**Citizens Information Board**

**Board Meeting, Wednesday, 24 March 2021**

By Videoconference

**Present:** Seán Sheridan (Vice-Chair), John Saunders, Cearbhall O Meadhra, Mary Doyle (until item 4), Ian Power (from item 5), Tina Leonard (until item 7), Tim Duggan, Nicola Walshe, Teresa Blake, Joan O’Connor, Joanne McCarthy (until item 6)

**Apologies:** James Clarke, Niall Mulligan, Mary Higgins

**In attendance:** Angela Black, Chief Executive; Fiona Coyne, Adrian O’Connor, Graham Long (also taking minutes), Gary Watters (item 8)

**Minutes**

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| **Item** | **Agenda Description** |
| **1** | **Declaration of Interests** |
| 1.1 | The Chair invited Board members to declare any relevant interests. No relevant interests were declared. |
| **2** | **Minutes of Previous Meeting** *(The minutes of the Board meeting held on Wednesday, 17 February 2021 were circulated in advance of the meeting.)* |
| 2.1 | The draft minutes are to be amended with two changes to item 5.1 (Governance Documents). With these amendments, the minutes were proposed by Joanne McCarthy and seconded by Mary Doyle. |
| **3** | **Governance Documents** |
| 3.1 | The Board discussed a revised draft Oversight Agreement and a revised draft Performance Delivery Agreement from the Department of Social Protection (DSP). The Board authorised Seán Sheridan to finalise the Oversight Agreement with the DSP, with some changes to the section on reporting to be explored. In relation to the Performance Delivery Agreement, Seán Sheridan will respond to the DSP that there are still some issues with the mechanics of the monitoring and review processes. The engagement of the Acting Chief Executive will be required to ensure arrangements are put in place that are acceptable to all parties. |
| **4** | **CIB Advocacy Strategy** |
| 4.1 | A paper on CIB taking a lead role in the development of an advocacy standards framework was circulated in advance of the meeting. The Board agreed that this initiative should be explored and that the work should progress through the Social Policy and Research Committee. |
| **5** | **Unstructured Debt** |
| 5.1 | A paper on unstructured debt was circulated in advance of the meeting. The paper took data from a number of different sources, including the MABS companies, to try to ascertain the extent to which household debt is being built up during the pandemic. However, the scale of this issue is not clear at present, and so it is also not clear if there will be a significant increase in the number of clients accessing MABS as a result of the pandemic. The Board agreed that this is an area that needs to be kept under review. |
| **6** | **Committee Reports** |
| 6.1 | Social Policy and Research Committee |
| 6.1.1 | At the meeting of 3 March 2021, the Social Policy and Research Committee examined the 2021 social policy framework and discussed how best to use the social policy returns made by the Service Delivery Companies to CIB, for example, to form the basis of a webinar. The Committee is also seeking to extend its engagements with other organisations, including the ESRI, DFI and FLAC. |
| 6.2 | Finance, Audit and Risk Committee |
| 6.2.1 | At the meeting of 10 March 2021, the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee completed its self-assessment and this has been circulated to the Board. It was also agreed that a new external member should be sought for the Committee with particular expertise in ICT and/or cybersecurity.  |
| 6.3 | Strategy and Governance Committee |
| 6.3.1 | At the meeting of 4 March 2021, the Strategy and Governance Committee agreed that the digital strategy could now move to the discovery phase and signed off on its work programme for the year. Initial steps for the preparation of the new Strategic Plan, including the development of a performance management framework, are now under way. |
| **7** | **CIS and MABS Staffing** |
| 7.1 | A spreadsheet was circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting setting out the business cases for staff that are currently with the DSP for approval. It was noted that the request for a Communications, Policy and Research Officer for NAS had been approved for an initial period of 3 years. It was also noted that approval for the fourth Principal Officer post in CIB expires in June 2021. Losing this post would have implications for, among other areas, the development of Irish Sign Language (ISL) projects currently underway in the Advocacy team. |
| **8** | **Finance Matters** |
| 8.1 | Budget Monitoring Report February 2021 / Period 2 |
| 8.1.1 | The Budget Monitoring Report for February 2021 showed an overall excess of income over expenditure of €916,082 at that point in time.  |
| 8.2 | Risk Management |
| 8.2.1 | A revised risk register was presented to the Board following the first formal review of the year. It was noted that green risks are now presented on a separate tab. |
| 8.3 | Draft Financial Statements |
| 8.3.1 | The draft financial statements for 2020 have been updated following input from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. The financial statements were proposed by Cearbhall O Meadhra and seconded by Ian Power. |
| 8.4 | Fixed Assets Register |
| 8.4.1 | An exercise has been carried out to reconcile assets on CIB’s fixed assets register with physical assets. Criteria have been set for the writing-off of fixed assets, including where an asset has been identified as no longer in use or where the asset cannot be located and was purchased more than 20 years ago. Office equipment with a purchase value of €641,434 and office furniture with a purchase value of €138,971 was recommended for write-off. The net book value of these assets is zero. The writing off of the assets was proposed by Nicola Walshe and seconded by John Saunders. |
| 8.5 | Review of Internal Controls |
| 8.5.1 | Statements of assurance from CIB managers were circulated in advance of the meeting. The Mazars audit report on internal controls, including internal financial controls, was also circulated in advance. These documents were proposed by Ian Power and seconded by Cearbhall O Meadhra. |
| 8.6 | Procurement |
| 8.6.1 | The Board approved a request to commence a procurement competition for call centre technologies for the Service Delivery Companies. |
| **9** | **Report of the Chief Executive** |
| 9.1 | The Report of the Chief Executive was circulated in advance of the meeting. It was noted that the Chief Executive and the Acting Chair had attended the launch, by Minister Helen McEntee, of the North Leinster MABS strategy. It was also noted that the contract held by NAS to provide the Patient Advocacy Service (PAS) has been extended to October 2022.  |
| **10** | **Corporate Services, HR and Governance Matters** |
| 10.1 | ICT Update |
| 10.1.1 | In relation to the Wide Area Network (WAN), 128 of 135 sites are now live. One hundred and twenty-one sites are now using new telephony equipment. An issue with network capacity has been resolved. It was noted that CIB is seeking to secure 0818 number blocks to replace the 076 telephone numbers currently in use. The 076 number range is due to be discontinued in January 2022.  |
| 10.2 | Update on Staffing |
| 10.2.1 | A recruitment competition for an Executive Officer on the eLearning team is now complete. CIB has postponed its earliest date for a return to offices to 8 June 2021.  |
| **11** | **Angela Black’s Retirement** |
| 11.1 | The Chair spoke to some of Angela’s achievements in her role as Chief Executive, particularly the internal restructuring of CIB and the external restructuring of the CIS and MABS companies. The Board thanked Angela for her contribution to the organisation and wished her a happy and rewarding retirement.  |
| **12** | **Closed Session** |
| 12.1 | * CEO Recruitment: The Board was advised of the current position on the recruitment of the permanent and acting CEO.
* Board Succession Plan: The Board approved the proposals circulated by the Vice-Chair and agreed that they should be submitted to DSP for approval.
* Committee Membership: The Board agreed to appoint Teresa Blake to the Social Policy and Research Committee and Joan O'Connor to the Strategy and Governance Committee.
* Presentation at the next Board meeting: The Board requested a presentation on the Abhaile and PIP programmes.
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| **13** | **Date of the Next Meeting**  |
| 13.1 | The next meeting of the Board will take place on Wednesday, 26 May 2021.  |