



Subject	Board and Committee Effectiveness Review		
Status	Open		
Purpose	For Note		
From	Registrar		
History	Parent Committee	First Submitted	Revision Number
	N/A	11/02/2016	1

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1. Purpose

To note the outcomes of the Board and Committee Effectiveness Review.

For Note

2. Terms of Reference

The Board has established an Effectiveness Review which is undertaken each year, the results of which are considered by the Board and the Committees.

3. Open

4. Contribution to the Board's Purpose and Objectives

In delivering the Act, ARB's objectives are:

Protect the users and potential users of architects' services and Support architects through regulation. The effectiveness of the Board and Committees is essential to the delivery of both objectives as the Board establishes ARB's strategy, provides oversight to the organisation and performs statutory roles. The Review informs the Board and enables areas of improvement to be targeted.

5. Key Points

- i. In November 2015 effectiveness questionnaires were circulated to the Board, the Board's individual committees and to appropriate advisers. A separate questionnaire including relevant questions was also completed by the Operational Management team.
- ii. The purpose of the Effectiveness Review is to enable the Board and its Committees to highlight areas of improvement, and areas for future development. It helps ARB improve as an organisation. The information gathered in the Review also assists the Registrar in the formation of the Governance Report, which forms part of the Annual Report and Financial Statements.

- iii. So as to maintain consistency and allow longer-term analysis, the questions remain the same as in previous years. With the prospect of a substantially new Board coming in to place in 2016 the next questionnaire will be created. This will be done with assistance from the Board's auditors Grant Thornton, who have specific expertise in this area, and from consulting with similar organisations who undertake such exercises.
- iv. Results of all the responses to the six questionnaires are available on the Board's intranet for viewing, and will be published on ARB's website. Those responses are voluminous and it would be inefficient to reproduce them in full here. Below is a summary of the responses for each of the questionnaires.

Board Questionnaire

- v. All Board members completed the questionnaire. Overall there was a positive response to all of the questions posed within the survey. No area of the Board's work resulted in more than half of respondents providing a negative rating.
- vi. The most negative area of response was in the area of Board composition. Half of respondents considered that the election process for architects is inappropriate, and that it does not ensure that the Board is diverse and has the right mix of skills and experience. Similarly half of respondents do not believe that the Board is the right size to ensure effective decision making.
- vii. There was an almost universal view that the Board is a cohesive unit that understands its responsibilities and challenges and supports the executive appropriately. There was some room for improvement in ensuring that significant programmes of work are aligned to ARB's purpose and objectives, with two Board members disagreeing that programmes of work are sufficiently aligned, and three respondents did not consider that decisions are appropriately reviewed and evaluated. Three respondents also felt the discussions were too retrospective.
- viii. Two respondents did not feel that sufficient time was allowed to allow the Board to discharge its collective responsibilities, but there was unanimity in the opinion that all Board members are given equal opportunity to contribute to discussions.
- ix. With one exception the Board was generally very happy in the quality and quantity of information provided to it by the Executive, its advisers and its committees, though less satisfied with communication from and relationships with its sponsoring government department. One person said that they receive insufficient information about the work of the Professional Conduct Committee.

Audit Committee

- x. All four members of the Committee and the internal and external auditors completed the questionnaire.

- xi. All responses were unanimously positive in relation to the work of the Audit Committee and the quality of information and advice it receives. There were however minority negative responses in relation to the skills and experience of the Committee, the appropriateness of the induction and ongoing development, and the question of whether the Committee understands its public sector equality duty.

Prescription Committee

- xii. The Prescription Committee questionnaire was completed by the seven members of the Committee plus its independent adviser.
- xiii. Save for one exception, respondents were exclusively positive about the work of the Committee, the understanding of its individual members, and support it receives.
- xiv. One respondent considered that the Committee has insufficient time to discharge its responsibilities.

Investigations Oversight Committee

- xv. All three members of the IOC completed the questionnaire. All members were satisfied with all elements of the Committee's work.

Remuneration Committee

- xvi. All three members of the Remuneration Committee completed the questionnaire. While there was satisfaction with the majority of the Committee's work, one respondent was of the view that there was inappropriate advice from the management team and staff.
- xvii. All committees will review the outcomes of the survey at future meetings.

Operation Management Team

- xviii. All four staff members of the executive team completed the questionnaire on Board effectiveness. The team was generally positive about the effectiveness of the Board, and in particular about the commitment and behaviour of individual Board members. The team did however consider there was room for improvement in respect of understanding the public sector equality duty and providing appropriate challenge. There were also a number of comments submitted:

1) The Board has developed into a cohesive and settled unit; its members generally are honestly committed to fulfilling ARB's statutory duty and to acting in the best interests of the public and the profession. They provide unwavering and genuine support to staff. Understandable frustrations have spilled over as a result of the interminable Periodic Review, but I feel that these have been managed well by the Chair.

2) The trust between the staff team and the Board has been enhanced during the last twelve months.

3) Much more trust between the Board and Staff, resulting in easier conversations when challenging each other. Feels a safer place to challenge. More challenge required at a more strategic level - often the challenge focuses on operational or small things rather than the overall strategy/policy.

Next Steps

xix. It is important that the results of this review are used to shape future behaviours, particularly in respect of the newly incoming Board and the training and induction that will be provided. Those areas which have been highlighted as having room for improvement, highlighted below, may be useful to discuss at the next Board development day and future sessions of the Board.

- Statutory responsibilities
- Ensuring work is aligned to Purpose and Objectives
- Distinction between staff and Board
- Reviewing completed work
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Board's values
- Appropriate challenge and risk assurance
- Transparency
- Conflicts of Interest
- Focussing efforts on future events
- Dealing with difficult issues
- Managing time appropriately
- Being clear on the expected quality and quantity of advice
- Relationships with stakeholders

While the greatest area of concern was the composition of the Board, this is not an area which can be affected by internal discussions.

6. Risk Implications

The Board is required to have in place an effective structure of corporate governance. Regularly reviewing where improvements to Board performance can be made mitigates risks of Board ineffectiveness and supports the delivery of the organisation's statutory functions.

7. Resource Implications

There are no points arising from the review that require significant resource to address. Sufficient time for the Board and committees to consider ongoing improvements and explore issues must be factored in to the Board Development sessions.

8. Communications

The Board recognises the importance of Board evaluation in improving the Board's effectiveness.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

One of the issues raised is a perceived lack of Board understanding as to its public sector equality duty. This may need to be addressed by further targeted training at Board/committee level.