

## Minutes of Board Meeting held on 11 September 2019

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Location	Present	In Attendance
8 Weymouth Street London W1W 5BU	Alison White (Chair) John Beckerleg Mark Bottomley Will Freeman Stephen McCusker Liz Male Elena Marco	Karen Holmes (Registrar) Emma Matthews Rob Jones Marc Stoner Simon Howard  Helen Ransome (Minutes)

Note

Action

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### 1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Emeritus Professor ADH Crook, Emeritus Professor Richard Parnaby and Derek Bray.

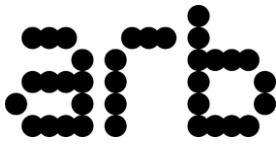
### 2 Members' Interests

There were no declarations relevant to the agenda items in the open session of the meeting.

### 3 Update from the Chair

The Chair welcomed Board members to the September meeting. She explained that due to the apologies received from three members of the Board, the Board would be inquorate for decision-making. She told the Board that decisions would therefore be approved following the meeting through a write around process, which would be followed by a subsequent endorsement meeting on 25 October 2019.

The Chair then spoke about the success and progress with the Board's induction. She commented that hearing from guest speakers alongside usual Board business and decision-making had been helpful in understanding the pressures and diversities within the profession. This in turn would help with planning for future strategy. She reminded Board members of a session involving guest speakers from the education sector scheduled for 4 November 2019. She told the Board that this would include information on the work of schools of architecture, the higher education quality assurance regimes, along with challenges and opportunities institutions find themselves facing. The Chair welcomed feedback from members of the Board on the induction process and any remaining areas not yet addressed.



The Chair then stated that since the meeting in early July, progress had continued to be made with the implementation of the revised governance structure, especially regarding appointments to committees. She raised that final decisions needed to be made about budgets and fees for 2020, albeit the outline was that discussed at the July meeting.

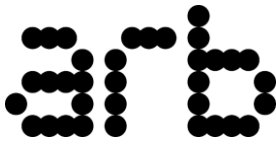
The Chair updated the Board in relation to the senior sponsor at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). She told the Board that ARB had a new sponsor, Neil O'Connor, (Director, Building Safety Programme) supported by Rebecca Williams-Phelan as Deputy Director. Ms Williams-Phelan was leading the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety. The Chair stated that she was looking forward to meeting Mr O'Connor and Ms Williams-Phelan and inviting them to a Board meeting in due course.

The Chair told the Board that the report of the Competency Steering Group had been published. The Competency Steering Group had oversight of the working groups set up in response to the Hackitt Report. She advised Board members to read the report, including the helpful summary. She advised that the Head of Professional Standards would provide a further briefing for the Board later in the meeting, including proposals for next steps.

The Chair reminded the Board about the forthcoming development day on 25 October 2019 [which would follow the endorsement meeting] and stated that the agenda would be shared in due course.

The Chair then commented on the wider political climate and the potential implications this would have on organisations across the UK. She stated that the Board's role would be to test whether the ARB was sufficiently prepared and resilient to cope with any scenario it might encounter.

The Chair finished with an update following a conference call with the network of non-executives, including the lead non-executive within the Cabinet Office. She reported that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster had expressed the value added by the challenge, support and independence of non-executives but had reiterated that policy decisions would be a matter for ministers alone. He explained that the Prime Minister's priority was the UK's exit from the European Union and that there was a material chance the UK would leave without a deal. The Registrar and Chief Executive told the Board that the MHCLG had sought assurances from the ARB that steps had been taken to ensure its preparedness for any outcome.



#### 4 Minutes

The draft minutes provided to the Board were agreed without amendment.

**The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2019.**

**The decision was unanimous.**

#### 5 Matters Arising

The matters arising report was noted by Board members. The Registrar and Chief Executive advised that the Board Handbook would be updated over the coming weeks. She told the Board that the updated terms of reference for each of the committees would be included and a review of the content within the Resources area on Diligent would be carried out to ensure the information was clear and easy to navigate.

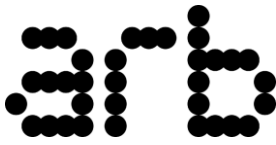
#### 6 Governance Review

The Head of Qualifications and Governance introduced the report and the recommendations.

##### i) Population of the Board's Committees

The Head of Qualifications and Governance raised that the recruitment of non-executive members of the Prescription Committee was to be expedited to ensure committee business could continue. The Board was therefore invited to approve the new appointments through a write around process following the completion of the recruitment exercise.

A Board member queried the frequency by which committee membership would be reviewed. The Chair confirmed that this would be looked at on an annual basis and considered following changes to the Board in 2020. The Chair stated that there was a need to ensure continuity within the committees while also considering the personal development of each Board member. She assured the Board that all committee members would receive a full induction before beginning committee work.



## **ii) Consultation on the General Rules (Temporary Appointment of Board Members)**

The Head of Qualifications and Governance told the Board that following its agreement, a consultation process had been carried out in relation to the proposed addition of some further rules regarding the temporary appointment of Board members to the General Rules. Notification of the consultation was included in the ARB's ebulletin and was promoted on social media channels and the ARB website. She reported that no responses were received and the recommendation to the Board was therefore to adopt the changes. She assured the Board that while the Executive accepted that it was not ideal to change the General Rules on an ongoing basis, this was necessary due to current circumstances. She told the Board that a wholesale review would be carried out in due course to ensure alignment with the Act and any new legislation once the decision around Brexit had been finalised.

A Board member asked whether ARB tracked the analytics regarding people accessing information about consultations (which it did do). It was agreed this information would be included in future reports.

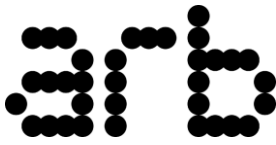
## **iii) Internal Governance Review Report**

The Head of Qualifications and Governance confirmed that phase one of the Governance Review had been completed. Further areas of review were to follow, such as the annual review process, the Board code of conduct, complaints process, and scheme of decision making.

The Head of Qualifications and Governance told the Board that there would be a move towards greater consistency within minute taking and decision-making across the committees. This suggestion was supported by the Board.

## **iv) Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications**

The Head of Qualifications and Governance reported that the Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications were ready for consultation. This followed agreement at the first July Board meeting that operational and governance changes should be considered. The Head of Qualifications and Governance explained that the majority of the changes impacted on the early stages of reviewing prescription submissions. They would change the information gathering processes to allow for further control and



empowerment within the Executive. The Prescription Committee would then provide checks and balances.

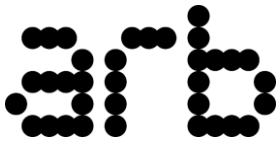
The Head of Qualifications and Governance explained that there would be a transitional phase if the changes were agreed after consultation. As previously agreed, a root and branch review of ARB's approach to the prescription of qualifications would then be undertaken in 2020. She told the Board that a consultation period of four weeks was recommended. This would take account of the large number of submissions due later in the year.

The Head of Qualifications and Governance finally highlighted some typographical errors in the tracked version of the document and confirmed that these would be rectified before consultation. She stated that the consultation process would involve notifying key stakeholders such as schools of architecture. It would be promoted in the ebulletin, on the website, and on social media platforms.

One Board member queried why applicants for prescription were asked to include the procedures, methodologies, criteria and personnel underpinning reports submitted. The Head of Qualifications and Governance responded that understanding the origin of application material helped in understanding and assessing the validity of the submissions and what weight to attach to them.

**The Board:**

- i) Agreed the recommendations in Annex A which set out the proposed Board members who should populate each of the committees;**
- ii) Agreed that the Board members' membership of the committees should then be reviewed periodically;**
- iii) Noted the plans for the recruitment of the Independent Non-Executives for each committee, including the associated timeframes and the proposals to seek Board approval of the appointments for each committee via write around during the autumn 2019;**
- iv) Agreed the appointment of Alice Hynes as Chair of the Prescription Committee on the basis outlined in key point i;**
- v) Noted the additions/adjustments that should be made to the membership of the committees in the first half of 2020;**
- vi) Agreed the daily attendance allowance for the Independent Non-Executives of each Committee of £300 or part thereof, including reading time and meeting preparation;**
- vii) Agreed the daily attendance allowance for the Independent Non-Executive Chair of the Prescription Committee of £375 or part thereof, including reading time and meeting preparation; and**



- viii) Agreed the Attendance Allowance, Reading/Preparation Time, Travel and Subsistence Policy be adjusted so that reading time for Board members on the Prescription Committee be included within the daily attendance allowance of £375 so this aligns with the proposed allowance for other Independent Non-Executive members of the Committee**

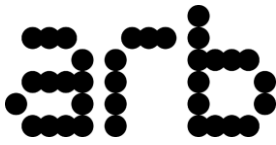
**The decision was unanimous.**

## **7 Budget and Fees 2020**

The Head of Finance and Human Resources introduced the paper saying that the position remained as reported to the Board in July 2019 and as laid out in the ARB's strategy. He confirmed that the recommendation was to maintain the retention fee at the current rate and to increase the headcount as previously advised to the Board for 2020.

One Board member raised the importance of communicating these decisions to key stakeholders. The Registrar and Chief Executive confirmed that ARB would be issuing a press release regarding the maintenance of the fee and that this would be provided in notifications to the profession. It would also be made clear that the Board had taken the decision to increase headcount in order to deliver an ambitious Business Plan.

The Chair suggested an opening statement from the Board in the Business Plan defining the ARB's strategic purpose and its reasons for its direction of travel. The Chair and Chief Executive and Registrar agreed to work together on drafting an introduction.



A Board member suggested that section D of the Business Plan (strong relationships) should be strengthened. It was suggested that the Executive may want to take a more proactive approach once the outcomes of the stakeholder research were known and that these would influence future planning and actions in this area.

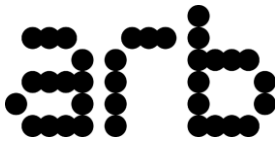
The Registrar and Chief Executive confirmed that the projected costs associated with taking forward the outcomes of the stakeholder research had not been included in some sections of the Business Plan (such as section D3) as the strategy around these areas had not yet been developed. These areas would be developed during 2020/21. She stated that ARB's budget catered for outreach work which could be repurposed for communication actions as a result of the stakeholder survey. If the strategic direction were to change, then any decision about funds would be brought back to the Board. She assured the Board that costs would be kept under close scrutiny and only items budgeted for would be carried out without further Board approval.

A Board member queried whether the need for further visits to institutions as part of the prescription process had been factored into the budget. The Registrar and Chief Executive confirmed that this had been taken into account in requesting an increased headcount and more independent advisors. She further stated that if the outcome of the root and branch review of ARB's approach to prescribing qualifications affected costs then this would be brought back before the Board.

The Board agreed that some further amendments should be made to the Business Plan to reflect the discussions that had taken place. The Board was happy with the general direction and content of the Plan. The content was agreed, subject to the changes discussed.

**The Board:**

- **agreed the 2020 Business plan (subject to the changes discussed);**
- **agreed an overall increase in the head count of seven full time equivalents;**
- **agreed the release of £30k from reserves to commence recruitment during 2019;**
- **agreed that the annual retention fee for 2020 remain at £111;**
- **agreed to hold all other fees at the 2019 level;**
- **agreed the budget for 2020, as shown in Annex C, Column 4; and**
- **agreed that the Registrar and Chief Executive access the funds in maintenance reserves to manage any accommodation and equipment needs.**



**The decision was unanimous.**

## 8 Operational Activities Report

The Board noted the Operational Activities Report.

The Head of Registration told the Board that an email would be sent to architects directing them to information about Brexit and how to seek the necessary documentation they needed if they wished to register in another member state. He stated that the MHCLG had been keen for ARB to continue to engage with the profession on this topic. The Head of Registration told the Board that ARB had begun these communications before the 2020 retention fee renewal period as it would enable ARB to manage any peaks in activity more effectively. The Head of Qualifications and Governance reported that she would be attending a Brexit Regulatory Forum hosted by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and would provide the Board with an update thereafter.

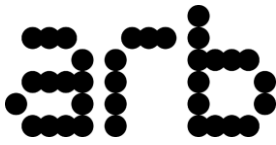
The Chair told the Board that she had written to the Chair of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) advising him of the decision to cease the business as usual review of the Criteria and Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications. She said she received a helpful letter in response stating that the RIBA understood the Board's decision and would be willing to work with ARB to review the Criteria in relation to life/fire safety and climate change in the future.

The Head of Qualifications and Governance told the Board that the ARB had been invited to join one of the Department for International Trade's Expert Trade Advisory Groups. The initial introductory meeting had taken place where the Terms of Reference were discussed, along with updates in relation to the status of existing free trade agreements.

The Head of Qualifications and Governance told the Board that ARB had contacted the Quality Assurance Agency and had submitted comments on the draft Architecture Subject Benchmark Statement to the Review Group Chair and quality assurance team. She reported that ARB had been clear that the current criteria should be used and that nothing further had been received following those comments.

The Registrar and Chief Executive reported that as part of the stakeholder research, a survey had been sent out to architects. The target was to receive 1,000 responses but





at last count over 1,000 had already been received. She told the Board that the next survey would be sent to students, consumers and others that had used ARB's services. The outcomes of the stakeholder research would be discussed by the Board when the outcomes were available.

The Chair asked about the equality and diversity (E&D) data held about those on the Register. The Head of Registration confirmed that ARB collected information about the protected characteristics and currently holds the data for 26,000 registrants. The Chair asked whether ARB can include requests for data in the retention fee process. The Head of Registration stated that changes could be made to the form to ask for the information. The Chair stated that emerging best practice suggests that regulators should understand registrant diversity in comparison with the wider population. She suggested that the Board may wish to consider the current position in respect of the E&D information ARB publishes, and decide what approach it wished to take in the future.

The Head of Professional Standards stated that ARB had experienced difficulty in the past with encouraging architects to provide data and highlighted a need to promote the value of providing such information. The Chair stated that seeking a choice from registrants as to whether they wished to provide the data was important, even if this did not result in receiving the data sought. She highlighted the importance of such information in Board decision making and asked that the topic be added to a Board agenda so that the Board can consider the current position. The Head of Registration told the Board that a presentation detailing the current make up of the Register would be uploaded to the Diligent platform.

## 9 Management Accounts

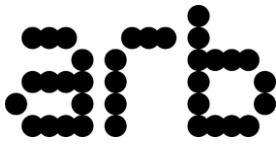
The Head of Finance and Human Resources introduced the management accounts saying the position had not changed since the report to the Board in July and that matters remained on track.

The Board noted the Management Accounts.

## 10 Prescription Committee Annual Report

The Board noted the Prescription Committee Annual Report.

The Chair of the Board requested that the Chair of the Prescription Committee attend



Board meetings periodically to present the annual report and take questions. It was confirmed that all committees would continue to publish an annual report and that the Chair of each committee would attend a Board meeting accordingly.

One Board member questioned whether the Prescribed Examination process would move to a more digital format in future. The Head of Registration explained that a review was being undertaken to look at processes for Prescribed Examination. The issue of electronic working would be explored further in the future. He highlighted that finding an appropriate platform for sharing digital papers was a challenge as the cost of software licenses was considerable due to the size of the prescribed examination panel. The Head of Registration stated that the plan was for the outcomes of the business as usual review of the prescribed examination to be brought to the Board in December 2019 and that efficiencies and the governance of the process would be considered as part of this.

The Chair queried the section of the report which highlighted that a Prescribed Examination candidate had successfully appealed against the outcome. She suggested that such information, and the executive's response, should be placed before the Board for consideration. The Registrar and Chief Executive confirmed that such matters would be reported to the Board in future as they would not form part of the considerations of the Prescription Committee.

The Chair suggested that observing the Prescribed Examination should form part of the Board's ongoing induction.

## **11 Any Other Business**

No other business was raised.

## **12 Dates of Future Board Meetings**

25 October 2019 (endorsement meeting/development session)

9 December 2019

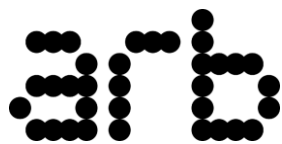
27 January 2020

5 March 2020

14 May 2020

19 June 2020 (development day)

The Chair told the Board that the 16 July 2020 date had been vacated. An alternative date would be sought. Board members were reminded to provide their availability.



Note

Action

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