

Board Meeting

Friday, 26th September 2025 10:30am to 12:30pm
In-person (George's Quay House)

Present: Catherine Heaney, Seamus Smith, Stephen Lycett, Claire Byrne, Catriona Curtis, Mary Dorgan, Seán Sheridan, Orlagh Nevin (Items 1 to 7), Bríd O'Donovan, Mary Corcoran, Fiona Ward, Patrick Gibbons

In attendance: Graham Long, Carmel Beirne, Elsa Flanagan, Caroline Mitchell (minutes), Gary Watters (for items 6,7,8)

Apologies: Sarah Harte, Rachel Downes

Minutes

Item	Agenda Description
1.	Declaration of Interests
	The Chair invited Board members to declare any relevant interests. None were declared.
2.	Board Business and Approval of Agenda
	The agenda was approved. It was noted by the Chair that Sarah Harte will be returning from maternity leave before Christmas.
3.	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	The minutes of the meeting held on 25 th July 2025, were proposed by Sean Sheridan and seconded by Patrick Gibbons. The Secretary to the Board provided updates on matters arising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update on Impact Framework project will be presented to the Standards and Development committee on 8th October, and it will then be brought to the next Board meeting in November. • The 2024 CIB Annual Report was issued to the DSP on 18th September. The DSP will inform CIB when it is officially laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas. The Board will be informed when this occurs. • CIB's first Gender Pay Gap report will be brought to the Board for noting on November 7th.
4.	Report from the Chief Executive Designate and Chair (for discussion)
	The Board acknowledged the CEO's report as exemplary, noting the inclusion of numerous positive developments.

	<p>The Chief Executive thanked the Chair for her attendance and participation at the recent CIB staff day, noting it was received very well by the staff. The day was focused primarily on strategy. The Chair noted that it was a very uplifting experience and that the CEO gave an excellent presentation while she was there.</p> <p>The CEO and Chair spoke to the report, with particular emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner McGrath lecture – The Chair emphasises that CIB is in a unique position as the ‘trusted source’ of information for the public on their rights and entitlements. The outline of the event will be a keynote speech from the Commissioner, supported by CIB, chaired by the CIB Chair and a Q&A session. The Board discussed the potential attendees, including the Board, Oireachtas members, representatives from the SDCs, and representatives from the tech sector. A date for the event is yet to be confirmed. • Management letter 2024 Audit – this will be discussed under FAR update. • Marking 25 years of CIB as a trusted information source commenced last week. Research by Amárach confirmed high trust levels in the Citizens Information brand, which will inform the next strategy. The Board emphasised the need for service availability to maintain trust and agreed it was crucial to continue monitoring SDC service-related data. • The Board noted Minister Calleary’s attendance at the successful launch of the Liberties CIC, which was well supported by the local community. Several community service projects are active in the area. • Budget 2026 – The Chair stressed the importance of Board members promoting CIB’s work and strategic objectives in relevant fora. A post-Budget discussion will take place at the November meeting which will inform the next strategy. The Board also noted the development of SDC strategies and their relevance to the next CIB strategy.
5.	Committee Reports
(a)	<p>Report from the Compliance and Reporting Committee, 5 September</p> <p>The Chair provided an update on the recent meeting which focused on SDCs Q2 quarterly financial returns, Q2 WTE report, service activity for MABS, Abhaile, CIS, CIPS and citizensinformation.ie, SDCs mid-year budget reprofile and CIB’s climate action plan, issues with Kilkenny and Cork CIB offices. Concern was raised over impact of AI and the 47% call abandonment rate for CIPS, and the Committee discussed how this issue could be addressed.</p> <p>(b) Report from the Governance Committee, 18 September</p> <p>Matters arising, including Board evaluation report and action plan, will be discussed under agenda item 8. The CEO end of probation review will be discussed in closed session.</p> <p>A Board member reported that they attended an IPA course on sustainability. The course presentation slides will be made available to all Board members on Convene.</p> <p>(c) Report from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, 17 September</p> <p>The Chair of the Committee provided a summary of the recent meeting, highlighting the attendance of the external auditors as a key point.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caoimhin Broderick from Moore, representing the C&AG, confirmed that a clean audit report will be issued to CIB, with no matters arising. The absence of a management letter is exceptional and reflects the high standard of financial governance. The Board agreed that that this achievement should be communicated to the DSP post budget announcement. • The Terms of Reference for an advisory audit of CIB’s Risk Management Framework were formally approved. • The Committee reviewed the risk register and management accounts and approved virements. • Two SDC audit reports were approved. One audit report remains subject to further discussion due to commentary provided by the relevant SDC. <p>It was noted that CIB’s internal auditors will be invited attend a Board meeting next year.</p> <p>The Board acknowledged this achievement because of strong collaboration between FAR Committee, the Compliance and Reporting Committee, and the Executive team.</p>
6.	Finance Matters
(a)	<p>Budget Monitoring Report August 2025 (for review)</p> <p>The Finance Manager presented the management accounts, with any significant variances explained. It was outlined that our expenditure is very close to our budgeted figures.</p>
(b)	<p>Budget Estimates 2026 (update)</p> <p>The Chair emphasised that setting the budget is a key responsibility of the Board. The strategic budgeting process commenced early in the year at the February Board meeting. Throughout the process, the draft suite of business cases was reviewed by the FAR Committee, Compliance and Reporting Committee and Board on several occasions.</p> <p>CIB management liaised with the DSP following queries raised in late July. No further update has been provided by the DSP at this point.</p>
(c)	<p>Procurement (for approval)</p> <p>The Executive sought the Board’s approval for the following procurements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval to procure WAN Telephony services for a budget of €9m and a duration of 7 years. (due to expire in August 2026) • Approval to renew a licence agreement in relation to the second floor in Mall House, Slievenamon Road, Thurles, Co Tipperary <p>The Board approved the two requests.</p> <p><u>Media strategy, planning and buying services</u> CIB’s current contract is a drawdown contract from the Government Information</p>

	<p>Services (GIS) framework and will expire on the 22nd of November 2025 with no renewal option. CIB will have to commence a new procurement process. A formal request note will be presented at the next Board meeting in November.</p>
7.	Risk Management
(a)	<p>Sumer NI will carry out risk require interviews with FAR/Board/Executive. Every three years.</p> <p>Strategic Risks (for review)</p> <p>Updates to CIB’s strategic risk register, containing eleven risks, were presented to the Board for review.</p> <p>Fraud risk mitigants were updated to include the removal of petty cash and credit cards in the service delivery companies, effective from 2026.</p> <p>The Misinformation risk was discussed in relation to its likelihood and impact. The risk register will be updated to reflect the discussion (impact is 2, likelihood is lower). There is no confirmed date of the launch of the international protection project. Any associated risks will be discussed in advance of this with the Department of Justice.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the appropriate level of information contained in the risk register given the FOI landscape and the potential exposure this could have for CIB and SDCs.</p> <p>The Board noted while there is a digital strategy in place and CIB is looking to enhance accessibility and efficiency of service to the public through technology, the Board made a decision in the last strategy that keeping a focus on face-to-face services is important.</p>
(b)	<p>Risk Register (for review)</p> <p>The Finance Manager provided an overview of the top organisational risks as well as risk changes and new risks added since July 2025.</p>
8.	External Board Evaluation Action Plan
	<p>The Chair commended the effective work of the Board and its Committees over the past three years and will meet each Committee Chair to review structures and address any duplication of work.</p> <p>Succession planning is a key priority, as several members’ terms conclude this year. The upcoming Standards and Development Committee meeting will be Sean Sheridan’s final meeting as Chair, and the Committee was encouraged to appoint a Vice-Chair.</p> <p>Exit interviews will be recorded and reviewed by the Governance Committee, with the process to be incorporated into the next Board review. The Board discussed the draft action plan and agreed that as governance requirements evolve, identifying and maintaining the right skill mix is essential to achieving ‘gold standard’ performance.</p>

	<p>All Board members must be appointed through the PAS process, in line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. When vacancies arise, the Board defines the required competencies, the role is advertised, interviews take place, and recommendations are made to the Minister. Committee members are also subject to a process to ensure they are fit and proper, reflecting strengthened governance standards.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the need to formalise the staff representative process, which currently relies on self-nomination and anonymous voting, by developing clear role descriptors and responsibilities aligned with best practice. Conflicts of interest and staff protection, as previously discussed in training, will remain key considerations, particularly in relation to consideration of committee membership. Once the process is developed and agreed it will be sent to the Minister for final approval.</p> <p>The DSP representative, appointed by the Minister, adds valuable oversight, particularly at the FAR Committee. A roles and responsibilities framework will be developed for DSP's consideration before future appointments.</p> <p>To strengthen culture and leadership alignment, the Chair proposed that following annual goal setting, the CEO present their strategic vision to the Board, addressing culture specifically, without executive staff present. The CEO agreed, noting existing staff engagement opportunities.</p> <p>Finally, once new Board members are appointed, the Chair proposed a full Board training session as a collective refresher for both new and existing members.</p>
9.	Closed Session
	The Board met in closed session and discussed the CEO's probation sign-off and welcomed the CEO contract being approved for signing.
	Date of next meeting
	The next meeting will be held in person in George's Quay House on Friday, 7th November.