

Board Paper

for Open session

**Subject: Report on the Delivery of the Business Plan
2025**

To receive an update on the delivery of the 2025
Business Plan.

Board meeting:

21 January 2026

Agenda item:

7

Action:

- For noting
- For discussion
- For decision

Purpose

To provide the Board with an update on the delivery of the 2025 Business Plan.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to note the update on the delivery of the 2025 Business Plan.

Annexes

[Annex A](#) – 2025 Business Plan

Annex B – Business Plan Delivery Tracker

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

2.1. In 2021 the Board approved a new and ambitious Corporate Strategy for 2022-2026, which set out five key priority areas:

- Continuous improvement in our regulatory services
- Modernising the Education and Training of architects
- Delivering a new system of Continuing Professional Development for architects
- Transforming our systems, processes and technology
- Investing in our people and building a positive and inclusive culture based on shared values and behaviours.

2.2. To support the delivery of this five-year strategy, we have continued with our approach to business planning and delivery, which was developed in 2022. This included:

- The approval by the Board of a new Business Plan for 2025 (**Annex A**) mapped out against the five key priority areas in the Corporate Strategy
- Internal business planning controls, including regular Business Plan Delivery Group meetings
- Each of the commitments within the Business Plan have been captured and logged in an excel tracking tool.

2.3. The Executive Officer and Business Plan Coordinator is accountable for keeping the excel tracking tool up to date and highlighting delivery risks. This tool includes:

- An exhaustive list of commitments mapped against the Business Plan
- Clear SLG director accountability and staff 'delivery owners'
- Proposed deadlines to assist with managing delivery of each commitment.

2.4. **Annex B** is an extract from the tracking tool which also includes colour coding to set out delivery 'status'.

2.5. The status is described using the following colour codes:

GREEN: Complete and can be reported as successfully delivered

AMBER: Started/On track to be delivered in 2025

BLUE: Some activity has been identified to fall into 2026

RED: Has not started/has not been delivered in 2025

2.6. Our 2025 Business Plan is made up of 48 commitments across the five key priority areas in the Corporate Strategy.

2.7. At its July 2025 meeting, the Board received a mid-year report against each of the 48 commitments, stating that:

- **AMBER:** 34 of the 48 commitments are ongoing or scheduled to be delivered in 2025
- **GREEN:** 7 of the 48 commitments have been completed.
- **RED:** 7 of the 48 commitments had not started.
- **BLUE:** 3 commitments will commence in 2025, but some activities have been identified to carry over and complete in 2026.

2.8. This end of year report provides an overview of progress against the key commitments for 2025, along with a delivery status shown at **Annex B** and in short:

- **GREEN:** 34 of the 48 commitments have been completed.
- **BLUE:** 7 of the 48 commitments have commenced in 2025 but have been identified to complete in 2026.
- **RED:** 7 of the 48 commitments have not been delivered in 2025

2.9 The annex sets out each of these commitments and the respective status, along with some additional information for items marked in blue and red.

3. Continuous Improvement in our regulatory service

3.1. Following the roll out of a new 24/7 online self-service system in 2023, we have continued to gather robust feedback to identify any improvements to the stakeholder's experience, as well as gathering feedback on the new CPD system. Any necessary changes and improvements will be made by our new CRM developer.

3.2. We have continued to make improvements to guidance materials across our department's key functions, including information that's required from institutions for Parts 1, 2 & 3. From the feedback we have gathered on our CPD scheme and system, we will be looking at how we can make changes to our CPD compliance guidance, to make improvements to user experience.

3.3. We continue to make progress with the overhaul to improve international routes to registration and manage the transition phase for the replacement of the current Prescribed Examination and UK Adaptation Assessment. In October 2025 we launched a consultation on new proposed routes to registration. The consultation will close on 2 February 2026 and the Board will receive a report later in the year.

3.4. As part of our aim to improve the way in which we accredit and quality assure the initial education and training of architects, the Accreditation team have carried out 13 regular reviews of institutions in 2025, via in person and virtual visits. Targeted

student engagement formed part of these visits from 2025 and will continue in 2026. We have received a positive internal audit report on the visits process.

- 3.5. Our Policy & Communications team also successfully held 8 trainee talks, to explain the role of ARB and help students understand their responsibilities once they join the register.
- 3.6. We continue to make good progress to develop new Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) and Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs), successfully signing, launching and promoting an MRA with Canada across Q2 & Q3 of 2025. In Q2 we also rolled out a route to registration which complied with the UK/Swiss recognition of professional qualifications arrangements.
- 3.7. In relation to embedding a programme of MRA/MOU monitoring visits, we have revisited this business plan item and have instead developed a more proportionate, risk-based approach to monitoring our recognition agreements. We have therefore developed a process which would be followed in the event a significant issue arose, which then warranted a monitoring visit to be undertaken.
- 3.8. In September 2025 we successfully implemented a new Architects Code of Conduct and Practice following a public consultation. To underpin the new Code two sets of new guidance have been consulted on and published in 2025, with the third and final set being consulted on in early 2026.
- 3.9. Equality, diversity and inclusion remains a priority at ARB, both externally and internally. Our EDI partner, Purpose Union, created a new EDI Strategy which the Board approved in early 2025. Our EDI statement and action plan was published on our website in May 2025.
- 3.10. As part of our research into the profession to better understand trends and demographics, we have developed a census-style survey which will be published in 2026.

4. Modernising initial education and training of Architects

- 4.1. Following the recommendations from the Commission on Professional Practical Experience a comprehensive plan was published on our website in May 2025 and a consultation on proposed changes will be published in early 2026.
- 4.2. In Q3 of 2025 we commissioned an independent researcher, Harlow Consulting, to assess the impact of our new regulatory framework and explore issues around access. The research report is currently being finalised, and the Board is expected to

receive the recommendations report at its March 2026 meeting.

5. Delivering a new system of Continuing Professional Development for architects

- 5.1. We have continued to promote the importance of CPD as a key plank of professionalism in architecture via email campaigns to high-risk non-compliant groups, as well as redeveloping the webpage to include more targeted information.
- 5.2. In Q4 2025 we successfully developed a CPD AI tool with Ensemble to facilitate data analysis and drive future regulatory policy.

6. Transforming our systems, processes and technology

- 6.1. Our progression into a third phase of Power Platform/CRM development work was impacted by a decision, taken early in 2025, to change partners for Power Platform development. A procurement exercise was concluded in Q4 which identified a new supplier, Codec. We intend to sign initial contracts with Codec before the end of January 2026 and will then proceed through a short discovery, onboarding, and handover phase, including the transfer of support responsibilities from the incumbent to Codec. The third phase of Power Platform development work, including the creation of new standards and case management capabilities, will begin shortly thereafter.
- 6.2. An IT Working Group, to be chaired by the Director of Performance and Planning, will be operationalised in February 2026. This group will be responsible for ensuring we maximise benefits from transformation and realise the efficiency opportunities from process and system improvement, in addition to our wider IT governance and IT strategy.
- 6.3. We expect to develop a formal post-transformation IT Strategy in Q3 2026.
- 6.4. Under the remit of ARB's new Performance and Planning directorate, a post-transformation, business-as-usual IT operating model will be established. We will evaluate the benefits of an IT Continuous Improvement Program as part of the new operating model, covering Business Continuity Planning, Incident Response, and IT Risk Management, in addition to Cybersecurity.
- 6.5. The decision to defer development of business capabilities (6.1) contributed to delays in delivery of both IT Strategy development and initiatives to improve our

data management controls and outcomes. As a result, we now intend to deliver concrete outcomes in these areas during the year 2026.

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

- 7.1. In Q3 2025 we successfully rolled out a new People Strategy as we continue our ambition to be high performing and a great place to work. The purpose of the People Strategy is to encompass the various aspects related to employees and their experience within the organisation.
- 7.2. As part of our Learning and Development framework, we launched a new learning platform, Kallidus, replacing Shine and LinkedIn Learning, allowing all staff to complete mandatory and non-mandatory courses under one platform.
- 7.3. As we continue our approach to skills development, we have developed a Management Development Programme for a number of managers across the organisation and will be carried out in 2026.

8. Resource Implications

- 8.1. There are no specific additional resource implications emerging from this paper. Any resource implications relating to Business Plan Delivery during year will be presented alongside policy papers or the Management Accounts.

9. Risk Implications

- 9.1. Risks for each major programme of work are set up in Project and Programme Risk Registers. These also feed into the Corporate Risk Register which is regularly reviewed by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and periodically considered by the Board and appears on this Board's agenda.

10. Communication

- 10.1. We regularly report operational performance to MHCLG as part of our Framework Agreement.

11. Equality and Diversity implications

- 11.1. There are a number of specific commitments in the Business Plan relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. While we have made progress and delivered on the Business Plan commitments relating to EDI, we have identified much more work is needed to embed inclusion in our policies and operational procedures, which will be delivered as part of our proposed EDI Strategy.

12. Recommendations

- 12.1. The Board is asked to note and comment on the operational performance of ARB as set out in the paper.

Continuous Improvement: Registration

Annex B

Ref	Commitment	Additional information on 2026 activity
CI1	Use a range of feedback mechanisms to gather & evaluate feedback on the CRM system and make any necessary changes, to improve user experience.	
CI2	Make any necessary changes & improvements to guidance materials across the department's key functions.	
CI3	Review associates' induction and training, to support the changes in each of the routes to registration activities.	

Annotations

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BLUE: Some activity has been identified to fall in to 2026
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Continuous Improvement: Accreditation

Ref	Commitment	Additional information on 2026 activity
CI4	Work with providers and stakeholders to ensure that the Board's new framework for qualifications is fully embedded as we move to new competency outcomes in accredited qualifications.	
CI5	Evaluate the outputs from the Education Transition Reference group and update any guidance or operational handbooks as appropriate.	
CI6	Work closely with the apprenticeships trailblazer group to ensure proper alignment with competency outcomes delivered by learning providers and those delivered through an apprenticeship.	
CI7	Evaluate early work on student engagement related to Accreditation and standards for providers.	

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Continuous Improvement: International

Ref	Commitment	Additional information on 2026 activity
CI8	Undertake reviews of our existing MRAs/MOUs to broaden their scope.	
CI9	Sign, operationalise and promote ARB's MRA with Canada.	
CI10	Roll out a route to registration which complies with the UK/Swiss recognition of professional qualifications arrangements.	
CI11	Embed an MRA/MOU monitoring and visiting process, and publish a visits programme for 2026 onwards.	
CI12	Continue the progress overhauling international routes to registration and working to replace the prescribed examination, subject to outcomes of consultation.	

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Continuous Improvement: Governance

Ref	Commitment	Additional information on 2026 activity
CI13	Take forward recommendations and improvements resulting from Board and Committee Effectiveness Review Reports, as well as other feedback on governance related improvements and developments.	
CI14	Manage the roll out of new or updated Governance policies, subject to legislative and Board approval.	
CI15	Embed the revised Board and Committee Annual Performance and Development Review process.	

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Continuous Improvement: Standards

Ref	Commitment	Additional information on 2026 activity
CI16	Deliver the Eos Transformation project, for a smooth roll out of a new case management system.	Delivery of case management system to be undertaken in 2026 following the onboarding of the new Power Platform developer
CI17	Review standards and education work to ensure recommendations from Grenfell Inquiry are embedded in ARBs work	
CI18	Work with MHCLG and other relevant bodies to support any regulatory and public policy changes actioned as part of the Government's formal response to the Grenfell Inquiry	
CI19	Complete the appointment of a new Professional Conduct Committee legal services provider.	
CI20	Complete the public consultation on a new Architects Code of Conduct and Practice, publish and promote a new version of the Code.	
CI21	Prepare and consult on any new guidance required to underpin the new Code.	Two sets of guidance finalised and published, third set planned for early 2026 .

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Continuous Improvement: EDI

Ref	Commitment	Additional information on 2026 activity
CI22	Prepare and publish a new EDI statement and action plan.	
CI23	Share best practice and support ethical behaviours and inclusion in the profession, building on the learnings from our research into the workplace culture in architecture.	
CI24	Carry out research into the profession to better understand trends and demographics.	Outline of census-style survey is being drafted, to be published in 2026.
CI25	Establish Senior Leaders Taskforce in partnership with a professional body.	

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Continuous Improvement: Performance reporting & systems improvement

Ref	Commitment	Additional information on 2026 activity
CI26	Build greater alignment between our corporate strategy, business plan and regular performance reporting for Board and Committees.	
CI27	Introduce new and enhanced financial procedures, including new budget management procedures and monthly reporting.	

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Modernising initial education & training of architects

Ref	Commitment	Additional information on 2026 activity
IE1	Communicate the implications for the new initial education model so that university applicants and other students are increasingly aware of the different routes to registration.	
IE2	Continue student engagement through visits and other communications channels to promote understanding of the work of ARB, the implications of regulation, the Code of Conduct and routes to registration	
IE3	Analyse the recommendations from the Commission on Professional Practical Experience and publish the Board's response alongside a consultation on proposed changes. This will need to consider the regulatory impact on employers and schools of architecture.	Consultation will be published in 2026.
IE4	Develop a publication and improvement strategy so that we can highlight data and outcomes from our new accreditation methodology, providing more useful information for students, learning providers and others about the quality of initial education and training.	
IE5	Complete the tender process for the development of the evaluation framework to assess the impact of our education reforms on accessibility.	
IE6	Continue to manage the transition to the new regulatory framework and share information to learning providers, the board and other relevant stakeholders, including oversight of apprenticeships.	

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Continuing professional development for architects

Ref	Commitment	Additional information on 2026 activity
CP1	Build the communications campaign to promote the importance of CPD as a key plank of professionalism in architecture, raising awareness of ARB's system and the statutory compliance requirements and continue to monitor feedback so that we can ensure ongoing improvement within the system.	
CP2	Embed the annual review system for CPD, ensuring effective training and support to assessors and looking at the data on compliance and impact.	
CP3	Establish a project to look at how technology, including AI, may support us to use aggregated anonymised qualitative data from CPD to identify good practice and support wider efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of regulation.	
CP4	Alongside stakeholder engagement, the Board will consider whether new or different mandatory CPD topics should be required as part of the Scheme using a risk-based model and considering wider public policy and regulatory imperatives.	Review of mandatory topics will now take place in 2026, to allow sufficient data from a whole CPD cycle to be analysed.

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Transformation

Ref	Commitment	Additional information on 2026 activity
TR1	Complete the development of our CRM applications system which will provide a new standards and case management functionality.	New CRM Partner has been appointed, and work will be completed in 2026.
TR2	Establish an internal Efficiency Task and Finish group to ensure we are maximising benefits from transformation and realising the efficiency opportunities from process and system improvement.	IT Working group to be rolled out in Q1 of 2026.
TR3	Develop a longer term technology and improvement strategy so ARB is increasingly utilising the benefits from systems integration, data analysis using Power BI or related technologies and Artificial Intelligence.	First draft of the Strategy will be available in Q3 2026.
TR4	Develop further our cybersecurity capabilities, integrating with the Business Continuity Plans. These will be reported regularly to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to ensure it reflects the Board's risk appetite in this area and tracks key cyber risk activity including decommissioning of legacy application systems as soon as the Eos Transformation Programme allows.	Will continue into 2026 as part of IT Strategy.
TR5	Build our business improvement capabilities at ARB to ensure our technology strategy aligns with our business operating model.	Dependent of new CRM developer being appointed.
TR6	Reduce information security risk by improving data management.	Dependent of new CRM developer being appointed.

Annotations

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Investing in our people

Ref	Commitment	Additional information on 2026 activity
IP1	Share with the Board an updated People Strategy which will incorporate the review of equality, diversity and inclusion, our approach to skills development post IT Transformation and succession planning. We will also publish updated metrics on performance including staff turnover rates, sickness absence and staff survey scores.	
IP2	Update key policies and roll out training for staff on both financial management, including new policies in relation to procurement, and the new HR system.	
IP3	Deliver an enhanced associates engagement and performance programme including a new Annual Performance and Development Review Process and promotion and monitoring of the ARB Board, Staff and Associates Values and Behaviours Framework.	Feedback has been gathered, but due to resource constraints, improvements will be rolled out in 2026.
IP4	We will agree an updated remuneration plan following the completion of the external benchmarking report.	
IP5	Establish a new EDI staff group, such as a working group or an employee resource group.	More scoping work is required to establish the right group.

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2025 Business Plan: End of year review

Total number of commitments: 48

Annotations

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Strategic Priority	Number of commitments	Green	Amber	Blue	Red
Continuous improvement	27	23	0	3	1
Modernising initial education and training	6	5	0	1	0
continuing professional development	4	3	0	2	1
Transformation Programme	6	0	0	0	4
People and culture	5	3	0	1	1
Totals	48	34	0	7	7