|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Board Meeting** | **21 July 2021** |
| **Agenda Item** | **9** |

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

|  |
| --- |
| **If you have any enquiries on this paper, please contact Hugh Simpson at** [**HughS@arb.org.uk**](mailto:HughS@arb.org.uk) **on** [**020 7580 5861**](tel:00442075805861) |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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** | | |
|  |  | **Competence Review**  We are currently finalising a policy discussion paper setting out our proposed approach to the outcomes expected at the end of the initial period of education and training as well as the Board’s high-level position on routes to registration. This paper takes into account the research carried out by SQW, the feedback from the Board development day, the input from the two listening sessions carried out with the ARB Engagement Group and the advice of the Competency Working Group.  We will be inviting views on our proposed approach before the process of developing the proposed outcomes for trainee architects and standards for institutions which will require further engagement and formal consultation later in the year. | |
|  |  | **EU Exit/Development of International Routes to Registration**  The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government’s (MHCLG) consultation in relation to the future ways in which international qualifications could be recognised has now been published. The Professional Qualifications Bill was introduced to Parliament in mid-May 2021. The Bill, if approved, will provide ARB with the ability to pursue opportunities for UK architects to work internationally; this is likely to take the form of reciprocal arrangements with counterpart regulators in other countries. Under the provisions within the Bill, the Board would therefore have the powers to establish rules, setting out how it will recognise international qualifications and to apply additional requirements to individuals holding international qualifications who were seeking to gain entry to the UK Register.   We anticipate the legislative process will be complete in the first part of 2022. We are continuing to work closely with MHCLG, providing advice and support as the legislation makes its way through the parliamentary processes.  In parallel, we are developing principles and criteria upon which we will base the development of our new international routes to registration as well as our approach to mutual recognition agreements. As outlined below, we will be undertaking some engagement work and seeking feedback on these principles and criteria in the early autumn.  In the meantime, we have continued discussions with our counterparts in Australia and New Zealand, and in the USA regarding the development of potential mutual recognition agreements. We have also in dialogue with the Architects Council of Europe and are seeking to develop a new mutual recognition agreement with our European partners under the framework of the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. | |
|  |  | **Prescription**  We continue to operate the existing procedures, as agreed at the Board Development Day in March. With the Chair of the Prescription Committee, we have structured the meetings so we have time to clearly summarise the Committee’s advice to the Executive, and this now features in the introductory section of the Board paper, along with any other significant considerations for the Board.  To manage the high volumes of annual monitoring and covid responses, we have piloted an approach of grouping the papers by risk and significance of changes or compliance. A separate paper is still produced for each institution, but the Executive introduce the detail of exceptions (good practice, or concerns) only, and the Chair focuses the Committee on those in the meeting. This is working well after two meetings, but we continue to evaluate.  We have commenced the review of the advice to institutions, and will develop this through May and June. We have a new Qualifications Executive who has started, and so additional capacity in the team to help deliver and test this. | |
|  |  | **Professional Conduct Review**  We have prepared the first draft of the new Investigations & Professional Conduct Committee Rules, which will be ready for Board consideration in September, and publication by the start of 2022 after a period of consultation.  The remaining recommendations within the review, including the establishment of a new Quality Assurance framework and the modernisation of existing guidance, will be discussed by the Policy Committee at its July meeting, and remain on course for delivery by the end of the year, as set out in the 2021 Business Plan. | |
|  |  | **Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme**  The awaited Building Safety Bill was laid in Parliament on 5 July which will (if and when it becomes law) provide ARB with the statutory power to set CPD requirements as a condition of registration.  The laying of the Bill will trigger a period of engagement and consultation with the profession and beyond, as we seek to design an effective and deliverable CPD scheme. We have prepared a discussion paper which explains the new legal powers, the research and engagement we have carried out to date, and the broad principles we think any scheme should try and follow. Those principles are that a scheme should improve the overall standard of competence in the profession, be driven by architects’ individual development needs, not be overly bureaucratic, and avoid duplication with other schemes where possible. We intend to publish the discussion paper within the next few weeks.    **IT Update**  We recognise the need for significant IT transformation and work continues in relation to the projects under way such as a move from windows 7 to windows 10 and improvements to cyber security.  The Chief Executive and Registrar with the Director of Finance and Resources have commissioned an IT audit to build a better assessment of risks and ensure our IT investment and application system development projects are appropriately designed and resourced. The audit which has been completed is intended to provide much more confidence as we seek to prioritise work to support out of date infrastructure and legacy systems and enable us to provide advice to the Board about investment.  We will provide an opportunity for detailed discussion with the Board in September.  **Return to the office**  From 19 July staff will be able to return to the office in a safe and manged way, 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 and social distancing to be maintained. We want to support staff back to the office and so staff are only being encouraged to come into the office at this stage.  Over the next few weeks we will be launching a survey to continue to understand concerns of staff in returning to the office as well as how their attitudes to home and office working may have changed during Covid-19 lockdown.  Once we have the results of the survey, we will review the findings before moving to the next stages of re-opening.  We have carried out the relevant risk assessments and are comfortable to commence in-office Committee and Board meetings and guidance has been issued on these arrangements. We will keep these under review. | |
| **5.** | **Policy and communications update**  We have started to evaluate our activities against four key aims, in line with ARB’s key messages and priorities in the business plan. These are below and highlighted in brackets against relevant activities.   * **ARB** - raising the profile of ARB and putting our brand identity into action so that people understand our purpose, role, responsibility, and have confidence in us. * **CPD** - engaging stakeholders to help us develop a Continuing Professional Development scheme that is that is proportionate, genuinely helpful to the profession, and tailored by architects to meet their own individual development needs. * **IET** - engaging stakeholders to help us develop an outcomes-based approach to initial education and training that will enable new routes into and thereby improve access to the profession. * **EDI** - promoting our aim for a profession that is diverse and representative of society, and gathering stakeholder support on the actions we’ll take to get there.   **Engagement with stakeholders**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **June** | **Meeting Details** | **SLG member/s in attendance** | **Board Members in Attendance** | | 4-Jun | Meeting with NCARB- National Council of Architectural Registration Boards [ARB] | EM & Rob Wilson |  | | 7-Jun | Meeting with Chartered Association of Building Engineers [ARB] | HS, SH |  | | 11-Jun | Architects’ Council of Europe (ACE) Roundtable [ARB] | EM |  | | 14-Jun | Meeting on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion at ARB [ARB / EDI] | HS, RRH | Teri Okoro | | 14-Jun | Meeting with Chartered Association of Building Engineers [ARB] | SH |  | | 16-Jun | Meeting with Architect and FAME representative Siu-Pei to discuss Equality, Diversity & Inclusion at ARB [ARB / EDI] | HS, RRH | Teri Okoro | | 17-Jun | Meeting with Association for Professional Studies in Architecture [ARB / IET] | EM & Lorcan McCormack Lean |  | | 18-Jun | CLC Professional Indemnity Insurance sub-group [ARB] | SH |  | | 18-Jun | Competence Review: Working Group 7 Meeting [ARB] | SH |  | | 21-Jun | Meeting with RIBA to discuss Architects Act [ARB / CPD] | RRH & James Farrar |  | | 25-Jun | Meeting with Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture [ARB/ IET] | BJ, Grant Dyble & Michelle Wright |  | | 29-Jun | Meeting of Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy’s (BEIS) Trade Technical Group (Provision of Business Services) [ARB] | EM |  | | 29-June | Meeting with the founders of the Future Architects Front [ARB / EDI] | RRH, SH |  | | 29-Jun | Attendance at RIBA’s Future Architects Group meeting [ARB / EDI] | RRH, SH |  | | 1 July | Brian Martin, Head of Technical Policy, MHCLG | HS |  | | 6 July | Peter Baker, Chief Inspector, Building Safety Regulator | HS, SH |  | | 7 July | Andy Von Bradsky, Head of Architecture, MHCLG | HS | Alan Kershaw |   **Engagement with the profession**  Architects Engagement Group:   * There are currently 184 members of the group; 173 of these joined the group directly and an additional 11 joined when they completed the consultation on guidance for institutions. The demographic details below cover only the 173 who joined the group directly. * 66% of members are White but all ethnic groups are represented; * 49% are based in London or the South East but all nations and regions are represented * 58% are male and 39% are female; * 69% are registered architects; the group also includes students, academics, architectural consultants and Part 3 candidates, and other built environment professionals. * We met three members of the Architects Engagement Group to seek feedback on key messages and policy aims. This was helpful and constructive, enabling us to use their valuable feedback to re-develop these messages and aims. *[ARB / CPD / IET / EDI]*   **Public affairs**   * Hugh met with Richard Goodman, MHCLG Director General for Building Safety, Grenfell and Net Zero. The meeting covered priorities in these areas, including the role of education and training in driving competence, improving culture across the professions in the sector, and our plans for continuing professional development. *[ARB / CPD / IET / EDI]* * The most significant Government activity in June was that MHCLG published its response to its consultation on the regulation of architects. We published an update on our website about the changes and what they would mean for the profession; this was the second most viewed page on the site in publication week (407 views, 359 unique views). We also issued a quote as part of a joint press release with MHCLG. *[ARB / CPD]* * Tim Loughton MP copied us into a letter he sent on behalf of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Armenia raising concerns about the company’s acceptance of a contract with the Azerbaijan government. We have provided a response to the MP. *[ARB]* * We were mentioned in Parliament by Lord Grimstone, the minister responsible for the Professional Qualifications Bill in the House of Lords. During a debate on the Bill he cited ARB as an example of a regulator that would benefit from new powers to take decisions on recognition agreements. *[ARB]* * Upcoming public affairs activities will focus on the two significant Bills now progressing through Parliament that would amend ARB’s powers in the Architects Act. These are the Building Safety Bill, which is due to be debated by MPs on 21 July, and the Professional Qualifications Bill, which does not yet have a date for its next stage (Report in the House of Lords). *[ARB / CPD]* * Several committee inquiries are also continuing. We will monitor these and consider how to engage with them more proactively once our projects are more progressed later this summer, and once our public affairs functions are more established. *[ARB]*   + The Environmental Audit Committee inquiry into sustainability in the built environment;   + The Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee inquiry into local government and net zero;   + A new House of Lords Built Environment Committee inquiry into housing.   **Consultations and publications**  We have completed analysis of our consultation on new guidance for institutions, on Fire and life safety and Sustainability. The conclusions and resulting amendments to the guidance are presented to the Board in a separate paper.  Look ahead:   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Topic | Activity | Planned date | | CPD | Launching a public engagement exercise to invite views on the Board’s intended principles for the scheme, and to gather intelligence about how architects currently undertake CPD, to be followed by a consultation on detailed proposals in 2022. The communications plan will focus on our target audience of architects. | By the end of July | | IET | Launching a public engagement exercise to introduce and invite views on the new framework for initial education and training, to be followed by a consultation on detailed proposals in 2022. The communications plan will focus on our target audience of architecture students, those who did not complete a full course of architecture qualifications, and academic institutions. | September | | International routes to registration | Holding targeted, invite-only roundtables and inviting views online about the Board’s proposed principles for MRAs and assessments. | September |   **Digital communications**  **Website**   * In May, June and the first half of July, website highlights were:   + Publication of a summary of upcoming changes to the Architects Act and ARBs role, related to the introduction of the Professional Qualifications Bill *[ARB/ CPD/ IET]*   + Publication of ARB’s Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2020 and a summary landing page designed to drive engagement with the report *[ARB/ CPD/ IET/ EDI]*   Both pages were the #1 viewed page on the site on the day of launch   * In this period, website engagement is below the 2021 monthly average, likely due to high levels of engagement in the early part of the year (due to UK exit and launch of ARB’s sustainability and fire and life safety guidelines and consultation) * Most viewed webpages for May and June were:   + #1 /architect-information/applying-for-registration-for-the-first-time/i-hold-overseas-non-recognised-uk-qualifications/   + #2 /public-information/before-hiring-an-architect/architects-register/   + #3 /architect-information/applying-for-registration-for-the-first-time/  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | May | June | Monthly av. | | Sessions | 24,986 | 24,874 | 29,620 | | Sessions from social | 222 | 384 | 423 | | Users | 18,302 | 17,997 | 21,251 | | Pageviews | 57,924 | 57,076 | 68,307 |   *Session: The period of time a user is actively engaged with arb.org.uk*  *Sessions from social: The period of time a user who first visited one of ARB’s social channels is actively engaged with arb.org.uk*  *Users: Visitors who have initiated a session on arb.org.uk*  *Pageviews: Total number of pages viewed on arb.org.uk*  Ebulletin   * May’s edition sent Friday 28 May to 43,657 architects, with an open rate of 32% and click through rate (% of openers who clicked) of 4.6%. * Most read items:   + #1 Dear Architect   + #2 Update your personal details   + #3 Chair’s message   Social   * Social engagement overall is above the monthly average for 2021 * Stand-out content in terms of performance has been around upcoming changes to the Architects Act (Facebook) and our engagement with the profession (Twitter) which has resulted in additional engagement events with stakeholders. *[ARB/ CPD/ IET/ EDI]*   **Media coverage**  Please find below a selection of coverage where ARB is mentioned:   * May   + Architectural Review: [Architecture workers of the world, unite](https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/architecture-workers-of-the-world-unite) * June   + Building Design: [Profession cheers decision to recognise qualifications of overseas architects](https://www.bdonline.co.uk/news/profession-cheers-decision-to-recognise-qualifications-of-overseas-architects/5112181.article)   + Architects Journal: [Architect Reprimanded after calling council officer C-word](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/architect-reprimanded-after-calling-council-officer-the-c-word) * July   + Architects Journal: [Government finally introduces far-reaching Building Safety Bill](http://mediaplatformplus.precise.co.uk/review.aspx)   + Architects Journal: [Architect numbers fall after plunge in EU applications](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/architect-numbers-fall-after-plunge-in-eu-applications)   + Building.co.uk: [Building Safety Bill is ‘industry’s opportunity to embrace far-reaching change’](https://www.housingtoday.co.uk/news/building-safety-bill-is-industrys-opportunity-to-embrace-far-reaching-change/5112631.article)   + Building Design: [Arb reports 50% plunge in applications from EU architects](https://www.bdonline.co.uk/news/arb-reports-50-plunge-in-applications-from-eu-architects/5112705.article) | | |
| **6.** | **Resource Implications**  Only as identified in the paper. | | |
| **7.** | **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. | | |
| **8.** | **Communication** | | |
| There are not specific communications implications arising from this paper. | | |
| **9.** | **Equality and Diversity Implications**  None directly emerging as a result of updates in this paper. | | |
| **10.** | **Further Actions** | | |
|  | These are referred to within the key points set out above. | | |
|  |  | |