
Council Courier

09.12.2021

This is an informal account of the discussions and decisions most recently taken at Council. Action notes and official minutes will be produced in due course.

Introduction

The President welcomed Council to the second meeting of the current session which would be structured in two parts: a closed session for confidential and governance items, and an open session including attendance by the press.

Obituary

Members were remembered and Council resolved to send condolences to next of kin. Particular mention was made of Owen Luder PPRIBA.

Declarations of interest

There were no new declarations.

Royal Gold Medal 2022

Balkrishna Doshi was confirmed as the Royal Gold Medal recipient for 2022.

Minutes of previous meeting, 30 September 2021

Agreed as a correct record.

Governance update

Nations and Regions Council

Committee:

Council voted

- a) to accept the nomination of Tom Foggin, VP Membership, as the Chair of this Committee;
- b) to adopt the updated Terms of Reference of the Committee;
- c) to accept the election by the committee members of Tim Clark as the new vice-chair of the Nations & Regions Council Committee.

Other governance issues:

Council voted

- a) to adopt the constitutional changes previously circulated to council on 20th August 2021 and already agreed by the board, subject to additional governance requirements, including the holding of a General Meeting, on a date to be confirmed, to consider changes to the Bye-Laws and the seeking of Privy Council approval and consultation with the Charity Commission as necessary;
- b) with effect from the next council meeting, in line with the interim statement of intent:
 - i) the board to provide council with a “board quarterly report” which will supplement, but not duplicate, the report from the chair of the board to council and the board courier; and
 - ii) the chair of the board to be available to take questions during a Q&A session at council on matters of high strategic importance as set out in the biennial plan and masterplan – questions to be provided to the Honorary Secretary 3 working days in advance of the council meeting;
 - iii) to conduct a governance review every three years, facilitated by an external consultant;
 - iv) to note that the group has considered the matter which Council agreed, under AOB, on 30th September to refer to the group, relating to the RIBA’s relationship with RIAS, and which was also considered by the Board at its meeting in October. Following consideration of all relevant factors, the group advises Council that this is a matter which falls entirely within the remit of the Board and

Fit and Proper Person test and Professional Standards threshold test

Council voted to approve both.

Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) – interim report from working group

Chair of the PII working group Jennifer Dixon outlined four streams of work which the group would be leading on:

1. Contractor consultation – the extent of design, liability and professional risk.
2. Clarification of what architects do. An enhanced proposal form would be piloted with selected brokers, distinguishing between different kinds of risks.
3. Exclusion types: examination of architects' design responsibilities, again enhanced proposals forms to be piloted with brokers.
4. Unintended consequences of current provisions of regulatory and statutory instruments to architects.

Recommendations would be made subsequently.

Feedback:

- It would be helpful if RIBA could demonstrate which kinds of contractual terms should be avoided, particularly by small practices.
- Larger clients used external funding and it was invariably those who funded projects who introduced new contractual terms.
- Both working groups (PII and regulation of function) should work together.

- A request was made for the practice note on professional indemnity insurance cover for fire safety issues to be updated in the new year.

The President thanked both speakers and the contributors. He encouraged Council members to come forward to join the expert advisory groups if they hadn't already expressed an interest. A summary would be provided of the working groups which had been formed to date, and their members.

Regulation of the architect working group – report

The original Regulation of Function working group was being augmented with several Council members to form a new group led by Roger Shrimplin. The call for evidence for the government consultation on regulation of the architect had been responded to in the meantime.

Strands of work:

- It was very likely that the National Planning Policy Framework would be reviewed by the government and that the group would need to consider a response to this.
- Matters of discipline would be addressed by the Standards Committee, of which RS was a member. An ARB consultation was in train on professional conduct rules and disciplinary processes, with a deadline for responses of 20 December.

Roger Shrimplin would convene a meeting of the Regulation of the Architect working group which Council had agreed should be formed – as yet it had not met.

Comments from the floor:

- Protection of function and regulation of function were different things and should not be confused. How much support would architects get from greater regulation? And how could protection of the role be achieved?
- Need to define differences between architects and non-architects.
- Avoiding duplication by ARB of CPD should be a key objective.
- RIBA should be solely responsible for education – it had been advocating outcomes-based learning from the outset.
- Speed of response was essential, as government and ARB consultations were coming thick and fast.

Open session - with press in attendance

Finding and Accessing Architecture

The President introduced this item.

The RIBA already did a lot of good outreach work with schools and could now widen the scope of its work to make architecture more accessible. Femi Oresanya had offered to lead a working group to look at how this could be done.

Femi Oresanya then outlined a few potential areas of focus:

- Offering work experience – drawing up a register of practices working with schools, and a register of schools interested in collaborating.
- Involving other members of the built environment professions - a 'Built Environment' day for going into schools.

- constructing a toolkit for this activity. There were plenty of members already interested in doing this work.
- The RIBA should be a 'connector' of those already active and work to extend the scope of activities.

Comments from the floor:

- Outreach work was needed to explain the variety of careers that might be available.
- Joining up with local initiatives was a productive approach.
- Young people should be helped to explore built environment jobs in the round – what are the opportunities?
- Map activities happening in the RIBA's regional network, including schools of architecture.
- Try and keep things at local level to maintain contacts.
- Include mentoring as part of the resources register.
- Put inclusion at the heart of this work to boost under-represented groups.
- Routes to qualification – would be looked at further down the line.
- Good work already being done should be brought together, Femi willing to participate in activity in the regions to learn more.
- Government funding might be available for certain inclusive initiatives.

Any Council members aware of others already doing outreach work should please contact the President.

Climate emergency – summary of actions and potential areas of future focus.

The President introduced this item.

The intention was to hold a round table in the new year, bringing some members of the Sustainable Futures Group and interested Council members together. All Council members were invited to put their names forward.

Discussion points:

- How to feed climate-related knowledge back into education – e.g. some climate targets needed to be part of validation criteria.
- How could small practices be engaged?
- Retrofitting should be included in RIBA awards.
- Practices needed information on carbon issues, e.g. how to calculate carbon footprint. One source of information was desirable.
- Important to work with clients to expand their knowledge, in time to inform the brief for the architect.
- RIBA Client Advisors Group was producing a sustainability workbook which could be shared in draft (contact Jennifer Dixon).
- Influence government to reward sustainable practice
- Responding to the climate emergency was a way of differentiating the impact which architects can have on society.

The President thanked everyone for participating in the discussions.

Reports for noting:

- Finance report
- Chief Executive's report
- Board report
- Board courier
- Membership
- President's diary
- Governance update

Minutes for noting:

- Audit Committee
- Standards Committee
- Nations & Regions Council Committee

SW 14.12.2021

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