

Open session

Board meeting: 15 February 2023

Agenda item: 11

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 our proposals to modernise the initial education and training of architects is due to be launched in the first week of February 2023. The communications approach was shared with the Board in a previous meeting, and will include media, social media and direct emails to architects, educators, and a range of stakeholder groups we have identified, including student groups and those with an interest in equality, diversity and inclusion. We also intend to hold an online event in early March, to invite questions and discussion. We have a contact programme and will offer meetings to key stakeholders during the consultation period.
- 2.2. The consultation will run for three months, closing in May, after which we will analyse the results and report back to the Board in summer, to allow for further policy development.
- 2.3. In the meantime we continue to develop policy in the key areas we have heard need addressing through our research and engagement to date: issues with the availability and consistency of professional practical experience; student access to funding through different models of education, and the reform of our prescribed examinations process.

Continuing Professional Development

- 2.4. The consultation on our proposals for a new CPD scheme closed on 3 January 2023; we have received our highest response rate yet and we are analysing the qualitative feedback received.
- 2.5. We will present an analysis of that feedback to the Board workshop on 28 March 2023.




Development of International Agreements/Routes to Registration

- 2.6. The legislative changes that will enable ARB to enter and sign Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) have now been passed by Parliament and signed by the Minister.
- 2.7. These legislative changes became effective on 18 January 2023 and mean that we can now progress with this signing of our first MRAs. We are now in the process of making plans to sign the MRAs that we have been working on with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) and the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACAA) and the New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB) in the coming weeks.
- 2.8. The MRAs will become operational, and we will open for applications under the new international routes, in the late Spring 2023. We will use the period between the signing of the MRAs and the opening of the new international routes to put the final arrangements in place, which include briefing our pool of assessors, piloting our UK Adaptation Assessment and adding information about the MRAs and how to apply to our website. Further updates will be provided at the Board meeting.
- 2.9. The legislative changes also mean that the interim arrangements that were in place following the end of the UK/EU Implementation Period relating to recognition of EU qualifications ceased on 7 February 2023. In the event that no new MRA was in place between the UK and the EU by the time the interim arrangements ceased, the Board agreed in Spring 2022 that it would continue to unilaterally recognise EU qualifications which were recognised under the interim arrangements (i.e., those which are included in the February 2020 version of Annex V of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive).
- 2.10. The Board's decision to unilaterally recognise the relevant EU qualification therefore became effective from 7 February 2023. These arrangements will be in place whilst EU Commission and the UK Government consider the ARB and Architects Council of Europe's (ACE) Joint Recommendation for a new MRA, although the Board will review them on an annual basis. The implementation of the Board's decision to unilaterally recognise the relevant EU qualifications means that there will be no change to those seeking to join the UK Register with these qualifications, until either such time as a new MRA is agreed, or the Board decides to make alternative arrangements.

Strategic Transformation

- 2.11. The Board received an update presentation at the workshop discussion on the 25 January. The report set out the progress being made in the programme, but particularly the IT elements of transformation.

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- 2.12. We are pleased that a number of enhancements to ARB's cyber security have been put in place, in particular the completion of the Web Application Firewall.
- 2.13. We are making steady progress as we work towards the delivery of our 'cloud first' strategy for both applications and IT infrastructure. Some applications systems, such as SAGE financial systems are currently being migrated to the cloud, while many others are dependent on the new applications/CRM system being designed, built and implemented first. Our goal remains that we will move our IT infrastructure (servers based in the Weymouth Street office) into the cloud by September 2023.
- 2.14. Moving to a new, holistic, and integrated CRM/applications system (covering registration, applications and case management) remains the largest project within the IT Transformation. Our IT Principal Partner (ITPP), Intergence, has appointed a delivery partner to lead on the CRM development. They have made a strong start and we remain on track to deliver the first phase of CRM by September 2023 when we plan to have our core registration services run through the new MS Dynamics system, including the renewals process.
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3. Overview of the Board Workshop, 25 January 2023

- 3.1. While it is right that the Board is able to discuss policy development and strategic issues in private workshop style meetings, we also recognise that more could be done to be open and transparent about topics we discuss and also to ensure we capture, as a formal Board minute, any commitments made at those meetings by the executive and any work commissioned.
- 3.2. In future CEO reports it is our intention to provide a very high level summary of the topics discussed and capture any actions we agreed to.
- 3.3. At the January workshop the Board heard about plans to launch our consultation on the initial education and training of architects including the wide range of stakeholder engagement activities planned. We also discussed the very successful RIBA event on education and practice which had been held the previous week.
- 3.4. The Board received a presentation on the quantitative data emerging from the CPD consultation which recently closed. It provided an opportunity for Board members to highlight areas for exploration as the more detailed qualitative analysis was undertaken. In particular there was discussion around feedback about a 'reflective statement' and we would need the analysis to set out the full diversity of views on CPD.
- 3.5. Further presentations were given on IT transformation and registration data following the annual retention fee campaign.

4. Update on Board Recruitment: Lay Member

- 4.1. The Board will be aware that Thomas McDermott has been appointed as a permanent lay Board member with effect from 9 January 2023.
- 4.2. A further lay Board member vacancy will arise in the Spring 2023. The recruitment for this vacancy will be overseen by the public appointments team at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The Board has agreed to recruit temporary lay Board Member in the interim.
- 4.3. An open recruitment campaign is being undertaken in order to make the appointment, with applications closing on 13 February 2023. Shortlisting and interviews will follow. We hope the appointment panel, previously agreed by the Board, is able to bring a recommendation to the Board for approval in March 2023.

5. Misuse of title audit

- 5.1 We have recently completed our latest audit of higher-risk misuse of title cases. While most of our title regulation work is reactive – responding to complaints from members of the public and the profession – we also carry out a proactive audit of higher risk cases.
- 5.2 These cases will include UK based architects of practising age who have recently been removed from the Register, or individuals who have unsuccessfully attempted to register.
- 5.3 89 cases were investigated. In all instances where the title ‘architect’ was being used in business or practice we either received assurances that they would refrain from doing so, or the individuals concerned were reinstated the Register.
- 5.4 In 2023 we have committed a dedicated resource to carrying out this exercise earlier in the year, particularly to deal with those individuals who have been removed from the Register for failing to pay their retention fee, but continue to practise under the title ‘architect’.

6. Resource Implications

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

7. 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.

There is specific additional risk in relation to the forthcoming lay member vacancy, but our powers to appoint a temporary lay member should provide suitable mitigation.

8. Equality and Diversity implication

We are seeking to ensure a diverse pool of applicants for our lay member vacancy and discussions are ongoing between the appointment panel as the executive team.

9. Recommendations

The Board is asked to note this paper.
