



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	19 November 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 2015.

3. Key points

Stakeholder Relations

Consumer/client organisations

We continue to build relationships with organisations representing clients and consumers. We have a meeting scheduled with the Chief Executive of the British Property Federation, to explore possible joint working. We also have a meeting planned with the Managing Director and the Industry Marketing Manager of Houzz to discuss their website's listings categories and related matters. In addition to this, we are in the process of seeking meetings with the Advertising Standards Authority and TrustaTrade as part of our strategy to inform consumers about the statutory Register.

Local authority project

We are in the process of revisiting our local authority project, this involves us contacting the planning departments of local authorities and asking them to include links to our website from their websites.

Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture

The most recent liaison meeting between ourselves and representatives of SCHOSA Council took place in early October. We updated SCHOSA representatives in relation to the Department for Communities and Local Government's Periodic Review; and the position regarding the interpretation of the revised Directive. Additionally, we discussed SCHOSA's

upcoming Autumn Forum; and discrepancies which were arising in relation to institutions' pass lists and degree certificates. We also discussed the changes which the Malaysian Registration Board is making to its accreditation process, whereby individual schools were now being asked to apply for accreditation direct rather than being recognised solely via their RIBA-validated status.

We also attended and participated in SCHOSA's Autumn Forum in Cardiff in early November 2015. SCHOSA requested that we update the Forum about European/International matters in particular, e.g., the development of mutual recognition agreements between the EU and Canada, the USA etc. Any points arising from the Forum will be reported on at the Board meeting.

RIBA

The Head of Qualifications and the Registrar met with representatives of the RIBA's Education Department in early October 2015. The RIBA's team provided updates on the progress of the RIBA's Review of Architectural Education. We updated the RIBA team about the progress of the Periodic Review and the impact that the delay to the publication of the Review report was having on our ability to progress the review of the routes to registration. We also confirmed the current position regarding the interpretation of the revised Qualifications Directive. We have agreed to follow up our discussion with another meeting before the end of the year.

The Registrar met with Adrian Dobson, RIBA's Executive Director Members, for a bi-monthly meeting. The meetings have been set up to ensure a good working relationship is maintained between both organisations.

Association of Professional Studies Advisers in Architecture (APSAA) Forum

We attended and participated in APSAA's Autumn Forum in London in mid-November 2015. Any relevant points arising from the Forum will be reported at the Board meeting.

Engineering Council

We have recently responded to an Engineering Council survey which was seeking information regarding professional and statutory bodies' approaches to the maintenance of competence/continuing professional development. By way of a follow up to the survey, the Engineering Council requested a meeting with us so that we could explain ARB's approach to this area in more detail. We have in turn learnt more about the Engineering Council's plans in this area.

European Network of Architects Competent Authorities (ENACA)

We attended an ENACA meeting in October 2015. The agenda focussed on interpreting the revised Directive in practical terms. The main item was dedicated to the development of the guidance for notifying new qualifications/minor and significant changes to the European Commission for listing under Annex V of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive, which we are assisting with. The discussions which are taking place will assist us to bed in the requirements of the revised Directive over the coming months.

Architects Council of Europe (ACE)

We also attended the latest round of ACE meetings, including the General Co-ordination meeting and the Finance Committee meeting. ACE is looking to undertake work to find out how qualifications are accredited across Europe; how the European Notification process compares to other national accreditation processes and where there are similarities between the accreditation processes; ACE is also starting to consider its campaign to lobby for 5+2 when the Directive is next reviewed; and to work with ENACA to better understand how the newly revised Directive should be interpreted (A46 in particular). We will additionally be attending the ACE General Assembly in late November 2015 where, amongst other things, member organisations 2016 subscription fees will be agreed. It is anticipated, following our attendance at the ACE Finance Committee in September 2015, that the UK's subscription, which is shared between ARB and the RIBA, will increase by just under 5%. Due to the time lag between the ACE Finance Committee in September and the General Assembly meeting in late November, and the ACE's regulations in relation to this area, the UK has submitted a precautionary letter of resignation in case any changes are made to the budget/the UK's subscription in the interim. Assuming the anticipated budget and subscription are agreed at the General Assembly in late November, the UK will withdraw the precautionary letter of resignation and both ARB and the RIBA will remain members of the ACE for 2016.

European Commission/Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf

Staff met with a representative from UK SOLVIT (the European Commission's informal problem solving network) and a researcher from Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf on 13 October, conducting research into the functioning of the European Commission's Internal Market Information system ('IMI'). The IMI is a secure intranet facility through which European competent authorities and other stakeholders may contact one another quickly and securely. The purpose of the meeting was to provide user feedback into the operation of the system from users of the system which are particularly active. A guided conversation covered the structure and organisation of IMI; the application and administrative practice using IMI and an outlook on the development dynamics for IMI.

Liaising with Professional Bodies about the annual retention fee and the forthcoming elections

We have written to the architects' professional bodies again this year to secure their help in raising awareness of the retention fee deadline in an attempt to minimise the number of removals from the Register. We will also be seeking their assistance to raise awareness of the forthcoming elections.

4. Communicating ARB's work

Ebulletin

The ebulletin continues to grow in popularity with the circulation for the September ebulletin reaching almost 30,000 and unique opens standing at 11,294. This equates to a unique open rate of 38% which is well above the industry standard of 25% for other ebulletins in the architecture sector and 21% for other ebulletins in the professional services sector (statistics for the regulatory sector were not available).

Data on the most popular stories shows that articles relating to misuse of title and professional standards matters continue to appeal to readers. Additionally, the regular

prescription column fared well, as did the piece about the upcoming election of architect Board Members.

A key objective of the redesigned ebulletin was to encourage architects to review and update their contact details. The September ebulletin performed well in this regard with 633 contact detail updates received in the week after the ebulletin was sent out, compared to 69 the previous week.

Grand Designs

We exhibited at Grand Designs Live at the NEC in Birmingham from 8-11 October 2015. We received a very positive response from members of the public and handed out in the region of 800 'Meeting your Architect' forms. We were also visited by architects and students who welcomed our attendance at this event. We had questions on a whole range of subjects including the extent of our regulatory role; how to find an architect and what to do when things go wrong. We were able to advise consumers and clients and refer them to resources and key contacts. Visits to our website also increased noticeably during the week of the exhibition with visits to the site climbing to almost 6,000 during that week, an increase of 14% on the previous week. We also posted messages relating to this event on social media with Facebook messages about Grand Designs proving particularly popular.

Recent Press Coverage

There has been no recent coverage in the trade press about the ARB although we continue to monitor coverage and note an increase in articles debating the extent to which architects have an ethical responsibility. We will work with the trade press to raise awareness of the retention fee payment date and the upcoming election for architect Board members.

We continue to encourage local papers to include information about PCC cases which result in sanctions against architects and misuse of title prosecutions. We have received recent enquiries from The European, Kitchen and Bathroom Review and Ask Jeff (the Sunday Times property doctor) although they have not yet published articles citing the information we have provided.

Website

Unique visits to the ARB website for the first three quarters of 2015 were up 12% to 203,000, compared to the same period for 2014. Hits on the online Register for the first three quarters of 2015 were up 17% to 210,600, compared to the same period for 2014. Searches of the online Register for the first three quarters up of 2015 have also increased by 13% to 259,400. We are currently working on making improvements to the prescribed exam section of the website, the resources (including online videos and guidance booklets) are very well used but further work is needed to make this section of the site more user-friendly and easy to navigate.

Architects Elections 2016

Board members will be aware that in 2016 we are running an election to fill seven vacancies on the Board. The formal election notice was issued via email on 2 November 2015, and is available on our election microsite – www.arb.org.uk/election

The election microsite sets out more about the role of a Board member; provides copies of the Electoral Scheme; our Information for Prospective Board members leaflet as well as the election timetable. It also includes details as to how prospective candidates for election can find out more about us and the work we do.

We have been publicising the election through our social media channels and through the e-bulletin. A flyer was also included with the retention fee invoice which was issued in October 2015. We have also been in touch with and met with a number of diverse groups and professional bodies in order to make them aware of the election, and will continue with this over the coming months.

Board Member Appointments

We have been working with DCLG to develop the recruitment packs for the three Board vacancies which we will be carrying in 2016. The pack will need to be approved and signed off by the Minister, which we anticipate will have taken place by the time of the Board meeting. The vacancies will then be advertised accordingly. We will provide further updates at the Board meeting.

5. Administration of the Register

Accuracy of the Register

The Accuracy project is on-going, with staff amending records when accessing the database as well as the use of dedicated time through cross-team working. Overall amendments made during the year to date total 31,667.

New admission emails have been revised, to encourage, registrants to update their details online. Our on-going commitment to making our 'self-serve' facility more widely known and used, assists us in keeping staffing numbers as low as possible.

2015 Retention Fee Collection

The Retention Fee Collection Process is underway. The statutory notice was sent out on 26 October 2015. The payment system is in place and as at 4 November 2015, 3000 payments had already been received, 80% of these were online payments. Throughout 2015 a staff task group have been working on a project to implement improvements to the retention fee collection process in response to feedback received from architects. Consequently, a number of new measures have been adopted and are in place for this year, these include a new text reminder service for registrants; a new diary reminder tool for architects; a designated retention fee email account to reduce issues that architects identified in relation to messages ending up in spam folders and an email containing 10 top tips to help architects remember to pay on time.

The top 10 tips email has already been circulated and was well received. 586 contact detail updates were received in the week after the message was sent out, with many architects providing mobile telephone numbers and alternative email addresses. In addition to this, we created a tool for architects to download a retention fee calendar reminder, with 800 people have clicked on this link to date at the time of going to print.

Prescribed Examination - training and development days 2015

On 22 and 23 October Examiners and Independent Examiners undertook their annual training and development. The days were in two parts, with the morning session covering diversity and equality as well as unconscious bias. The afternoon session included the consideration of portfolios, with a view to making developments to the process in line with the learning points from the morning session. Staff will work to make appropriate arrangements to amend the materials circulated to examiners, to ensure best practice. Some efficiencies are likely to arise in the areas of copying and postal costs. Examiners and staff noted that amendments to the Examination Procedures are presently out of scope until the periodic review concludes but amendments to guidance and application documents were a desirable way to develop the process in the intervening period.

6. Committee Meetings

Investigations Oversight Committee	-	7 October 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	7 – 8 October 2015
Prescription Committee	-	15 October 2015
Remuneration Committee	-	27 October 2015

7. Future Meetings and Events

Professional Conduct Committee	-	9 November 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	16 – 17 November 2015
Audit Committee	-	24 November 2015
Remuneration Committee	-	24 November 2015
Prescription Committee	-	26 November 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	2 – 3 December 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	7 – 8 December 2015
Professional Conduct Committee	-	12 – 14 January 2016
Professional Conduct Committee	-	15 January 2016
Professional Conduct Committee	-	21 January 2016
Professional Conduct Committee	-	27 January 2016
Professional Conduct Committee	-	1 February 2016

8. Anticipated dates for future Board reports on particular projects within the Business Plan February 2016

Risk Management Strategy

ARB's Policy on Board Open and Confidential Sessions

Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) Consent Orders implementation review

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. We are 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.