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7 April 2026

MPBA Strengthens Strategic Partnership with STEP CONNECT2 Across Key Public Sector Infrastructure Events

The Modular & Portable Building Association (MPBA) is reinforcing its long-standing partnership with STEP CONNECT2 by supporting a growing portfolio of leading events for public sector infrastructure, with a particular focus on the education and justice estates.

This expanded collaboration reflects a shared commitment to driving innovation and sustainability, as well as responding to growing demand and the continued advancement of modern methods of construction in modular and portable buildings.

A cornerstone of the collaboration is Education Estates®, which the MPBA has supported since 2019. Organised in partnership with the Department for Education, it is the UK's leading event for education infrastructure, focusing on the funding, design, build, maintenance and management of schools, colleges and universities. Through its involvement, the MPBA has played an important role in connecting its members with key stakeholders across the education sector while showcasing the value of modular construction.

Building on this, the MPBA chose to partner with STEP CONNECT2 to launch the MMC Awards in 2023, with the awards now in their fourth year and featuring 18 prestigious categories recognising excellence and innovation in modern methods of construction.

In 2026, the collaboration broadens further, with MPBA supporting the Public Sector Estates Congress for the first time, alongside continued involvement in Education Estates® in Focus, a specialist event that this year brought together SEND and sustainability, with estate management set to be incorporated into its 2027 programme.

Looking ahead, the collaboration will extend into the launch of Justice Estates & Infrastructure in 2027, a new platform dedicated to the future of the justice estate and the role of innovative construction approaches in delivering resilient, adaptable environments.

The partnership provides an important route for MPBA members to engage with emerging opportunities across these sectors. As demand grows for faster delivery, improved productivity and more sustainable solutions, modular construction is increasingly recognised as a strategic

response to industry challenges including cost pressures, programme certainty and skills shortages. With the potential to deliver projects significantly faster than traditional methods and a sector turnover already measured in the billions, modular and portable building solutions are playing an increasingly important role across the UK's public estate.

This collaboration is further strengthened by the active involvement of MPBA within the event programmes, with Richard Hipkiss, Development Director at the MPBA, serving as a judge for the MMC Awards and contributing to the Advisory Groups for Education Estates®, the Public Sector Estates Congress and Justice Estates & Infrastructure.

"We're proud to continue strengthening our partnership with STEP CONNECT2 across such a diverse and influential portfolio of events. These platforms play a vital role in bringing together sector leaders, enabling collaboration and supporting the adoption of innovative, sustainable construction solutions.

Education Estates® continues to be a standout event for us, providing an excellent opportunity to engage with key stakeholders and highlight the value modular construction can bring to the education sector. We're also particularly excited to support the launch of Justice Estates & Infrastructure, as the sector looks to modern methods of construction to deliver flexible, high-quality environments."
Richard Hipkiss, Development Director, MPBA

"Our partnership with the MPBA has grown from strength to strength since 2019, and their continued support across multiple events reflects a shared vision for the future of public sector infrastructure.
From education to justice infrastructure, collaboration is essential to delivering better, more sustainable outcomes. The MPBA brings invaluable expertise and industry insight, while also helping to connect its members with key opportunities across the sectors we serve. We're delighted to be working together to shape the conversations that matter most."
James Lee, CEO, STEP CONNECT2

Through this strengthened collaboration, MPBA and STEP CONNECT2 will continue to provide influential platforms that enable collaboration, showcase best practice and support the adoption of modern methods of construction across the UK's public estate.

Ends

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