

Open session

Board meeting: 7 December 2022

Agenda item: 8

Subject: Business Plan 2023

Action: For Decision

Purpose

The Board is asked to approve the proposed Business Plan for 2023.

Recommendations

To approve the proposed Business Plan for 2023.

To delegate to the Chair responsibility for making any necessary changes as a result of feedback from the Board.

Annexes

Annexe A- Business Plan 2023

Author/Key Contact

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1. Open/Confidential Session


This paper will be held in the open session of the meeting.

2. Background and Key points

- 2.1. At its meeting on 9 September 2021, the Board approved a new and ambitious five year Corporate Strategy for 2022-26. This strategy set out ARB's purpose, our vision and five overarching priorities to:
- Modernise initial education and training of architects
 - Develop and deliver a new model of CPD
 - Transform our systems, processes and technology
 - Invest in our people and build a high-performance culture
 - Delivery continuous improvement in our regulatory services.
- 2.2. We are coming to the end of the first year of the Corporate Strategy and significant progress has been made in each of the five key priority strategic aims. **Annexe A** sets out the draft Business Plan for 2023. Delivery of the priority actions within this proposed Business Plan will ensure ARB maintains momentum as we seek to improve our operations and delivery changes to the regulation of architects.
- 2.3. To enable the Board to make an informed decision about the budget and fees strategy for 2023, an outline of the business plan was presented to the Board at its workshop discussion in September 2022.
- 2.4. We have taken that feedback and prepared a draft ARB Business Plan 2023 for publication which is set out in **Annexe A**.
- 2.5. There is significantly more detail within operational business plans but what is presented in the annexe is intended to provide clarity to the Board and in particular to external stakeholders about the key areas of work for 2023. In addition, to provide some visibility on future trajectory, a summary of expected areas for delivery in 2024-26 are also included.
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3. Resource Implications

- 3.1. Resource requirements for the delivery of the strategic plan priorities, including activities scheduled for 2023, were considered as part of the Board discussion and decision on the budget for 2023.

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- 3.2. The only area where we already believe some additional work will be required, which was not factored into budget discussions in September, is work we think will need to be expedited in relation to the review of the Prescribed Examination. We have an ambitious timetable for the delivery of a new modernised framework for the initial education and training of architects; the prescribed examination is modelled on the three part structure which ARB is planning to reform. We do, however, believe we can meet the additional costs from within the proposed departmental budgets.
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4. Risk implications

- 4.1. A key plank of the Board's risk management strategy is to consider those risks which may hinder our ability to delivery our corporate strategy and within that, our statutory functions. Although a number of key deliverables within the Business Plan are subject to change following external consultation, and could also be influenced by public policy changes, no additional risks have been identified as part of the Business Plan development process.
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5. Communication

- 5.1. Once the Board approval has been received and any drafting amendments required are made, we will publish the Business Plan for 2023 on our website.
- 5.2. Each of the initiatives set out within the Business Plan will be promoted as appropriate by the Communications team.
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6. Equality and Diversity implication

- 6.1. No specific equality and diversity implications arise from new proposals within the Business Plan. However, a number of the strategic aims and the activities to deliver them set out in the draft business plan are designed to have a positive impact on equality, diversity and inclusion. These include the proposals to modernise initial education and training.
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7. Recommendations

To approve the proposed Business Plan for 2023.

To delegate to the Chair responsibility for making any necessary changes as a result of feedback from the Board.





Business Plan 2023

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1. Introduction

Our five-year [Corporate Strategy](#) states that we want a world in which the built environment inspires those who live and work in it, reflects the needs of society so that people are safe and can live well, and helps to tackle the fundamental challenges our planet faces. The contribution that regulation can make to this overarching purpose may be small, but we recognise that architects and other professionals in the built environment can achieve their own goals, potential and outcomes only if we are delivering effective regulation.

Our vision

We have an ambitious vision for ARB. Our goal is to deliver improvements and tangible outcomes in each of our core statutory functions and deliver meaningful and positive change in our strategic priorities.

Our 2022 Business Plan set out our commitments, all contributing to delivering our strategy and the five key strategic priorities. Majority of those commitments have been delivered, with a small number rolling over to 2023.

In 2022 we have:

- Made significant improvements to our guidance, processes and engagement with the profession, exam candidates and institutions, and put feedback mechanisms in place to be able to gather data about their experiences with ARB.
- Analysed our major survey on initial education and training, using this alongside events and other engagement to draft new educational outcomes for initial education and training of architects and new standards for learning providers. We plan to consult on these in early 2023.
- Carried out a major survey on the principles for our new continuing professional development (CPD) scheme which we used to develop new guidance and launch a new public consultation on the detail of the proposed scheme.
- Embarked on a major organisational transformation programme which will overhaul our outdated operational processes and systems, will bring added cyber security and integrity to our IT systems, and oversee the design and delivery of a new holistic applications and case management system. These are all designed to improve our services to registrants as well as delivery efficiency gains.
- Co-created with our staff a new shared values and behaviour framework. We have also introduced a new performance management system so that we can be a model employer, boost stability and improve key staffing metrics.

Our Business Plan for 2023 includes a range of commitments which will help us play our part in supporting efforts to address climate change as well as fundamental and long-standing structural issues around equality and diversity in architecture. Our vision and commitment, set out in the Corporate Strategy 2022-26 is to:

- Demonstrate leadership for the sector in responding to key challenges including fire and life safety and climate change;
- Foster a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion in our own organisation and take action to ensure change occurs in architecture;
- Work with the profession (including employers, educators, students and others) to modernise initial education and training;
- Build on the professionalism of architects by implementing a new model of continuing professional development which supports good practice and lifelong learning;
- Embed a culture of continuous improvement within ARB so that our regulatory services are accessible, effective and designed around the needs of our stakeholders

In this annual business plan we refer back to our strategic vision for 2026, and set out the activities we will carry out in 2023 towards this vision. We also show a summary of expected areas of activity in 2024-26 recognising that plans will develop over time as we receive feedback from stakeholders on proposals.

2. Continuous improvement in our regulatory services

Our vision for 2026

We will continue to modernise and transform the way in which ARB operates if architects and the public are to benefit from regulation. We will deliver improvements which we want to be tangible and measurable across each of our statutory functions.

In 2023 we will:

Registration:

- Use new technology, as part of the Transformation Programme, to enhance our communications with architects, institutions, examination candidates and those applying for registration through MRAs. We will gather feedback on their experiences and interaction with ARB. We will use the feedback to identify and deliver demonstrable improvements to the experience of these stakeholders.
- Move to a 24/7 online self-service for architects to maintain their own registration, including paying for their retention fee and accessing certificates and payment receipts.
- Continue to implement new legislation relating to the information included on the public Register, communicating with registrants electronically and registration appeals.
- Manage the implementation of new ways that international architects will be able to register, including the UK Adaptation Assessment which will be a requirement of those joining the register through a new Mutual Recognition Agreement.
- Improve transparency for the public by improving the way in which any sanctions or disciplinary findings against architects are published on the online register.

Accreditation:

- Deliver improvements to the way in which we accredit and quality assure the Initial Education and Training of Architects.
- Deliver operational improvements to support the information exchange between ARB, providers of education and training and other regulatory bodies of architecture.
- Improve the utilisation of data gathered as part of the new ARB accreditation model to be launched in the second half of 2023.
- Visit schools to speak to their students and staff about ARB's role, requirements for registration and upcoming changes to the structure of education and training.

In 2024-26 we will continue to develop improvements in efficiency and customer service, and work to operationalise key elements in the corporate strategy as they are approved. These include any system developments for the new CPD framework and monitoring process as well as a new accreditation methodology following the development of new learning outcomes and standards for institutions as we modernise initial education and training of architects.

Assessment and international routes:

- Launch and operationalise Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)/Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) we have developed, subject to legislative approval and continue to develop MRA/MOUs in compliance with the principles and criteria we have developed.
- Promote the introduction of proposed new routes to registration and their benefits to potential registrants and practices.
- Introduce the new UK Adaptation Assessment as part of the route to registration for those taking advantage of Mutual Recognition Agreements with regulatory bodies in other countries.
- Develop plans and commence a review of the UK Adaptation Assessment, in tandem with the review of the Prescribed Examination, after the first six months of its operation.

In 2024-2026 we will complete a review of the UK Adaptation Assessment that we initially put in place, taking feedback into account, and will make adjustments where there is evidence to support doing so. We will continue to visit international counterparts as part of our MRA monitoring processes and to check on-going compliance with our standards. We will publish the programme for this annually.

Standards and good practice:

- As part of preparatory work to review the Code of Conduct and Practice we will carry out research and extensive engagement with architects, employers, to understand better issues around professionalism in action.
- Review our existing guidance for architects and consider what changes are needed as we prepare for an overhaul of the Code of Conduct and Practice.
- Carry out further work to promote updated guidance on professional indemnity insurance and engage across the sector to identify any gaps in our suite of guidance.
- Carry out detailed analysis of disciplinary cases and share learning with the profession through ARB Insight and other communications channels.

Protection of title:

- Carry out further engagement with relevant consumer organisations.
- to promote the online register and the benefits of using a regulated professional.
- Carry out an audit of higher-risk groups who may be illegally using the title architect whilst unregistered.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

- Publish detailed analysis of:
 - The makeup of the architects' profession in 2022;
 - The makeup of new architects joining the profession each year between 2016 and 2021;
 - How the makeup of the profession compares to the UK population at large.
- Use the publication of these data to promote understanding of issues within the sector and engage with stakeholders to consider action we and others can take.
- Use our EDI forum to promote and take action to ensure our working environment that reflect ARBs culture and values, is truly inclusive and improves staff wellbeing, recruitment and retention.
- Ensure our office space is an inclusive space that is welcoming and functioning for those with hearing and sight impairments as well as how accessible it is for other physical disabilities, and that it supports collaboration and different learning styles amongst staff.
- Through our people strategy, create opportunities for all by adapting our recruitment procedures to better ensure we reach the widest talent pool possible.

In 2024-26 we will deliver improvements in our standards and guidance work. We will take feedback, learning and insight from our consultation activities to identify practical changes we can make, both within ARB and within key policy areas so that we make a difference on equality and diversity. We will publish a new Code of Conduct and Practice and review the suite of guidance which sits alongside it to support architects to practice in adherence to the Code at all times.

2. Modernising initial education and training of architects

Our vision for 2026

Initial education and training of architects will better reflect the knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours they need in areas such as climate change, safety, ethics and emerging technologies. The structure of education and training will encourage diversity and wider access to the profession, whilst providing assurance that only competent individuals will be admitted to the Register of Architects.

In 2023 we will

- Consult on and approve a new educational model; competence outcomes; standards for learning providers; the establishment and operation of a new Accreditation Committee; and arrangements for transitioning to the new model.
- Publish an Accreditation Handbook which will assist organisations in working to our new accreditation model.
- Engage with learning providers as part of the delivery of the new model of Initial Education and Training.
- Begin inspections and visits to learning providers, as part of the new model of accreditation.
- Initiate a formal review of how we assess the competence of applicants with non-accredited qualifications in architecture, including the Prescribed Examination process and UK Adaption Assessment.

In 2024-26 we will transition to a new model of architectural education by accrediting qualifications that will produce the new competence outcomes, delivered by learning providers judged against a new set of standards. We will embed a proportionate and effective accreditation model and overhaul the prescribed examinations process. We will provide leadership on the challenges architectural education faces in respect of professional practical experience, funding and diversity.

3. Delivering a new system of continuing professional development for architects

Our vision for 2026

Architects will be utilising a continuing professional development (CPD) model they see as a positive contribution to their practice and professional development. There will be evidence that the model has made an impact on the competence of architects with learning shared across the profession.

In 2023 we will

- Finalise CPD policy development, including the analysis of the scheme consultation and publication of a report on responses.
- Run a pilot exercise for the new CPD scheme, and use the results to assist our implementation.
- Promote the incoming scheme and its requirements to architects, including running events and online sessions to do this.
- Develop an IT solution to facilitate the introduction of the CPD scheme in 2024.

In 2024-26 we will develop, test and implement our internal processes for selecting, sampling, assessing and deciding on CPD submissions. In 2024, we anticipate the system to go live, with architects submitting information relating to CPD undertaken. We will develop and test the quality assurance system to ensure consistency for the assessors. Compliance with the scheme will become mandatory from 2025.

4. Transforming our systems, processes and information technology

Our vision for 2026

ARB's systems and processes will enable architects to manage their own data and information, improving their experiences and delivering efficiencies. The public will have increased transparency about qualified and registered architects. The IT infrastructure will not only ensure secure data but will enable ARB to gather improved insight into the profession, including areas where regulatory attention is needed such as equality and diversity, new guidance or changes to education and training.

In 2023 we will

- Move to the next phase of transforming our IT systems by introducing a new applications and case management system.
- Continue to overhaul our IT infrastructure including cyber security profile to ensure enhanced data security.
- Continue to modernise ways of working including better use of technology to support hybrid working.
- Improve data security for the organisation, by moving to cloud-based services.

In 2024-26 we will roll out a new holistic software applications system across ARB enabling us to deliver significant improvements in registrant services and 'self-serve' access. We will develop enhanced data analytics so that we are providing insight on key trends to the profession and the wider built environment.

6. Investing in our people and building a positive and inclusive culture based on shared values and behaviours

Our vision for 2026

ARB is an organisation where all our staff and our associates understand and are highly motivated to deliver our purpose and vision, where staff are well led and well managed, have the right skills and competencies, and are working to a shared set of values and behaviours. If we achieve this, we will deliver high quality regulation.

In 2023 we will

- Embed our new staff performance management system as part of our work to retain, support and develop of workforce
- We will monitor and review our new values and behaviour framework, assessing ARB culture and staff attitudes
- Complete the review of our non-executive associate group so that they are effectively supported in their roles and receive training necessary, including training on equality diversity and inclusion
- Introduce new and innovative recruitment methods for both staff and associates to improve the diversity of our talent pool
- Carry out a review of the Board, Committee and Non-Executives Annual Review process, identifying areas for improvement so that they can be implemented for the subsequent round of reviews
- Complete the review of our core HR policies so that they are aligned with our People Strategy and support a high function workforce with an inclusive and supportive culture
- Carry out a review of our future property needs to ensure our accommodation is fit for purpose and enables a collaborative working environment for our workforce

In 2024-26 we will continue our journey to be a high performing organisation. We will use research and engagement methods to ensure we gather feedback from staff, associates and stakeholders about our operational performance. We will complete the review of our property needs, reflecting the new hybrid way of working and our need to ensure a fit for purpose office space for ARB staff. We will review the skills and competencies required of our workforce, and encourage staff development, as we roll out a new IT system and move away from old paper based and manual processes.

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