**Citizens Information Board**

**Board Meeting, Wednesday, 26 May 2021**

By Videoconference

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

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

**In attendance:** Fiona Coyne, Acting Chief Executive, Susan Shanahan, Adrian O’Connor, Stephen Valentine, Graham Long (also taking minutes), Gary Watters (items 6 and 7.1)

**Minutes**

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| **Item** | **Agenda Description** |
| **0** | **Acknowledgements** |
| 0.1 | The Chair acknowledged Fiona Coyne’s first attendance at a Board meeting as Acting Chief Executive, as well as Stephen Valentine’s first attendance as Acting Senior Manager. |
| **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, 24 March 2021 were circulated in advance of the meeting.)* |
| 2.1 | The minutes were proposed by Cearbhall O Meadhra and seconded by Joanne McCarthy. Completed items will be removed from future action logs. |
| **3** | **Opening of CIS / MABS / CIB Offices** |
| 3.1 | Following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, CIB is currently planning to return to working in offices in September. Fifty-four MABS offices are open for limited or urgent appointments, with the intention that all offices will open from 8 June for face-to-face appointments. Forty-nine Citizens Information Centres are open for appointments, with the intention that wider services will be offered from these locations from 8 June.  |
| **4** | **Update on the Abhaile Scheme and Personal Insolvency Practitioners** |
| 4.1 | Adrian O’Connor presented on the Abhaile Scheme, which is a cross-organisation initiative that assists people in mortgage arrears. Achievements under the scheme include the 20,685 people who have accessed a MABS Dedicated Mortgage Arrears Adviser or a Personal Insolvency Practitioner, and the 16,781 people who have accessed the MABS Court Mentor Service. It was noted that CIB is currently working with the Department of Social Protection on a proposal to provide further access to Personal Insolvency Practitioners. |
| **5** | **Committee Report** |
| 5.1 | Social Policy and Research Committee |
| 5.1.1 | At the meeting of 5 May 2021, the Social Policy and Research Committee revisited the 2021 social policy framework with particular attention paid to connections with other organisations such as NESC or the Housing Agency. The Committee is also progressing a paper in relation to CIB leading the development of a framework for national advocacy standards.It was noted that CIB would welcome the opportunity to prepare a submission to the newly-formed Commission on Taxation and Welfare. |
| **6** | **Finance Matters** |
| 6.1 | Budget Monitoring Report April 2021 / Period 4 |
| 6.1.1 | The Budget Monitoring Report for April 2021 showed an overall excess of income over expenditure of €2.6 million at that point in time. Variances include grants to Service Delivery Companies which have since been paid as well as underspends in ICT and overheads. |
| 6.2 | Re-profiling of Budget 2021 including for Pensions Lump Sums |
| 6.2.1 | CIB has re-profiled the 2021 budget to better reflect the likely levels of expenditure over the next number of months. The re-profiling includes a virement from non-pay budget lines to the pay budget line. The virement is for €173,000 and is to cover pensions payments that could not be anticipated at the start of the year. Approval for this virement has been received from the Department of Social Protection (DSP). The Board were informed that this virement amount has now increased to €187,000. The Board approved the re-profiled budget and virement of €187,000 subject to DSP approval of the revised amount. |
| 6.3 | Risk Management |
| 6.3.1 | There was no update in relation to risk management. |
| 6.4 | Procurement |
| 6.4.1 | The Board approved the following contract awards:* Refurbishment of the Kilkenny premises
* A framework for a time and attendance system for the Service Delivery Companies
* A framework for architect-led design team services for the Service Delivery Companies and CIB

The Board approved the following requests to commence procurement competitions:* A framework for total facilities management for the Service Delivery Companies and CIB
* A framework for travel and subsistence software for the Service Delivery Companies and CIB. This process will be dependent on approval from the Digital Government Oversight Unit (DGOU).
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| **7** | **Committee Reports** |
| 7.1 | Finance, Audit and Risk Committee |
| 7.1.1 | At the meeting of 19 May 2021, the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee discussed the budget monitoring report, budget re-profiling, procurement requests and cybersecurity. Mazars is currently on track to complete the 2021 internal audit schedule. Alex Hoare has been appointed to the FAR Committee as an external member. Alex brings particular expertise in ICT to the Committee.  |
| 7.2 | Strategy and Governance Committee |
| 7.2.1 | At the meeting of 7 April 2021, the Strategy and Governance Committee discussed the new strategic plan along with a timetable to complete the plan by the end of the year. The Periodic Critical Review that is due to be scheduled under the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies* is likely to have a bearing on strategy development. The Committee also discussed the consultation process for the strategy and performance measures that could be implemented. CIB’s Business Plan for 2021 was circulated and it was noted that the Annual Report is on track for completion ahead of the statutory deadline in June. |
| **8** | **Report of the Chief Executive** |
| 8.1 | The Report of the Chief Executive was circulated in advance of the meeting. It was noted that a number of steps had been taken by CIB’s ICT team following a ransomware issue in the HSE.  |
| **9** | **Corporate Services, HR and Governance Matters** |
| 9.1 | ICT Update |
| 9.1.1 | In relation to the Wide Area Network (WAN), 130 of 135 sites are now live. One hundred and forty-eight sites are now using new telephony equipment. CIB has requested 0818 numbers to replace the main office numbers currently on the 076 range, which is due to be discontinued in January 2022. Direct dial numbers for individual staff members will be geographic numbers.  |
| 9.2 | Update on Staffing |
| 9.2.1 | Recent recruitments include competitions for an acting Senior Manager and for the CIS Manager. External competitions are currently underway for a HEO on the MABS team and for a Clerical Officer on the Digital Content team. CIB has postponed its earliest date for a return to offices to September 2021.  |
| 9.3 | External Requests to Board Members |
| 9.3.1 | It was agreed that, in the event Board members are contacted by journalists or public representatives in relation to a CIB matter, those journalists or public representatives should be directed to the Secretary to the Board in the first instance. |
| **10** | **Closed Session** |
| 10.1 | * The Chair briefed the Board on the recent meeting with the DSP Management Board, summarising the presentations made by the Acting CEO and himself, together with the principal issues raised by the Management Board;
* The members of the Board reviewed the results of the recent Skills Audit and discussed next steps in the development of a multi-annual succession plan;
* The Board noted the very high quality of recent policy submissions made on behalf of the Board and agreed that it would be useful to have periodic briefings, to provide the Board with a deeper understanding of particular policy areas and to recognise the work of the staff who prepare these submissions.
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| **11** | **Date of the Next Meeting**  |
| 11.1 | The next meeting of the Board will take place on Wednesday, 23 June 2021.  |