



**Subject** Revision of the Board Members' Code of Practice  
**Purpose** For Decision  
**From** Audit Committee

If you have any enquiries on this paper, please contact Emma Matthews/Karen Holmes at [emmam@arb.org.uk](mailto:emmam@arb.org.uk)/[karenh@arb.org.uk](mailto:karenh@arb.org.uk) or on 020 7580 5861

---

### 1. Summary

To consider and agree adjustments to the Board Members' Code of Practice.

### 2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board agrees the changes to the Board Members' Code of Practice as outlined in **Annexes C and D**.

### 3. Open Session

### 4. Contribution to the Board's Purpose and Objectives

In delivering the Act, ARB's objectives are:

'protect the users and potential users of architects' services' and 'support architects through regulation'.

Having appropriate corporate governance processes in place lowers the risk of reputational damage, increases confidence in the role of ARB, and ensures the work carried out by the organisation is undertaken in a proportionate and transparent way.

The DCLG, through the DCLG/ARB Framework Agreement, requires ARB to have a Code of Practice that is in line with the Cabinet Office Model Code, any amendments to the Cabinet Office Code should be considered as part of the review of the ARB Board Members' Code

### 5. Background

- i. The Framework Agreement, which sets out the roles and responsibilities of ARB and the DCLG, states that amongst other things, the Board is responsible for 'ensuring effective arrangements are in place to provide assurance on risk management, governance and internal control.' The Agreement also goes on to state that amongst other things, the Chair of the Board is responsible for ensuring that 'there is a code of practice for Board members in place consistent with the Cabinet Office Model Code.'

A copy of the Cabinet Office Model Code can be found at **Annex A**.

- ii. Over the course of the last two years, the Audit Committee has been undertaking a review of the Board Members' Code of Practice. During this time, there have been various changes to the membership of the Committee and the Committee has from time to time, required advice and guidance from both the Cabinet Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The Board Members' current Code of Practice can be found at **Annex B**.

- iii. Whilst reviewing the Code, the Committee received advice from the Cabinet Office and the DCLG which stated that the Board's Code should mirror the Cabinet Office Model Code. The Committee, however, felt that there were areas of the Cabinet Office Code which were extremely restrictive and it therefore sought more detailed advice and requested feedback from the DCLG on some suggested wording.

On the basis of the advice and feedback, the revisions set out in **Annex C** highlight the Audit Committee's proposed changes to the Code of Practice.

A clean copy of the revised Code can be found at **Annex D**.

The key revisions are as follows:

- The principles underlying the Board's Code have been realigned with the Cabinet Office's Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies;
- Section 5.5.6 (Political Activity) has been included to reflect the Government's Code of Conduct;
- Section 5.6.1 (Public Duty and Private Interest) subsumes the previous section 5.6.2 (Disclosure of Pecuniary and Other Interests) in order to avoid repetition and reworded to reflect the Government's Code more closely;
- Section 5.7 (Register of Interests) includes further information on the details that need to be provided as part of the Register of Interests;
- Sections 5.9 (Allowances) and 5.10 (Additional Appointments) have been included to reflect the Government's Code of Conduct more closely.

Other adjustments have been made to reduce repetition and improve the clarity of the document.

The Board may wish to note that the 'Appendix K' referred to within the revised Code refers to Appendix K of the Board's Handbook.

- iv. The Board is asked to discuss the proposed revisions and agree the revised Code of Practice.

**6. Resource implications**

None.

**7. Risk Implications**

Not having an appropriate corporate governance framework in place is a reputational risk for a public body. Ensuring the Board Members' Code reflects current best practice is important to the smooth running and effective execution of ARB's statutory functions.

**8. Communication**

Reviewing the Board Members' Code demonstrates a commitment to good corporate governance.

Should the Board approve the revised Code of Conduct and Practice, it will need to be circulated to all Board members and inserted into the Board's Handbook. ARB's Document Log will also need updating.

**9. Equality and Diversity Implications**

Once the final version of the revised Code had been agreed by the Audit Committee, it was agreed that any relevant equality and diversity matters were identified and dealt with. Following a review, no issues were identified.

**10. Further Actions**

Should the Board approve the revised Code of Conduct and Practice, the updated Code will need to be circulated to Board members and inserted into the Board's Handbook. Staff will additionally need to update ARB's Document Log.