Citizens Information Board
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Board Meeting

Friday, 12th December 2025 10:00am to 11:30am
Online (Zoom)

Present: Catherine Heaney, Seamus Smith, Stephen Lycett, Claire Byrne, Catriona Curtis, Mary Dorgan, Orlagh Nevin (from Item 4), Bríd O'Donovan, Mary Corcoran, Fiona Ward, Patrick Gibbons, Sarah Harte

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

Apologies: Fiona Ward

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. Apologies were received from Fiona Ward. The Chair welcomed Sarah Harte back from her maternity leave. CIB's Finance Manager confirmed that Board fees for 2025 will be paid at the end of December 2025. <u>Board Recruitment</u> The Chair noted that the Executive have received a draft Chair recruitment booklet for review, and that there is no update on the recruitment of the three ordinary members of the Board. The approved booklet was returned to the Department in May 2025. The Chair proposed and the Board agreed that the Governance committee will review the Chair materials and feedback to the secretary of the Board. The approved materials will be included in February's papers. The Standards and Development Committee also needs new members. The Chair asked any interested members to contact Caroline Mitchell. <u>CEO PMDS</u> The Chair informed the Board that the CEO's PMDS will be carried out by the Chair and Mary Dorgan and will be reported back to Board in a closed session.
3.	**Minutes of Previous Meeting**
	The minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2025 were proposed by Seamus Smith and seconded by Catriona Curtis. It was noted that the request for update to procurement note was made and noted by the FAR Committee.

4.	**Report from the Chief Executive and Chair (for discussion)**
	The Chief Executive report was circulated in advance of the meeting. The CEO and Chair spoke to the report. Main areas of discussion were: Commissioner McGrath Event The event took place on 27th November. Attendees included the Ombudsman, Data Protection Commissioners, representatives from the Media Commission, Google, Department of Social Protection, Department of Justice, Courts Service, Central Statistics Office and Garda Síochána. Following the success of the event, the Executive has arranged meetings with the CSO and National Library to explore scope for potential collaboration. The Chair has also been in contact with the Commissioner's office, and they are keen on showcasing CIB as an example of a trusted source model across Europe and potentially featuring CIB as a case study in the Special Committee on the Democracy Shield's report. CIB will write to the EU Special Committee on the Democracy Shield. SDC credit cards The CEO noted that 5 of the SDCs had appealed the FAR and Board's decision about the removal of credit cards from January 2026, following a thematic audit by Sumer NI. The FAR reiterated its stance at its last meeting and the Board noted that it was too short a timeframe to review this decision. The Board has agreed to a volunteer recognition budget line across SDCs. 2026 Meeting Schedule and Strategy Development The Secretary to the Board presented the draft 2026 schedule with associated meeting themes incorporating the development of the next corporate strategy. The Chair proposed that the date of the 20th February Board meeting, which was agreed. The proposal includes the location being the Dublin Grant Thornton (GT) offices pending agreement with GT. The Board noted the Alpha report was comprehensive, setting out structured recommendations. The CEO noted that there were several recommendations, in a FLAC minority report, published in July 2025 which relate to CIB, including a potential amalgamation with the Legal Aid Board. A member of the CIB executive will attend a FLAC -hosted event in January 2026. The CEO also updated the Board on a project that is being undertaken to examine data gaps and evidence in relation to the drop in CIS query numbers in 2025. The Board noted it is interested to understand if there is a drop in demand or are the services unable to service the current or rising demand. The Board also noted that CIB and the CIS have engaged extensively in relation to volunteer recruitment.
5.	**Committee Reports**
(a)	**Report from the Compliance and Reporting Committee, 19 November** The Chair provided an update on the recent meeting and committee report. The Chair highlighted the call abandonment rates in CIPS, discussion about non-compliance with financial reporting and the removal of petty cash and credit cards from SDCs in 2026. The Board discussed that any

	change to CIPS operations, to free up staff time for call answering, must be examined alongside legislation and the SLA.
(b)	**Report from the ICT, Digital and Data Committee, 28 November** The Chair provided an update on the recent meeting and report. A soft launch of AskCI is planned before the Christmas break. The CIS have secured additional funding from Rethink Ireland. More locations are planned for the Digital Clinics in 2026. There are currently 24 locations at present. The branding project development will continue into the next strategy cycle.
(c)	**Report from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, 26 November** The Chair provided an update on the recent meeting and report. Included in the Board papers are outstanding audit items from internal reports and will be brought to FAR and included in future Board papers. The CEO updated the Committee on the purchase of laptops and ICT hardware above the contract level approved by the FAR. A paper on this matter will be brought to the next FAR meeting.
6.	**Finance Matters**
(a)	**Budget Monitoring Report, October 2025 (for review)** The Finance Manager presented the management accounts and explained significant variances. CIB is prioritising full utilisation of allocated budget before the end of the year.
(b)	**Budget 2026 Allocation (for approval)** At the November Board meeting an update was provided regarding the final budget allocation figure for 2026. Following this meeting the proposed 2026 contingency budget was further reduced by €84,331 to fund the regional administrator pay awards and rental budget changes in the SDCs. This change was presented to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee in November. CIB received the allocation letter from the DSP on 11 December, and it is included in the document library on Convene. The proposed profiling of the 2026 budget was approved by the Board based on the allocation letter.
(c)	**Internal/External Audit Outstanding Findings (for review)** Following a request by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, the Finance Manager presented a summary of the outstanding internal and external audit findings prior to 2025. It was suggested that it would be useful to include the original completion deadline for every action to understand any delays in completion. The FAR Committee will continue to monitor and review the tracker.

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<tr><td>(d)</td><td>Procurement (for approval)
The Executive sought the Board’s approval for the following procurements:

Procure payroll bureau services framework for the SDCs to draw down from – CB gave update. Chair of the FAR Committee provided an update on the cost. The request was proposed by Orlagh Nevin and seconded by Claire Byrne.
Procure facilities management services for CIB premises through an OJEU single supplier framework.
Procure creative campaign services through an OGP framework.
Award contract for software licences for a duration of 4 years and a budget of €1.8m.

The Board approved all requests, noting that all procurements are estimates and are budget dependent.

As requested in the previous Board meeting Board, the media and buying strategy note was updated and brought to the FAR Committee for review in November.</td></tr>
<tr><td>7.</td><td>Risk Management</td></tr>
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(b)</td><td>Strategic Risks (for review)

Updates to CIB’s strategic risk register, containing eleven risks, were presented to the Board for review. Comments have been updated in three areas.

Risk CIB 00009-25 Risk that CIB does not comply with legislative or public service requirements; likelihood was reduced to 1 following discussion at the November Board meeting. The overall rating has reduced to 4.

It was noted that the Minister appoints Board members and this is outside of CIB’s remit and control.

Risk Register (for review)

The Finance Manager provided an overview of the top organisational risks as well as risk changes and new risks added since September 2025.</td></tr>
<tr><td>8.</td><td>AOB</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>The Chair thanked all Board members and the Executive for their excellent work throughout the year and noted several positive developments during 2025. The Chair noted the recent Commissioner McGrath event was indicative of the professionalism and good work of all in CIB and the Board.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Date of next meeting</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>The next meeting will be held on Friday, 20th February – the finalised schedule and further details will be circulated to the Board.</td></tr>
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