

Board Paper

for Open session

Subject: **Chief Executive's Report**

To note a report from the ARB's Chief Executive on matters relating to the running of the Board's business

Board meeting:

22 July 2026

Agenda item:

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Action:

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

Purpose

To provide an update from the Chief Executive on matters relating to the Board's business including progress updates on the Board's key strategic priorities as well as additional operational issues.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to note this paper.

Annexes

N/A

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.
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2. Background and Key points

Routes to registration and Readiness for Practice UK online module

- 3.1. The new Partial (not requiring Part 1), and confirmation of current competence (replacement for Competency Standards Group, referred to as route “R” in the recent consultation) are now being built into CRM, in anticipation of a launch in Spring 2027. A project board specifically tasked to co-ordinate all aspects of the new route, including guidance and communications, is working towards this.
- 3.2. We have appointed additional, temporary consultancy capacity, from Deloitte, following a tender exercise. This will focus on drawing together all of the connecting policy and operational elements, and providing assurance of the regulatory impact of the suite of changes to new routes, including examinations and assessments.
- 3.3. Progress to develop our new online Readiness for Practice UK module, which will replace our UK Adaptation Assessment in Spring 2027, is moving forward at pace. Having completed the drafting of the content, and appointing a supplier to build and host the module, we are in the process of testing the first module component. Once this has been completed we will then build the full module. We remain on track to deliver the new online module within our projected timeline.

People update

- 3.4. The online recruitment system Talos is now live and all recruitment for staff and associates will be managed via the portal. This is an excellent development as it enables us to push our employer brand across a range of online and social media platforms.
- 3.5. The recruitment campaign for the Independent Member for the People Committee has closed and we have had a total of 31 applications. Interviews are scheduled to take place on the 23rd and 24th of July with the Board approving the appointment in September. The successful candidate will start before the end of the year ahead of the current member’s departure in November.

- 3.6. The Board will recall that the decision was taken to appoint a Head of Communications to the Strategy Directorate, having appointed a specialist agency to support the process we are currently in the final stages of the process. We are confident that we will be able to appoint a candidate to further increase our communications expertise.

Governance Update

- 3.7. Alan Kershaw has been reappointed as ARB Chair by the Privy Council for a further two-year term commencing on 20 June 2026. Mr Kershaw has served as Chair since 2020, initially on a temporary basis before being formally appointed in 2022 for a term running until 19 June 2026.
- 3.8. The Board will be aware that the MHCLG launched the recruitment campaign for five permanent Board members (4 x architect and 1 x lay members) in late June 2026. We are actively supporting the MHCLG's campaign. We issued a news release to the Register, and are promoting the campaign via our social media channels. We have also developed our own dedicated website page which explains more about the role as well as how to sign up for one of the three information sessions we are running. The information sessions are designed to provide prospective applicants with more insights into ARB's work, our Corporate Strategy and the role of a Board member. We also explain how applicants can apply through the Public Appointments website.

Overview of the discussion and actions arising from the Board Workshop session held on 1 July 2026:

- 3.9. The Board held an additional workshop session on 1 July 2026.
- 3.10. The Board was provided with an update on ARB's Continuing Professional Development Scheme and in particular data and evidence collected on a range of factors including compliance rates, success of the AI tool as well as variances.
- 3.11. The Board was provided with an update on the MHCLG's commission to establish an expert Built Environment Professional Regulation Working Group.
- 3.12. The Board discussed ARB's planned response to the MHCLG's Call for Evidence.
- 3.13. Work in all areas would be taken forward further to the Board's discussions.

International Update

- 3.14. We are continuing to make positive progress in relation to the development of a new Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) with our South African counterparts, the South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP). We are discussing the timeline for completing the drafting, progressing the agreement through our respective governance processes and when we are likely to be in a position to sign and launch the agreement with SACAP. As soon as we have further details and are in a position to release more specific timings, we will update the Board accordingly.
- 3.15. The revised MRA that we operate with our US counterparts, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) has successfully been approved by both the ARB Board and NCARB Annual General Meeting. We are now in dialogue with NCARB so that we can establish the timeline for re-signing and operationalising the revised MRA. Again, we will provide further updates as soon as we have more details in relation to the specific timings about this.
- 3.16. Work to review our MRA with the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) and the New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB) is moving forward. We remain on track so that the revised agreement can be considered through our respective governance processes in the Autumn 2026.
- 3.17. We held a positive and productive annual monitoring meeting with our Canadian counterparts, the Regulatory Organizations of Architecture in Canada (ROAC). This reaffirmed that our agreement is running smoothly. Both organisations are participating in a Department for Business and Trade/UK Academy event in early July to raise further awareness of the agreement.
- 3.18. We are undertaking preparatory work to review our memorandum of understanding with the Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA). Once this work has been completed, we will commence the more substantive review of the agreement to ensure that it encompasses our new initial education and training requirements. We envisage that we will complete this work in mid-late 2027.

Registration and Accreditation update

- 3.19. We have concluded the final removals from the Register for CPD non-compliance. In total, 355 architects were non-compliant and were removed. Of these, 44 (12%) have returned to the Register.

- 3.20. We are working with our IT supplier to build the next stage of the CRM, in time for the 2027 retention fee cycle, which will start in late October. The focus of the build is: changes to improve the retention fee payment process; enhancements of the CPD declaration and recording process; and preparation for new routes to registration due to launch in Spring 2027.
- 3.21. We have agreed the requirements and the build has started. We will test the developments in August.
- 3.22. We have received our third application from an education Provider, for a combined academic and practice outcomes qualification. We have started preparations for in person visits to these three Providers in the late summer. We are also working with the existing 29 Providers of Part 3 qualifications, to manage any transition applications that may follow the Board's decisions on the Trainee Record of Experience, and the role of practice outcomes Co-ordinator, at the meeting in July.
- 3.23. We are on track to complete the baseline data collection for the Standards for Providers, and review of this data at the Accreditation Committee, as set out in the Transition timeline, by December 2028. All current Providers have engaged with our discussions to enable them to prepare, and are aware of the actions they need to take to have continuity of qualification beyond December 2028. A small number of Providers who do not currently have any Part 2 or Part 3 qualifications are currently deciding their positions on whether they will apply in the future for accreditation of academic outcomes qualifications.
- 3.24. We are working with Finance team colleagues to prepare and despatch the Accreditation Fee invoices by the end of July.

3. Resource Implications

- 3.1. There are a number of resource implications related to issues highlighted in this paper, but they will be set out separately for the Board. For example, implementing the new routes for registration, updating the prescribed examination and the development of the readiness to practice module all carry resource implications.
- 3.2. We are aware that there will be additional pressure relating to the establishment and running of the expert working group on professional regulation in the built

environment. We will keep the Board updated on any unforeseen costs, but at the moment we believe the work can be delivered without any significant additional budget. If there were additional costs, these would be discussed with MHCLG.

4. Risk Implications

- 4.1. Risks relating to each of the initiatives set out in this paper have been considered separately, either as part of specific Board papers and discussions, or incorporated into project, programme or corporate risk registers.
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5. Equality and Diversity implications

- 5.1. There are no specific EDI implications arising out of this paper, however a number of key strategic priorities are either directly or indirectly designed to support and promote EDI.
 - 5.2. Our work to deliver new routes to registration, ARBs reform of education and training and our international work will positively impact on the diversity of the registrant population. We expect a positive impact relating to the reforms to Professional Practical Experience requirements.
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6. Recommendations

- 6.1. The Board is asked to note this paper.