



**Subject** Update from the Chief Executive  
**Purpose** For Note  
**From** Chief Executive

If you have any enquiries on this paper, please contact Marc Stoner at [marcs@arb.org.uk](mailto:marcs@arb.org.uk) on 020 7580 5861

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### 1. Summary

To provide an update from the Chief Executive on the operational activities of the Executive team.

### 2. Open Session

Open session. Any confidential matters will be discussed in a separate report in the confidential session.

### 3. 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

ARB's Operational Activities Report keeps the Board informed of activities which ensure that ARB meets its purpose and objectives, its statement of priorities and delivers against the Business Plan.

### 4. Update on Core Projects

To support the core project work, we have made a temporary appointment to support the core project delivery. The individual has significant formal project management experience, and will concentrate on drawing together, and driving forward, the project work streams with the relevant SLG or other key personnel.

They also have significant policy and stakeholder experience, working with a range of government and regulatory organisations. They have direct experience of project managing an EU Exit preparation project at a large government department. They start on 7 September.

This enhanced capability will cover the period until other Board approved resources come on stream later in the year, and is funded from the resources agreed to support the major projects.

### **i) Competence Review**

The collection of evidence to support ARB's review of architects' competence continues, with the survey of the profession and the wider call for evidence both launched in August 2020. The survey will close in September and the call for evidence in October 2020, and meanwhile the research company SQW will continue to assimilate the necessary information to produce a report for the Board in early 2021. We have updated our website pages which are dedicated to our Competence Review accordingly.

### **ii) EU Exit**

Further to the UK's exit from the EU on 31 January 2020, we have continued to review and update our EU Exit website pages where needed so that our information remains current and reflects our position during the implementation period.

We are developing and putting in place plans to ensure that we can continue to operate smoothly at the end of the implementation period regardless of the outcomes of the UK and EU negotiations. We will be issuing communications to architects and key stakeholders so that they are aware of the position and the steps that they need to take should they wish to register in the EU before the end of the year.

We have been continuing to provide technical advice and have made contributions to Government discussions about the future relationship between the UK and the EU.

In addition to our EU Exit preparations, we are continuing to explore the possibility of establishing agreements with Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) and New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB). Following disruption caused by the pandemic and changes in personnel at NZRAB, we have now resumed our discussions and have been continuing to share information about our respective routes to registration and our accreditation processes. We have mapped our respective sets of accreditation criteria against one another in order to determine the levels of compatibility between them. Our reviews and discussions have identified that there is a good level of compatibility between each country's requirements and that this could form a sound basis upon which to base any potential agreement. We are therefore now undertaking initial high level discussions with the AACA/NZRAB about what the basis of any agreement might be, e.g., a post registration agreement, an educational level agreement, what compensatory measures might need to be included within any agreements etc.

In parallel, we have also resumed our discussions with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) in the USA in recent months. Again we have been sharing information regarding our respective routes and processes and determined that there is a good level of compatibility that could form a sound basis to a future agreement. Our next steps will include beginning to explore the basis of an agreement.

Discussions will continue throughout the remainder of this year and into 2021.

### **iii) Prescription**

An initial project plan up to the end of December 2020 has been developed, focusing on improving the way the Executive seek information, assess and present it as part of the

decision-making process, and how information is transferred safely and efficiently between Executive, Committee and Board.

At its meeting on 30 July, the Policy Committee discussed the issues raised by the Prescription Committee, in the form of a “Policy Log”, and gave some initial directions to the Executive on how these matters should be approached and developed in future meetings. A prioritised list is being developed, and work has started on a number of areas, including the role of the external examiner, and direction on “standard directions” that can be considered in applications. The intention is to ensure consistency of decision-making, and efficiency of the seeking the right material to inform the process. Additionally, the standard directions can be varied, but an explanation of the rationale would be explicit in any committee or Board papers.

Initial work on improving IT functionality to share papers, the content and format of future committee and Board papers (including a clear and succinct trail of how the evidence meets the threshold criteria) and a programme of updating internal guidance (in the form of standard operating procedures) and external guidance (Good Practice Guidance) has begun. These two elements of guidance are linked and dependent, and will be developed together, continuing into 2021 in a modular fashion.

#### **iv) Professional Conduct Review**

The Professional Conduct Review remains ongoing, with the independent reviewer having completed phase one of her report. The full report is due for completion by September 2020.

#### **v) Strategic Statements**

The proposed Strategic Statement on Climate Change & Sustainability is being considered by the Board on 7 September. We are continuing to work on the guidance for institutions and the profession in relation to Fire & Life Safety Design. We will be bringing the guidance to the Board for consideration and approval during the Autumn.

### **6. Investigation Panel Recruitment**

During September 2020 we will be commencing the appointment of new members to the Investigation Pool, with a view to new appointments starting in the New Year. This will be a mix of re-appointments and new appointments.

Alan Kershaw, as the portfolio holder for fitness to practice, will be consulted on the recruitment and selection process.

### **7. Return to the office**

From 14 September staff will be returning to the office, although the office will initially remain closed to visitors and no on-site meetings with external attendees will be held. Calls

will continue to be answered remotely. One team will be attending the office per day, so 1/5 of the workforce will physically be on site, this will allow social distancing to be maintained.

A full Covid-19 risk assessment has been carried out and the office is compliant with current regulations. The risk assessment has been shared with the staff team, will be displayed in the COVID section of the ARB website and will be displayed in the office.

**8. Professional indemnity insurance**

The availability of adequate professional indemnity insurance for architects remains a concern, as it does for professionals across the built environment. The Executive continue to consult with stakeholders – including professional bodies, MHCLG and insurers – and will continue to review whether our guidance remains accurate and helpful. Any proposed changes to our regulatory approach will be discussed first at the Policy Committee.

**9. Resource Implications**

Only as identified in the paper.

**10. Risk Implications**

ARB's CEO's Report provides the Board with an update on business activities, progress against the Business Plan, as well as highlighting any emerging risks which may impact on delivery.

Further detail of specific risks to the organisation and in relation to operations will be provided in the confidential CEO's report.

**11. Communication**

The update from the Chief Executive, informs the Board of ARB's work and any risks which may prevent the delivery of ARB's operations.

**12. Equality and Diversity Implications**

Particular care will need to be taken when making decisions in respect of re-opening the office, to ensure that those employees with protected characteristics (or dependants with protected characteristics) are not disproportionately affected by those decisions. A full risk and equality impact assessment will be carried out at the appropriate time.

**13. Further Actions**

These are referred to within the key points set out above.