

On 26th April 2023 the RPSA and CABE announced that they propose to enter a Strategic Alliance to further the development of residential surveying in the UK.

To help members, and non-members, understand the motivation and consequences of this exciting new venture, the RPSA has put together a list of FAQ's

The FAQ's cover:-

The proposed changes

The RPSA brand

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RPSA Panel

[The proposed changes](#)

What is a Strategic Alliance?

It is a bringing together of the benefits and attributes that each party brings to a joint approach.

CABE has a robust, effective and modern infrastructure that delivers strong governance, established systems and many member benefits facilitating training and personal development.

RPSA offers a dynamic and innovative approach to residential surveying that has led to the development of new markets, new standards and an expanding opportunity for practitioners across the industry.

What is proposed?

It is envisaged that this strategic alignment, which once ratified later this year by each organisation's Board, will see RPSA separate its current membership services and commercial panel operations, with the membership becoming part of CABE at equivalent grades. This will provide enhanced benefits to individual surveyors and enable the commercial panel services to operate as a separate company providing instruction for work to both RPSA and CABE members unencumbered by commercial conflicts and with improved governance and oversight.

The expertise of our combined memberships will allow CABE to establish a specialist technical section for surveying providing additional support and recognition to members engaged all forms of building surveying and ensure members play a key part in the new market for new build snagging inspections in the UK.

What is the benefit of the alliance to the RPSA

The RPSA has grown at a phenomenal rate, up from 300 in 2020 to almost 900 in 2023. While that is an incredible achievement, it does mean that the systems, governance and infrastructure put in place in 2020 is now obsolete and unable to cope with further growth.

But, as a professional association we want to be able to provide better member services, more training opportunities, regular events, reliable communications and, above all, a governance structure fit to



demonstrate that membership represents quality, professionalism and reliability. Delivering all of that is a major, expensive and demanding proposition.

As an established organisation that has, itself, recently undergone modernisation and development of its infrastructure, CABA already offers all of the elements that a chartered association needs in the 21st Century.

So why reinvent the wheel? Combining our resources offers RPSA members access to established and effective systems that do exactly what we would have to have developed ourselves. The alliance delivers those benefits quickly and without the cost burden we would incur if we repeated the exercise ourselves.

What's in it for me?

This is an opportunity for RPSA and CABA members to come together to be part of something much bigger and with more influence in the market and to support the independent surveying community. We believe it's also key that our combined resources will have a meaningful and significant impact on the new and growing new build snagging market.

What's in it for CABA?

CABA is looking to align with the RPSA because they are committed to supporting good standards and providing a better range of services to our surveying members. The combined resources of our two organisations can better exploit new opportunities including the new-build snagging market. We believe that by coming together we can add value to all stakeholders.

The RPSA brand

Will RPSA disappear as a brand?

The RPSA brand has built a strong following in both the surveying and consumer environments and is identifiable as a mark of quality. But dual branding can lead to confusion about the messages we want to deliver.

The RPSA brand will change over time to provide a new identity for the independent commercial panel services organisation and within the membership of CABE the creation of a specialist surveying section with Residential Property Surveyor titles.

What will happen to the ownership of the RPSA?

For historical reasons, the RPSA currently exists as a company limited by guarantee. That means that the Directors (who form the “Council”) have no personal liability for any debts of the business, nor can they benefit from the assets of the business.

However, like so many aspects of the current RPSA structure, the formal Articles of Association have been outgrown and are no longer fit for purpose.

It’s a bit like a social club suddenly becoming a major corporation. The terms under which it previously operated are no longer viable and so things need to change if it is to survive in the longer term.

Currently the RPSA Panel exists in name only as an activity within the general operation of the RPSA, and the Council have long appreciated that this is a situation that is not tenable. So separating the panel into an independent entity was always a plan, the intention being to free it up to attract investment and be able to develop more significantly.

As a part of the strategic alliance, RPSA Ltd will become a wholly owned subsidiary of CABE, and the panel will be separated. See below.

Will RPSA be represented within CABE

All governance of the membership will come under the oversight of CABE’s governance structures in line with its Royal Charter and Engineering Council obligations. Representatives from the RPSA community will join the CABE Board and associated subcommittees including Membership and Professional Standards Committee (MPSC) and Technical Expert Panel (TEP).

A new board will be established to oversee the operation of the independent commercial panel services organization, including individuals representing from both RPSA and CABE.

How do I know that CABE will take the same level of interest in me as RPSA have done?

You only have to ask CABE members how engaged and proactive their Association is. By supporting all professionals in the construction industry CABE is raising standards and supporting members to make a difference within the sector.

RPSA membership will be represented at the key decision-making levels within the chartered association and RPSA Chairman, Alan Milstein, will initially join the CABE team to lead the new specialist Surveying Section as Director of Surveying Services and a representative of the current RPSA council has been invited to represent the surveying community on the CABE Board of Directors. This appointment will last for five years, after which the seat will be filled through general membership elections.

Membership

What will happen to my RPSA membership?

Once ratified, current RPSA Memberships will transfer to CABA at the equivalent level as determined by your membership, qualification, and experience record currently held by us. All members will be individually contacted to confirm the level of CABA membership being conveyed.

For most full RPSA members this will result in entry to CABA at Chartered Member (MCABA) level due to a special pathway that has been proposed for the alliance process.

Newly qualified entrants into surveying (such as those who have recently qualified through the Sava DipRSurv route) will enter as Associate level (ACABA) and will then have the opportunity to upgrade to MCABA status once you have gained the necessary experience.

RPSA technical members will join at the equivalent technician grade within CABA, and students will transition into their free student membership.

Inevitably there will be some members whose individual circumstances prevent a direct mapping of their qualifications, skills, and experience. In those instances, the CABA membership team will work with you to establish the best pathway.

What happens to my MRPSA/TechRPSA post nominals?

Your current post nominals will cease to exist 12 months after the date of ratification of this agreement and will be replaced by CABA designations and titles commensurate with the level of membership you are granted and those associated with the surveying section. For example: MCABA, Residential Property Surveyor.

You can also start to use your new postnominals from the date at which this agreement with CABA is ratified if you prefer.

Can I still have student membership?

Yes, If you are a current student member of RPSA you will automatically become a student member of CABA and will be then given the opportunity on completion of your studies to upgrade to an appropriate grade of membership as you commence and develop your professional career.

Will CABA recognise my DipRSurv for membership?

Yes, CABA currently recognises and will continue to recognise a number of qualifications including the DipRSurv from Sava as an appropriate route to membership.

I'm an RPSA Affiliate company. What will happen to that?

As an RPSA Affiliate company you will be offered the opportunity to transfer to the CABA Company Partnership Program at an equivalent level

What if I don't want to transfer my RPSA membership to CABA, can I remain an RPSA member?

All RPSA memberships will close 12 months after this agreement between the two bodies is ratified after which the benefits of RPSA membership will only be able to be accessed by maintaining your membership with CABA.

Will I become a Chartered Surveyor?

No, you will not become a chartered surveyor and you cannot call yourself a Chartered Surveyor or Chartered Building Surveyor because they are protected titles of the RICS.

Instead you will be able to refer to yourself by the designation and titles associated to your level of CABE membership and membership of the technical section. For example: MCABE, Residential Property Surveyor.

How can I be a member of CABE I'm not a building engineer?

CABE membership already encompasses a wide range of technical specialists working in the built environment sector. Around 20% of existing CABE members are already surveyors including a significant number of Building Surveyors so this is nothing new.

Indeed, CABE was originally founded in 1925 as the Incorporated Association of Architects and Surveyors (IAAS) so surveyors have been an integral part of CABE membership from its inception almost 100 years ago.

What about membership fees?

As a comparison, the membership fee at Chartered MCABE level is currently £295 per year while full RPSA membership is £180 per year.

As an RPSA member joining CABE as part of this alignment of the organisations you will be protected from any increases in cost beyond the RPSA membership fee for at least a year following the date of your next membership renewal, after which you will pay the standard CABE fees for your grade of membership.

CABE current membership fees can be found [HERE](#)

Do I have to pay CABE membership fees on top of RPSA fees?

No you will only ever be charged one membership fee.

What happens if I am already a CABE member

When this agreement is ratified, your RPSA membership will combine automatically with your CABE membership, and you won't be charged any further fees for your RPSA membership. You will simply continue paying your CABE fees as normal at the rate for your grade of membership. Indeed you will immediately start to make a saving by not having to also pay your RPSA subscription.

What is happening to the cash reserves currently held by the RPSA?

Primarily any reserves will be used to subsidise membership fees for up to 2 years (depending on your RPSA membership anniversary date...but 1 year as an absolute minimum).

In considering the best use of RPSA funds the Council felt that returning this to members through a membership subsidy was the fairest and most equitable route.

Benefits

What benefits will I get as a member of CABE?

As a member of CABE you will get the enhanced status of being a member of a Chartered Professional body and full member of the Engineering Council with all the status that conveys.

You will retain all your current RPSA benefits and in addition you will get the full suite of CABE member benefits that include; the highly renowned Building Engineer journal, full access to the online community, access to a range of webinars, CPD, training many of which are free or discounted for members, and access to affiliate programs which include discounts on many products and services.

Will I still get benefits like Terms and Conditions and TPO scheme membership within CABE?

Yes. The current benefits you receive through RPSA will be retained in addition to the new benefits you will get as a CABE member, and in particular key support elements including terms of conditions will be maintained as part of the surveying section of CABE.

Will you offer surveying CPD?

Yes, CABE already offers a wide range of CPD and will continue to do so. They also intend to develop more content including training, events and CPD aimed specifically at surveyors.

How much CPD do I have to do?

All CABE members are required to complete 35 hours of CPD per year and complete an annual disclosure which is submitted online. They accept a wide range of activities including self-study and structured professional development as well as courses and qualifications that can contribute to this total.

RPSA Panel

What is happening with the RPSA Panel?

The panel operations will continue to operate in much the same way as it does currently but as a new commercial entity with an exclusive relationship with the combined RPSA and CABA membership to provide surveying work exclusively to the combined membership.

We have long recognised that the existing structure of the panel, operating as it does as an undefined entity within the RPSA, has prevented investment (because any investor would not be able to benefit from any asset growth) and hampered the opportunities to extend the operations of the panel.

The solution is that Andrew McColl, who currently runs panel operations on a consultancy basis from his own office, and Jerry Quinnell, who currently owns and delivers the panel finance and IT systems on a consultancy basis, will form a new business “Commercial And Residential Building Surveys Ltd” (CARBS) as a limited company into which they will invest to create new growth potential for the panel. CABA will have no direct role in the running of the company but will retain an interest by virtue of non-executive roles.

This frees the panel operation from potential commercial conflicts within CABA and ensures appropriate governance and oversight of both the membership and panel operations.

It's worth noting that the RPSA Panel does not currently own any assets in its' own right, all of the operational aspects being owned and operated by Andrew and Jerry separately.

How will CARBS and CABA work together?

CARBS have committed to the following:-

- 2% of net income will be returned to the CABA Benevolent Fund for up to 5 years
- Maintain a surveyor-biased fee split arrangement.
- The company will introduce up to 4 Non-Executive Directors from within the membership to add value and provide oversight to the business activities of CARBS.
- The company will be committed to only offering instructions to CABA members, which, of course, includes current RPSA members.

The panel will also enter into a long-term contractual arrangement with CABA the intention being to create new opportunities for the wider CABA community, using the skills and knowledge of existing CABA members to open new markets and attract new clients.

In short, the panel will continue to run pretty much as it does today, but with the added benefit that Andrew and Jerry will be able to make meaningful investment into the business to help it grow and deliver more benefit to more members.

Will my panel instructions reduce?

While it is recognised that the panel will fish in a bigger pond of members, the intention is to significantly develop and grow the panel operation. Freed from the inability to invest, it is intended that the panel will be expanded, offering a bigger opportunity for all members.



Key contacts are:-

Alan Milstein (chairman@rpsa.org.uk): Director for outward communication, oversight, media and external affairs.

Andrew McColl (andrew@rpsa.org.uk): Director for panel and client account management.

Jerry Quinnell (jerry@rpsa.org.uk): Director IT, systems, financials and membership.

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