



Subject Report on the Delivery of the 2016 Business Plan
Purpose For Note
From Operational Management Group

If you have any enquiries on this paper, please contact Simon Howard at simonh@arb.org.uk or on 020 7580 5861

1. Summary

To provide the Board with a report on ARB's performance and delivery against the objectives set down in the 2016 Business Plan.

2. Open Session

3. 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.

4. 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 performance of the organisation this year has again been assessed that traffic light system, with comparable figures shown below for the last four years.

Core work is excluded.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Green	31	38	24	25	28	21
Amber	10	4	5	2	0	4
Red	4	1	0	0	3*	3*

Key:

Green – ARB has successfully delivered the item of work to a satisfactory standard

Amber – ARB delivered the majority of the item, or delivered only with partial success

Red – ARB has not delivered the item, or performance has been unsatisfactory

* undeliverable due to the over-run of the Periodic Review

- iii. Attached as **Annex A** is the 2016 Business Plan with 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 10.
- v. **Delivery and Achievements in 2016**

General Workload

The Board has been informed of the continued rise in workload for ARB, which was in 2016 been delivered with no additional staff members. This workload has been delivered in a challenging environment, with the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG's) Periodic Review of the regulation of architects, which commenced in early 2014, still ongoing.

The Register continues to grow quickly, with an increase of 4% (1,580 architects) since 31 December 2015. This has included a 10% rise in new applications. While this increase brings additional income, with it comes extra work in terms of processing applications, retention payments and general administration of the Register.

There has also been an increase in our regulatory workload, an inevitable result of having a larger Register. There has been a 29% increase in the number of Professional Conduct Committee hearings, resulting in an 83% increase in sitting days. These increases were carefully managed within the same budget as 2015.

Overall Performance

The Report against the Business Plan sets out our achievements during 2016. The Board will note that the majority of items have been delivered successfully. The only objectives that were entirely undelivered were those put on hold awaiting the findings of the Periodic Review.

A result of having suitably challenging targets is that they are, on occasion, not entirely achieved. This has been the case in four areas of work, and most notably how successful we have been at promoting the Register of Architects. The Board will however note that we have identified weaknesses in our approach to this area and have set up all staff-working groups to improve performance. We are confident that the steps we are taking now will produce an upturn in performance into 2017.

Key Achievements in 2016

Registration

- An all staff initiative to reinstate architects to the Register after retention-fee strike offs, to allow as many as possible to vote in the architect elections;
- Efficiency improvements to the registration process resulting in reduction in processing times since the mid-point of 2016 despite an increase in applications and a largely new staff team;
- A significant increase in the number of emails addresses held for architects following proactive efforts to update information;
- The thwarting of several fraudulent applications for registration, and a successful conviction under the Fraud Act;
- Changes to the online portal and registrant services section of the ARB website following a review of feedback, making both processes clearer to applicants;
- A saving of over £10,000 in the retention fee mailing campaign.

Qualifications

- The prescription process continues to operate within the agreed KPIs despite the continued heavy workload and despite the team losing a member for four months during the year;
- eight new applications for prescription have been received to date this year as well as several challenging applications to renew prescription; these have been dealt with within the appropriate timeframes and within budget;
- We have updated and published a revised version of the Good Practice Handbook which provides advice and guidance to institutions seeking prescription/to renew prescription;
- We have dealt with a number of challenging applications for prescription and annual monitoring submissions, e.g., an application involving a

franchised qualification; several applications involving qualifications with unique course structures; an annual monitoring submission which highlighted that the qualification concerned was not compliant with ARB's requirements;

- We have developed a clear understanding of the 4+2 model which is set out in the Professional Qualifications Directive and have disseminated the relevant information to relevant stakeholders; we have also made significant contributions to the development of pan-European guidance in this area through our work with the European Network of Architects Competent Authorities;
- We have made a significant contribution to the development of the European Commission's guidance regarding the notification of qualifications for listing under Annex V of the Directive;
- We have continued to build upon and develop our relationships with stakeholders;

Professional Standards

- Investigations will have been completed within the agreed KPIs of 80% for only the second time in ARB history;
- 33 PCC cases will have been delivered on time and on budget, despite an 83% increase in sitting days;
- New members of the Professional Conduct Committee and Investigations Pool have been recruited, trained and appointed;
- A new Code of Conduct has been drafted and published after full consultation;
- Regular guidance has been published on matters of good professional practice;
- An appeal against a Professional Conduct Committee decision was successfully defended at the High Court;
- A continued increase in visitors to the online Register of Architects;
- Five misuse of title prosecutions, all prosecuted successfully through the criminal courts.

Communications

- Updated the ARB website to make it mobile compatible, began work on developing a brand new ARB website for 2017;
- Staff from across the organisation attended three consumer shows;
- Established a 'Tone of Voice' group with other regulators to review the suitability of our standard correspondence;
- Restarted a project to get Local Authorities to publicise the existence of the Register of Architects;
- Maintained relationships with key stakeholders, and developed a new partner in the Architects Benevolent Society, looking to see where benefits to architects can be found;
- A more engaging approach to social media has proven successful, with increased coverage and referrals to the online Register.

Corporate

- Developed an enhanced Disaster Recovery plan;
- Tendered for and appointed new Internal Auditors;
- Implemented the Pension Regulator's new governance arrangements;
- Undertook three Internal Audits, achieving moderate assurances in all;
- Completed an IT resilience project;
- Introduced open evenings for prospective appointed and elected Board members;
- Completed the quadrennial election of architects to the Board;
- Delivered an improved induction programme for new Board members.

5. Resource Implications

As detailed above.

6. Risk Implications

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

7. Communication

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.

8. Equality and Diversity Implications

None identified.

9. Further Actions

The format of this report has now been in place for some years; however OMG is alive to feedback that the document has gradually become information heavy and unwieldy. While this format has already been agreed for the 2017 Business Plan, a redesigned presentation will be introduced for the following year, focussing less on core work and more on the delivery of discrete business objectives and the impact of them.