

Open session

Board meeting: 17 May 2023

Agenda item: 10

Subject: Chief Executive's Report

Action: To Note

Purpose

To provide an update from the Chief Executive on the operational activities of the Executive team.

Annexes

None

Author/Key Contact

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1. Open/Confidential Session

This item will be noted in the open session of the Board meeting.

2. Background and Key points

This paper updates the Board on key operational developments including progress to delivery our key strategic priorities.


Update on Strategic Priorities

Modernisation of Initial Education and Training

- 2.1. The consultation on ARB's proposals will close on 10 May 2023. We have promoted it to registrants twice, and have shared it with stakeholders including learning providers and representative bodies. We've ensured wide sectoral media coverage, and held an online Q&A. Following the online event, we produced some FAQs to help people understand the complex proposals, and shared these through a reminder email to registrants. We've also used them on social media, in the form of animated gifs.
- 2.2. We've held roundtables and bilateral meetings throughout the consultation period, most recently with learning providers (including bespoke webinars with those who have made requests). We have held regular meetings with RIBA, we attended an online briefing event and Q and A with RIAS and the Chief Executive met with RIAS's education sub group in Edinburgh. We have also met with RSAW and RSUA to brief them on the proposals and listened to their feedback..
- 2.3. These detailed conversations have helped us understand the external context and reception of our proposals, and will feed into our developmental work once we close and analyse the consultation responses in detail.
- 2.4. Once the consultation closes, we will need to give ourselves time to analyse and consider the evidence base before we commence further engagement activities. The Board will receive the full results and some initial recommendations at the next workshop on 14 June.

Continuing Professional Development


- 2.5. A separate agenda item in this meeting will invite the Board to consider the consultation analysis, including recommendations for developing the scheme. Subject to this conversation, a consultation report will be published this summer and updated scheme guidance will return to the Board later in the



year, so that the final scheme can be published and promoted before the year is out.

Development of International Agreements/Routes to Registration

- 2.6. Following the relevant legislative changes that were approved earlier in the year, we have now signed our first MRAs with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), and the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (ACA) and the New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB).
- 2.7. Our MRA with NCARB became operational on 25 April 2023, and the agreement with ACA and NZRAB will become operational on 25 May 2023.
- 2.8. To raise awareness of the MRA with NCARB and promote uptake, we have worked closely with various government departments and with the American and British professional institutes (AIA and RIBA) on a series of events in Washington and London, as well as wider communications activities. These include a panel discussion and reception at the British Embassy and Ambassador's residence in Washington (the latter of which was also attended by the UK Trade Minister, Nigel Huddleston MP), an online event and an in-person reception hosted by NCARB at their offices, and a reception at RIBA in London. Media and social media activities by the Department for Business and Trade have supported further outreach. The news has been well received, with almost exclusively positive commentary on social media and a celebratory atmosphere at the architects we've met at the events.
- 2.9. We received fifty applications for certificates under the NCARB MRA in the first week of operation. Further updates can be provided at the Board meeting.
- 2.10. In May, when the MRA with ACA and NZRAB becomes operational, we will participate in a reception at the UK Consulate in Sydney and a series of meetings with architect practices. We will continue to promote both MRAs and help architects understand how to take advantage of them.
- 2.11. We have been updating relevant sections of our website to reflect the position as well as providing advice and guidance to potential applicants who are seeking to use the MRAs. We have been issuing relevant certificates for architects holding UK qualifications who are seeking a licence in the USA, as well as receiving applications from architects holding USA qualifications seeking to register in the UK. Architects holding USA qualifications will need to undertake ARB's UK Adaptation Assessment before being eligible for registration. We are in the final stages of preparation ahead of the first assessments taking place; these will take place from early July 2023 onwards.




We will provide further information and statistics on the initial take up of the ARB/NCARB MRA at the Board's meeting on 17 May 2023. Initial statistics relating to the ARB/AACA/NZRAB MRA will be provided to the Board in July 2023.

- 2.12. During the second half of 2023, we will be turning our attention to the development of some additional potential MRAs; the Board will be aware that we have been approached by our counterpart organisations in Hong Kong, South Africa, Taiwan and Canada. We will be completing the 'due diligence' analyses for each potential agreement using our principles and criteria to determine whether we should progress to the drafting of an MRA or MOU with any or all of these partners.
- 2.13. The UK Government has been progressing a cross-government review of the Joint Recommendation submitted by the ARB and the Architects Council of Europe (ACE), in parallel to the European Commission's review of the Joint Recommendation. The UK Government is engaging with the European Commission to begin the process of jointly reviewing the Joint Recommendation, as set out in Article 158 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.
- 2.14. The Government is endeavouring to make progress on these discussions over the summer. Progressing this recognition arrangement is one of the Government's priority areas for enhancing the UK-EU trading relationship through the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). The Department for Business and Trade will be leading the negotiations, in line with the process set out in the TCA.
- 2.15. The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) is now running Round 2 of its Recognition Arrangements Grant Programme. Regulatory bodies seeking to establish MRAs are able to apply for grants of up to £75k for the 2023/2024 financial year. We submitted an application for the full amount by the deadline of 24 March 2023, and are awaiting DBT's decision as to whether or not we have been successful.

Strategic Transformation

- 2.16. The development of the new CRM system, a key part of our Transformation Programme, is progressing well. We have concluded the third of four development "sprints". The output of the four sprint cycles will be the replacement of the current applications systems and Register database, and any existing online application portals. There will be new associated functions that will allow us to communicate with architects and collect their retention fee in a more efficient and effective way.

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- 2.17. We will be migrating data and launching testing in the next few weeks. We have also agreed the first communication message to architects to alert them to the fact the systems will be changing. There will be follow up campaigns through the Summer, leading up to the issuing of the statutory notice of the Retention Fee once the Board have agreed it.
- 2.18. We are commencing a significant exercise in data cleansing and transformation, ahead of the migration. We know that just under 2,500 architects either have no email address, or have one which is in some way defective or has been blocked by the architect. These individuals will be contacted to encourage them to update their details, and to use the IT system. There is a separate paper on how we would handle the manual processing of registration activities, and our assessment of the costs, at the May Board meeting.
- 2.19. A high level demonstration of the system capabilities, and the opportunity to hear from ARB team members who will use it, is scheduled for the Board Workshop in June. We are also planning a more interactive session with the Transformation Assurance Group.
- 2.20. A key plank of our Transformation Programme is the End User Compute project whereby we are moving from a thin-client VDI model to one where staff are provided with laptops and the office is fitted out with laptop docking stations.
- 2.21. This project is necessary to provide basic IT facilities for staff, but also to ensure we can work effectively in a remote way. Sixty percent of desks in the office have already been fitted out to support new laptop infrastructure and the final 40% are scheduled for 19 May 2023.
- 2.22. The laptop roll out started on 2 May and is scheduled to complete by 16 May 2023.
- 2.23. We are moving to a Microsoft Office 365 and MS Teams environment to enable significant improvements to team working, document sharing and management and remote communications. Teams training is scheduled over four weeks from early May.
- 2.24. Although MS Teams will be the default videoconferencing channel for internal ARB meetings and with government (who use Teams as the default programme), we will continue to use Zoom for online Board meetings in the short term and would expect to continue to use Zoom for large participant external meetings given its superior functionality.



People Strategy

2.25. In April we received a report on the Staff Survey. The next meeting of the People Committee will consider the report in detail, however, we are delighted to report to the findings were extremely positive. More than eight in ten staff are positive about their job and their experience of ARB overall.

- Staff developed a new set of values in 2022, and there is emerging evidence that these values are being demonstrated in practice:
- On collaboration, although one in five people do not yet feel confident to raise issues with other teams, three-quarters say their colleagues are taking time to build interpersonal relationships.
- On innovation, three-quarters can contribute to discussions about how ARB works and feel safe to speak up if something goes wrong.
- On commitment, more than nine out of ten feel that their work contributes to ARB's purpose, although a third feel that timeframes for delivery can be unreasonable.
- And on valuing each other, around eight in ten report feeling well-supported and respected by colleagues.

2.26. Though leadership and management relationships with largely positive, staff noted that the organisation sometimes lacks the bandwidth to support growth and transformation.


2.27. The full staff survey report has been shared with staff. Given the timing of the next People Committee, the report has also been shared with the Chair of Board and the Chair of People Committee.

2.28. We have also been rolling out further training for managers which is being supplemented by a series of one to one coaching sessions.

3. Overview of the Board Workshop, 28 March 2023

3.1. Richard Goodman, Director at DLUHC, provided insight into his role and the key projects that he had been involved in over recent years, as well as upcoming developments and areas of focus for the department, including the challenges facing the built environment. There was a brief Q and A with Board members.

3.2. Board members received an update on the results of the CPD Scheme Consultation with detailed discussion to enable the executive to bring back final proposals for approval at the May Board meeting.

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- 3.3. Board Members received an update on the education consultation from a communications perspective, around the general reception from various social media sources and stakeholders.
 - 3.4. A brief property update was presented to the Board, on some of the options available following the end of the current lease at Weymouth Street.
 - 3.5. The Board were provided with an update on ARB's Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA's) and upcoming work on MRA's.

Actions

- 3.6. At the workshop, it was agreed the Executive would approach the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to come to speak with the Board at an early opportunity. We have done this, but given the resignation of the BSR Chief Executive, we will provide a verbal update at the Board meeting.
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4. Update on Board Recruitment

- 4.1. The Board will be aware that a permanent lay Board member vacancy arose on 31 March 2023, and whilst a recruitment campaign is undertaken by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to fill the vacancy on a permanent basis.
 - 4.2. The Board agreed to appoint a temporary lay Board Member in the interim. Following an open recruitment campaign, the Board appointed Samantha Peters as a temporary lay Board Member with effect from 1 April 2023. Samantha Peter's appointment is initially for 12 months. Ms Peters has also been appointed to the Board's People Committee also with effect from 1 April 2023.
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5. Resource Implications

There are no additional resource implications arising from updates in this paper which have not been reported previously to the Board.

6. Risk implications

There are a number of risks in relation to items covered in the paper which are addressed through programme risk registers and have been highlighted to the Board previously.

7. Equality and Diversity implication

There are no specific EDI implications flowing from this paper. Each of our strategic priorities have important EDI elements which are reflected in project specific updates to the Board.

8. Recommendations

The Board is asked to note this paper.
