



## Minutes of Board Meeting held on 2 October 2020

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Location	Present	In Attendance
By video conference	A Kershaw (Chair) J Beckerleg M Bottomley D Bray S Brookhouse Emeritus Professor T Crook W Freeman E Marco S McCusker	Marc Stoner (Acting Chief Executive Officer and Registrar) Emma Matthews Simon Howard Brian James Katherine Onadeko (Minutes)

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### Note

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#### 1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Liz Male.

#### 2 Members' Interests

There were no declarations relevant to the open session agenda items.

#### 3 Update from the Chair

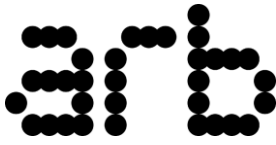
The Chair welcomed the Board and congratulated Professor Elena Marco and Emeritus Professor Tony Crook on their recent appointments and awards respectively.

The recruitment of the permanent Chief Executive Officer and Registrar was under way and should be finalised shortly.

The Chair updated the Board on the EU Exit Task Force meeting with the Architects Council of Europe (ACE), attended by the Chair, the Director of Professional Education and Will Freeman as portfolio holder for EU Exit.

Board appraisals were being organised with a few more dates to be finalised; members were reminded to submit their paperwork to the Chair as soon as possible if they had not yet done so.

The Chair reported that catch up and/or introductory meetings had been scheduled with the Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture, Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland and Ulster and there



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would also be a further liaison meeting with the President of the Royal Institute of British Architects in November. All these meetings would focus on continuing fostering good dialogue.

#### 4 Minutes

**The Board approved the open session minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2020.**

#### 5 Matters Arising Report

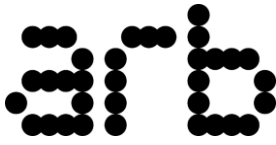
The Board noted matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

#### 6 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Statement

The Director of Regulation explained that the Statement had been considered by the Policy Committee, who echoed the views of the Executive in that the ARB needed to identify actions to take forward where it could demonstrate added value. Historically the organisation had developed a good review of Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) matters internally; but had been less successful in developing the influence the organisation could have on the profession. Now was a good opportunity to review how people could access the profession, especially in light of the upcoming routes review.

The Board felt that this was a valuable piece of work but questioned how ARB would develop the role the organisation had in collecting and disseminating Equality and Diversity statistics. The Director of Regulation confirmed that there was a live webpage which included published Equality and Diversity data. The Director of Registration also had plans for improving the current data rate of 66% of the Register to 80%. There was a general consensus that the importance of E&D data collection should be brought alive for stakeholders.

The statement's impact on the Prescription Committee, and how proactive the Board could be regarding how minority groups were attracted to undertake an architecture



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qualification within a higher education institution, needed further work. The imposition of sanctions on schools for not admitting a diverse range of students would conflict with schools' independence. Section A2 of the paper would be difficult to police as each school would have their own approach. The Director of Regulation emphasised however that ARB needed to demonstrate that every option had been explored.

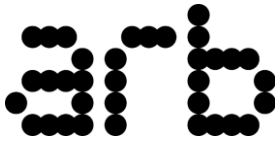
As a statutory regulator, ARB had an opportunity to speak with authority and encourage others to listen. In relation to schools of architecture, there were several factors which were suggested for consideration:

- The institution's admissions policy
- Arrangements made for people from different backgrounds
- The attitude and procedures that were taught and the type of people they create
- Students should be consulted on what their understanding of the issues were
- Students should be consulted for examples of policies that had changed and examples from members of protected groups on if/how their situations had improved
- Class and socio economic considerations – were all students given the same opportunities to obtain year out work experience? Some black and minority ethnic students had found this difficult, lacking the same contacts as some of their peers
- Differences in learning styles which needed to be addressed in assessments
- Investing in the appointment of diverse staff and external examiners
- Highlight the apprenticeship programme to encourage a wider group of people in the profession. This was thought to be a good way to encourage social mobility.

It was suggested that whilst prescription might not be removed from qualifications due to failings relating to the above criteria, it may be the case should evidence emerge that an institution's strategy in these areas had changed and they no longer met ARB's expectations as a result of such changes.

In regard to work experience it was observed that practices did not necessarily have relationships with local schools and this could be a significant barrier to black and minority ethnic students in the profession.

There was consensus that there remained a lack of clarity within the profession as to how the Board was appointed; the view that the Board was appointed by peers still



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existed. There needed to be a clearer message that the appointment process had changed.

The Director of Regulation explained that, once the Board had agreed the statement, the Executive would develop a work plan with measurable goals and report back to the Board.

In the spirit of collaborative working, it was suggested that this was a subject on which ARB and RIBA could work together. The Chair confirmed that he would raise the EDI statement with the RIBA president at the next liaison meeting and consider how both organisations could take the work forward.

There following amendments to the paper were suggested:

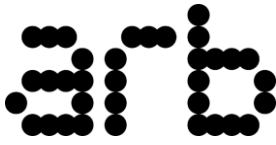
- The wording in the ‘What will we do?’ section on Page 1 be reviewed to address the ‘we recognise we cannot change things’ tone.
- The Board considered whether the wording in the Professional Conduct Review section (B2) should further address mental health in Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) cases. The Director of Regulation stated that there were policies in place within the PCC, and that PCC members received guidance relating to making reasonable adjustments to those who need it.
- It was suggested that the statement should include reference to how ARB was working with professionals of different diversity groups. The Director of Regulation stated that he would look into this.

**The Board agreed the EDI Strategic Statement subject to the minor drafting amendments which were raised and any final reviews needed.**

## **7 Appointment and Performance Management of Non-Executives other than Board Members and Independent Non-Executives of Committees.**

The Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) invited comments. The paper had the support of the Remuneration and Appointments Committee, which had confirmed that it was clear and in line with good governance.

A question was raised as to whether it was suitable that the Inquirer posts were not



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subject to the eight year appointment cap; the Director of Regulation clarified that Inquirers seldom undertook work for the organisation, it would therefore be disproportionate to have the eight year appointment policy in place for that role. It was decided that the rationale of the Inquirers not undertaking work regularly should be made clearer in the paper.

It was queried whether the Prescription Committee should be involved in the development of the job specification and requirements for the Independent Prescription Advisers. The Director of Professional Education however reasoned that this may confuse matters as the advisers now reported to the Executive and not the Prescription Committee. The Board thought it would be a good balance for the Executive to take soundings from the Prescription Committee with regard to the role description and recruitment process outside the formal process.

#### **The Board agreed:**

- i. the plan outlined in Annex A of the Board paper.**
- ii. that Whilst appointees can serve in multiple roles (unless specifically conflicted), the total time spent at ARB cannot be more than eight years. Reappointments will be considered after a period of four years. There is one exception which is for the Inquirers role as the number of cases referred is minimal, maybe one per year and given their expertise the 8 year cap would not be applied.**
- iii. that no member of the Board or Independent Non-Executives of Committees may serve any other functions listed in Annex A of the paper.**

#### **ITEMS FOR NOTE**

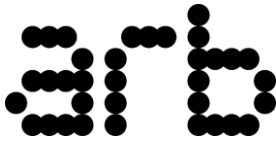
##### **8 Chief Executive's Report**

The profession's reaction to the announcement of the increase to the annual retention fee had been balanced and relatively quiet.

The Board felt that this was a result of the well presented approach taken in informing the profession of the increase of the fee.

##### **9 Prescribed Exam Annual Report**

The Director of Registration expressed his confidence that the system changes put in place in response to COVID equipped the organisation to have a viable alternative



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solution to face to face exams.

The Chair asked whether the implementation of these changes had been a matter purely of managing a crisis, or if it had now provided an opportunity to improve the process. The online process had been a significant change in culture for both staff and candidates, but the process had been supported due to the global necessity of working remotely.

There had been real progress but there were also improvements that needed to be made and further issues to consider including plagiarism. The Chair agreed that the transition had been successful and congratulated the Director of Registration and the team on their hard work; but stated that the process would need to be subject to robust quality assurance checks before a decision could be made as to whether ARB might approve remote examinations on a more permanent basis.

The outsourcing of the prescribed exams should be considered. This had previously been reviewed and highlighted the current landscape changes in terms of the consequences of the UK's exit from the EU, and how this would likely impact on the volume of future applications. Operating a blended approach to the exams was suggested as a way of being more inclusive. In terms of diversity and access it was thought that increasing flexibility might encourage different types of candidates.

The Board complimented the presentation of the report and noted the content.

## 10 **Any Other Business**

It was suggested that, in relation to Equality and Diversity, the Board should refrain from using the term 'BAME' or 'people of colour' and instead make use of the full terms. It was agreed that the use of appropriate terminology would be an ongoing consideration.

## 11 **Dates of Future Board Meetings:**

20 November 2020

3 December 2020 - Development Day\*

Additional December Board Meeting: 17 December TBC

\*subsequently postponed in response to renewed lockdown restrictions

