

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:

19 July 2023

Agenda item:

10

Action:

- For noting
- For discussion
- For decision

Purpose

To provide an update from the Chief Executive on matters relating to the Board's business.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to note this paper

Annexes

None.

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

- 2.1. This paper updates the Board on key operational developments including progress to delivery of our key strategic priorities.

Update on Strategic Priorities

Continuous Improvements in our regulatory services

- 2.2. In preparation for the launch of the new IT systems, we sent a targeted email communication to those on the Register, giving early notice of the changes we are planning to make over the summer, and that will affect the way the retention fee is collected this year. Part of this included asking architects to check that their details were correct, and that they had supplied a unique email address, to which their online portal credentials would be sent.
- 2.3. We had a 60% open rate, and the Registration and Accreditation teams process over 2000 changes in 72hrs. This reduced the number of shared email addresses from over 1500, to 352. We are planning to engage further, building on this campaign, over the summer. This will include direct contact with larger employers.
- 2.4. This work will ensure smooth transition to the new IT system and payment of retention fee. We will closely monitor any changes in concerns raised, or notifications of resignations or changes in volumes of those who do not pay the retention fee during the payment campaign.
- 2.5. Informed by desktop research commissioned earlier this year, we have started to develop a project plan for the options for any required changes to the Prescribed Examination, once the Board has discussed and made decisions about the IET consultation.
- 2.6. We have processed all the planned prescription activity for the final Prescription Committee meeting, due to be held on 11 July. There are only three new applications received that will transfer to the new Accreditation Committee when it takes office in the Autumn. We have shortlisted for lay Chair, Committee Members, Visitors and additional Prescribed Examiners/Assessors, and will have completed the appointments by mid-August.

Modernisation of Initial Education and Training

- 2.7. We continue to analyse the qualitative aspects of the consultation responses to our proposals on IET. We continue to meet with stakeholders to explain the Board's process for decisions as well as continue discussions about wider strategic issues relating to education, recognising that our reforms are only one part of wider educational and training priorities for the sector.
- 2.8. Subject to the Board's feedback, we remain on course to publish the consultation report and enabling the Board to make decisions relating to the modernising IET at the September Board meeting.

Continuing Professional Development

- 2.9. We are in the process of developing an online portal that will allow architects to record their CPD and reflections on it and allow us to review and take regulatory decisions on those submissions.
- 2.10. The pilot scheme continues. We have received 'half-way' feedback on the draft CPD scheme, which has informed us of potential issues and concerns and allowed us to take anticipatory steps in advance of the scheme being launched.
- 2.11. We have also met with the RIBA to improve our mutual understanding of our CPD schemes, both of which are subject to further development.

Development of International Routes/Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAS)

- 2.12. Our MRAs with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) and the New Zealand Architects Registration Board (NZRAB) became operational in April and May 2023 respectively.
- 2.13. As anticipated, there have been high levels of interest in the MRAs and we have been issuing a high volume of certificates to individuals holding UK qualifications within scope of the MRAs and who are seeking to make use of the MRAs. We will provide further information and relevant statistics as part of the Performance Monitoring Report to the Board.
- 2.14. We are now turning our attention to the development of some additional potential MRAs; the Board will be aware that we have been approached by our counterpart organisations in Hong Kong, South Africa, Taiwan and Canada. We will be completing the 'due diligence' analyses for each potential agreement using our principles and criteria to determine whether we should progress to the drafting of an MRA or MOU with any or all of these partners.
- 2.15. We continue to engage more widely with international counterpart organisations as part of our international work and recently met our counterpart organisation in India.
- 2.16. The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) has been running Round 2 of its Recognition Arrangements Grant Programme. Regulatory bodies seeking to establish MRAs are able to apply for grants of up to £75k for the 2023/2024 financial year. We submitted an application for the full amount earlier this year and have been informed that we have been successful in securing the grant funding. We will be using this funding to support the due diligence and drafting processes we will be undertaking over the next nine months.

Strategic Transformation

- 2.17. We are in the user acceptance testing phase for the new CRM/applications system, which is due to conclude in mid-July. We have developed a training approach to ensure all staff who are using the phase 1 elements of the system (Registration, Finance and some Professional Standards team members) are

supported to do so. There will be multi-channel support, including direct teaching, video sessions and a traditional user manual, and all staff will need to pass a certain level of competence on the new system before they are able to use it fully.

People Strategy

- 2.18. We continue to make progress in relation to the key activities within the People Strategy.
- 2.19. Management training is ongoing with one to one coaching being offered to a number of staff. Additional training in Recruitment and Time Management is also planned.
- 2.20. The Senior Leadership Group have approved, in principle, the need to commission an EDI audit of the policies, procedures and processes and some capabilities around training. This proposal is scheduled to be discussed at the People Committee in August.
- 2.21. The Committee has considered the Staff Engagement Survey and discussed the positive findings as well as areas for development.

Overview of the Board Workshop, 14 June 2023

- 2.22. As part of open and transparent governance we report on the topics discussed and any key actions agreed during Board workshops. While it is important that these discussions remain confidential to enable frank discussion and policy development work, it is right to share the key themes discussed.
- 2.23. Members received an overview of the strategic ambition of the transformation programme, and an update on the progress and current spend against budget for the programme.
- 2.24. The Board were provided with a video demonstration of the new registration portal and CRM system from both the view of a Registration Officer, and from the Architect's perspective.
- 2.25. Daniel Barrowcliff, Building Safety Regulator Industry Competence Lead, provided insight into the role of the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) and the industry competence and expectations. Changes in regulation to the Building Safety Act 2022 were discussed.
- 2.26. Board Members were provided with a summary of findings from the recent Education consultation.
- 2.27. The original IET policy proposals were considered in light of the consultation feedback; Board members considered policy options and next steps.
- 2.28. Board Members received a summary on the status of ARB's Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA) and Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) that ARB was working on. A series of risks and challenges were also highlighted. Board members provided their initial views of the development of an international strategy, which should be based on a managed approach; the Executive would

bring back a draft strategy, including proposals regarding the funding of this area of work, for approval in the Autumn 2023.

Update on Board and Committee Effectiveness Review

2.29. The Board will be aware that we have appointed the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) to undertake the independent, external Board and Committee Effectiveness Review this year. The Governance Team have been liaising with NCVO contacts to develop the review plan; the review will take place between September and November 2023. Further details will be provided to the Board and Committee members before the beginning of September.

3. Resource Implications

3.1. There are no specific resource implications arising from the Chief Executive's report.

4. Risk Implications

4.1. Key risks relating to strategic priorities are captured in the Risk Register and highlighted in separate update papers.

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. The People Strategy update also references the Executive's work in this area.

6. Recommendations

6.1. The Board is asked to note this paper.