

Board Meeting

Friday, 8th November 2024 at 10:30 am

In-person – Georges Quay House.

Present: Catherine Heaney, Claire Byrne, Seamus Smith, Ian Power, Patrick Gibbons, Stephen Lycett, Orlagh Nevin, Sarah Harte, Fiona Ward, Mary Corcoran, Mary Dorgan, Seán Sheridan, Brid O’Donovan, Teresa Blake (from Item 4), Catriona Curtis (joining remotely).

In attendance: Graham Long, Rachel Downes, Carmel Beirne, Katrina Bruna (minutes), Gary Watters (for items 6, 7 and 8)

Apologies: Caroline Mitchell

Minutes

Item	Agenda Description
1.	Declaration of Interests
	The Chair invited Board members to declare any relevant interests. No interests were declared.
2.	Board Business and Approval of Agenda
	The Chair noted that in the absence of the Acting Board Secretary, Corporate Services Executive Officer Katrina Bruna was in attendance to record minutes of the meeting. The agenda was approved.
3.	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	The minutes of the meeting held on 27 th September 2024 were proposed by Ian Power and seconded by Sarah Harte.
4.	Reports of Acting Chief Executive and Chair (for discussion)
	<u>Industrial relations:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIB, the DSP, SIPTU and CIS Chairs met for a forum facilitated by Kevin Duffy on 11 October 2024. A proposal on pay was agreed for recommendation to SIPTU members at that meeting and it was confirmed on 29 October that the ballot of members had approved the proposal. CIB is now working to implement the arrangement and will require some funding from the DSP to do so. The proposal envisaged further meetings in relation to CIS administrators and a follow-on pay arrangement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLIS has notified CIB of an invitation to attend a WRC conciliation conference with SIPTU on three separate points on 15th November 2024. It was subsequently deferred. CIB has confirmed its willingness to attend the WRC conference. <p>SLA: CIB received the outstanding SLA from South Leinster MABS on the 4th November 2024.</p> <p>There was an increase in activity of 38% on the citizensinformation.ie website. The increase is a more accurate depiction of website traffic through the use of the sticky cookie banner.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged that positive developments and progress have been made in a number of different areas since the last meeting.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the Government will dissolve on 8th November, and Cabinet will remain in place until a new one is appointed. The Chair acknowledged the openness and engagement of the current Minister and the positive relationship with the Department of Social Protection.</p> <p>The Chair sought the Board’s approval to send correspondence at the end of the Minister’s term on behalf of the Board.</p>
5.	<p>Committee Reports</p>
	<p>(a) Report from the ICT, Digital and Data Committee, 4th October</p> <p>The Chair gave a high-level overview of the Committee meeting. Key points related to the development of the Digital Strategy, appointment of the successful vendor 4OC, next steps and timelines for the project. The Acting CEO is engaging with Ian Power to progress the Digital Strategy project with the support of Head of Division, Standards and Development.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the risk of the small ICT team supporting a large number of devices across CIB and SDCs. The ICT team is fundamentally under-resourced which poses a risk and will have to be considered by the Board as part of strategic budgeting for 2026. The Chair advised that the strategic alignment of resources will be considered in the upcoming strategy review.</p> <p>A joint workshop between the ICT, Digital and Data Committee and the Standards and Development Committee is expected to take place in early 2025. The Chair expressed the desire to attend the Digital Strategy workshop and advised that any Board member may join the workshop if they wish to do so.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged Adrian O’Connor’s long service with CIB and formally thanked him for his engagement and dedication on behalf of the Board.</p> <p>(b) Report from the Standards and Development Committee, 23rd October</p> <p>The Chair of the Committee gave a brief update on the most recent meeting.</p>

	<p>The Committee discussed the draft Indecon report in relation to the National Advocacy Service. Further work is required on the report, and it will be brought back to the Committee before circulation to the Board. Indecon were also appointed to develop the Service User Impact Framework project and the Committee provided feedback in relation to next steps, overall approach, metrics and boundaries. The Standards and Development Committee will schedule a meeting with the ICT, Digital and Data Committee to consider how CIB will assess, measure and report on impact of services.</p> <p>(c) Report from the Governance Committee, 31st October</p> <p>The Committee meeting focused on updates from Chairs of committees, the budget for 2025 and the Strategy Review agenda item for the forthcoming Board meeting.</p> <p>The Committee also discussed the Committee membership of new Board members Patrick Gibbons and Orlagh Nevin, who will both be joining the ICT, Digital and Data Committee.</p> <p>The closed session was focused on CEO recruitment and risk and governance training. The Chair noted that further discussion will be held by the Board in its closed session at the end of the meeting.</p> <p>The Board has committed to an external review which will take place in 2025. The Chair noted that a robust review will be undertaken, and it is expected to commence in early 2025. The review will include a review of the current sub-committee structure and succession planning for a number of Board terms coming to an end in 2025. A review of Board membership will include the appointment of external members with specialist expertise.</p> <p>(d) Report from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, 16th October</p> <p>The Chair of FAR Committee outlined matters raised in the most recent meeting on 16th October 2024. The Committee had discussed matters including use of credit cards in the SDCs, fixed assets policy, procurement, and the language around mitigants in the CIB Organisational Risk Register. A new external member Declan Mohan has joined the Committee, bringing the number of external members to four.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Finance Matters</p>
	<p>(a) Budget Monitoring Report, September 2024</p> <p>The budget for 2024 is €61.988m, which is largely an Existing Level of Service (ELS) budget. This budget has changed from €61.713m since the mid-year review process. This increase is due to the 2023 carried forward surplus which DPENDR have approved for use in funding the costs of transferring the SDC occupational pension schemes to a master trust.</p>

By the end of September, income had totalled €48.210m, of which €48.074m was Government funding and €135,777 was “other income”. Total expenditure to the end of September was €47.770m, leaving an excess of income over expenditure of €439,904.

The year-to-date variance against profiled expenditure was €375,950, while income was €63,954 ahead of profile due to the receipt of funding from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) for the international protection applicant information project. In relation to the underspends, €135,370 relates to delays in receiving web development invoices from the OGCI0, €90,550 relates to ICT across a range of different budget lines and €68,325 relates to the Abhaile Vouchers budget. €83,366 was overspent in the rent and service charges budget due to early receipt of invoices.

(b) Budget Estimates (update)

The Acting CEO noted that a written report was circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting. The report was taken as read.

(c) Procurement – Insurance Brokerage (for approval)

Approval was given by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee on 16 October to award a contract for Insurance Brokerage services to CIB and SDCs. Approval was sought from the Board to award this contract to Marsh Ireland.

The Board gave approval to award the contract.

(d) 2023 Annual Financial Statements (update)

- Audit is in progress; a status update meeting will take place next week. The 2023 Annual Financial Statements are expected to be brought to the Board for approval at the 19th December meeting.
- Contract with Eir Evo to support the SAOR case management system: Three people are engaged under the contract - project manager, CRM architect and developer. CIB has recently identified that this contract expired in September 2023 and has been non-compliant since. The non-compliance with procurement regulations will be reported to the C&AG and the statement on internal controls will also be updated.
- CIB will bring the three SAOR resources in under an existing ICT managed infrastructure contract. CIB is engaging external procurement advice on this.
- The Board noted that the matter has been brought to its attention, and this will be notified to the C&AG by the Finance Manager. A note will need to be prepared for the Board, following consideration by the FAR Committee.
- An external accounting firm DHKN was contracted by the CA&G to undertake CIB’s audits for a period of three years from 2025.

(e) Extension of Lease – Dockgate Galway (for approval)

The Executive sought the Board’s approval for the extension of 10 years on a lease held by CIB in Dockgate, Galway. The current lease is due to expire on 30th November 2024. The extension was

	<p>considered by the FAR Committee on 17th July and recommended for approval by the Board. The Board approved the extension.</p>
7.	Risk Management
	<p>(a) Risk Register Considerable progress has been made on the risk register. Several changes were made before the last FAR meeting and afterwards.</p> <p>The Finance Manager reported that mitigants in the risk register are split between current controls and future mitigants, and the FAR Committee has recommended keeping only the current mitigants on the risk register and keeping future mitigants separate.</p> <p>The Board noted this as a positive development.</p> <p><u>Cyber Security Risk</u> The Board discussed the heightened level of cyber security risk. There is a requirement to identify mitigating actions in the event of an attack. CIB is storing sensitive data including advocacy cases and MABS SAOR data. The SDCs publish their data protection practices in their data protection notice. The Board discussed data retention periods for data across CIB and the SDCs and asked the Executive to follow up in ensuring that data that is no longer required is deleted.</p> <p>The Chair noted that this discussion was had, and it will be addressed separately in a more structured way following appointment of the Head of Division, ICT, Digital and Data.</p>
8.	Budget 2025 & Strategy Review
	<p><u>Budget 2025</u></p> <p>The Chair noted that there is additional clarity around the allocation of CIB’s budget for 2025. There was a material increase of 8.2%, which is significant, and it is understood that the increase appears to be to address pay claims in the Service Delivery Companies.</p> <p>While the increase will allow for the resolution of pay claims, the otherwise static budget will also impact service delivery and the Board’s ability to meet its strategic objectives. This includes the lack of funding to address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backfilling of posts, potentially leading to temporary closures due to lone working; • New premises projects where services have received notice to quit; • Health and safety issues in buildings not funded. <p>CIB is looking to engage again with the DSP’s Estates Department to ascertain what, if any, premises may be available to address the immediate premises requirements of some service delivery companies.</p> <p>CIB can progress with the development of key strategies including the Digital Strategy and the User Impact Framework. Compliance related work in both CIB and the Service Delivery Companies is</p>

	<p>stretched with no further capacity. CIB has no in-house capacity to address industrial relations and service delivery issues.</p> <p>The Chair sought the Board’s approval to send correspondence to the DSP to relay that the additional funding to address pay claims is a very positive development, but that there is concern that the Board is not able to invest in the organisation with implications for service delivery and ability to achieve strategic objectives.</p> <p><u>Strategy Review</u></p> <p>The Chair has requested a formal mid-point review of the delivery of the current strategy. DSP input and approval of this process will be requested. The scope of the review will address funding and capacity, changes in the external environment and links to the Periodic Critical Review. It was agreed that the review should commence by February 2025, subject to DSP approval.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Closed Session</p>
	<p>Board discussed the summer session on Board responsibility and conflict, delivered by Dr Niamh Brennan, and the subsequent deliberations of the Governance Committee.</p> <p>The Board agreed that an RFQ for the external review of the board be prepared for consideration by the Governance Committee, with a view to board approval in December. It should cover required review areas, as well as a reflection on the sub-committee structure and the board's code. A review of boards, with a similar construct to CIB should be undertaken in this context to establish best practice in dealing with perceived/real conflicts.</p> <p>The Board discussed the Acting CEO end-of-year review. In addition to the Chair, the Board agreed that Bríd O'Donovan should continue to undertake the review.</p> <p>Bríd O'Donovan reported on the status of the CEO recruitment campaign.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Date of next meeting</p>
	<p>The next meeting will be held online on 19th December 2024, at 9:30am.</p>