



**Subject** Report on the Delivery of the 2019 Business Plan and Performance  
**Purpose** For Note  
**From** Operational Management Group

If you have any enquiries on this paper, please contact Simon Howard at [simonh@arb.org.uk](mailto: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 2019 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 2019 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, usually in January and July.
- ii. The performance of the organisation this year has again been assessed under a "RAG" traffic light system. In addition the Board will note that a few items have been provided with a Blue rating. This is where the Business Plan item (or a significant part of it) has been deferred for external reasons beyond the control of ARB, and because of that it is not possible to rate performance in this area.
- iii. Attached as **Annex A** is the 2019 Business Plan with further detail as to how effectively ARB has delivered its strategic objectives, and performed against its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- iv. The KPIs are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain challenging but achievable. For example, the KPI for time taken to decide that an allegation against an architect should not be investigated further is being reduced by eight weeks in 2020, as it was not considered appropriately challenging.

- v. We are aware of the importance of measuring not only the efficiency of the activities we carry out, but the impact of those activities in terms of delivering our statutory obligations and strategic objectives. This is why we will continue to consider, in conjunction with the Board and our stakeholders, how we can best measure the value of those activities, and how we can most effectively report on them.

vi. **Delivery and Achievements in 2019**

**Key Achievements in 2019**

Registration

- Rolled out the **pass list portal** for all schools of architecture, allowing schools to upload their pass lists directly into the system in a digital format.
- Dealt with an **unprecedented demand** for EU certificate requests with no drop off in service levels, and despite a higher volume of applications for registration across the year.
- Created an amended version of the online application portal and worked with government to develop operable legislation in **preparation for a No Deal Brexit**.
- **Developed wireframes** for a fully digital application management system in preparation for development of the system in 2020.
- **Enhanced validation tools** to improve the efficiency and integrity of the Register by preventing the input of invalid and contradictory data, and redrafted our procedures to improve efficiency

Qualifications

- Successfully managed the complexities of **apprenticeship applications** and course changes, which has tested the boundaries of the Board's rules and guidance.
- Through visits to institutions, dealt with **significant issues** in respect of threshold standards of two prescribed qualifications.
- **Redrafted our Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications**; recruited a new Prescription Committee, which will operate under revised terms of reference; the team took on the responsibility for gathering information and making recommendations to the Board on prescription matters.
- **developed new processes** to sit underneath the governance and operational changes to the Procedures. This has been achieved in less than three months, and required the review, reworking and creation of new

internal approaches to ensure a robust audit of assessment for our recommendations to Board.

- **Continued to manage new and renewal applications** through the prescription process during a period of transition once the former Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications ceased to operate and a revised set of Procedures were brought in.

#### Professional Standards

- Despite a 40% increase in the number of complaints and an 85% increase in the number of title investigations, we **maintained KPI compliance** across our in-house case management. Similarly, despite an 88% increase in the number of cases considered by the Investigations Panels, we have managed to maintain over 80% KPI achievement.
- We carried out a **'strike off audit'** of those architects removed for non-payment of their retention fees, to ensure they weren't continuing to practise under the title 'architect', resulting in 197 formal investigations.
- We **reviewed and revised all procedures** and drafted up to date procedure documents. Internal audit commented that the procedure documents were among the best they had seen.
- We **implemented electronic case-work**, improving data protection, efficiency and cost control. The initial complaints investigation stage is now managed electronically and our Investigations Panel process is now managed via a secure online portal.
- We **developed an interactive, virtual tour of our PCC** hearing room to enable stakeholders to familiarise themselves with the hearing environment. The tour is available in both text and audio format to improve accessibility. The tour is will be live on the ARB website before the end of the year.
- We began to **move regulation up-stream**, with a member of the Professional Standards team now attending all part 2 and part 3 university liaison visits in order to provide advice and guidance to students looking to join the profession. The aim is to educate students regarding professional obligations, the Code, and common pitfalls - in order to reduce issues and complaints in the future.
- We **appointed six expert architect inquirers** to assist the ARB in its disciplinary investigations and mitigate the risk of knowledge-loss in the professional standards staff team.
- We carried out a **legal services tender** for PCC investigations, resulting in a recommendation for contract award being made to the Board with the potential for significant improvements in efficiency and cost.

Communications

- The **2018 Annual Report** experienced an **increase of 646%** in page views in the first seven weeks compared with previous years.
- Followers across all social media platforms have been increased, most notably **LinkedIn Followers** which have been **increased by 265%**.
- Page views of **Annual Retention Fee** webpages have **increased by 50%** compared with 2017.
- .
- We expanded our **Brexit web content** from a single FAQ page to multiple pages covering useful links, statistics and guidance - page views **increased by 863%**.
- Response rates to surveys conducted as part of the ongoing **Stakeholder Research project**, the first major project of this kind in two decades, have so far exceeded expectations.
- A **new working partnership with Professional Standards** was established, Communications now contact publications to request title misuse corrections and educate the media on the use of the title in the UK.
- We commissioned a **summary content audit of our web estate** which has informed future strategy in this area.
- 
- New stakeholder links were established, including **data sharing with National Association of Citizens Advice Bureau**.

Corporate

- Successfully **inducted a new Board** and ensured all ARB business was properly managed to account and plan for the three months without a Board, including an action plan to ensure the Board effectively prioritised its decision making once in place.
- Effectively **implemented an online Board pack system** which contributed to the continued drive to save paper. This helped to achieve a 35% year to date saving on paper usage.
- Developed and commenced roll out of an **online expenses system** – soon to be rolled out to all Board/advisors.
- Carried out **successful tenders** for office cleaning services and an investment broker.
- Achieved **'London Living Wage'** accreditation.
- Managed the process to allow for the **appointment of six independent committee members**.

- **Reconfigured the office space** to accommodate an enlarged staff team.
- Received an **unqualified audit opinion** from ARB's external auditors in relation to the annual review of ARB's Financial Statements.

**5. Resource Implications**

None identified

**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**

Any Business Plan items rolling over into 2020 are identified within the report.