

Subject	Report on the Delivery of the 2015 Business Plan		
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 performance against the 2015 Business Plan.

For Note

2. Terms of Reference

N/A

3. Open

4. Contribution to the Board's Purpose and Objectives





In delivering the Act, ARB's objectives are to protect the users and potential users of architects' services and support architects through regulation. These objectives are then reflected within the priorities and Business Plan set for each year. The Business Plan sets the programme of work for the year in order to achieve ARB's objectives and the review of performance against the Business Plan enables the Board to provide effective oversight.

5. Key Points

- i. The Board sets a Business Plan and budget each year. In July the Board received a mid-year update regarding progress against the Business Plan. Twice yearly updates on ARB's key areas of performance (Reporting to the Board updates), are provided to the Board in February and July. There is a further annual report relating to the work undertaken by the Qualifications Department. Specific updates of every year, on individual projects, are also provided where appropriate.

- ii. This annual update considers all areas of the Business Plan and notes, through a traffic light system, whether ARB has successfully delivered against the Business Plan.

The traffic lights are:

	ARB has successfully delivered the item of work to a satisfactory standard
	ARB delivered the majority of the item, or delivered only with partial success
	ARB has not delivered the item, or performance has been unsatisfactory
	No outcome due to Periodic Review, so item of work undeliverable

- iii. Attached as [Annex A](#) is the 2015 Business Plan with the inclusion of an end of year assessment. The report goes into further detail as to how effectively ARB has delivered its objectives.
- iv. How ARB has performed against the Key Performance Indicators is reported in the Reporting to the paper at agenda item 15.
- v. **Delivery and Achievements in 2015**

Challenging Environment

The Board will be fully aware of the environment in which ARB has had to operate in during 2015. The Department for Communities and Local Government’s (DCLG) Periodic Review of the regulation of architects commenced in early 2014, continuing into 2015. As well as maintaining day-to-day operations and continuing to deliver the Business Plan 2015, we have had to operate with the review running in parallel. Significant team resources have again been needed to ensure that our engagement with the Periodic Review has been appropriate throughout the year. The DCLG has continued to provide positive feedback regarding our approach to the Periodic Review and engagement with the process.

Team strengths and flexibility

Interim arrangements were in place until July 2015, when the position of Registrar was filled. Some interim arrangements remain in place and will continue into 2016 whilst we define and rebuild staff resources. The interim arrangements have enabled us to offer development opportunities and challenge to the team, as well as ensuring that we are maximising everyone’s knowledge and skills.

Achievements/New Initiatives in 2015

The Report against the Business Plan sets out our achievements during 2015 and how we performed against the Board's objectives. There are several notable areas of achievement, which the Committee is asked to note:

- Success in developing 'self-serve' facilities for architects, and the new Route Finder tool being used by over 5,000 applicants;
- 99% of those using our online registration portal stated they were satisfied with the service;
- A continued increase in the profile of ARB, with visits to the online Register and website both up by more than 10%;
- A drive to highlight matters of professional practice, including the introduction of the 'Dear Architect' column and information videos on 'How to find an architect' and 'How to avoid complaints';
- A high performing disciplinary process, with investigations decisions being reached in target times for the first time since such targets were introduced, and no adverse findings by reviews or appeals;
- The development of an online complaints tool, introducing a modernised service for complainants and better opportunities to streamline back office systems;
- Feedback now being in place for all areas of the business, with further rollouts planned for additional processes and services in 2016;

The Board is also asked to note that there has been an increase in our core work during 2015. Assumptions based on previous years' throughput and trends are set annually. This assists us in ensuring that we have sufficient human and financial resources for the year ahead. Examples of the increase in our core work are as follows:

Registration

2014 saw an unprecedented increase in the Registration team's workload, with a 106% increase in EU applications (assumption 400, actual at year end 824). 2015 has seen that number grow again, with a greater than expected increase in applications of all kinds, reflected by an unprecedented growth in the size of the Register.

Qualifications

The number of new and existing institutions wishing to seek prescription for new and qualifications continues to increase (12 new institutions/existing institutions with new qualifications have approached us over the last year, 9 new institutions approached us last year; the typically annual average is two/three per year), as

does the complexity of the applications we are receiving.

This year has involved looking at a number of new qualifications with an atypical structure, e.g., with periods of education in practice; a qualification which have been franchised to EU institutions by existing UK institutions; and top-up qualifications; qualifications with specialisations running through them.

This year has also seen the team being approached by different types of organisation, e.g., private institutions/free-standing organisations, as well as an EU institution which is running a franchised UK-prescribed qualification. This means that the team have spent significantly more time meeting and briefing new and existing institutions regarding our prescription procedures, and have had to dedicate more time to the consideration of the applications in order to ensure that the Board continues to make robust decisions in this area and that the qualifications concerned meet the relevant ARB and EU requirements. Where appropriate time has also been spent on seeking Government and external advice to ensure that the Board continues to meet its obligations in this area.

The European Commission's new online notifications system has now been running for a year. The team processed and considered 69 notifications during 2015. This is a significant leap in the workload in this area. The comparison table is set out below for context:

2010	20
2011	21
2012	38
2013	13
2014	11
2015	69

Notwithstanding this, the team has also reviewed streamlined their approach to the consideration of European notifications to make the internal processes more efficient, and it has reviewed the guidance issued to UK schools which need to notify their qualifications to the Commission.

Professional Standards

2015 saw a greater focus on more proactive case management at the receipt of complaints, so as to focus ARB's resources only on the most serious cases and manage the parties' expectations. 59% are now resolved within the office. This is an approach supported by the IOC and DCLG, and has resulted in 2% fewer cases being referred to the Investigations Panels, and 30% fewer PCC cases. This allows for greater emphasis to be put onto cases which require action in the public interest.

Similarly we have focussed our resources in regard to the regulation of the title 'architect' on educating the public, and dealing with serious instances of title misuse. This has led to a 15% increase in visitors to the online Register, and 71% more criminal prosecutions, both of which raise awareness of ARB's work in this area.

6. Risk Implications

A failure to deliver the Business Plan effectively could impact on ARB's objectives and ARB's statutory functions.

7. Resource Implications

As above.

8. Communications

ARB establishes an annual Business Plan which outlines the work needed to support and deliver ARB's responsibilities and objectives. The review against the Business Plan assists the Board by providing oversight of ARB's delivery each year.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

None identified.