**Citizens Information Board**

**Board Meeting, Thursday, 7 July 2022**

By videoconference

**Present:** Catherine Heaney, Tina Leonard, Seán Sheridan, Mary Higgins (to item 7), Joan O’Connor, Nicola Walshe, Cearbhall O Meadhra, Mary Doyle, Teresa Blake, John Saunders, Tim Duggan

**Apologies:** None

**In attendance:** Fiona Coyne, Chief Executive, Rachel Downes, Graham Long (also taking minutes), Adrian O’Connor, Stephen Valentine, Rachel Downes, Gary Watters (item 5)

**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** | **Board Business and Agenda for the Meeting** |
| 2.1 | The agenda for the July meeting was adopted by the Board. |
| **3** | **Minutes of Previous Meeting** |
| 3.1 | It was asked that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 2 June 2022 include some additional details on the closed session held, including a reference to the discussion on the reorganisation of the Board’s committee structure. It was noted that it was useful to have members of the Executive attend at the Board meeting and it was asked that this continue.  With this amendment, the minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday, 2 June were proposed by Tina Leonard and seconded by John Saunders. |
| **4** | **Chief Executive and Chair’s Report** |
| 4.1 | The Chair noted that the Board had had a very useful exchange with the Minister on 2 June and that there had been openness to greater collaboration with the Department.  The Chair informed the Board that the Minister is now considering a shortlist of candidates from the Public Appointments Service process.  The Board discussed whether it would be feasible to meet again in person. It was agreed that this would be beneficial when the new Board members are appointed.  Fiona Coyne spoke to a number of areas set out in the Chief Executive’s report. Fiona noted that Carmel Beirne would be joining CIB in August as the Head of Division, Compliance and Reporting. Fiona thanked Stephen Valentine for all his work in the acting role.  Fiona noted that the CIS Volunteer Group has now produced a draft Volunteer Strategy to support the return of volunteers to centres across the country. This would see volunteers return in roles to support the work of Information Officers. The proposed strategy will now go to the CIS Employers Group for consideration.  In June, Fiona assisted the DSP on the evaluation panel to select consultants to carry out the strategic review of Abhaile. This review is now underway.  In relation to communications, a workshop on a communications strategy for CIB was held with Carr Communications in May. Work is ongoing on this strategy. Fiona reported a significant increase in media interest in MABS, with meetings held with the MABS National Spokespeople in relation to messaging.  A meeting was held with representatives of NAS, including the Chair, on 9 June. This was to discuss how NAS can ensure that CIB grant funding is ring-fenced and reported on separately from the Department of Health contract funding. The meeting follows the recommendation made in the Periodic Critical Review of CIB.  SLIS has been issued with a first performance notice in line with the Service Level Agreement. The issue has been discussed with SLIS and the first performance notice provides an opportunity to explain the issue.  Following the circulation of an organisation chart in June, it was asked that a list of ‘officer’ responsibilities in CIB, such as complaints officer or access officer, be circulated to the Board. |
| **5** | **Finance Matters** |
| 5.1 | Risk Management |
| 5.1.1 | There was no update to be provided in relation to risk. |
| 5.2 | Procurement |
| 5.2.1 | Requests to commence five procurement competitions were approved. The competitions are for contract cleaning and related services, creative services, ICT helpdesk services, managed print services and media buying and related services.  It was also noted that a previously approved procurement competition, for HR advice services, would now be expanded to include some additional activities related to the Employer-Union Fora for CIS and MABS. The Board agreed the procurement competition could go ahead on this basis. |
| 5.3 | Budget Mid-Year Review 2022 |
|  | The mid-year review of the budget for 2022 indicates an outturn of €59.186m, which is approximately €1.255m under budget. Areas of underspend include Abhaile vouchers, ICT, and wages and salaries. The reprofiled budget was approved by the Board. |
| 5.4 | Budget Estimates 2023 |
| 5.4.1 | Nicola Walshe noted that she had been involved in the budget estimates process in her capacity as a Finance Executive in CIB but was in attendance at this meeting as a Board member.  A paper providing a narrative outline of the budget estimates for 2023 was discussed. The paper included an overview of the steps taken to establish projected budgets in the Service Delivery Companies, the components of CIB’s Existing Level of Service (ELS) request, as well as a summary of the business cases put forward in relation to premises projects, a pay claim in MABS, the introduction of LSIs for administrators in NAS and a regrade of the National Administrator role in NAS.  Gary Watters presented on the details of the budget estimates, which proposed total expenditure of €60.475m. The estimates for the Service Delivery Companies had previously been brought to the Allocations Sub-Group, with the full set of estimates also brought to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. The estimates include increased budgets for ICT, rent and service charges, light and heat, with a decrease in grants to the Service Delivery Companies. Inflationary pressures were discussed and it was noted that there may be surprises in costs in 2023. It was asked that CIB continue to engage with the DSP on the possibility of multi-annual funding in certain areas, including premises and digital developments. It was also noted that increases in CIB salaries costs that may stem from a new public pay agreement were not incorporated in the estimates. Gary described how an OGP framework for energy is being finalised and will be more expensive than the previous framework.  CIB’s status as a charity was discussed in the context of VAT payments, and it was requested that the Executive discuss this charitable status with the DSP.  The Board approved the budget estimates and business cases for presentation to the DSP, with the understanding that there could be changes in relation to heat and light costs arising from the new OGP framework. |
| **6** | **Committee Reports** |
| 6.1 | Social Policy and Research Committee |
| 6.1.1 | The Committee met on 22 June 2022 and was chaired by Cearbhall O Meadhra. Cearbhall provided an update on the meeting, which included a discussion on two recent submissions, one to the DSP and one to HIQA, along with a discussion on a social policy report on access to legal services. |
| 6.2 | Finance, Audit and Risk Committee |
| 6.2.1 | The Committee met on 29 June 2022. It was noted that the internal audit plan is on track. The terms of reference for internal audits of the Service Delivery Companies now include compliance with Circular 13/14.  The FAR Committee discussed the Allocations Sub-Group meeting of 21 June 2022. A separate note from this meeting was prepared in advance of the FAR meeting.  The budget monitoring report for May showed an excess of income over expenditure of €1.175m. Larger variances arise in relation to salaries and fees, Abhaile, ICT and advocacy.  CIB’s mid-year review of the budget was presented to the Committee with a current projected spend to the end of 2022 of €59.186m. The Committee was asked to approve the presentation of the reprofiled budget to the Board and this was proposed by Cyril Sullivan and seconded by Mary Doyle.  CIB’s estimates for 2023 were presented to the Committee with an ELS request of €60.318m. The Committee approved the estimates to be presented to the Board.  Developments in relation to the cyber risk register were discussed. It was noted that the implementation of a system to restrict network access has been delayed but is currently escalated to a very high level in the company tasked with resolving the issue.  CIB’s Data Protection Officer provided an update on the actions taken to address the issues raised in the recent internal audit report from Mazars, with the development of a retention policy the only item outstanding. Work on the policy is currently in progress.  A note of the meeting was circulated to the Board. |
| 6.3 | Allocations Sub-Group |
| 6.3.1 | The Allocations Sub-Group met on 21 June 2022.  The Service Delivery Companies brought forward €2.27m in surplus funding into 2022. Of this, €2.263m was returned to CIB by the companies and the remainder was deducted from the April grant to SLIS. SLIS has raised concerns about solvency previously and this has not been addressed further, leading to the transition of SLIS to monthly rather than quarterly funding. An issue in relation to the amount of surplus brought forward into 2022 has been resolved.  The budget estimates for each of the 22 Service Delivery Companies was discussed. Total expenditure of €41,217,114 was proposed for SDCs in 2023.  The sub-group discussed that three premises projects would be presented to the DSP for approval, these are a co-location of CIS and MABS in Naas, a co-location of CIS and NAS in Clondalkin and a co-location of CIS and NAS in Ennis. It was noted that construction inflation is causing considerable difficulty in arriving at accurate budget estimates for such projects. Susan Shanahan presented on business cases for staffing, which relate to NT MABS, NAS and SLIS. A pay claim for the MABS companies will also be presented to the DSP.  The process for undertaking a reprofiling exercise with the SDCs in mid-2022 was discussed by the sub-group.  A note of the meeting was circulated to the Board. |
| 6.4 | Strategy and Governance Committee |
| 6.4.1 | The Strategy and Governance Committee met on 15 June 2022. An update was provided on CIB’s reorganisation, and it was noted that the digital strategy would now be progressed under the new ICT, Digital and Data division. The committee noted that Bearing Point had been commissioned to support with the development of the new strategy and meetings between Bearing Point and CIB were due to take place shortly.  The committee discussed revised versions of CIB’s Code of Practice and Code of Business Conduct. It was agreed for the updated drafts of these codes be brought to the Board for formal approval.  The Chair advised the committee that the Board are currently reviewing the structure of sub-committees of the Board. It is expected that the new sub-committee structure will closely align to the new four Divisions of CIB, Corporate Services, Standards & Development, ICT Data & Digital and Compliance and Reporting.  A note of the meeting was circulated to the Board. |
| 6.5 | Communications Sub-Group |
| 6.5.1 | The Communications Sub-Group met on 1 July 2022 and reviewed a draft communications grid produced by Carr Communications, including the mapping of audiences and communications channels. |
| **7** | **CIB’s Code of Practice and Code of Business Conduct** |
| 7.1 | The Board approved revised versions of the Code of Practice and Code of Business Conduct, subject to any amendments to the committee structure that could be agreed later in the meeting. |
| **8** | **Committee Structure to Support Strategy** |
| 8.1 | Terms of reference for three new committees were circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting. The new committees are ICT, Digital and Data; Compliance and Reporting; and Standards and Development. This means that, with the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee continuing, the Board’s committee structure will mirror CIB’s Executive structure. It was noted that there was potential for overlap between the committees, particularly in relation to the ICT and cyber responsibilities of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. The Board approved the terms of reference for the three new committees, and it was asked that a survey be issued to Board members seeking interest in the four committees that will be in operation. Following that survey, membership of the four committees can be agreed at the October meeting of the Board. |
| 8.2 | The Chair extended the appreciation of the Executive and the Board to Tim Duggan, whose term on the Board as the DSP representative ends in August. Tim was thanked for his insight and support over his time as a Board member. |
| **9** | **Strategy 2023 – 2025** |
| 9.1 | The Board established a new sub-group to oversee strategy development. The sub-group consists of Seán Sheridan, Tina Leonard and Teresa Blake. |
| **10** | **Service Level Agreements** |
| 10.1 | The Board also established a new sub-group to oversee the development of the Service Level Agreements with the Service Delivery Companies. The sub-group consists of Joan O’Connor, Catherine Heaney and John Saunders. It was agreed that the Board would delegate the reserved function of SLA development to this sub-group, given the time gap to the next Board meeting. It was requested that the draft SLA be issued to the Board for observations ahead of its circulation to the Service Delivery Companies for comments. |
|  | **Date of the Next Meeting** |
|  | The next meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 20 October 2022. |