Future Trends Survey:

March 2016

RIBA
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The RIBA's monthly Future Trends Survey

was launched in January 2009 to monitor business and employment trends affecting the architects' profession. Participants give monthly predictions for overall workload and staffing levels over the next three months, and are also asked about their workload predictions in key sectors: private housing, commercial, community and public sector. In addition practices are asked on a quarterly basis about their current workload and staffing levels. The Survey is carried out by the RIBA in partnership with the Fees Bureau. Results of the Survey, including a full graphical analysis, are published each month on **www.architecture.com**

The following is a summary analysis of the results from the March 2016 Survey returns.

Future workload (March 2016)

How do you expect the architectural workload in the organisation you work in or own to change over the next three months.

Overall

Expect	%
Decrease	10
Stay the same	49
Increase	41
TOTAL	100
Balance	+31

(The definition for the balance figure is the difference between those expecting more work and those expecting less.)

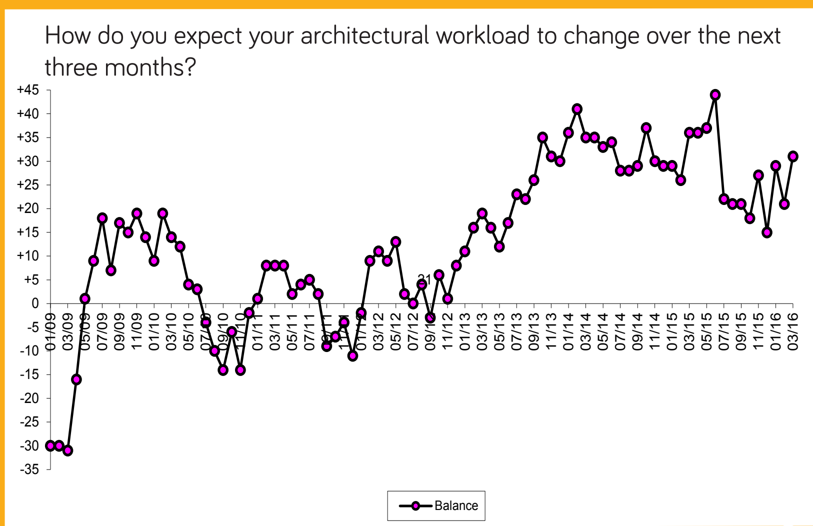
This month the RIBA Future Trends Workload Index bounced back strongly, following last month's fall, standing at +31 in March 2016 up from +21 in February 2016.

The recent downward trend in the Workload Index does appear to have bottomed out, and our practices are predicting a healthy increase in workloads over the next quarter. There continues to be a degree of volatility in the data, however, perhaps indicating that there is a general level of uncertainty about the future economic direction of travel for the architectural profession.

In terms of geographical analysis, all the Nations and Regions returned positive workload forecasts, but it was the North of England that was the stand out performer with a balance figure of +52.

Analysing this months' data in terms of practice size, large practices (51+ staff), with a balance figure of +57, remain the most positive, but small practices (1 – 10 staff), with a balance figure of +28 are also upbeat about work prospects. Medium-sized practices (11 - 50 staff), have seen a big jump in confidence levels, with a balance figure of +48.

Notes
The balance figure is plotted here. The definition for the balance figure is the difference between those expecting more work and those expecting less.

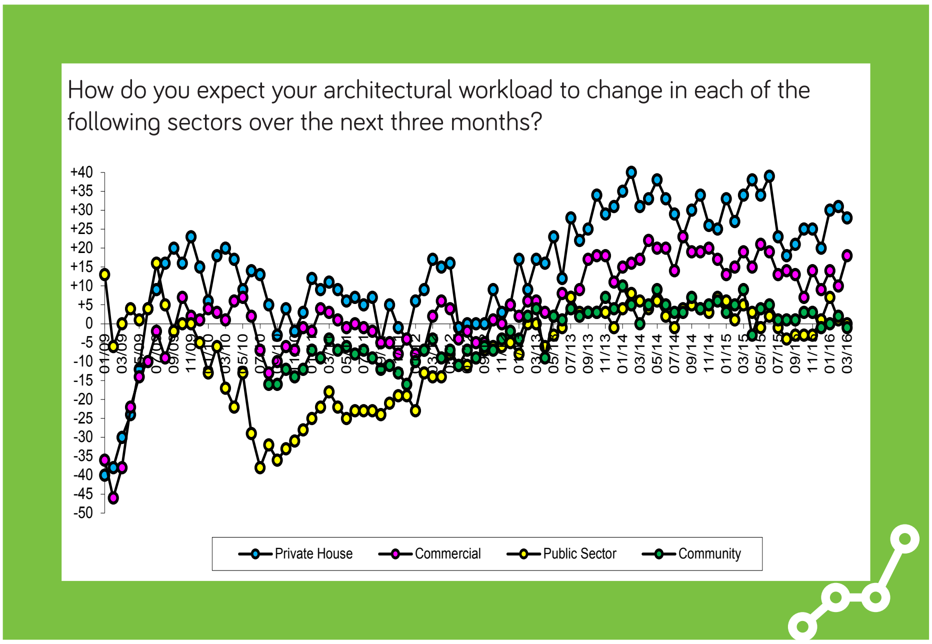


In terms of different work sectors, it was the commercial sector workload forecast that returned the most eye catching result, with a significant increase up to +18 in March 2016 from +10 in February 2016.

The private housing sector workload forecast decreased marginally to +28 in March 2016, down from +31 in February 2016, but private housing remains the best performing sector by far in our survey.

The public sector workload forecast had a balance figure of zero this month and the community sector -1. It is clearly the private housing and commercial sectors that are driving the current growth in the work of the profession. Our practices are not anticipating any significant increase in public and community sector work in the near term.

The following graph tracks the sector predictions in the RIBA Future Trends Survey over time:



Future staffing levels (March 2016)

How do you think the number of permanent architectural staff employed in your organisation will change over the next three months?

Permanent Staff	%
Decrease	5
Stay the same	80
Increase	15
TOTAL	100
Balance	+10

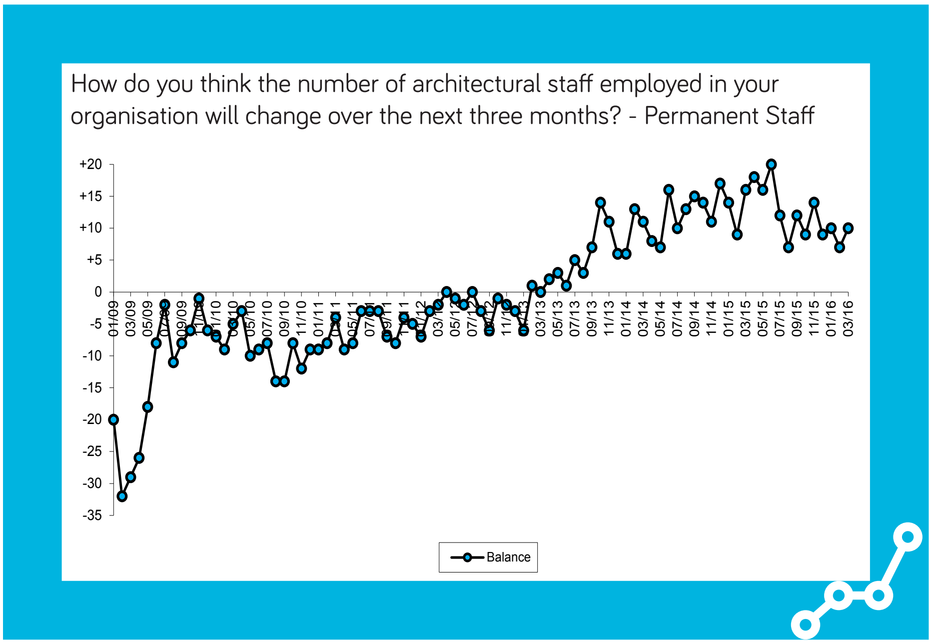
(The definition for the balance figure is the difference between those expecting to employ more permanent staff in the next three months and those expecting to employ fewer.)

The RIBA Future Trends Staffing Index also climbed a little this month, standing at +10 in March 2016 up from +7 in February.

Small practices (1 – 10 staff) returned a Staffing Index balance figure of +5 this month, whilst medium-sized practices (11 - 50 staff), with a balance figure of +35, and large practices (51+ staff), with a balance figure of +57, continue to be more positive about taking on additional staff.

Notes
The balance figure is plotted here. The definition for the balance figure is the difference between those expecting to employ more permanent staff in the next three months and those expecting to employ fewer

The following graph plots the RIBA Future Trends Staffing Index over time:



Anecdotal commentary received from our participating practices continues to be largely weighted towards the positive, albeit tempered by the recognition that fee levels remain under pressure. The bespoke residential and domestic extension markets continue to be buoyant with many practices reporting an increase in both enquiries and work in progress in these types of project.

The RIBA Future Trends Survey is based on a representative sample of the range of different practice sizes and geographical locations which enables analysis of the trends in sectors, size groups and by nation and region.

A total of 235 practices took part in the Survey in March 2016. The development of a larger database of respondents will increase the statistical accuracy of the survey, and if your practice would like to participate in future months, please contact the RIBA Practice Department on 020 7307 3749 or email practice@riba.org. The survey takes approximately five minutes to complete each month, and all returns are independently processed in strict confidence by our partners the Fees Bureau.