



Subject Update on ARB's Operational Activities
Purpose For Note
From ARB's Staff Team

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1. Summary

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

2. Open/Confidential Session

Open session. Any confidential matters will be discussed in a separate report in the confidential session.

3. 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 2017.

4. Key Points

Stakeholder Relations

Regular Liaison Meeting with representatives of the Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture's (SCHOSA) Council

We met with representatives of SCHOSA Council in mid-March 2017; this provided an opportunity to discuss matters of mutual interest as well as to catch up about the recent work of each organisation. We were able to provide reminders to SCHOSA representatives about the submission and presentation of pass lists; annual monitoring submissions and the use of ARB's logo in material publicising prescribed qualifications. Additionally, we updated SCHOSA representatives about the Department for Communities and Local Government's Periodic Review and the Board's review of the UK routes to registration. We were also able to discuss the Board's recent decisions to look at the pros and cons of reviewing the Criteria and Procedures separately from the review of the UK routes to registration; SCHOSA representatives confirmed that they would be discussing this at their Spring 2017 meeting and would welcome the opportunity of providing feedback/representations to the Board ahead of the discussion at the May 2017 Board meeting.

Association for Professional Studies in Architecture's (APSA) Spring Forum

APSA traditionally arranges a Spring forum; we were invited to attend and provide an update about ARB's recent work at the forum being held on 23/24 March 2016. This provided a useful opportunity to engage with APSA members and to bring them up to date with relevant areas relating to ARB's work, including the issues which we had also updated SCHOSA about (see above); it also provided APSA members to let us know what they have been working on since the last Autumn forum and what APSA's future plans were. We will be setting up regular bi-annual liaison meetings with representatives of APSA so that we can maintain and improve our engagement with this stakeholder.

Royal Institute of Architects in Wales

The Head of Professional Standards presented Continuing Professional Development sessions in Cardiff and Pembroke on the new Code of Conduct and Practice and practical steps that can be taken to avoid complaints. A further session in North Wales is scheduled for the end of May, and it is hoped that similar events can be arranged through the RIBA and RIAS in coming months.

Professions Together/Quality Assurance Agency Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies Forum

We attended a Professions Together/Quality Assurance Agency/Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body forum which covered a range of topics relevant to the higher education sector. Of particular relevance to ARB's work were the presentations and discussions relating to the Higher Education Reform Bill, Brexit, training for External Examiners and apprenticeships. The forum also provided an overview of the QAA's current role and responsibilities as well as an update on the role of the Office for Students. We will be organising a post-Prescription Committee session regarding the QAA's role and responsibilities, plus the changing landscape in Higher Education from its perspective, in the near future; a representative from the QAA has been invited to give a presentation to the Committee accordingly.

Built Environment Professional Education Project (BEPE)

We met with Julie Fleck, BEPE Project Lead, to discuss the progress of the Built Environment Professional Education Project and to provide an update regarding ARB's position in relation to its review of the UK routes to registration, as well as the reviews of the Criteria and Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications. The project, which was set up following the success of the London 2012 Paralympic Games, is seeking to ensure that inclusive design becomes an important and integral part of the education and training of all built environment professionals.

Board of Architects, Singapore

Members of the Operational Management Group met with a delegation from the Board of Architects Singapore, who visited ARB to discuss several topics including the prescription of

qualifications, routes to registration, the regulatory models in the UK and Singapore, as well as Singapore's mutual recognition agreements with several other countries. We will stay in contact with the delegates to exchange information on matters of mutual interest.

General Medical Council's Professional and Linguistic Assessment Boards (PLAB)

Representatives of the Qualifications and Registration Teams observed several of the General Medical Council's PLAB tests in late April; this gave us a valuable insight into how other sectoral professions, of which architects are one along with the doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, midwives and veterinary surgeons, undertake tests of equivalence for those that do not hold directly recognised or Directive-recognised qualifications.

Architects Benevolent Society (ABS)

We gave our permission to the ABS to use our logo on the cover of their Annual Report to show that we are working with one another. We also included a story about the ABS in the February eBulletin advising registrants that we had worked together during the retention fee collection exercise and providing background information about the ABS.

Which?

The Communications Lead participated in the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) 'A Day in the Life' work shadowing scheme. This involved hosting a member of staff from Which? for a half day and organising meetings with representatives of ARB's different regulatory teams. This was followed by a reciprocal visit to Which? on 2 March 2017 involving a series of meetings with staff working in the content, policy, campaigns, EU and public affairs teams. As a result of this a further meeting is planned with a member of the content team to explore whether there is a possibility for joint working.

Other regulators

We have met with representatives of other regulators to share advice and best practice, including colleagues from the Nursing and Midwifery Council, General Dental Council and the General Osteopathic Council. We have also benefited from our network of regulatory communications colleagues who have shared information about what they include in communications welcoming registrants as well as how they share their logos with universities. We also continue our connection with the Professions Together (formerly UKIPG) and our Communications Lead is involved in the relaunch of this network which has brought benefits in terms of building new relationships with other regulators and professional bodies.

Briefings and other events attended

We have purchased a ticket to the Construction Industry Council's 2017 series of briefings to share amongst the staff team to enable team members to hear about wider issues within the construction sector and to extend our network. The two recent briefings included an address from Gavin Barwell MP, Minister of State for Housing, Planning and Minister for London as well as speakers from Crossrail 2 and the National Infrastructure Commission amongst others. We also attended an event organised by the Government Communications Service celebrating 100 years of government communications.

Apprenticeships

Members of the team met with representatives of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) in early February 2017 to learn more about the development of the new nursing degree apprenticeship. This was an extremely useful meeting which enabled us to learn more about how the NMC was working with the relevant Trailblazer group to ensure its accreditation requirements would be met; it also enabled us to learn more about the general landscape in relation to apprenticeships.

We met with representatives of the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT) on 14 March 2017 to learn more about their experience of developing a Construction Design Management apprenticeship standard. This was an opportunity to learn more about the process involved and what role the CIAT played as well as their experience of working with their Trailblazer group and managing government requirements regarding apprenticeship standards.

We also met with representatives of the Architecture Trailblazer Group on 20 March and attended a Group meeting on 10 April 2017. We discussed the next steps that the Group would be taking now that the Government had approved the development of the 'architectural assistant' and 'architect' standards; we also discussed some of the areas and risks that the Group would need to be mindful of when developing the standards so that they could continue to develop a provision which would meet ARB's prescription requirements. We will continue to regularly liaise and engage with the Trailblazer Group in this way over the coming months.

Equality and Diversity matters

We received an enquiry from the Diversity Advisory Group at RIBA (Architects for Change) asking for the E&D data we hold for the Register. We were able to provide this and we are also in the process of arranging for members of this group to come and visit ARB to meet with representatives of our regulatory teams.

The report into the mental health and wellbeing of architecture students was presented to the Prescription Committee and, following their input, it was updated for consideration by the Board. The ABS has also indicated that they are working on the issue of mental health in the sector and have expressed an interest in seeing the final version of the report.

The tone of voice project which is working to ensure our correspondence is balanced and appropriate continues with examples of our correspondence circulated to the external members of our project team for comments.

EU Referendum

We reviewed and updated our EU Referendum Frequently Asked Questions at the beginning of April following the UK government's Article 50(2) notification of intent to leave the European Union. Only minor changes were made but we are committed to keeping this document up to date.

5. European Issues

European Network of Architects' Competent Authorities (ENACA)

We attended the latest ENACA meeting on 31 March 2017. Discussion focussed on the management of atypical registration applications and the Professional Qualifications Directive, and best practice around the notification of qualifications. There was also a discussion with representatives from the European Commission on the use of IMI (their information exchange server)

Architects Council of European (ACE)

We attended the ACE General Assembly meeting in early May 2017. The meeting included a symposium which focused on the relationship of architectural education and the practice of architecture. Further relevant details will be provided via a verbal update at the Board meeting.

6. Communicating ARB's work

Architects Code of Conduct and Practice

We have been continuing to raise awareness of the revised Architects Code of Conduct and Practice, which came into force at the beginning of 2017. We included an article in the February eBulletin, and have also posted social media messages across all channels alerting our audiences to this document.

eBulletin

The February eBulletin was well received by readers, the most popular stories covered the new Code of Conduct which (as mentioned above) clocked up 720 views, followed by the Dear Architect column which received over 600 views. Stories updating registrants on the retention fee collection process and the key 2016 numbers were also well read with nearly 400 views each. The eBulletin is also designed so that an architects contact details are placed at the top of their message together with an option enabling them to click through in order to update this information. We received 345 contact detail updates in the week immediately after the February eBulletin was sent out, compared to 72 in the previous week.

Website

A substantial project was undertaken to refresh the website, moving it to a mobile compatible platform whilst at the same time changing the layout and labelling to make it easier to navigate. This follows feedback received from external stakeholders and the staff team in focus groups undertaken previously. The new website was launched on the 12 April 2017 is now live at www.arb.org.uk. Careful monitoring will be undertaken following its initial launch to identify changes to patterns of visits and iron out any initial issues.

The former ARB website was limited by the functionality available on the old platform and this had started to impact visitor numbers. Visits to the main ARB website for the first quarter of 2017 stood at 80,534, down 3.3% on the same period for 2016. Nonetheless, visits to the online Register, which is hosted via a separate domain, remained strong, reaching

85,999, up 8% on 2016.

Social media

We continue to use our social media channels to support the dissemination of our messaging. Messages informing our audiences that we were exhibiting the National Homebuilding Exhibition in Birmingham resulted in strong engagement. Posts about our local authority project, referencing the Councils who have added links to the Register also proved popular. Additionally, the post alerting stakeholders to our press release responding to the publication of the periodic review produced good engagement on twitter and facebook.

Exhibitions

ARB had a stand at the National Homebuilding Exhibition between 23 and 26 March 2017. Information on the Register and using an architect was given to visitors to the stand. A review group is in the process of forming to look at the information we gather at exhibitions and to consider how we best use this resource.

Local Authority Project

Our project to ask local authorities across the UK continues to add links to the Register to the planning sections of their websites continues to make good progress. There are now 91 councils linking to our website which equates to 20% of the UK. The Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA) have recently put us in touch with local authorities in Northern Ireland and so we are hoping to have links on some of these council websites in the near future.

7. Administration of the Register and Organisational Efficiency

Accuracy of the Register

Update on Removals from the Register for Non-Payment 2017

Following the 2017 removals for non-payment, as of 4 April 2017, 640 architects of the 1182 removed had been re-entered on the Register (54%). The staff team also attended a session to discuss the 2017 fee collection process including reviewing feedback and proposing plans for the 2018 process.

We have now begun the task of identifying those former registrants who were removed for non-payment in 2016 and 2017, to establish whether they are still using the title 'architect' in business or practice. Where individuals are identified, they will be advised to either immediately rejoin the Register or refrain from using the title.

Section 11 Project

This project is to use section 11 Architects Act 1997 to remove architects from the Register who have failed to provide a correct address.

In January 2017, we emailed 355 architects whose retention fee invoice was returned as the addressee was no longer at the address. We followed this email up with a formal letter to

204 architects who did not act in response to the email. (This is down from 620 architects in 2016).

As of 4 April 2017, 138 architects had not responded to our concerns or updated their details. We will continue trying to contact the remaining architects via email and social media over the course of the year as we have done in previous years.

We anticipate removing any architect who has not responded or updated their registered address from the Register in October 2017, before the 2018 retention fee notices are sent out.

8. Committee Meetings

Prescription Committee – 23 February 2017

Investigations Oversight Committee – 24 February 2017

Professional Conduct Committee – 22 and 23 February 2017

Professional Conduct Committee – 1 March 2017

Professional Conduct Committee – 2 and 3 March 2017

Professional Conduct Committee – 13 and 14 March 2017

Audit Committee – 16 March 2017

Professional Conduct Committee - 20 March 2017

Professional Conduct Committee – 27 to 29 March 2017

Prescription Committee – 30 March 2017

Professional Conduct Committee – 5 and 6 April 2017

Professional Conduct Committee – 10 and 11 April 2017

Professional Conduct Committee – 13 April 2017

Professional Conduct Committee – 25 April 2017

9. Future Meetings and Events

Professional Conduct Committee – 16 and 17 May 2017

Professional Conduct Committee – 24 May 2017

Prescription Committee – 25 May 2017

Professional Conduct Committee – 7, 8 & 9 June 2017

Audit Committee – 15 June 2017

Professional Conduct Committee – 19, 20 & 21 June 2017

Prescription Committee – 22 June 2017

10. Resource Implications

Only as identified in the paper

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. Equality and Diversity Implications

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

14. Further Actions

These are referred to within the key points set out above.