



Subject	Update on ARB's Operational Activities		
Status	Open Session		
Purpose	For Note		
From	Registrar & Chief Executive		
History	Parent Committee	First Submitted	Revision Number
	N/A	16/07/2015	N/A

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### 1. Purpose

To update the Board on ARB's operational activities since the last Board meeting.

#### For Note

### 2. 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. ARB's Operational Activities Report keeps the Board informed of activities which ensure that ARB meets its purpose and objectives and delivers against the Business Plan 2014.

### 3. Key points

#### Discussions with Stakeholders

One of the regular liaison meetings between ARB and representatives of SCHOSA Council took place in late June 2015. We covered topics which included SCHOSA's recent request regarding the Part 1 Prescribed Examination; updates on the interpretation of the revised Qualifications Directive and the implications of this; and ARB's Review of its Routes to Registration. We also advised SCHOSA's Council that we would be happy to attend any forthcoming SCHOSA meetings to provide updates on our work as required.

Relationship building continues with consumer bodies, ARB's Chair and the interim Registrar and Chief Executive met with Liz Male the Chair of TrustMark and Simon Ayers TrustMark's Chief Executive to explore ideas for joint working. A meeting was also held with a representative of Checkprofessional an online directory to ensure the directory is listing architects and non-architects correctly and establish points of contact going forward.

A meeting was held with the Property Ombudsman to discuss matters of common interest including how they deal with complaints and whether they have opportunities to raise awareness of the Register. A meeting was also held with Ombudsman Services during which the discussion covered the ADR Directive and its implications for the UK.

We attended a meeting of the Regulator's Communications Group, where ideas about best practice were shared. We also continue our involvement in the UK Inter-Professional Group (UKIPG) a group of organisations involved in the delivery of regulatory policy which was set up as a knowledge sharing network.

We also attended a meeting of the Quality Assurance Agency/UKIPG Professional Statutory Regulatory Bodies Forum. The meeting focussed on the regulatory data landscape and ways in which information sharing could be improved. We were able to gather some useful and interesting ideas about how our Prescription process can be developed, as well as it being a valuable networking opportunity to meet our counterparts from other regulatory bodies.

Finally staff also attended a meeting of regulators seeking to develop a common framework for the collection, usage and reporting of Equality & Diversity data. While it was apparent that we are some way behind the larger healthcare regulators in this area, the problems faced in how to effectively collate and use the data we have are not exclusive to ARB.

### End of Year Shows

Members of the Prescription Committee visited the University of Westminster's End of Year Show in mid-June. As well as looking at the student work on display, the Committee members took the opportunity to develop and further their knowledge of the issues concerning schools of architecture and their students. Some of the Staff team have also been to see some of the other London-based End of Year shows.

### Europe

We have taken part in the most recent and relevant meetings held by the Architects Council of Europe regarding the mobility of architects within Europe. The meeting focussed largely on planning the work which the ACE wishes to undertake in this area over the coming year. Areas which will be taken forward by the Professional Qualifications Directive/Practical Training and Continuing Professional Development Group, which has recently become one large working group as opposed to three separate groups, include mapping member states' accreditation processes (to facilitate discussion regarding mutual recognition agreements between Europe and the rest of the world) and gathering data in relation to the regulatory frameworks which exist in member states. Further work will also be undertaken in preparation for the next review of the Qualifications Directive, which the ACE anticipates will commence in the next two to three years.

### Growth Duty

The 2015 Deregulation Act has recently come into force, and one of the duties it places on ARB is to take into account the importance of promoting economic growth when taking decisions. This means that any regulatory action ARB takes must only be taken when it is needed, and it must be proportionate.

The Duty does not outweigh other statutory factors ARB must take into account when making decisions, but for the first time provides a legal power for economic growth to be a relevant

consideration.

The Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) has said it does not intend to monitor regulators' compliance with the Duty, but would expect one to be able to demonstrate it had considered it if challenged. To support the new Duty, we will be introducing a new section into all Board papers to make clear what weight we have given to the Growth Duty when making decisions.

#### **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Directive**

The EU Directive on Consumer ADR became UK law through the ADR Regulations on 9 July 2015. This means that consumers will be able to contact an ADR body in the event that they cannot resolve a dispute with a business.

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI), has been appointed by Government to act as the Competent Authority for the purposes of the Directive. It will be the responsibility of the CTSI to approve ADR providers who are compliant with the various criteria of the Directive. As yet, no ADR providers have been approved for architects, but if and when they are it will be a legal obligation for architects to provide this information to their clients.

Being a statutory regulator which deals with disciplinary matters in the public interest rather than an organisation which resolves disputes between parties, ARB's involvement with this Directive will be limited. Once further information is available, we will be issuing guidance to the profession.

#### **4. Communicating ARB's work**

##### **London Build Expo**

ARB presented at the London Build conference which took place at the O2. ARB attendees also established new relationships with representatives from CABE and the National Federation of Builders as well as meeting Jeff Howell who writes the Telegraph's Property Doctor column.

##### **Website**

Visits to the ARB website remains consistently solid with 128,050 visits in the period January to June, a 3% increase on the same period in 2014. Additionally visits to the Register increased by 16% to 135,500 for the period January to June 2015 compared to 116,600 for the same period in 2014 and searches of the Register increased by 6% to 186,000 for the period January to June 2015, up from 175,200 for the same months in 2014.

##### **Ebulletin**

The refreshed version of the ebulletin issued after the February and May meetings has been well received, the average circulation for these two ebulletins was 28,340. The most popular stories covered title prosecutions, professional standards issues and updates on prescription of qualifications. The new format places emphasis on architects updating their contact details which has proved very successful with 650 change of detail notifications received the week after the May ebulletin went out compared to 75 in a normal week.

### Investigations Oversight Committee

The Communications Coordinator participated in a discussion with the Investigations Oversight Committee to explore and plan how to develop communications relating to the work of professional standards. This is something that the Board requested at its last meeting.

### Retention Fee Feedback

We have formed an internal staff group to analyse feedback relating to the collection of the retention fee with a view to identifying possible actions which will improve communications around the retention fee including improving and targeting reminders.

## 5. Administration of the Register

### Accuracy of the Register

The accuracy of the Register project continues. We are continuing to check records to ensure that all information is accurate and in a standardised format. As and when database records are accessed by staff, they are checked updated if required. The Register now stands at over 36,000, the largest it has ever been.

### 2015 Retention Fee Collection

In 2015, 1824 architects were removed from the Register for non-payment of the annual retention fee (145 of this number were also removed in 2014). As of 16 June 2015, 72% have re-joined the Register.

Planning work has commenced for the 2016 retention fee collection.

### Equality and Diversity Survey

We conducted a survey to collect equality and diversity data from all registrants who had not previously been asked for this information. ARB is an inclusive organisation and we want to ensure that we understand how our work impacts on the users of our services so that we can improve our policies and procedures to meet the needs of those we serve. This forms part of the Board's Commitment to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty which was established by the Equality Act 2010. The survey was sent out on 20 May 2015 and to date, over 4500 responses have been received. This, together with the 2300 responses we have collected over the past two years, means that we now hold equality and diversity data for 6800 registrants, 16% of the overall Register.

## 6. Committee Meetings

Professional Conduct Committee	-	18 May 2015
Prescription Committee	-	21 May 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	21 May 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	1 June 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	2 June 2015
Investigations Oversight Committee	-	4 June 2015

Professional Conduct Committee	-	5 June 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	9 & 10 June 2015
Prescription Committee	-	18 June 2015
Remuneration Committee	-	22 June 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	23 & 24 June 2015
Audit Committee	-	2 July 2015

#### **7. Future Meetings and Events**

Professional Conduct Committee	-	20 July 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	11, 12 & 13 August 2015
Prescription Committee	-	13 August 2015
Budget Briefing	-	13 August 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	14 August 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	17 August 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	7 & 8 September 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	10 & 11 September 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	14 September 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	15 & 16 September 2015

#### **8. Anticipated dates for future Board reports on particular projects within the Business Plan**

Routes to Registration Update – September 2015.

#### **9. Risk Implications**

ARB's Operational Activities Report provides the Board with an update on business activities, progress against the Business Plan, as well as highlighting any emerging risks which may impact on delivery.

#### **10. Resource Implications**

Staff resources continue to be stretched to capacity, although we are now seeking to fill some of the vacancies which have arisen during the last 6-12 months. We are also considering the current structure, to ensure resources are positioned where needed, now and in the future. Due to the interim arrangements in place, team members have taken on additional tasks and responsibilities in order to ensure that we continue to deliver.

#### **11. Communication**

The update on ARB's operational activities, updates the Board on ARB's work and any risks which may prevent the delivery of ARB's operations.

**12. Equality and Diversity Implications**

ARB takes equality implications into account in all areas of its work and where appropriate, specific impact assessments are undertaken.