Conference and other commitments.

- **Awards categories and other suggestions for improvement**

Feedback suggests alternative award categories. A review should be undertaken by the project group as part of planning for the next event. Additional suggestions for improvement, drawn from event feedback, will also be shared for consideration during planning.

The Board will be consulted in March as to the progress of this work.

Organisational Development Partner
Head of Organisational Change
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