

# **Review of 2017 Business Plan**

- Identifies actions that could be deferred
- Includes areas of additional work
- Highlights areas of activity to be included in the extended 2017/2018 Business Plan

In line with the discussions that took place at the Board's Development Day and the May Board Meeting, the Business Plan timeframe has been extended to the end of July 2018.

Following the Board's feedback, a further updated plan will be discussed as part of the budget briefing sessions and brought back to the September Board meeting where the Business Plan and budget will be approved.

#### Section A - Maintaining the Quality of and Access to the Register

Under the Architects Act 1997, ARB maintains the UK Register of architects. The Register identifies those who are entitled to use the title "architect" in business and practice as they have met the requirements for qualifications and competence. The Register is the tool through which potential users of architects' services can find an architect and check that an architect is registered. It is also important to architects that they are identified as qualified professionals. The Register must therefore be accurate and accessible. The work which underpins the maintenance of the Register is wide ranging. Digital by default.

	Area of Work	Actions	2017/2018
1.	Improve the accuracy of the Register	<ul> <li>Further increase the use by registrants of online tools for updating details.</li> <li>Undertake an accuracy and quality review of the Register database.</li> <li>Implement email and telephone verification software across all self-service registration systems.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Work underway - efficiencies to be made by further enhancing the self-service provision available.</li> <li>Work underway - efficiencies to be made.</li> <li>Work underway - efficiencies to be made, further work to be done in 2018.</li> </ul>
2.	Continue to enhance online registration system, including further development of internal office systems	<ul> <li>Continue to develop streamlined back office systems to support the online registration tool.</li> <li>Gather feedback from users and potential users of the system and make appropriate amendments to the system.</li> <li>Explore Plain English accreditation for the information provided in the system.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Work underway, improvements and efficiencies to be made over next 12/18 months.</li> <li>Work underway - improvements and efficiencies to be made from feedback received.</li> </ul> Defer until 2018
3.	Provide an efficient and effective service to all enquirers	<ul> <li>Develop a more robust system for handling incoming email, capable of providing management information.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Work underway, efficiencies and risk mitigation incentives involved in this project</li> </ul>

## Section A – Maintaining the Quality of and Access to the Register

	Area of Work	Actions	2017/2018
4.	Undertake a fundamental review of the routes to registration.  Note: At its meeting of 15 September 2016, the Board will be asked to discuss and agree whether to hive off a review of its current interpretation of Section 4(1)b of the Architects Act 1997; if the Board does decide to hive off such a review, this part of the Business Plan will need to be reviewed and adjusted accordingly. A revised version of Section A4 will be brought back to the Board at its November 2016 meeting as required.	<ul> <li>Explore whether current arrangements remain fit for purpose and reflect current best practice.</li> <li>Explore whether registration should continue to be qualifications-based and any implications for change at an EU and international level.</li> <li>Consider whether alternative routes to registration would be viable and would widen access to the Register whilst maintaining standards of competence.</li> </ul>	Full Routes Review is on hold.  Aspects of the Review have been extracted to form "business as usual" reviews.  Review of the Criteria Review of the Prescription Procedures  (If the projects are agreed at the July meeting, information on each of the projects will be included in the updated Business Plan for 2017/2018)

#### Section B – Maintaining the Qualifications of Architects

Under the Architects Act 1997, ARB prescribes (or recognises) the qualifications required to become an architect for those who gain their qualifications within the UK. We also contribute to the scrutiny and review of those qualifications which are obtained in other European Economic Areas, and which seek to be listed at a European level. We therefore maintain systems for assessing qualifications against set criteria. These criteria are held in common with the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Quality Assurance Agency benchmark for architectural qualifications. The UK criteria also reflect the minimum requirements across the EEA. We work closely with many other organisations and Member States to ensure that our systems are robust, fair and efficient and provide support to Schools and Institutions of Architecture, whilst ensuring that as a regulatory body, we have confidence that prescribed qualifications meet the Board's objectives and criteria.

	Area of Work	Actions	2017/2018
1.	To have improved engagement with institutions, students and other stakeholders regarding the prescription process and Criteria to inform, to obtain feedback and to promote an understanding of ARB's role with regard to qualifications, and to maintain a high quality service for institutions, students and EU Member states.	To improve the promotion of the availability of the following services and to meet all reasonable requests for:  feedback sessions;  planning meetings;  university liaison sessions;  regular engagement with and liaison meetings with stakeholders;  speaking at relevant conferences/ forums;  Providing support for those seeking to list qualifications in Europe.  To improve and develop areas of ARB's website relating to prescribed qualifications/the student handbook as well as keeping them up to date.	<ul> <li>Interactions with schools undertaken as part of core work will assist in the Criteria and Prescription Procedures review</li> <li>Improvements to the website will enhance the offer available online and support our self-service objective</li> </ul>
2.	On behalf of the UK and its capacity as the UK's Competent Authority for Architects, embed the revised notification process within ARB's procedures, and scrutinise and review European qualifications which are notified to the European Commission for listing under the PQD.	<ul> <li>Continue to embed the European Commission's revised process for the notification of qualifications within ARB's procedures.</li> <li>Ensure that the European Commission's deadlines for considering notifications are met on every occasion.</li> </ul>	Core Work

#### **Section C - Maintaining the Standards of Conduct and Practice of Architects**

Users and potential users of architects' services need to have confidence in the standards set by us under the Architect's Code of Conduct and Practice, and that we take appropriate action where architects fall below the standards expected. We will seek to raise awareness of the Code and how clients may use the Code to help them in their relationship with their architect, as well as raising awareness and understanding of the Code by architects themselves. We will investigate allegations of unacceptable professional conduct and serious professional incompetence but will also seek to mitigate the risk of such situations arising.

	Area of Work	Actions	2017/2018
1.	Ensure efficient processes which are fair to all in all aspects of complaints handling	<ul> <li>Review and improve all literature guidance to ensure they remain compliant with Best Practice.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Reviewing guidance is a recommendation in the Periodic Review Report and will form part of the S14 Review.</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Integrate online complaints tool with ARB's internal investigations portal.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Systems development needed to create further efficiencies and mitigate risk around data security.</li> </ul>
		Develop and increase the use of online feedback.	Planned for second half of 2017.
2.	Ensure the investigations process is running smoothly and offers a fair process to all.	<ul> <li>Ensure that the Investigations Panel and Professional Conduct Committee are adequately resourced and trained in best practice. The Investigations Oversight Committee is provided with appropriate information and maintains strategic overview of ARB's investigation processes.</li> <li>Outdated Professional Standards database and IT system are replaced by a fit for purpose system.</li> </ul>	Defer  Major IT development on hold until the outcomes of Section 14 Review has been completed

## Section C - Maintaining the Standards of Conduct and Practice of Architects

	Area of Work	Actions	2017/2018
3.	Review how ARB delivers its statutory obligations under section 14 to investigate allegations of unacceptable professional conduct and serious professional incompetence.	<ul> <li>Seek views from all stakeholders as to how ARB's disciplinary regime might be improved.</li> <li>Draft new rules and acquire Board approval for changes where appropriate.</li> <li>Undertake three month formal consultation on proposed changes.</li> <li>Publish new rules; provide training as necessary to those who deliver a service on behalf of ARB.</li> <li>Ensure that guidance and standard correspondence is updated to reflect changes to procedures</li> </ul>	■ To commence second half of 2017 to April 2018
4.	Appoint new Investigations Pool members.	<ul> <li>Undertake an open and fair recruitment exercise to appoint architect and lay members of the Investigations Pool</li> <li>Ensure that the appointments process adequately fulfils the skills balance required on the Pool</li> <li>Provide induction and training to new members as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul><li>Complete</li><li>Complete</li><li>Complete</li></ul>

#### Section D – Raising Public Awareness of the Register and Helping Users and Potential Users of Architects' Services to Make Informed Choices

We recognise that it is not sufficient simply to hold an accurate Register. To be of value, the Register must be accessible, and users and potential users of architects' services must understand the distinction of the title "architect" and the importance of the Register in confirming an architect's registered status. We therefore work to increase awareness of the Register, to inform the public about the qualifications and competence of architects and to alert members of the public to the Architects Code of Conduct and Practice. We also work to prevent the misuse of the title "architect" which may only be used by those on the Register.

	Area of Work	Actions	2017/2018
1.	Raise public awareness of the standards expected of architects.	<ul> <li>Ensure that the Code is embedded within all of the key communication documents published by ARB.</li> <li>Publish articles throughout the year highlighting the benefits of using a registered professional.</li> <li>Establish an internal task and finish group to explore ways in which public awareness can be raised, including establishing links with other organisations; reviewing the material we publish; our attendance at consumer shows; and how our impact and reach in this area can be maximised.</li> </ul>	Core Work  Core Work  Work underway
2.	Uphold the value of the Register by increasing its use.	<ul> <li>Continue to increase awareness of the Register through online platforms.</li> <li>Develop a strategic communications plan to keep the Register topical and in the public arena.</li> <li>Develop relationships/partnerships with relevant organisations/groups to raise awareness of the Register through advocacy.</li> <li>Review the misuse of the Board's Title policy and approach.</li> <li>Raise awareness of the purpose of prosecutions so that potential offenders are deterred and the</li> </ul>	Core Work  Core Work  Plan in place for 2017  Defer until 2018  Core Work

## Section D – Raising Public Awareness of the Register and Helping Users and Potential Users of Architects' Services to Make Informed Choices

		<ul> <li>Use all legal options available to deal with serious/repeat misusers of the title of architect.</li> </ul>	Core Work
3.	Encourage architects to promote their registered status to increase awareness and value of the Register.	<ul> <li>Explain to registrants the value of referring to their registered status.</li> <li>Expand the Registrant's services secure area so that architects can have access to their details and embedded logo information in an attempt to further enhance public awareness of the Register.</li> </ul>	Core Work  Work underway, linked to raising awareness of the Register
		<ul> <li>Increase links to the ARB Register via websites.</li> <li>Establish an internal task and finish group to review registrants' services and registrants' pages on the website</li> <li>Introduce an electronic 'welcome pack' for new registrants.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Work is embedded in Communication Strategy</li> <li>Work underway- Commitment to self-service objective, efficiencies to be made</li> <li>The 'Welcome pack' is already in train and will be rolled out in September 2017</li> </ul>

	Area of Work	Actions	2017/2018
1.	Continue to embed the requirement of the revised Professional Qualifications Directive (PQD).	<ul> <li>Continue to consider the outcome of the PQD legislative changes and determine whether any further changes may need to be made to appropriate ARB policies, requirements and documents.</li> <li>Take legal advice and advice from DCLG and BEIS where necessary.</li> <li>Analyse and cost any necessary system changes for 2018 budget.</li> <li>Engage in discussions with stakeholders and ensure understanding of the changes.</li> <li>Ensure information is readily available.</li> </ul>	Core Work
2.	Engage with the European Commission's review of the Professional Qualifications Directive.	<ul> <li>Continue to attend and engage with our European Stakeholders, e.g, ACE; ENACA</li> <li>Continue to liaise with Government Departments, e.g., DCLG and BEIS</li> <li>Consider the implications of any potential changes to the Directive</li> <li>Ensure information is readily available to stakeholders</li> </ul>	Core Work
3.	Managing risk.	<ul> <li>Audit Committee regularly reports to Board.</li> <li>Internal audit function appropriately resourced and monitored.</li> <li>Maintain reporting cycle of risk register and risk strategy from staff to Board level.</li> <li>Monitor delivery against performance indicators (bi-annual), the Business Plan (annual), ARB's purpose and objectives (annual).</li> <li>Ensure adequate reserves are maintained through review of reserves policy and maintenance of the policy minimum.</li> </ul>	Core Work  Core Work  Core Work  Review planned for September 2017

	Area of Work	Actions	2017/2018
		<ul> <li>Effective reviews of policies to be considered in 2017.</li> <li>Monitor the outcome of legal challenges for areas of improvement and trends, particularly where there may be a financial or reputational risk.</li> <li>Consider implications and risk of any changes as consequence of the Periodic Review.</li> <li>Continue to develop awareness amongst the staff team of the risks which could impact on ARB's work internally.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Rolling programme, linked to continuous improvement</li> <li>Core Work</li> <li>Ongoing – separate plan now in place</li> <li>Core Work</li> </ul>
4.	Maintain adequate and appropriately skilled staffing levels that are utilised effectively.	<ul> <li>Ensure sufficient staff resources are maintained to deliver statutory functions and the 2017         Business Plan in line with the Board's priorities.</li> <li>Maintain staff development budget and encourage flexible working, and interaction with outside organisations to further enhance knowledge, skills and engagement.</li> <li>Continue to cultivate an environment that supports engagement and encourages team members to reach their full potential.</li> <li>Ensure that pay and reward is competitive and attracts and retains high calibre staff.</li> <li>Continue to build on ARB's people strategy and key succession planning policy.</li> <li>Introduce online expenses system.</li> <li>Replace Human Resources Software.</li> </ul>	Core Work  Core Work  Core Work  Core Work  To be completed by end of 2017 To be completed by end of 2017
5.	Deliver the recommendations resulting from the Periodic Review	<ul> <li>Respond to outcome of review and develop an implementation plan, if appropriate.</li> </ul>	Defined timelines for delivery

	Area of Work	Actions	2017/2018
	and maintain Government and Stakeholder confidence.	<ul> <li>Ensure there are sufficient resources in place, to deliver relevant outcomes.</li> </ul>	Separate work plan in place
6.	Efficient financial management.	<ul> <li>Clear budget setting process agreed and understood by Board.</li> <li>Regular monitoring of outcomes against budget, along with forward planning, horizon scanning and early warning alert mechanism of variances to the Board.</li> <li>Prompt notification of fees.</li> <li>Alignment of budget to Business Plan, including capital expenditure projects.</li> <li>Provide 3 year forecasts to capture longer term financial obligations.</li> <li>Develop a property strategy.</li> <li>Annually Review the Boards Investment Strategy and the Investment and Management arrangement.</li> </ul>	Core Work  Core Work  Core Work  Core Work  Work underway – defined timelines due to Lease Break clause.
7.	Compliance with legal obligations.	<ul> <li>Health and safety.</li> <li>Employment requirements.</li> <li>Data handling.</li> <li>PAYE.</li> </ul>	Core Work

	Area of Work	Actions	2017/2018
8.	IT strategy.	<ul> <li>Keep under regular review the strategic IT development plan, maximising digital and self-service opportunities.</li> <li>Understand the ongoing needs and vision for the organisation, including a strategy on continuous improvement and efficiency savings through the use of technology.</li> <li>Increase the use of the organisation's website and online tools.</li> <li>Explore the possibilities and implications involved in moving ARB's Board and Committee papers on-line.</li> </ul>	To defer system developments would delay the delivery of efficiency savings and ARB's ability to deal with increased demand.
9.	Explore and take up opportunities to work with stakeholders and partners to deliver ARB's objectives.	<ul> <li>Actively seek opportunities for working with a wider range of stakeholders.</li> <li>Build partnerships with others to influence the regulation of architects to protect consumers.</li> </ul>	Core Work  Core Work
10.	Respond to, and advise on European legislation that affects the regulation of architects.	<ul> <li>Monitor EU legislation in terms of ARB's objectives / statutory functions.</li> <li>Consumer Directive</li> <li>ADR Directive</li> <li>Data protection</li> <li>Services Directive</li> <li>Implement a communications plan to ensure architects are informed.</li> </ul>	Core Work

	Area of Work	Actions	2017/2018
11.	To continue to improve governance arrangements within the organisation and ensure that they are aligned with best practice.	<ul> <li>Undertake a Board and Committee effectiveness review, and implement any actions from the previous year's review.</li> <li>Ensure the Board has sufficient, evidence based, timely information, on which to make informed decisions.</li> <li>Be alert to best practice in the arena of governance and recommendations on how to continually improve.</li> <li>Ensure Board membership continues to comply with the requirements of the Act; induct new Board members as appropriate.</li> <li>Conclude the review of the ARB/DCLG Framework Agreement.</li> </ul>	Core Work  Important to keep up to date with significant changes to the Board's structure planned for 2018  Core Work  Induction 2017 almost complete, planning required for 2018 changes  Work not yet commenced- September 2017 (Next review planned Q4)
12.	Continue to review, develop and implement our equality and diversity action plan.	<ul> <li>Conclude the review of the Board's Code of Practice.</li> <li>Review the Board appraisal process</li> <li>Review the Board's General Rules.</li> <li>Review and amend the plan as required taking into consideration best practice in this area including moving to an inclusion policy.</li> <li>Collect and analyse Equality and Diversity data, and utilise the information to influence policy decision making.</li> <li>Make the data fully available to assist others in their policy information gathering.</li> </ul>	Defer until 2018  Work underway- review will be needed in line with proposed governance change.  Core Work  Core Work  Core Work

	Area of Work	Actions	2017/2018
		<ul> <li>Undertake project to consider how to make consultations more accessible.</li> <li>Review and ensure that ARB is collecting appropriate and relevant data.</li> <li>Ongoing training for staff, Board and those who assist delivery of the organisations objectives.</li> </ul>	Defer until 2018  Core Work  Training planned for 2017, more will be needed in 2018.
13.	Manage ARB's reputation to ensure there is public confidence in the regulation of architects.	<ul> <li>Raise the profile of ARB's role, in order to communicate the role of regulation.</li> <li>Strengthen our relationships in the regulation and consumer sectors.</li> <li>Gather feedback from those that use our services, to ensure we are offering relevant and accessible services in a way which adds value.</li> <li>Deliver a communication plan which raises awareness of the role of ARB, in particular the public Register of Architects.</li> <li>Communicate the value of using a registered architect to enhance public/consumer/client understanding.</li> <li>Attend relevant consumer events to raise awareness of ARB's role and the public Register, through exhibiting and speaking opportunities.</li> </ul>	Core Work  Core Work  Core Work  Core Work  Core Work
14.	To respond to the Government's advice and guidance regarding the UK's departure from the EU.	<ul> <li>Provide Government with information as requested on the current regulatory regime, facts and figures</li> </ul>	Core Work
		<ul> <li>Respond to the advice and guidance provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government regarding any proposed changes to</li> </ul>	Core Work

Area of Work	Actions	2017/2018
	ARB'S role and responsibilities.  To ensure any changes to legislation are enacted with minimal disruption to ARB's work	<ul> <li>Impact currently unknown but we must be ready to respond when needed</li> </ul>
	To ensure that the profession and public are kept up to date with how the UK's departure from the EU will affect ARB's core activities and function through communications, and website FAQs	Core Work
	<ul> <li>To liaise with other EU competent authorities as and when appropriate</li> </ul>	Core Work  Impact currently unknown

	Areas of Additional Work 2017-2018	Actions	2017/2018
1.	Apprenticeship route	Engage with the development of the Architects Trailblazer route	
	Explore possibilities of Mutual Recognition Agreements with International Countries	Undertaken	

	Areas of Additional Work 2017-2018	Actions	2017/2018
1.	2018 High Level Business Plan Areas		
	Implementation of new governance		
	arrangements, including recruitment,		
	induction, rule changes		
	'Business as usual' review of		
	Prescribed Examination Procedures –		
	Dependant on Criteria/Procedure		
	Review amendments		
	Stakeholder Research Project		
	Recruitment of external advisers-		
	Examiners, Prescription Advisers,		
	possible expansion of Professional		
	Conduct Committee		
	Ongoing IT Development + Continuous		
	improvement regime		

#### Glossary

BEIS Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy DCLG Department for Communities and Local Government

EEA European Economic Area

ENACA European Network of Architectural Competent Authorities FReM Financial Reporting Manual (Government document)

PQD Directive 2005/36/EC on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications

PCC Professional Conduct Committee

ARB maintains a rolling programme of review for all of its policies and procedures. The following are the main major areas which ARB may consider in 2017 and beyond: