

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:

18 October 2023

Agenda item:

9

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. The new online portal for architects to manage their registration, and the accompanying CRM system went live on 12th September. The data from the existing Registration database was transferred across and is available in the portal.
- 2.3. Those applying to join the Register for the first time are able to make their applications, upload their documents, and pay the fees online. We have had 226 new join and re-join applications since going live. We have had favourable feedback from those who have used the portal to make these applications.
- 2.4. ARB team members can use the new dashboards to manage their workload, and escalate concerns easily, both internally, and to external stakeholders, such as the Schools or the applicants. This is working well, and 106 applications have been completed and persons added to the Register since go live. Despite being a major change management exercise in training and familiarising team members with a new way of working, we have improved the KPI time for turnaround of these applications, when compared to the manual processing approach. We anticipate these times will improve further as staff members become even more comfortable with the new ways of working.
- 2.5. Invitations with login details for existing architects have been sent out in batches. Over 31,000 invitations have so far been sent, and around 5,000 architects have signed up to the portal and updated their details. We are continuing this process over the coming weeks, ahead of the retention fee notification process.
- 2.6. We have dedicated staff working with architects, on the phone, webchat and email, to support those logging in for the first time. Extensive FAQs and How To videos are on the website to facilitate this. So far, we have had minimal critical feedback on the process, or the portal.
- 2.7. We have had some technical and support challenges in this migration process, which has resulted in intensive discussions with our technical partners. We are extending the period of “hypercare” where we have direct and daily support and problem resolution, until after the retention fee is announced.
- 2.8. At the time of writing, we remain confident that necessary fixes to a range of ‘bugs’ and technical challenges will be resolved before the statutory notice is issued at the end of October, but it has been a particularly challenging time for the registrations team and IT colleagues.

Modernisation of Initial Education and Training

- 2.9. The competence outcomes and standards for learning providers, agreed by the Board at its September meeting, were published on 28 September 2023. They can be viewed on our website [here](#), with clear information about how and when they apply. We also shared an FAQ page [here](#). They were emailed directly to learning providers, and 78% of them opened the email to read it. We also emailed consultation respondents, key stakeholder organisations and members of our engagement groups, and two thirds of them opened the email to read it. We can be confident that learning providers and other relevant stakeholders are aware of the new outcomes and standards, and the transition timeline.
- 2.10. In support of the launch we hosted a webinar with learning providers and key stakeholders, and we continue to meet with individual learning providers and their representative bodies as we move into the operational phase of the work. We are also working closely with those individuals and organisations responsible for the development of apprenticeship qualifications, having identified this route as being an important one to encourage greater diversity into the profession.
- 2.11. We will be publishing further guidance in support of the outcomes and the standards before the end of the year, alongside the new Accreditation Rules we have previously consulted on, which are subject to Board approval elsewhere on the agenda.
- 2.12. The first meeting of the Accreditation Committee will take place on 31 October 2023, and include an induction session. This meeting will be in person and will also include an element of handover operational work in relation to annual monitoring of existing prescribed qualifications.
- 2.13. To aide effective operationalisation of the outcomes and standards we will be establishing an Education Transition Reference Group (ETRG) in the coming weeks. This group will operate to ensure we have the best information possible from stakeholders as we transition from the outgoing regime to the new model of initial education and training. Discrete reports will be made to the Board on the transition work and feedback from ETRG meetings once it is up and running.

Continuing Professional Development

- 2.14. We have completed the pilot of the new CPD scheme, in which 91 architects participated. Useful information has been provided by the pilot, including in respect of architects' capabilities and willingness to complete the scheme, and the likely resources required to review CPD records.

- 2.15. We have also met with the RIBA to discuss changes to its own CPD scheme. We remain confident that the two schemes are compatible, and that RIBA members who carry out CPD in line with the Institute's requirements will not also have to also submit their CPD records to ARB, unless requested.
- 2.16. Final decisions on the scheme will be made by the Board at its December 2023 meeting, with a view to the CPD portal being available for use by architects in 2024.

Development of International Routes/Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA'S)

- 2.17. We are nearing the completion of the due diligence process following continued discussions with our South African and Canadian counterparts.
- 2.18. We hope to have the due diligence completed in the next month so that decisions can then be made as to whether we move forward to the next stage, which would be to begin drafting MRAs. Our discussions with our Hong Kong and EU counterparts are also moving forward.

'Eos' Strategic Transformation

- 2.19. IaaS (Infrastructure as a Service: Plans to move our 'on premise' infrastructure to 'the cloud' is on track. About 90% of our network infrastructure is now based on Microsoft's Azure online platform. The final phase of this work has been paused briefly to allow technical staff to support the CRM Go-Live, however we expect to complete this project within the coming weeks.
- 2.20. This part of IT Transformation is a significant element of our work to reduce our exposure to cyber threats.
- 2.21. MDR and EPP (Managed Detection Response and End Point Protection): Deployment activities are now complete, with laptop, server, MDR deployment achieved. Telemetry data is now being gathered across all in scope end points and passed through to Sophos for threat analysis and reporting. The project work has now moved to business-as-usual activity.
- 2.22. CRM Phase 1: The first phase of our project to replace our legacy registration and case management applications and databases has entered a critical stage. This first phase is to launch a new CRM Registration Database and applications system. We went live on 12 September.
- 2.23. Other elements of the Eos Transformation Programme scheduled in the coming weeks are projects to roll out Teams and Sharepoint integration and launch of phase 2 of the CRM project.

People Strategy

- 2.24. We are in the process of undertaking a review of the annual performance and development review process for the ARB Board Chair, Board members and non executive associates who sit on ARB's Committees.
- 2.25. The outcomes of the review will be taken to the People Committee in November 2023, with a view to rolling out a revised review process for the 2024 round of annual reviews.
- 2.26. In the meantime, we are taking the opportunity to make some minor adjustments to the feedback processes which will be adopted during the 2023 round of reviews.
- 2.27. This will include the Senior Leadership collectively providing feedback to the Chair and each Board member through the Chief Executive Officer & Registrar, as well as making some corresponding and timely updates to the review forms and the document which describes the review process.
- 2.28. Further updates can be provided to the Board at its meeting on 18 October. Board members are asked to raise any queries they have in relation to the adjustments and confirm that they are content to proceed on this basis for the 2023 round of annual reviews.

Update on the Board and Committee Effectiveness Review 2023

- 2.29. Further to recent updates, the externally facilitated Board and Committee Effectiveness Review is now underway. Surveys have been issued to Board and Committee members for completion and these will be followed by individual interviews with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), who are facilitating the review.
- 2.30. The initial outcomes of the review will be discussed by the Board at an upcoming workshop session; the final report will be made available to the Board in early 2024.

Overview of the Board Workshop, 5 September 2023

Key Points

- Board Members received an overview of the new regulatory framework in relation to the education reforms and were provided with a brief overview of the access to funding for students across all four UK governments. An update on the communication planning for the education reforms was provided to the Board, including a timeline and the workplan proposal for the Professional Practical Experience Commission.
- Board Members were provided with a summary of findings from the property survey completed by staff. Ben Thompson, Property Advisor, BNPP, provided an overview

and further information about how the relevant property options compared to the needs identified by staff within the survey.

- The Board received an update on the approach taken with Think Insight on the research into professionalism. A timeline of events was provided for the sign-off of the final report.
- The 2023 Business Plan was considered; an overview of the plans for 2024 was also presented.
- The Board was updated on the plans for the upcoming externally facilitated Board and Committee Effectiveness Review; NCVO had been appointed to undertake the review this autumn.
- The Board was provided with an overview of the current risks on the ARB Risk Register.

Actions

- The Director of Policy & Communications was asked to remove the use of the term 'non-cognate' or explain the term, when used within the Consultation Report; and to replace 'should' to 'must' throughout the Consultation Report where appropriate.
- Board members requested that a clear sequence of events and timeline for progressing the roll out of the potential education reforms be provided at the Board meeting the following day, as well as the original review aims and objectives.
- Board members requested sight of the mapping that was being prepared in relation to the ARB's proposed new Outcomes and the RIBA's Themes and Values.
- Further consideration should be given to the composition the UK-wide Engagement Group to ensure it included representation from all four UK nations.
- Ensure that the Board Workshop Planner for 2024 includes the opportunity for the Board to discuss the Corporate Strategy again at its March workshop session.
- Full consideration should be given to the range of appropriate charging options for accreditation, consistent with the Board's approach of full 'cost recovery'.
- It was agreed that slides shared at the Board Workshop on 5 September 2023 would be uploaded to Diligent.

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

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