2025 Business Plan

for Open session

Subject:

To approve the proposed 2025 Business Plan.

Purpose

The Board is asked to approve the proposed Business Plan for 2025.

Recommendations

To approve the proposed Business Plan for 2025.

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

Annexes

Annexe A- Business Plan commitments 2025

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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. At its meeting on 9 September 2021, the Board approved a new and ambitious five-year Corporate Strategy for 2022-2026. This strategy set out ARB's purpose, our vision and five overarching priorities to:
- Modernise initial education and training of architects
- Develop and deliver a new model of CPD
- Transform our systems, processes and technology
- Invest in our people and build a high-performance culture
- Deliver continuous improvement in our regulatory services

2.2. **Annexe A** sets out our aims, vision and focus actions to be delivered in 2025. These focus actions will ensure ARB maintains momentum as we continue to improve our operations and delivery changes to the regulation of architects.

2.3. At its workshop discussion in September 2024, the Board were presented an outline of the 2025 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 in particular to external stakeholders about the key areas of work for 2025.

Key Headlines for 2025

Continuous Improvement in our regulatory services

2.5. The work to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our regulatory services is intertwined with progress to delivery technological improvement.

2.6. Much of the work within teams will be ensuring we embed policy changes effectively, for example in accreditation, and take forward our 'business as usual'.

Modernising initial education and training for architects

2.7. The Board's reforms, published in 2023, are now being implemented, particularly in relation to the new accreditation methodology and learning providers incorporating new competency outcomes.

2.8. Key in 2025 will be embedding and improving the accreditation methodology and to consider and implement actions from the PPE Commission.

2.9. We know that while data collection will be useful for ARB in terms of assessing risk, we want to push ourselves to consider how regulatory data can be published to enable more transparency about performance.

Delivering a new system of continuing professional development for architects

2.10. Although the CPD model has been approved and we are coming to the end of the first year of the new framework, 2025 will be a critical year in relation to adoption by the profession, call and review of CPD and assessing whether we have achieved our policy objectives.

2.11. We expect our communications to become increasingly direct through 2025 as we approach the 2025 annual retention period.

Transforming our systems, processes and information technology

2.12. There are a number of key priorities for us in 2025. We are committed to the successful completion of the CRM development programme.

2.13. In the second half of 2025 we want to start to develop a longer-term IT and data strategy which supports us to achieve a more integrated approach to data, enables us to be more sophisticated in our understanding of trends, supports our goal to be better at predicting future activity.

2.14. We also want to develop a focus on efficiency and effectiveness and ensure we are maximising the benefits from the new suite of IT solutions.

Investing in our people and building a positive and inclusive culture based on share values and behaviours

2.15. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) will be a key priority for 2025. We will roll out the actions from the EDI strategy review, including enhanced recruitment and establishing an 'EDI in action' working group.

Reviewing the Corporate Strategy

2.16. It was agreed that the Board will undertake a more comprehensive review of the Corporate Strategy in 2025. The Board workplan provides an outline timeline with discussions at various points in 2025 and the target approval date of October 2025.

3. Resource Implications

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

3.2. It was noted that a number of areas of work for 2024 would be met from judicious use of reserves as they constitution important, one-off, initiatives which could

support improvements and efficiencies within ARBs functions in future. Those activities, the running of the PPE Commission and evaluation of our reforms to initial education and training will continue in 2025. As will the IT Transformation programme.

3.3. Additional cost pressures in relation to staffing, which relate to successful delivery of our statutory functions, are set out in the paper on executive pay in this Board agenda.

4. Risk Implications

4.1. There are a number of potential risks to the delivery of the Business Plan 2025, and these are considered as part of the Corporate Risk Register. However, there are a number which are worth emphasising.

4.2. Any IT Transformation Programme comes with risks. Currently these are being actively managed but there is a risk of resources (both cash and people) being diverted to deliver this programme of work. If this were the case it would be reported back to the Board for consideration.

4.3. We are also aware that the Government's response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry is expected before the Spring in 2025. We will be working with MHCLG on those aspects which relate directly and indirectly to the regulation of architects. Depending on the Government's response we may find additional policy work is required, at pace, in advance of any possible legislation.

5. Communication

5.1. Once the Business Plan 2025 has been approved by the Board, and any drafting amendments required are made, we will publish the Business Plan 2025 on our website.

6. Equality and Diversity implications

6.1. There are a number of specific EDI initiatives within the Business Plan which also relate to the development and approval of a new EDI strategy early in 2025.

6.2. In addition, the Commission on PPE and the Research work on access are directly aimed at access to the profession.

7. Recommendations

7.1. To approve the proposed Business Plan for 2025.

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

Aim and Vision

Focus - In 2025 we will:

AIM

Continuous improvement in our regulatory services

VISION

If architects and the public are to benefit from regulation, we must continue to modernise and transform the way in which ARB operates. We will deliver improvements which we want to be tangible and measurable across each of our statutory functions.

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

Accreditation
- 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.
- Evaluate the outputs from the Education Transition Reference group, and update any guidance or operational handbooks as appropriate
- Work closely with the apprenticeships trailblazer group to ensure proper alignment with competency outcomes delivered by learning providers and those delivered through an apprenticeship.
- Evaluate early work on student engagement related to Accreditation and standards for providers.

International
- Undertake reviews of our existing MRAs/MOUs to broaden their scope.
- Roll out a route to registration which complies with the UK/Swiss recognition of professional qualifications arrangements
- Embed an MRA/MOU monitoring and visiting process, and publish a visit programme for 2026 onwards
- Continue the progress of overhauling international routes to registration and working to replace the prescribed examination, subject to outcomes of consultation

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

Focus - In 2025 we will:

Standards
- Deliver the Eos Transformation project, for a smooth roll out of a new case management system.
- Work with MHCLG and other relevant bodies to support any government policy changes and deliver recommendations from the Grenfell Inquiry Report
- Complete the appointment of a new Professional Conduct Committee legal services provider.
- Complete the public consultation on a new Architects Code of Conduct and Practice, publish and promote a new version of the Code.
- Prepare and consult on any new guidance required to underpin the new Code.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Prepare and publish a new EDI statement and action plan
- 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
- Carry out research into the profession to better understand trends and demographics
- Establish Senior Leaders Taskforce in partnership with a professional body
- Establish a discrimination resource hub

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Aim and Vision

AIM
Modernising initial education and training of architects

VISION
Initial education and training of architects will better reflect the knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours they need in areas such as climate change, safety, ethics and emerging technologies. The structure of education and training will encourage diversity and wider access to the profession, whilst providing assurance that only competent individuals will be admitted to the Register of Architects.

Focus - In 2025 we will:

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.

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.

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.

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.

Complete the tender process for the development of the evaluate framework to assess the impact of our education reforms on accessibility.

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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Aim and Vision

AIM
Delivering a new system of continuing professional development for architects

VISION
Architects will be utilising a continuing professional development (CPD) model they see as a positive contribution to their practice and professional development. There will be evidence that the model has made an impact on the competence of architects with learning shared across the profession.

Focus - In 2025 we will:

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.

Embed the annual review system for CPD, ensuring effective training and support to assessors and looking at the data on compliance and impact.

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.

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.

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Aim and Vision

AIM
Transforming our systems, processes and information technology

VISION
ARB's systems and processes will enable architects to manage their own data and information, improving their experiences and delivering efficiencies. The public will have improved transparency about qualified and registered architects. The IT infrastructure will not only ensure secure data but will enable ARB to gather improved insight into the profession, including areas where regulatory attention is needed such as equality and diversity, new guidance or changes to education and training.

Focus - In 2025 we will:

Complete the development of our CRM applications system which will provide a new standards and case management functionality.

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.

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 Artifiical Intelligence.

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.

Build our business improvement capabilities at ARB to ensure our technology strategy aligns with our business operating model.

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Aim and Vision	Focus - In 2025 we will:
AIM Investing in our people and building a positive and inclusive culture based on shared values and behaviours **VISION** ARB is an organisation where all our staff and our associates understand and are highly motivated to deliver our purpose and vision, where staff are well led and well managed, have the right skills and competencies, and are working to a shared set of values and behaviours. If we achieve this, we will deliver high quality regulation.	We will 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.
	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.
	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.
	We will agree an updated remuneration plan following the completion of the external benchmarking report.
	Establish a new 'EDI in action' Working Group.

Architects Registration Board