

# 2026 Business Plan

for Open session

Subject:

To approve the proposed 2026 Business Plan.

Board meeting:

10 December 2025

Agenda item:

09

Action:

- For noting ☐
- For discussion ☐
- For decision ☒

## Purpose

The Board is asked to approve the proposed Business Plan for 2026.

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## Recommendation

To approve the proposed Business Plan for 2026.

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

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## Annexes

Annexe A- Business Plan commitments 2026

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## 1. Open Session

- 1.1. This paper will be held in the open session of the meeting.
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## 2. Background and Key points

- 2.1. The Executive has recommended that the Board approve a new Corporate Strategy for 2026-2030. This strategy set out ARB's purpose, our vision and three overarching pillars to:
- Strengthening education and training of future architects
  - Upholding confidence and trust in the profession
  - Delivering modern, efficient and effective regulation
- 2.2. These three pillars underpin the commitments set out in our 2026 Business Plan, **Annexe A**.
- 2.3. At its workshop discussion in September 2025, the Board were presented an outline of the 2026 business plan, to make an informed decision about the budget and fees strategy. Feedback from that discussion has been reflected in **Annexe A**.
- 2.4. 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 other stakeholders about the key areas of work for 2026.
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## 3. Resource Implications

- 3.1. Resource requirements for the delivery of the business plan commitments, including activities scheduled for 2026, were considered as part of the Board discussion and decision on the budget for 2025.
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## 4. Risk Implications

- 4.1. There are a number of potential risks to the delivery of the Business Plan 2026, and these are considered as part of the Corporate Risk Register and will be tracked as part of our new performance monitoring framework and KPIs
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## 5. Communication

- 5.1. Once the Business Plan 2026 has been approved by the Board, and any drafting amendments required are made, it will be published on our website.
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## 6. Equality and Diversity implications

- 6.1. There are a number of specific EDI initiatives within the Business Plan which also relate to embedding of our new EDI strategy.
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## 7. Recommendations

- 7.1. To approve the proposed Business Plan for 2026.
- 7.2. To delegate to the Chief Executive responsibility for making any necessary changes as a result of feedback from the Board.



# Business Plan 2026

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## 1. Introduction

ARB is an independent professional regulator, established by Parliament as a statutory body, through the Architects Act, in 1997. We are accountable to government.

The law gives us a number of core functions:

- To ensure only those who are suitably competent are allowed to practise as architects. We do this by approving the qualifications required to join the UK Register of Architects.
- We maintain a publicly available Register of Architects so anyone using the services of an architect can be confident that they are suitably qualified and are fit to practise.
- We set the standards of conduct and practice the profession must meet and take action when any architect falls below the required standards of conduct or competence.
- We set requirements for and monitor the continuous professional development that architects must undertake, to provide assurance to the public about the continuing competence of the profession.
- We protect the legally restricted title 'architect'.

This document sets out our business plan for 2026 and is complementary to our new five-year Corporate Strategy 2026-2030. Over the last five years we have made significant improvements to our regulatory model, but there is still further progress to be made. Over the next five years our regulatory efforts will prioritise improvements in safety, competence and culture. To successfully deliver these improvements ARB will focus on the following three key pillars:

- Strengthening education and training of future professionals
- Upholding confidence and trust in the profession
- Delivering modern, effective and efficient regulation

These three pillars are set out in our corporate strategy and underpin the commitments we have set out in this business plan.

## 2. Strengthening education and training of future professionals

### Our vision for 2030

By the end of 2030 we will have established a framework of education and training that is understood and implemented by learning providers, is fair and supportive to students and trainees, and equips architects of the future with the right competencies to practice safely and be successful.

### In 2026 we will:

- Continue to embed our new education framework by evaluating new applications and continuing annual monitoring for outgoing qualifications
- Complete the Standards for Providers dataset, to ensure all learning providers will be measured in future accreditation decisions
- Implement and embed improvements to professional practical experience, including the development and production of a new record of trainee experience
- Publish recommendations of our education access evaluation research and set out an evaluation action plan
- Carry out initial stakeholder engagement, research and information gathering to assess the feasibility of work-based routes to registration in the UK
- Maintain the established communication channels with learning providers
- Commission stakeholder perceptions research and publish proposals for enhanced involvement

### 3. Upholding confidence and trust in the profession

#### Our vision for 2030

By the end of 2030 we will raise competency levels of architects through a mature continuing professional development (CPD) scheme, by enhancing the professional guidance we offer, by tackling poor workplace culture and by dealing more efficiently with those architects that fall below expected standards.

#### In 2026 we will:

- Consult on, analyse and publish the third and final tranche of guidance documents that support the new Architects Code of Conduct and Practice
- Promote the standards and competence expected of architects through a range of communication channels, to improve competence and culture in the profession
- Establish a short life expert working group to consider the impact of AI on architecture and the role of professional regulation.
- Review and enhance the CPD scheme by analysing completion levels and the impact of our communication strategy, and making evidence-based proposals to improve the effectiveness of the scheme
- Develop an updated international agreements strategy, to improve our governance framework and inform our decision-making in relation to future agreements
- Complete the review of four of our mutual recognition agreements to broaden their scope and accommodate ARB's initial education and training requirements
- Complete our review of the UK Adaptation Assessment and develop, with an external partner, a new online module which is targeted and cost effective.
- Progress work to replace the Prescribed Examination at Parts 1 and 2 with a new single gateway assessment
- Continue to implement our EDI strategy, launching a census of registrants to better understand the demography of the profession, and publishing a resource hub to support individuals experiencing discrimination



#### 4. Delivering modern, efficient and effective regulation

##### **Our vision for 2030**

By 2030 we will have completed the modernisation of our services to registrants, have worked in alignment with government and other regulators to improve culture, competency and safety, and be able to use data to inform regulatory policy

##### **In 2026 we will:**

- Conduct a review of our current investigations processes to identify areas for improvement and propose a new investigations model
- Establish an IT governance group responsible for IT governance, risk management and planning in IT
- Develop a data mechanism to ensure that there is a clear single comprehensive source of data that allows us to track all mutual recognition agreement related data and identify themes and trends
- Develop and embed a new performance monitoring framework and key performance indicators, establishing clear measures for success and where applicable, measurability, reporting on all KPIs monthly
- Develop assessment templates and review mechanisms to ensure appropriate impact assessments are undertaken when developing and delivering key policies and operational systems and processes by
- Carry out new stakeholder perceptions research to inform a comprehensive review of our key stakeholder relationships and improve how we engage with them across different areas of work
- Expand our programme of visits and talks to trainees to inform them about ARB's role and their future registration
- Liaise and engage with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to contribute independent insight to their reform of the built environment sector and its regulatory frameworks
- Develop a sustainability policy and set baseline metrics to track and report
- Embed the learning and development strategy for our employees through various learning channels hosted on our online platform, as well as through management and leadership pathways, to promote wider learning and engagement across the organisation and enable

consistent upskilling of leaders, managers, and employees

- Continue to develop the online registrant-services portal MyARB to improve the way architects manage their registration

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We will consider your request and get back to you within 14 days.

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