

ADEPT President's Awards 2026

Entry form

Award category

Shaping Places for People

Project Title

Community Shelters in Hertfordshire

Local authority

Hertfordshire County Council

Headline summary (150 characters max.)

Hertfordshire County Council is working with local communities to improve bus waiting areas and the space around them through our Community Shelters.

Shaping Places for People: How was this project an innovative response to a significant local challenge? (150 words max.)

Community Shelters as a project work with local communities to improve shelters and the space around it to make it more engaging and aesthetically pleasing. The challenge faced at the Quadrant was the complete lack of infrastructure, right in the centre of a bustling community hub. Lack of bus stop infrastructure/ inadequate bus stops deters 23% of people from using buses according to a report from Campaign for Better Transport. The Quadrant had older benches and no shelter, this location created a blank canvas where visible enhancements could be made to the local area, and where even small changes could improve the bus stop user experience. We wanted to improve accessibility, as well as create a more pleasant bus stop waiting area.

Shaping Places for People: Please give evidence of the quality of outcomes obtained from the project (for example improved/more efficient services, increased inclusivity for residents, futureproofing the service). (150 words max.)

Although we are unable to quantify results numerically, we've had outstanding feedback from both the local community and Elected Members. Local residents have provided positive feedback on their Facebook Group, and local businesses use the shelter to promote local products and offerings, cementing it as a key part of the community.

The Sandridge Parish Council Newsletter said: "The redesign has already made a positive impact in the local community and has been the recipient of lots of positive feedback. We hope this continues to be an enjoyable space to visit for all in the community, regardless of whether you use the bus or not".

The upgrades created a space to nurture and expand the evident community spirit in the area. This project was conducted with the local community at its heart, and the valued feedback demonstrates how worthwhile this project has been.

Shaping Places for People: Please give evidence of the level of collaboration between place and people services (both within the council and with external partners/providers). (150 words max.)

The Community Shelters programme demonstrates strong collaboration between place and people services across Hertfordshire. The Quadrant scheme was developed jointly by transport, accessibility, community engagement and environmental teams within the council to enhance both public-realm infrastructure and community wellbeing. Early engagement with Sandridge Parish Council ensured the project reflected local needs, with residents influencing design choices such as planters, flat benches for social use, and the inclusion of a living roof to support pollinators. External partners played a vital role:

local volunteer groups committed to maintaining planting, and St Albans' art groups co-created bespoke artwork rooted in community identity. Suppliers, including Externiture, collaborated closely with council officers to coordinate installation, navigate utilities, and deliver a unified design across both shelters. This multi-agency, cross-sector approach ensured the project improved transport access while creating a valued social space shaped directly by the community it serves.

Shaping Places for People: Please give evidence of the level of buy-in to the project or its goals from members of the local community, health and social care, and external organisations. (150 words max.)

The project was done in collaboration with the local community. Partnership was at the heart of our strategy. After identifying the site in March 2023, with the obvious lack of infrastructure being a vital part of the choice, we decided to conduct this project in collaboration with the key stakeholders. Our first step was reaching out to the Parish Council in January 2024, who were enthusiastic about the possible changes that could be made. There were some obvious, straight forward changes that we could make, such as installing a shelter. The rest of the decisions were made based on what the local Parish Council, on behalf of residents, suggested to improve the space. Deciding on the elements for the project with the Parish Council allowed us to make changes that kept the local community as the priority.

Shaping Places for People: Please give evidence of the use or consideration of new sources of investment to fund projects. (150 words max.)

Community Shelters are only possible due to Bus Service Improvement Plan funding. This funding has given us the ability to transform infrastructure into a community hub, often where there was only a bus stop flag before. This is especially evident at the Quadrant. However, we rely on the good nature of groups and individuals to maintain parts of the project. Local volunteers are responsible for the maintenance of the community garden and planters that surround the shelter, keeping it alive with seasonal plants. Local art groups were kind enough to work on pieces for decoration for free. By utilising the community want of the shelter, and having involved them from the beginning, there was a mutual desire on the success of the project.