



Subject	ARB Priorities 2017-2020 and Business Plan 2017		
Status	Open Session		
Purpose	For Decision		
From	Operational Management Group		
History	Parent Committee	First Submitted	Revision Number
	N/A	14/07/2016	2

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### 1. Purpose

To agree ARB's Priorities 2017 -2020 and Business Plan for 2017.

### 2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- i. agrees the 2017 -2020 Statement of Priorities;
- ii. agrees the 2017 Business Plan;
- iii. notes that the Business Plan may need to be reconsidered if the Board decides to prioritise a review of Section 4(1b) of the Architects Act; and
- iv. notes that a review of priorities may be required once the outcomes of the Periodic Review are known.

### 3. Terms of Reference

Under the Scheme of Decision Making, the Board sets the Business Plan and Budget for the coming year.

### 4. Open

### 5. 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. The organisation's key activities reflect and support both objectives by maintaining the quality of and access to the Register, maintaining the qualifications of architects, maintaining the standards of conduct and practice of architects and raising public awareness of the Register, and helping users and potential users of architects' services to make informed choices.

The organisation's Purpose and Objectives document can be found at [Annex A](#).

In addition to the organisation's Purpose and Objectives, the Board sets priorities,

normally over three or four years. The priorities are reviewed both annually and regularly on an ad hoc basis - depending on additional pressures arising from a changing regulatory landscape, such as a change of remit for the organisation.

In addition to the Statement of Priorities, the Board agrees an annual Business Plan that illustrates how the Board's priorities will be progressed by way of specific activities over the next 12 months.

## 6 Key Points

- i. At the July Board meeting the Board discussed early versions of the Statement of Priorities for 2017 -2020 and the 2017 Business Plan. An early draft was supplied to provide an early opportunity for Board members to input into the Plan and to comment on the appropriateness of the general approach. This enables the Operational Management Group to ensure that the proposed Statement of Priorities and Business Plan reflects the Board's objectives and priorities for 2017 and beyond. It is also important that those priorities are aligned with the budget. Board members were asked to provide any further reflections after the July meeting. Both documents were discussed at the informal budget briefing session held in late July. Those who were unable to attend the session took the opportunity to meet with the Head of Finance on alternative dates.

Attached as [Annex B](#) is the draft Statement of Priorities for 2017-2020. The document states the organisation's statutory functions and the priorities and activities it wishes to achieve over the time span. The priorities run throughout the annual business plans, with progress against each priority being taken forward annually. For ease of use we have marked up in the Statement of Priorities the appropriate link back to the 2017 Business Plan and in the Business Plan we have provided the relevant reference(s) back to the Statement of Priorities.

- ii. The draft Business Plan 2017 (attached as [Annex C](#)) seeks to highlight in one public facing document the objectives and priorities for the Board, together with the more detailed operational plan for the calendar year. Performance indicators are included in Section F, which will enable the Board and others stakeholders to track the progress against ARB's activities. The performance indicators are reported on biannually and made available via ARB's website. The Board will be informed on an ongoing basis of any matters that are likely to be delayed or revised.

A mid-year report on progress will also be provided.

- iii. The plan assumes delivery of ARB's core statutory duties and functions. It also includes areas for improvement and continued development. There are three key areas which have significant impact in terms of finance and staff resource during 2017:
  - \*the review of the UK Routes to Registration;
  - \*the review of how ARB fulfils its regulatory responsibilities in accordance

with section 14 of the Act; and

- the development of systems to deal with the unprecedented increase in the number of registration applications.

**\*please note some of the costs of these projects were agreed in the 2015 budget and have therefore been carried forward.**

- iv. A full costing of delivering the Business Plan is contained within the 2017 Budget.
- v. An IT and Digital strategy to develop streamlined systems capable of delivering efficiencies and increased capacity has been put in place, with the costs involved factored into the budget.
- vi. There remain a number of unknowns which may have a material effect on the delivery of the Business Plan. The primary unknown remains the outcome/s of the Periodic Review, which will have not only an impact in terms of scope, but in terms of when various projects can commence.

Another unknown is the UK's recent decision to leave the European Union. Whilst risks and implications continue to be considered, any implications for ARB's roles and responsibilities cannot yet be clarified. The Board will receive a report as a standing item on the Board meeting agenda to ensure information is shared, and decisions within the Board's remit can be made in the usual way.

- vii. A further factor to consider is the forthcoming changes to the membership of the Board at the end of March 2017, when three experienced Board members leave. Additional staff resource will be committed to ensure new members can be inducted effectively. The co-operation and support of existing Board members will be paramount to making the transition as smooth as possible.
- viii. The Plan has been drafted on what information is known at this time, and on the assumption that ARB will be able to commence work on all projects in early 2017. The Board is however asked to note that a realignment of priorities may be required throughout the year, depending on the outcome/s of the Periodic Review.

As part of the discussions that have taken place since the July meeting it has been suggested that a review of the interpretation of Section 4(1) b of the Architects Act is removed from the Routes to Registration Review, and prioritised separately. If the Board does decide to hive off Section 4(1) b of the Routes to Registration Review, this part of the Business Plan will need to be adjusted accordingly. A revised version of Section A4 will be brought back to the Board at its November meeting if required.

## 7. Risk Implications

The 2017 Business Plan has been drawn together on the basis of a “business as usual plan”, as the outcome of the ongoing Periodic Review remains unknown at this stage, however, the Board is asked to acknowledge that an ongoing review of priorities will have to be undertaken in order to be able to deliver all of the required objectives should the outcomes of the Periodic Review be significant. Regular reports and updates, along with recommendations for change, if appropriate, will be provided to the Board.

Currently the implications of the UK’s withdrawal from the EU are not clear in relation to ARB’s remit. As information becomes available, any implications impacting on the delivery of the 2017 Business Plan and 2017 -2020 Priorities will need to be considered.

## **8 Resource Implications.**

As noted above and in the draft Business Plan. This plan has been produced as a ‘business as usual’ plan and does not incorporate any contingency resources for the unknown outcomes of the Periodic Review or implications of the changes to the UK’s status in Europe. The assumptions used to base resource needs in core areas have been estimated using information from the last three years.

## **9 Communication.**

ARB’s Statement of Priorities 2017-2020 and Business Plan are public documents. ARB’s Statement of Priorities sets out the organisation’s priorities for the next four years. The annual Business Plan sets out the activities that will be undertaken during the forthcoming calendar year in order to deliver those priorities. It is acknowledged that priorities and activities stated within each document may need to be amended or changed dependant on remit and risk reviews as appropriate. Both documents are used as tools for monitoring ARB’s performance.

## **10. Growth Duty Impact**

Each section of the Business Plan has been considered as to whether it is necessary to fulfil ARB’s statutory obligations or achieve its aims and priorities, and whether the proposed action is a proportionate response to the requirement.

## **11. Equality and Diversity Implications**

Each overarching priority and activity defined within the Business Plan will be reviewed for Equality and Diversity implications.