



Subject 2017 Board and Committee Effectiveness Review
Purpose For Note
From Communications Lead

If you have any enquiries on this paper, please contact Kate Howlett at kateh@arb.org.uk or on 020 7580 5861

1. Summary

To note the timeline and process of the 2017 Board and Committee Effectiveness Review

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

The effectiveness of the Board and Committees is essential to the delivery of both objectives as the Board, assisted by the Committees, establishes ARB's strategy, provides oversight to the organisation and performs statutory roles. The annual effectiveness review informs the Board and enables it to identify areas of improvement.

4. Background

- i. The Board has an established process of reviewing its performance on an annual basis. Questionnaires are typically undertaken in the final quarter of the year and the results considered in the first quarter of the following year. Actions to improve effectiveness are agreed following these considerations.

In February 2017, the Board considered the results of the 2016 Effectiveness Review and agreed the following actions for 2017:

- 1) To continue to refresh Board members' knowledge of their roles, particularly in relation to equality and good governance
- 2) To improve Board members' knowledge about the architectural profession
- 3) To strengthen engagement with key stakeholder groups
- 4) To introduce benchmarking information

It was understood there would be impending changes to the constitution of the Board as announced in Government's Periodic Review, and therefore the Board agreed there would be limited benefit in committing significant resource to the first

two recommendations. Nonetheless in response to these actions the Board's functions and Good Governance Principles were revisited as part of the Development Day held in May 2017. In addition to a fortnightly round up of news and information, external speakers, including the President of RIBA, Ben Derbyshire, were invited to present to the Board on their areas of expertise. As part of the 2018 Business Plan and budget decisions, the Board also agreed a significant piece of research into ARB's stakeholder relationships should be undertaken to enable benchmarking of our current impact, assessment of our future performance and key stakeholder relationships to be strengthened.

- ii. In addition to these overarching action responses, the Board's four Committees (the Audit Committee, Investigations Oversight Committee, Remuneration Committee and the Prescription Committee) each discussed the findings of their specific Committee Effectiveness Review and progressed relevant actions accordingly.
- iii. The 2017 Effectiveness Review commenced in November 2017. In 2016 the exercise was undertaken by an external provider, however given the anticipated Board composition change it was deemed appropriate for an internal review to be undertaken for 2017.

The Registrar sought input from the Chair and Vice Chair on the questions to be included in the Board survey, and with the chairs of all the Committees in relation to the Committee survey questions.

A total of seven, anonymous effectiveness questionnaires were undertaken, three related to the Board and one related to each of the Committees, completed by their members. Both the Board and the Operational Management Group (OMG) completed Board Effectiveness questionnaires. The Board also completed a questionnaire about the distribution of board papers.

The format was similar across all the questionnaires, featuring either a Yes/No question or a rating scale question (1-5) paired with a free text option to provide further thoughts and suggestions.

- iv. The questionnaire responses were reported to the Board as part of a Board Development Day in May 2018. There were clear recurring themes throughout the 2017 responses which formed the focus of discussion on the day.

The responses indicated a shared preference for:

- More meetings
- Concise and effective papers
- Healthy debate between the Board, its members and the OMG
- Revised tracking and oversight of ARB's operational performance
- Improved stakeholder insight

Following discussion, the Board agreed the following actions for 2018.

- 1) To implement a new meeting cycle with dedicated strategic time
- 2) To conduct an audit and seek regular feedback to improve papers
- 3) To continue to refresh Board and Committee members' knowledge of their roles and encourage the Executive share their views at meetings
- 4) To review how operational oversight information is provided to the Board
- 5) To improve stakeholder data capture and engagement opportunities
- 6) To build on Development Day topics and provide information on the cyclical plan of decisions

- v. A table of action for the key themes of the 2017 Board Effectiveness Review can be found in **Annex A**. A number of actions identified may overlap with areas of improvement identified as part of the Board appraisals.

5. Resource implications

None specifically identified, however if specific development needs for the Board are identified as part of the review, additional resources may be required.

6. Risk Implications

The Board is required to have in place an effective structure of corporate governance. To not regularly review, and self-reflect on where improvements to performance can be made poses a risk as to the effectiveness of the Board and Committees as well as delivery of the organisation's purpose and objectives, including its statement of priorities.

7. Communication

The Board recognises the importance of Board and Committee evaluation and reflection in order to improve its effectiveness. The Board is committed to continuous improvement in all areas of its delivery, including its corporate governance arrangements.

8. Equality and Diversity Implications

Anyone who had difficulty accessing/using the online tool was assisted to ensure the questionnaire was completed. Staff involved in putting together the survey had undertaken equality and diversity training. Care was taken to ensure the process and the questions involved were not in contravention of equality and diversity legislation.

Some survey response related to equality and diversity matters directly, including the suggestions that E&D implications are factored into every decision, that Board members receive a refresher on the subject every two years, that engagement with other organisations in this area are improved and that work is undertaken to explore what 'good looks like'.

19. Further Actions

Actions arising from the 2017 review will be taken forward throughout 2018 and beyond.

The Committees have also been asked to consider the feedback relating to their effectiveness and take forward any actions that arise accordingly.