



michelmores

PROPERTY AWARDS 2026

SOUTH WEST DEVELOPMENT SNAPSHOT

Three development trends from the 2026 entries

Introduction

It remains a demanding period for everyone working across the sector. Inflationary pressures and elevated interest rates persist, while developers and contractors are also navigating rising build costs.

The industry is also adapting to a wave of legislative change, from significant planning reforms and shifts in taxation to the introduction of new sustainability measures. Yet, in the face of these challenges, what stands out most is the sector's resilience and momentum.

The thing I enjoy most about working in the real estate sector is the passion that people have for buildings. A client reminded me recently of how fundamental buildings are to human existence. By and large, we are born in buildings, we are educated in buildings, we work and live in buildings and, eventually, if we are lucky enough, we get to retire and grow old in a well-run building, or perhaps even a villa somewhere with a more consistent climate!

The entries for this year's Michelmores Property Awards demonstrated a real estate community that is not standing still, but rather one which is adapting, evolving, and pushing forward with confidence, despite the challenges it faces. The schemes celebrated by the Awards showcased innovation and creativity, and most importantly a commitment to delivering projects that make a lasting positive difference.

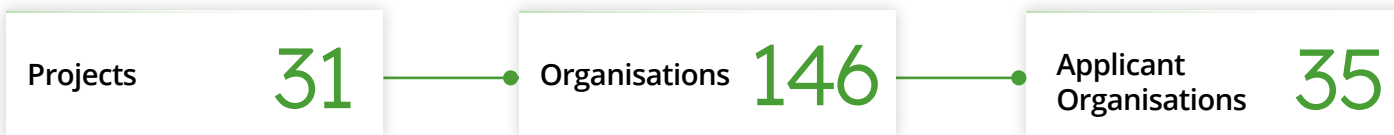
Across this year's entries and winning projects, several common themes emerged, highlighting how development is increasingly being measured by the long-term value it creates for people, places and communities.

At Michelmores, one of our core aims as a business is to make a positive impact. We all know that the need to transition to a more sustainable future remains a priority and it is great to see sustainability at the heart of how projects are being conceived and delivered. The quality and diversity of approaches within the submissions highlight a collective commitment to improving environmental performance across the built environment.



Headlines

A connected regional ecosystem



Representing developers, occupiers, architects, contractors, consultants, public bodies and specialist advisers from across the South West.

- More than £400m of development activity was represented across Gloucestershire, Bristol, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall.
- Residential & Later Living was the largest sector represented, accounting for 29% of projects submitted, demonstrating that innovative schemes were still progressing despite a market downturn.
- Healthcare & Life Sciences, and Education together represented more than 25% of projects submitted, highlighting sustained investment in public services and skills infrastructure.

Development trends from the 2026 entries



Successful development is no longer judged solely on what is built, but rather the lasting value it creates for people, places and communities.

1. The strongest projects solve real-world problems

Across the entries, successful projects were rarely justified on commercial grounds alone. The strongest submissions responded directly to identified local challenges, from housing shortages and healthcare pressures to community infrastructure and education needs.

Snapshot Insight

The strongest evidence of local need related to capacity gaps, where existing provision was no longer sufficient to meet demand.

Evidence from winners

BOWA MEDICAL UK HQ (Project of the Year Under £10m) and Musgrove Park Hospital Surgical Centre (Project of the Year Over £10m) highlight continued investment in healthcare infrastructure across the region. While BOWA focuses on innovation, training and advanced medical manufacturing, Musgrove strengthens patient care through modern facilities designed to improve capacity, resilience and service delivery.

Development trend

The winning schemes suggest that demand-led development is increasingly focused on operational resilience as well as new floorspace. The most compelling projects were those that addressed capacity constraints, improved service delivery and created long-term adaptability for changing user needs.



Development trends from the 2026 entries

Snapshot Insight

The strongest regeneration projects focused on repair, reuse and long-term revival, extending the life of existing buildings and places while creating new value for communities.

2. Sustainable development increasingly means making better use of what already exists

Many of the projects submitted centred on the transformation and repurposing of existing assets. From heritage buildings and community facilities to underutilised sites, entrants repeatedly demonstrated that existing places can be adapted to meet changing needs while delivering environmental, economic and social value.

Evidence from winners

Shoemakers Museum and Factory Cooperage demonstrated how heritage assets can be carefully adapted for contemporary use, combining conservation, sustainability and regeneration. Similarly, residential winners Gap House and Millstream, The Chocolate Quarter showed how underutilised sites and existing buildings can be repurposed to meet modern needs while contributing positively to their surrounding communities.

Development trend

The winners pointed to a clear shift towards projects that repaired, reused and revived existing places. Heritage, placemaking, community benefit and long-term stewardship were increasingly central to regeneration value, rather than treated as secondary considerations.

Snapshot Insight

Many of the strongest submissions demonstrated a clear focus on social value, community benefit and long-term positive impact beyond the buildings themselves.

3. The most successful projects create value beyond their site boundary

Perhaps the most encouraging trend was the emphasis placed on the people and communities that developments serve. Across a range of categories, entries demonstrated how projects were designed not only to deliver physical assets, but also to create lasting benefits for residents, visitors, learners, patients and local communities.

Evidence from winners

Several of this year's winners demonstrated how successful development can create lasting value for the communities it serves. Sky Primary & Eden Project Nursery was recognised for combining high-quality design with a strong focus on learning, wellbeing and sustainability. Plymouth Tinside Lido demonstrated how investment in heritage assets can preserve valued community facilities while supporting wider social, health and economic benefits. The residential winners, Gap House, and Millstream, The Chocolate Quarter similarly showed how development

can strengthen local communities by improving quality of life and supporting long-term neighbourhood wellbeing.

Development trend

Across the winning projects, investment in buildings was increasingly linked to investment in people and communities. Whether supporting learners, residents, visitors or local neighbourhoods, the strongest projects demonstrated that successful development is increasingly measured by the lasting benefits it creates beyond the physical asset itself.



Conclusion

Whether responding to housing need, improving public services, regenerating existing assets or supporting future skills, the projects submitted to the Michelmores Property Awards 2026 reflected a sector focused on long-term impact as much as physical delivery.

While the schemes varied significantly in scale and purpose, a common thread emerged: the most compelling projects demonstrated not only what they were building, but why they were building it and who would benefit.

Collectively, this year's winning projects demonstrated the quality, innovation and sustainability that continued to define the region's most successful developments, while highlighting the important role the built environment played in supporting communities and economic growth across the South West.

Read more about the winning projects and this year's Awards on the [Michelmores Property Awards 2026 Winners page](#).

This year's winners:

Project of the year
(under £10m) - BOWA
Medical UK HQ



Project of the year
(over £10m) - Musgrove
Park Hospital - Surgical
Centre



Regeneration Project
of the Year - Factory
Cooperage at Royal
William Yard



Education Project of the
year - Sky Primary &
Eden Project Nursery



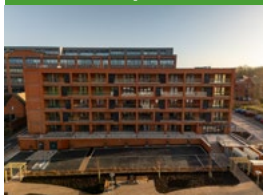
Leisure & Tourism
Project of the Year -
Shoemakers Museum



Heritage Project of the
Year - Plymouth Tinside
Lido



Residential Project of
the Year (36 homes &
over) - Millstream, The
Chocolate Quarter



Residential Project of
the Year (36 homes &
under) - Gap House



Building of the Year -
Shoemakers Museum



Sponsorship opportunities

Sponsoring the Michelmores Property Awards gives you a fantastic opportunity to raise your organisation's profile amongst the West of England and South West's property and construction sector.

With nine categories, the competition recognises a wide range of commercial and residential projects, with shortlisted and winning schemes placed firmly in the industry's spotlight.

Email events@michelmores.com to hear more about our 2027 opportunities.

Register for more info

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