**Citizens Information Board**

**Board Meeting, Wednesday, 22 September 2021**

By Videoconference

**Present:** Catherine Heaney, Seán Sheridan, John Saunders, Cearbhall O Meadhra, Mary Doyle, Nicola Walshe, Teresa Blake, Joan O’Connor, Joanne McCarthy, Mary Higgins, Tina Leonard, Ian Power

**Apologies:** James Clarke, Tim Duggan

**In attendance:** Fiona Coyne, Acting Chief Executive, Graham Long (also taking minutes); Susan Shanahan, Adrian O’Connor (item 5), Gary Watters (items 4, 6.2 and 7)

**Minutes**

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| **Item** | **Agenda Description** |
| **0** | **Board Business and Agenda for the Meeting** |
| 0.1 | Catherine Heaney noted that the agenda for this meeting had been consolidated and that the CIB senior management team would not be attending the whole meeting. The agenda was adopted by the Board. |
| **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, 21 July 2021 were circulated in advance of the meeting.)* |
| 2.1 | The minutes were proposed by John Saunders and seconded by Tina Leonard. |
| **3** | **Chief Executive and Chair’s Report** |
| 3.1 | Fiona Coyne flagged four areas to highlight in the Chief Executive’s Report. The issue in relation to surplus in the Service Delivery Companies has received extensive attention in the last number of weeks, with a number of changes now to be made. These changes include the circulation to the full Board of the Comptroller and Auditor General’s management letters, the addition of a risk to the risk register, the addition of surplus retention to the internal audit terms of reference and reporting to be incorporated into the estimates review process.The Periodic Critical Review (PCR) of CIB is now underway and is expected to be completed by the end of the year. A questionnaire will be issued later this week and documents for the PCR are being compiled.CIB is now planning for a return to offices on 1 November.Following a recruitment competition, Rachel Downes has been appointed as the Senior Manager for CIS and Advocacy. Rachel will take up her role on 27 September. |
| 3.2 | Catherine Heaney noted that she had spoken with Board members and, with their assistance, had reviewed how the Board organises itself. The intention is to focus the Board on governance, strategy and carrying out its role with rigour. Each agenda will be shortened, with a focus on one or two items. Committees will meet between Board meetings to ensure a smoother flow of work. Board papers will be stored and issued through an online system. An overview of the main areas of work for the Board was set out, and it was noted that meetings will take place on Thursday mornings from the start of 2022. |
| 3.3 | It was noted that Joanne McCarthy will be leaving the Board at the end of October. The Board expressed their thanks to Joanne for her commitment and contribution to the Board, as well as for her work as Chair of the Social Policy and Research Committee. |
| **4** | **Surplus in Service Delivery Companies** |
| 4.1 | CIB has not been fully implementing Circular 13/14 in its oversight of the Service Delivery Companies, and in particular has been allowing the retention and expenditure of surplus funding without authority from the DSP and DPER. Following a number of engagements with the DSP, it has been requested that the opening balance in the Service Delivery Companies for 2021 be returned within the current year. Arrangements are underway for this to happen in October. A letter is due to be sent in the coming days to the Service Delivery Companies setting out the issue and the next steps. It was noted that there is learning for the Board in a number of areas and that oversight arrangements will change on foot of the issue. |
| **5** | **Service Level Agreements** |
| 5.1 | A revised version of the core text of the SLA was presented to the Board, along with a Service Delivery Schedule for CIS and a Service Delivery Schedule for MABS. It was noted that the surplus issue could have a bearing on the completion of the SLA process and the Board agreed to give the Executive discretion In how to proceed with the SLA process in that context. |
| **6** | **Committee Reports** |
| 6.1 | Social Policy and Research Committee |
| 6.1.1 | The Committee met on 8 September and discussed engaging with the Service Delivery Companies on social policy reports. A report on fair administration and another on consumer protection in the financial system were also discussed. The pre-budget submission was circulated with the papers for the Board. |
| 6.2 | Finance, Audit and Risk Committee |
| 6.2.1 | The Committee met on 15 September and, aside from the surplus issue, discussed an internal audit report on the Citizens Information Phone Service, the audit schedule for the remainder of the year and the compliance record form for the Charities Regulator. The Board agreed with the FAR Committee that legal advice should be sought on CIB’s current status as a charity. |
| **7** | **Finance Matters** |
| 7.1 | Risk Management |
| 7.1.1 | The revised risk framework was approved by the Board. |
| 7.2 | Procurement |
| 7.2.1 | Requests were approved to award a contract for IT specialists, to award a contract for payroll services and to commence a procurement competition for HR support and advice services. |
| **8** | **Closed Session** |
| 8.1 | The Chair reported she had met with the Acting CEO for her check-in meeting, as per her contract. The Chair’s report was noted by the Board. |
| 8.2 | The Chair reported on the recruitment process for a CEO; the Board was satisfied with the process, as presented, including the interview panel and the enlistment of an additional Board member to support the design of the interview/s. |
| **9** | **Date of the Next Meeting**  |
| 9.1 | The next meeting of the Board will take place on Wednesday, 17 November 2021.  |