



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	17/09/2015	N/A

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

Stakeholder Relations

We continue to develop and maintain key stakeholder relationships. This is a key objective for us as we work to access new networks and disseminate information about the role of ARB.

Members of the staff team visited the practices of architect Board Members John Assael and Andrew Mortimer to learn about the work of practices including liaison with clients, the design process, the planning process and the use of technology. Staff found the visits both interesting and informative.

We are in the process of arranging meetings with the British Property Federation and the Chartered Institute of Building following encouragement from Board Members to contact client organisations.

Sharing best practice with other regulators is key to ARB's commitment to providing an excellent service. The Communications Coordinator is working with colleagues from other regulators to re-launch the UK Inter Professional Group (UKIPG) a forum for bodies with a regulatory remit.

4. Communicating ARB's work

Annual Report 2014

The 2014 Annual Report microsite was published on 29 July 2015. The Report followed the same format as that developed for the 2013 document. It adopts a style used by other regulators including information about our regulatory role and detailing how we have delivered on our business objectives, in line with our commitments to accountability and transparency.

Where possible feedback from readers in relation to last year's report was acted upon including adding links to Board Member biographies. We also included more links through to our website, particularly in relation to the retention fee process. Reporting data on the 2014 annual report (published in 2015) shows that whilst the open rate for the eblast remained constant at 31% the number of people visiting the microsite in the first week was down from 1290 in 2013 to 938 in 2014. We will be addressing this by using other communications channels to drive traffic to the microsite including an article in the ebulletin and social media messaging. One key improvement to highlight is that the bounce rate for the 2014 Annual Report Eblast was significantly lower than for the 2013 document. It was down 86% from 1,731 to 242. This means that many more messages are getting through and is an indicator that the project to encourage architects to provide up to date contact information is working.

Ebulletin

The refreshed ebulletin continues to be well received. Changing the layout and placing contact details at the top of the email has led to a significant increase in the number of architects updating their contact details. 733 contact detail updates were received the week after the July ebulletin was sent out, compared to 93 the previous week. The most popular stories in the July ebulletin covered the misuse of title prosecution, information about the prescription of qualifications and the consultation on the Architects Code. We are also working to increase readership of the ebulletin amongst non-architects and so have added a new sign-up feature to the website. -

Recent Press Coverage

Articles about ARB's 2014 Annual Report appeared in the architects press with criticism balanced by quotes from ARB spokespeople. We also issued a number of press releases in relation to both Professional Conduct Committee outcomes and title prosecutions with coverage following in the architects press.

We continue to work to build relationships with publications, particularly those operating in the construction and consumer sectors. We provide these magazines and papers with articles to inform their readership about our role.

An article was provided to a publication entitled "Kitchen and Bathroom Review" who asked for a piece on the role of architects and the Architects Registration Board.

The FT published an article about people continuing to work as they got older and the average age of people working in different professions, the journalist included data we provided and referenced ARB on an info-graphic.

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Retention Fee Feedback

The internal staff group set up to analyse feedback relating to the collection of the retention fee has been working on a number of improvements to enhance the process for the 2016 fee collection. These include sending out a specific e-communication in September to the profession to notify them of the deadline, providing tips to make sure the fee is paid on time and asking each architect to make sure their details are up to date. We are currently working on amending all necessary systems to allow architects to receive a text message reminder towards the end of the retention fee collection period if their fee remains unpaid. We will be writing again to the architects professional bodies and associations to seek their help lowering the number of architects removed for non-payment of the fee through their communication with their members etc.

Online Application Feedback

Work is underway to amend the online application portal following the collection of user feedback throughout 2015. Further guidance has been added to allow applicants to understand the way the pro rata fees work. Additional text has also been added to encourage more architects to provide a secondary email address (ideally a long-term personal address which we only use for internal use) thus resulting in less architects being unaware of the retention fee deadline. These initiatives are to reduce the number of architects removed for non-payment and in time reduce the admin burden internally.

Website

During August, members of the staff team participated in a focus group looking at ARB's website and digital communication channels. The staff attendees had a very productive discussion and expressed a desire to work towards developing a refreshed website which was easier to navigate and used more accessible language. The attendees also discussed further development of online services and posting more engaging messages on social media.

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. Work has commenced on the planning and communication schedule for the 2016 collection.

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 26 August 2015, 71% have re-joined the Register.

Prescribed Examination – Section 4(1)(b)

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The Board's equivalence route to registration, the Prescribed Examination accommodates stakeholders from a broad range of backgrounds. Planned Examiner training is to take place in October and will be dedicated to Equality and diversity with a focus on unconscious bias.

6. Committee Meetings

Professional Conduct Committee	-	20 July 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	11, 12 & 13 August 2015
Prescription Committee	-	13 August 2015
Budget Briefing	-	13 August 2015 & 3 September 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

7. Future Meetings and Events

Professional Conduct Committee	-	12, 13 & 14 October 2015
Prescription Committee	-	15 October 2015
Remuneration Committee	-	6 November 2015 (TBC)
Professional Conduct Committee	-	9 November 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	16 & 17 November 2015
Investigations Oversight Committee	-	18 November 2015
Audit Committee	-	24 November 2015

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We will be attending and contributing to a series of external stakeholder meetings throughout the Autumn period including the Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture's Autumn Meeting; the Association of Professional Studies Advisers in Architecture's Bi-annual Forum and meetings of the Architects Council of Europe and the European Network of Architects Competent Authorities.

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

November 2015

Equality and Diversity Update

Review of ARB's Consultation Policy

Review of ARB's Commitment to Transparency

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Scope for Review of Routes to Registration Policy (subject to outcomes of Periodic Review)

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 have recently filled the Qualifications Executive vacancy in the Qualifications Department, and Alastair Johnston has now joined the team. We are also considering the current structure, to ensure resources are positioned where needed, now and in the future.

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.