

Citizens Information Board

Board Meeting, Friday, 28 July 2023

Hilton Hotel, Killmainham

Present: Catherine Heaney, Seán Sheridan, Mary Doyle, Ian Power, Claire Byrne, Brid O'Donovan, Seamus Smith, John Saunders, Fiona Penollar, Stephen Lycett, Sarah Harte, Teresa Blake

In attendance: Fiona Coyne, Chief Executive, Carmel Beirne, Adrian O'Connor, Graham Long (also taking minutes), Gary Watters (items 6.5 and 7), Nuala Crowe Taft, Stewart Reddin, South Dublin CIS (item 8), Sharon Brennan, Angela Blair, North Dublin MABS (item 9), Trish O'Brien, O'Brien Governance Design (items 10 – 12)

Minutes

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	<p>The agenda for the July meeting was adopted by the Board.</p> <p>It was noted that this would be Fiona Coyne's last Board meeting. Fiona was thanked by the Board and the Chair noted in particular the Board's admiration of Fiona's leadership style during her time as the organisation's CEO.</p> <p>An update on the actions from the 2022 Periodic Critical Review of CIB was circulated in advance of the meeting and was noted by the Board.</p> <p>A review by BearingPoint of the 2018 restructuring of CIS and MABS companies was also noted by the Board.</p>
3	Minutes of Previous Meeting
3.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2023 were proposed by Seamus Smith and seconded by Brid O'Donovan.
4	Chief Executive and Chair's Report
4.1	Fiona Coyne spoke to a number of areas set out in her Chief Executive's Report, including the CIS working group on the volunteer strategy, which met on 3 July and which was facilitated by a representative from Volunteer Ireland. Fiona has also engaged with the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland and has had meetings with the Legal Aid Board to promote the funded services. Fiona noted the four-year extension of the Abhaile scheme, which has been well received by

	<p>the MABS companies. The Board formally welcomed the extension of the Abhaile scheme.</p> <p>Catherine Heaney reported on a meeting with officials from the CIB Oversight Unit in the Department of Social Protection in July. A new draft Oversight Agreement and draft Performance Delivery Agreement have been received from the DSP and will be brought to the Governance Committee for review.</p> <p>Catherine and Fiona also attended at a Management Board meeting in the DSP in July. There was good engagement at the meeting and the Executive will follow up with the DSP in relation to the digital strategy and colocations for premises.</p> <p>Catherine noted that an advert for new Board members had gone live on stateboards.ie, a website of the Public Appointments Service. The competition will close in August.</p>
5	CIB Strategy 2023 – 2026
5.1	The Minister has approved CIB’s draft strategy for 2023 – 2026. With one wording change, the strategy was approved by the Board.
6	Committee Reports
6.1	<u>Governance Committee</u>
6.1.1	<p>The Committee met on 20 July 2023. The Committee held a closed session on CEO recruitment and also reviewed a process for recruiting external committee members. A draft agenda for the Board meeting of 28 July 2023 was agreed.</p> <p>The Board approved the draft process for recruiting external committee members, with one change, which is that the committees will review expressions of interest rather than just the Chairs.</p>
6.2	<u>Standards and Development Committee</u>
6.2.1	The Committee met on 5 July 2023. The meeting had a particular focus on risks relevant to the work of the Standards and Development Division, as well as on the Committee’s annual work plan, methods to establish service user perspectives, volunteering in CIS and the Periodic Critical Review. Noel O’Meara, Standards and Development Executive, presented on the work being done on Quality Assurance with MABS.
6.3	<u>ICT, Digital and Data Committee</u>
6.3.1	<p>The Committee met on 10 July 2023. The Committee reviewed the cyber risk register and proposed a number of changes to the Committee’s terms of reference. These changes were approved by the Board and will be incorporated in CIB’s Code of Practice.</p> <p>Four potential external members of the Committee have been identified and will now be contacted to ascertain their interest in joining the Committee.</p>

	<p>A paper on the development of the digital strategy was drafted by the Committee and circulated to the Board. It sets out a process over the next 12 – 18 months to establish future directions for digital service channels. The Board noted that, given staffing constraints, it will need to be closely linked to CIB’s development of a people strategy. It was also noted that digital developments can drive footfall and enhance in-person service provision and that this will be key to the success of the digital strategy.</p>
6.4	<u>Compliance and Reporting Committee</u>
6.4.1	<p>Seamus Smith and Richard Deane from Pobal have joined the Committee. The Committee met on 12 July 2023 and reviewed risks related to the Compliance and Reporting Division, the budget estimates from the Service Delivery Companies, a newly-drafted Code of Practice for Leasing along with a new Guide to Best Practice Governance. An update was provided on operations in the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS). Draft Service Level Agreements were reviewed by the Committee following input from the Department of Social Protection.</p> <p>The draft Service Level Agreements were approved by the Board to issue to the Service Delivery Companies for comment. The Code of Practice for Leasing and the Guide to Best Practice Governance were also approved by the Board.</p>
6.5	<u>Finance, Audit and Risk Committee</u>
6.5.1	<p>At their meeting on 14 July the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee received an update on expenditure in CIB from 2020 onwards. No inappropriate expenditure was identified in the course of the lookback exercise conducted by the Finance team. The Committee discussed risk and an internal audit report from Mazars which follows up on the February 2022 report into Board oversight of SDC grants. The report notes that the recommendations from 2022 have been implemented.</p> <p>The Committee received an update on the budget monitoring report and approved revised financial policies and procedures, which allow the Finance Executive to stand in for the Finance Manager in certain situations if required. The Committee approved the executive to enter an agency agreement with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) for website development costs, and to extend for one year an existing long-term arrangement (LTA) with the insurers IPB.</p> <p>The mid-year reprofile of the budget was approved for submission to the Board. The budget estimates for 2024 were approved for submission to the Board, with an amendment to be made to CIB’s digital strategy business case and an expanded budget proposed for internal audit. The Committee also reviewed the leasing code of practice and the best practice guide to corporate governance for the Service Delivery Companies.</p>
7	<u>Finance</u>
7.1	<u>Budget Monitoring Report, June 2023</u>

7.1.1	<p>By the end of June, income had totalled €32.54m, of which €32.416m was Government funding and €124,505 was “other income”. Total expenditure to the end of June was €32.018m, leaving an excess of income over expenditure of €522,565.</p> <p>The year-to-date variance against profiled expenditure was €816,174, while income was €1.239m behind profile due to the agreed withholding of grant funding from the DSP.</p> <p>In relation to the underspends, €346,518 relates to corporate services and is largely due to the receipt of insurance renewal invoices in July rather than June. A further €144,499 relates to salaries due to being under our ECF in 2023 and €193,905 relates to Operational Compliance and Reporting across a range of different budget lines.</p>
7.2	<u>Mid-Year Budget Reprofiling</u>
7.2.1	The Board approved the mid-year budget reprofiling, with total estimated expenditure to 31 December 2023 anticipated to outturn at €60.530m.
7.3	<u>Estimates for 2024</u>
7.3.1	<p>The papers for the Board meeting included a briefing note on the Existing Level of Service (ELS) request for 2024 and the business cases proposed to be put forward to the DSP, along with the process involved in developing both submissions.</p> <p>The Board approved CIB’s ELS request for 2024 for a budget of €62,757,568, which would require a funding allocation of €62,551,994 from the Department of Social Protection (DSP). Eight business cases for service development were approved by the Board for submission to the DSP, totalling an estimated €5.856m.</p>
8	Presentation from South Dublin Citizens Information Service
8.1	Nuala Crowe Taft and Stewart Reddin from South Dublin CIS presented on the work of the CIS in a number of areas including callers, queries and advocacy cases. The Board noted the importance of the work of CIS, especially for people in complex situations.
9	Presentation from North Dublin Money Advice and Budgeting Service
9.1	Sharon Brennan and Angela Blair from North Dublin MABS presented on their company’s activities, including in relation to the national MABS Helpline and the Abhaile voucher desk, as well as on the MABS money advice process. The Board noted the influence and respect the service has in the community and the importance of the work being carried out.
10	Closed Session on Strategy Communications and Board Evaluation
10.1	The Board discussed communications on the strategy and agreed that this would remain internal pending the appointment of an interim CEO.

	A facilitated session was held on the 2023 Board Evaluation, with actions from that session to be consolidated into a workplan for the Governance Committee's consideration at its next meeting.
11	Closed Session on Risk
11.1	Board noted the updated risk register. Board adopted the new risk framework. Board agreed to make additional time on the board agenda at the next in-person meeting to have a discussion on how risk is being treated following the significant changes.
12	Closed Session on CEO Recruitment
12.1	The Board discussed the process to recruit an interim CEO. A discussion was also held in relation to the grade and duration of the CEO post in the Citizens Information Board.
13	Date of the Next Meeting
13.1	The next meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Friday, 29 September 2023, at 10:30am, online.