**Citizens Information Board**

**Special Board Meeting, Thursday, 29 September 2022**

By videoconference

**Present:** Catherine Heaney, Tina Leonard, Seán Sheridan, Cearbhall O Meadhra, Teresa Blake, John Saunders, Fiona Penollar, Claire Byrne, Seamus Smith, Sarah Harte, Brid O’Donovan, Ian Power, Joan O’Connor

**Apologies:** Nicola Walshe, Mary Doyle

**In attendance:** Fiona Coyne, Chief Executive, Rachel Downes, Graham Long (also taking minutes), Adrian O’Connor, Carmel Beirne

**Minutes**

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| **Item** | **Agenda Description** |
| **0** | **Introductions** |
|  | Seamus Smith, Claire Byrne, Sarah Harte, Brid O’Donovan, Ian Power and Fiona Penollar introduced themselves and were welcomed to the Board by the Chair. |
| **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 Chair set out the agenda for the special meeting of the Board, which relates to the production of a report to the Minister for Social Protection on volunteering in the Citizens Information Services. |
| **3** | **Volunteering in the Citizens Information Services** |
| 3.1 | A draft report on volunteering in the CIS had been circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting. The report included draft terms of reference for the review of volunteering in the CIS. A draft resolution for Board members to adopt in relation to volunteering in the CIS was also circulated.The Chair outlined the background to the special meeting, and in particular the request from the Minister for a report under section 24(4) of the Comhairle Act 2000 on volunteering in the Citizens Information Services. The Chair and the Chief Executive had also met the Minister and noted that CIB would carry out a full review of the volunteer programme, to incorporate views at all levels, including former and current volunteers, to be complete by the end of 2022. The Chair noted that the Board would need to write to the Minister in relation to some additional matters, including the postponement of the completion of CIB’s strategic plan 2023 – 2025, along with the potential for delay in implementing some of the recommendations in the Periodic Critical Review of CIB.Fiona Coyne set out the timeline in relation to the emergence of concerns from volunteers, including coverage on RTÉ’s Liveline radio programme and subsequent media coverage, appearances and statements.Rachel Downes provided an overview of a meeting with representatives from the CIS on 20 September, which had discussed the terms of reference for the review of the volunteering programme. Consultants from BearingPoint have been commissioned to carry out the review. The Chair noted that the SLA Sub-Group of the Board had been repurposed to oversee the development of the report to the Minister.The Chair invited input from the Board members on the draft report and suggestions were made and accepted on a number of different elements of the report, including the terms of reference for the review. It was agreed that a revised version of the report would be circulated to the Board for sign-off prior to its transmission to the Minister. |
| 3.2 | The Board adopted the following resolution:“The Board of CIB acknowledges the importance of continued volunteer engagement in the delivery of CIB-funded Citizens Information Services. The Board resolves to lead a collaboration with CIS companies in developing a longer-term volunteer strategy. To enable this, the Board authorises an immediate and independent review of the role of volunteers in CIB-funded services, in accordance with terms of reference in the attached report.The Board resolves to consider the learnings from recent developments and the application of these learnings in our oversight and ongoing support to CIS companies. Learnings will be considered in SLA development; in CIB’s own forthcoming corporate strategy and overarching mission; and in the rollout of remaining actions, as set out in the PCR concluded in May 2022 by the DSP. To enable such assimilation of learnings, the Board will write to the Minister seeking permission to extend timelines for the delivery of CIB’s strategy and relevant actions in the PCR to the end of quarter 1 in 2023. The Board authorises the submission of the attached report, as requested by the Minister under section 24(4) of the Act, and welcomes ongoing dialogue and communication with the Department on this and related matters as the independent review is being undertaken.” |
| **4** | **Approval of Annual Financial Statements 2021** |
| 4.1 | Following the audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), the updated Annual Financial Statements for 2021 were circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting, along with the draft letter of representation. Also circulated was a note of the changes made since the draft financial statements had been approved by the Board in March. The financial statements were proposed by Seán Sheridan and seconded by Tina Leonard.The letter of representation was proposed by Ian Power and seconded by Tina Leonard.The financial statements and the letter of representation will be sent to the C&AG by the Executive for certification. |
|  | **Date of the Next Meeting**  |
|  | The next meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 20 October 2022.  |