

Board Paper

for Open session

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

Board meeting:

10 December 2025

Agenda item:

6

Action:

- For noting
- For discussion
- For decision

Purpose

To provide an update from the Chief Executive on matters relating to the Board's business including progress updates on the Board's five key strategic priorities as well as additional operational issues.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to note this paper.

Annexes

None

Author/Key Contact

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1. Open Session

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

2. Background and Key points

Continuous Improvement (including operational aspect of CPD Scheme)

- 2.1 We began the 2026 retention fee campaign on 23 October, allowing the required 60 calendar days of notice to architects. We have made a number of changes and enhancements to the CRM system to support this.
- 2.2 We have upgraded the WorldPay fraud protection systems that check each card transaction. This has allowed both a smaller rate of card rejections (and thus no need to take manual payments), and also greater insights to resolve any payment issues with the architect. So far, we have only six payment issues that are not related to the architect's card or bank.
- 2.3 We ceased payment by direct debit this year. The mandatory nature of CPD and the need to make professional declarations at the time of payment meant direct debits were no longer possible under the process. We communicated with architects earlier this year to advise of the change, and seek feedback on any adverse impacts. We had 3347 architects with a direct debit, and only 29 responded, citing reasons of convenience, rather than impact on payment. Recognising other feedback from architects, we have introduced new, streamlined payments via ApplePay and GooglePay, where those who have an account can make a one touch payment. So far, 12% of our payments are now made this way, higher than the direct debit rate last year.
- 2.4 We have also set up the mechanisms to manage the non-compliance of CPD applications. We are case managing the small number (62 individuals) who have made a deferral at the time of their payment, but the application has been refused as it does not meet the CPD Scheme requirements. Examples of this include stating they are retired or doing CPD in a country other than the UK. Architects will have until the retention fee closing to add their CPD to MyARB. The functionality is working, and Registration Officers are progressing the cases as they come in, rather than awaiting the end of the fee period.
- 2.5 Currently, as of 24 November 2025, 7,430 architects have paid the 2026 fee. This is around 500 fewer than this time last year, though another 1,094 architects have started a fee payment, but have either not yet paid, or have not made their full CPD declaration on MyARB. We are tailoring our communications to this group to advise both the mandatory nature of CPD, and the ease of completion.

- 2.6 Currently 20% of the Register have paid the fee, and almost 25% have engaged in some way with the process.
- 2.7 For those that have paid, 48% have made a declaration that they are using MyARB to record CPD, with 42% indicating use of the RIBA system. The remainder declared either a deferral, or that they had joined or re-joined the Register since 1 October and are therefore exempt. We are verifying these declarations, using CRM functionality.
- 2.8 CPD deferral requests are running at 2.7% of those who have paid, very similar to the numbers last year. Of the 199 deferrals made, 20 of these relate to long-term (six months or more) ill health, 77 relate to statutory family leave, and 102 are classed as "other" and have free text explanations. Of these "other" deferrals, 40 are mis-declared (as they are either health or family leave), and the other requests for deferral have been rejected as non-compliant with the CPD Scheme. As described earlier, Registration Officers are case managing these to compliance before the end of the fee period.
- 2.9 There have been 315 resignation applications since the 2026 fee was announced, taking the year-to-date figure to 532 architects. These figures are within the projected budget and income calculations. Analysis of the resignations shows 62% are retired/retiring, and 24% are no longer using the title architect (either in the UK or have moved abroad).
- 2.10 We are also tracking the number of applications to join and re-join the Register in the remainder of 2025, and the volumes match the budget and activity projections currently.

Modernisation of Initial Education and Training

- 2.11 The focus of our work has been preparing the Professional Practical Experience requirements, which form the basis of a separate Board paper for this meeting. The paper includes an annex summarising all the engagement we've undertaken with learning providers and others since receiving the PPE Commission's recommendations earlier this year.
- 2.12 In October Harlow Consulting, the agency appointed to develop an evaluation methodology for our education reforms, ran a workshop with relevant staff members. We also invited three Board members to meet with them, of which two agreed to do so. They presented their initial thoughts about the theory of change and data we might use to evaluate whether our reforms are improving access to training and education, and ultimately the profession. Next steps include external engagement, and a draft framework that we're expecting to see in early 2026.

Eos Transformation

- 2.13 As described above, registration systems within the new CRM are working very well. The CPD functionality recently introduced is likewise working well.
- 2.14 We appointed our new CRM developer in September and are finalising specific Statements of Work which will sit under the over-arching contract and include details on payment schedule and quality metrics.
- 2.15 We have commenced internal ‘validation workshops’ to review the requirements for phase three of our CRM development work. This will feed into the ‘discovery’ phase of work, with our new CRM developer, which is now anticipated to begin in early 2026.
- 2.16 In the meantime, we have begun the preparations for the handover of our CRM support contract from the current supplier, to the new supplier. We have been carrying out detailed workflow mapping and documentation to mitigate risks in transition.

People Update

- 2.17 The Director of Policy and Communications recruitment campaign is on track with a longlist meeting (at the time of writing) due to take place on 1st December with the ARB panel interviews taking place on Tuesday 9th December, with an opportunity to meet the Senior Leadership Group and members of the policy and communications team the following week.
- 2.18 We are progressing work with an online performance management system called Perform with Kallidus (our online Learning and Development partner). This will enable the annual review process to be managed online reducing the burden of a paper-based approach. Managers will also be able to track progress against objectives making one-to-one discussions throughout the year more interactive and purposeful.

International Updates

- 2.19 As previously reported, we are continuing work to review our Mutual Recognition Agreements with the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) and the New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB), and the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) in the US. We are on track to complete the reviews in 2026.

- 2.20 We held our most recent annual monitoring meeting with NCARB in early November 2025. Amongst other things we discussed the review of our UK Adaptation Assessment, the review of our MRA and ways in which we can continue to raise awareness of the MRA. We will be working closely with NCARB to take these initiatives forward.

Governance Updates

- 2.21 All Board members' annual reviews for 2025 have been completed, as well as the Chair's annual review. The Chair and Senior Independent Board Member will provide relevant updates later on the agenda
- 2.22 Recruitment for the temporary architect Board member roles, which will need to be filled on 1 March 2026, is underway and progressing in line with the recruitment plans. The panel will provide recommendations regarding the appointments to the Board at its meeting of 21 January 2026. Successfully appointed candidates will then undertake a full induction prior to taking up their roles.

Update on the Board Workshop meeting held on 19 November 2025

- 2.23 The Board held a Workshop meeting on the 19 November in London.
- 2.24 Presentations were received from Angie Jim Osman, partner at Allies and Morrison about developments in architecture with a particular focus on the global nature of the business and the impact of ARBs reforms including MRAs.
- 2.25 The Board also hosted a session led by Professor Christopher Hodges OBE Emeritus Professor of Justice Systems, Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Oxford. Professor Hodges, an expert on regulatory systems and policy provided an overview of the regulatory systems thinking and the possible impact on current government reforms, including building safety.
- 2.26 The Senior Independent Board Member also held the annual private session with Board Members, excluding the Chair, as part of ARB's commitment to good governance.

Accreditation Update

- 2.27 The Accreditation Team continues to progress the Transition Period activities and respond to new qualification applications.
- 2.28 We are on track to visit each Provider by the end of the Transition Period, and have arranged the next 20 visits, which will include the review of their existing

qualifications, and the materials they have provided to meet the Board's Standards For Providers. This data will provide the baseline for future assessments by the Accreditation Committee.

- 2.29 We have commenced establishing the review of the Accreditation Committee activities, processes and outcomes, using an external research provider. This framework will set the measures for the review over the next couple of years. The Chair of the Accreditation Committee is contributing to this, along with the Executive. The Accreditation Committee are also contributing their views to the evaluation of activity so far and will spend the December 2025 workshop developing this.
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3. Resource Implications

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

4. Risk Implications

- 4.1. Risks relating to each of the initiatives set out in this paper have been considered separately, either as part of specific Board papers and discussions, or incorporated into project, programme or corporate risk registers.

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. This includes the Culture Conference referenced in this paper.

- 5.2. Our international work will directly have an impact on the diversity of the registrant population. The same applies to our education reform work, particularly looking at Professional Practical Experience.
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6. Recommendations

- 6.1. The Board is asked to note this paper.