Board Paper
for Open session

Architects Registration Board

Board meeting:

6 December 2023

Agenda item:

13

Action:

- For noting ☒
- For discussion ☐
- For decision ☐

Subject: **Chief Executive's Report**

To note a report from the ARB's Chief Executive on matters relating to the running of the Board's business

Purpose

To provide an update from the Chief Executive on matters relating to the Board's business.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to note this paper

Annexes

None.

Author/Key Contact

Hugh Simpson, Chief Executive and Registrar, Hughs@arb.org.uk

1. Open Session

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

2. Background and Key points

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

Update on Strategic Priorities

<u>Continuous Improvements in our regulatory services</u>

2.2. We went live with the CRM system on 12 September 2023. Since that date, we have processed 465 first time joining applications, with an average processing time of 9.4 working days, well within the 15-working day KPI. Only 27 of the applications breached the KPI, and each of these were due to non-compliance of the Education Provider to supply accurate pass list information to ARB.

2.3. Similarly, we have processed 72 re-join applications, with an average processing time of 3.2 days, against a KPI of 5 working days.

2.4. Architects get immediate, branded, acknowledgement of their application being received. They also receive email copies of certificates and receipts, and the ARB Welcome Pack, as part of a more professional and responsive service.

2.5. We have had no concerns or complaints from new applicants, regarding the ARB system, and architects can self-serve to print their own materials using the portal. This not only provides 24/7 responsiveness, but allows ARB team members to spend time on other activities.

2.6. The uptake of MyARB portal within existing registrants has been slower. There have been some technical issues, but it is apparent that the portal approach is also a culture change for the existing registrants. Our communications have targeted this, and currently we have 45% of the Register with a portal profile, and 34% of the Register having provided their home address and equality information. The CRM system allows better segmentation of messaging, and we can target different groups more effectively, and give better, branded and targeted messaging to them.

2.7. We have developed the first draft of the Accreditation Handbook, and supporting templates and materials for Providers. This will be the topic of the first Education Transition Reference Group, to be held on 4 December, and we are seeking feedback that supports our planning for the first round of monitoring and visits.

<u>Modernisation of Initial Education and Training</u>

2.8. Since the last Board meeting with have finalised and published the future framework for education and training, the new Competency Outcomes for architects, and the new Standards for Learning Providers. These have been sent directly to stakeholders including consultation respondents and all accredited learning providers, and have been communicated to registrants through ARB Insight. We also held an online Q&A to talk through the changes and the transition timetable. Through our direct communications, the architecture media and social media, we're confident that all relevant stakeholders are aware of the reforms.

2.9. We have written to all Schools of Architecture providing more information regarding the proposed accreditation fees for 2024. A number of concerns have been expressed to ARB about the size of the fee, the timing of the fee and the communications. We have explained that this fee level is cost recovery and that the Board is clear that individual architects should no longer pay for the accreditation of institutions. The timing of the fee was dependent on the outcomes of the statutory consultation. I personally acknowledged that our communications was not of the standard we aspire to and apologised to SCOSA members at their AGM in November.

Continuing Professional Development

2.10. In anticipation of the Board's approval of the CPD scheme elsewhere in these papers, we have been developing and testing the ARB CPD Portal, so that architects will be able to record their development activities from the start of 2024.

Development of International Routes/Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA'S)

2.11. We are in the final stages of completing the due diligence process following ongoing conversations with our South African and Canadian counterparts, and will be discussing whether we move forward to drafting MRAs with each organisation before the end of the year. Our discussions with our Hong Kong and EU counterparts are also progressing.

Environmental sustainability

2.12. We have been exploring how we can meaningfully report in sustainability within the financial statements and whilst we are not captured by the Greener Government Committee requirements we believe it's a good framework to track ARBs impact on the environment.

2.13. Therefore, we are working with a company called Ecometrica who can support us in tracking our environmental impact as an organisation as well as identifying where we can do better.

'Eos' Strategic Transformation

2.14. The IAAS project (on premise to cloud migration) moves closer to completion with the successful migration of legacy registration and regulation servers to the cloud. There are only two servers still to migrate. This work is a key interdependency for any office move and is on track.

2.15. Document management (including functionality within Teams) is being rolled out across the organisation. This work is expected to be completed before the end of

December. This work will enable more efficient team working and virtual collaboration.

2.16. Work is ongoing to develop a solution (through SAGE) for a new financial, HR and payroll system.

2.17. CRM phase 1 is almost complete. There remain two areas of functionality to be deployed: the new online CPD system; and the direct debit functionality. Both are expected to be deployed by the time of the Board meeting when a verbal update will be provided.

2.18. There remain very significant pressures on teams, particularly in registration where some system failures, user errors and 'bugs' have led to staff being inundated with help requests from registrants. Over 34,000 emails have been received into the inbox.

People Strategy

2.19. Updates have been provided in various papers to this Board and in the minutes to the People Committee.

2.20. The intention is to present a refreshed people strategy to the People Committee in the New Year and update the Board thereafter.

Board Apprenticeship Programme 2024

2.21. ARB has been selected as a host Board for the Boardroom Apprentice Programme for the second successive year and ARB's Boardroom Apprentice will commence their time with the Board on 1 January 2024. The Programme is supported by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The Boardroom Apprentice Programme is a twelve-month board learning and placement programme. Its vision is to move the board member role from aspiration to reality and its aim is to deliver the following:

- To create a diverse pool of capable board ready Board Members

- To provide a sustainable pool of capable board ready Board Members

- To enable practical boardroom experience for aspiring Board Members

- To provide the transfer of knowledge, skills and experience for aspiring Board Members

- To increase the knowledge and awareness of the role of Board Members.

2.22. The programme is built on three key pillars which include:

- Experience: A 12-month practical hands on placement

- Knowledge and Understanding: Transfer of knowledge and understanding through learning

- Support: Support through a dedicated board buddy from within the host Board.

2.23. Boardroom apprentices are provided with access to all Board, Committee and Workshop sessions as well as the relevant agendas, papers and associated documents. Apprentices are required to sign confidentiality agreements and a memorandum of understanding. Board apprentices attend 8-9 learning days led by the Department. These learning days cover aspects such as: understanding Finance, Management accounts, Governance issues, leadership, Strategy and development, what are the next steps for apprentices including support with writing CV/cover letters and where to look for board vacancies.

<u>Overview of the Board Workshop, 22 November 2023</u>

2.24. The Board held a workshop session on 22 November. The Board was provided with details and discussed the initial findings arising from the recent externally facilitated Board and Committee Effectiveness Review. The Board will receive the final report in early 2024 and will then be in a position to agree and take forward any relevant recommendations resulting from the review.

2.25. The Board also received a presentation from Thinks Insight, which focussed on the outcomes of the research which had been carried out in relation to Professionalism within Architecture.

3. Resource Implications

3.1. There are no specific resource implications arising from the Chief Executive's report.

4. Risk Implications

4.1. Key risks relating to strategic priorities are captured in the Risk Register and highlighted in separate update papers.

5. Equality and Diversity implications

5.1. There are no specific EDI implications arising out of this paper, however a number of key strategic priorities are either directly or indirectly designed to support and

promote EDI. The People Strategy update also references the Executive's work in this area.

6. Recommendations

6.1. The Board is asked to note this paper.