

Nomination Guidance Notes

The purpose of each category below is simply to provide a loose framework for your entry. You are free to interpret each category as you wish – your challenge is to wow the judges with a story about why you stand out from the rest.

Lifetime Achievement | Outstanding Contribution Award

This award recognises a leader, one who inspires, creates opportunity for others and who will be heralded for making positive, lasting differences to the local economy and community across a number of years.

Start-up Business of the Year

They're new and they're going places. Let's celebrate them and help them take their next step.

The judges will be looking for:

- A business that has been established within the past two years (on the closing date of 29 September 2024).
- Demonstrates evidence of entrepreneurship and/or innovation.
- Has defied challenging economic conditions to succeed, grow and thrive.
- Can evidence financial success, stability and future growth potential.

Small Business of the Year

They may be small but they're making a big impact on the business community in our region and beyond. To celebrate a small business (with fewer than 50 employees) that combines commercial success with other elements, such as customer service, social impact, innovation and developing talent.

The judges will be looking for:

- A business (with fewer than 50 employees) that combines commercial success with other elements, such as customer service, social impact, innovation and developing talent.

- Details of financial performance, evidence of success and potential for growth.
- Outline of long-term plans and company strategy.
- Overview of product and service development.
- What staff training and development plans are in place.

Best Place to Work

Who goes out of their way to create a workplace where people thrive and the days fly by?

Judges will be looking for a business which:

- Provides a good work-life balance and well-being initiatives.
- Offers rewards and recognition.
- Delivers exceptional training and offers career progression.
- Opens opportunities to all.
- Evidence of a motivated workforce.

Tell us how you meet staff needs and retention rates remain consistently high.

Environment and Sustainability Award

A business which has made big changes to reduce its environmental impact or provides services to help others reduce theirs.

The winner of this award will be a company that:

- Is working towards sustainable development goals and can demonstrate the impact.
- Is taking active green steps towards more environmentally-conscious operations and ethics.
- Has made and continues to make improvements in energy and carbon reduction or sustainable working.

You may have introduced environmental policies across your business, are using green communications or endorsing carbon footprint reduction. Your strategy, policies and foresight will reflect a well-considered green approach – rather than fractional, ad-hoc actions.

Charity of the Year Award

Which organisation is making a real difference to the lives of others? Let's put their name in lights!

Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- A financially successful business
- Transparency, accountability, and good governance in its operations, including financial management and reporting.
- The ways the charity engages with the local community and forms partnerships with other organisations and/or stakeholders.
- Innovative approaches to fundraising and delivering support.
- The tangible impact, achievements and positive changes the charity brings to its beneficiaries. Include details about the beneficiaries and the number of individuals it supports.
- A clear business plan and measurable results.

The winning charity will need to demonstrate not just how much money it raises or spends, but also how it uses fundraising and the contribution of volunteers to make a significant difference to those they work for and the local community.

Innovation Award

Who is doing things differently? Who is really pushing the boundaries and creating an example for others to follow?

Celebrating inventive thinking, groundbreaking ideas, products or system developments and creativity in business.

Judges will be looking for businesses that:

- Have a clear vision of what the innovation project, product, system or process had to achieve.
- Can detail how the product was developed.
- Can evidence a gain in revenue or market share.
- Are able to detail the overall benefits to the business and its customers..

Entrepreneur of the Year

A business person who can't stop having ideas, creating prosperity for themselves and for others.

Judges will be looking for someone who can demonstrate:

- How their actions and strategies have been instrumental to the success of the business.
- Evidence of strong financial performance, including the clear identification of an opportunity that has had a measurable impact on the success of business.
- Enterprising behaviours such as participation, risk-taking, management and leadership, vision, originality and innovation.
- How they have overcome barriers to achieve at a high standard (ie social, geographical or physical).
- A positive impact on the wider economy and local communities through employment, additional work as mentors or in the voluntary sector.

Nominations can be made by the entrant if they run their own business, or a sponsor or nominee from the business they work for.

Team of the Year

A group of people who have made a huge difference to their organisation, their community or the local economy.

This category recognises exceptional teams who have demonstrated an outstanding performance over the past year. The Team of the Year award celebrates close knit, well-drilled teams who have achieved significant business objectives and are pushing the business forward.

The judges will be looking for:

- Achievement of objectives
- Evidence of collaboration, communication and teamwork both within the team and with other departments.
- Innovative approaches, creative problem solving and implementation of new ideas which have contributed to the team's success.

- Measurable positive impact the team has had on the business, such as improvements on efficiency, productivity, profitability or customer satisfaction.

Eligible entries include departments within companies (eg. IT/HR), project teams or teams which have come together in collaboration.

Large Business of the Year

A leading light in the region, making a difference through employment and using local supply chains. This category is open to companies with more than 51 employees.

Judges will be looking at all aspects of company performance, including:

- A company with more than 51 employees that has demonstrated exceptional performance and serves as a benchmark of success and inspiration.
- Evidence of a strong managerial and financial performance including revenue, profitability and market share.
- Future growth and development plans and clear strategic vision.
- Staff training, career development opportunities, employee welfare and a positive workplace culture

Growth Award

They've expanded quickly and sustainably, or they've supported others to do so. The judging panel will be looking for:

- A growing medium-sized business that has taken tangible steps to increase its scale and impact.
- Strong financial performance including evidence of increase in turnover and/or profit.
- Inspirational leadership and effective management
- How the company has performed against its growth plan and an overview of future plans to sustain and further this growth.

Rising Star

They've got heaps of potential and they're already making a difference in their businesses. A leader of the future and the 'one to watch'.

The judges will be looking for someone who:

- Is under 25 years of age or under on 21 November 2024.
- Is thriving in the workplace and has the potential to become a future leader.
- Demonstrates commitment to personal development and progression
- Shows outstanding contribution to the workplace - in particular, areas or projects where they have exceeded expectations.
- Demonstrates inspirational levels of achievement and attainment.
- Is a role model for peers.