Citizens Information Board
information · advice · advocacy

Board Meeting

Friday, 20th February 2026 10:30am to 3:30pm
In person in Grant Thornton Offices, Dublin 2

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

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

Apologies: Fiona Ward, Mary Corcoran

Minutes

Item	Agenda Description
1.	**Declaration of Interests**
	The Chair invited Board members to declare any relevant interests. None were declared. The Board congratulated Caroline Mitchell on her appointment to Head of Corporate Services Division.
2.	**Board Business and Approval of Agenda**
	The agenda was approved. Apologies were received from Fiona Ward and Mary Corcoran.
3.	**Minutes of Previous Meeting**
	The minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2025 were proposed by Brid O'Donovan and seconded by Seamus Smith.
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: • The development of the CIB Strategy is progressing well, with significant consultation on-going. The CEO noted that feedback from the staff consultation day showed very positive engagement. It is understood that issues for consideration that were referenced on the day included culture, communication, siloed working and sterile office environment – the Executive is awaiting any additional update from Grant Thornton. • CIB attended the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Artificial Intelligence in January, while CIB, CIS and MABS attended the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection, Community and Rural Development in February. The CEO and Board noted they were positive engagements for CIS, MABS and CIB. • A meeting was held with MEP Cynthia Ní Mhurchú in relation to the European Parliament's Special Committee on the European Democracy Shield. A concept note, outlining CIB's role and remit, and how it aligns with the EDS, has been sent for consideration.

	• CIB's Standards and Development team is engaging with the CIS on a negative trend in statistics, with many potential explanations including changes in query complexity and advocacy activity. • AskCI is operating very well. There will be a further review of governance documentation before it is made more accessible. To date, approximately 5,200 questions have been put to the AskCI tool. The Digital Content team is tracking quality assurance. • CIB met with Google representatives and discussed website statistics and the association with AI overviews. CIB queried if 'search impression' statistics can be relied on to take account of AI usage, as well as how best to develop AI-readable content. • CIB intends to submit an application for a Better Public Services award for AskCI, in collaboration with a sponsoring department. The Board noted the excellent work outlined in the CEO's report, particularly in relation to Oireachtas Committee appearances, and acknowledged the significant preparation required from all attendees. The Board discussed the ongoing challenge of external stakeholders' understanding of CIB's role, its functions, and its relationship with the SDCs. Recent engagements, including with Commissioner McGrath, Oireachtas Committees, and the Trusted Information campaign, were noted as important opportunities to promote CIB, its role, and the website. The Chair noted that this discussion will be continued at the strategy session.
5.	**Committee Reports**
(a) **(b)**	**Report from the Governance Committee, 12 February** The Chair provided an update on the PAS recruitment for the role of Chair and three ordinary member vacancies and proposed a plan for interim arrangements after the end of her term at the start of July 2026: • Mary Dorgan has agreed to chair the Governance Committee on an interim basis until a new Chair is appointed. She will also act as a point of contact for the Chief Executive. • Mary will observe Governance Committee meetings from March 2026. • Board meetings will have a rotating Chair, starting with the Governance Committee and Mary Dorgan. The Governance Committee will review a draft schedule at its next meeting. The Board approved the interim arrangements. The Board expressed their concern with the delay in appointing Board members and noted that it poses a risk to the Board's ability to fulfil its obligations, especially in the strategy development period, and should be recorded in the risk register. The approved Board vacancy materials were submitted to the DSP in May 2025, and the Chair vacancy materials were submitted in January 2026. **Report from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, 4 February** The Chair provided an update on the recent meeting and report. • The Committee requested that the final internal audit plan place greater emphasis on value-adding audits, including consideration of procurement project reviews, budget management, and control enhancements to prevent overspends. The Board endorsed this recommendation. A revised internal audit plan will be brought to the next Committee meeting in March.

	• The Committee noted the improved standards because of the Thematic Reviews with the SDCs. Whilst there are still issues emerging, the improvements noted are positive. **Update on external ICT, Digital and Data member** • The external member vacancy was advertised and a good number of expressions of interest was received. The Committee Chair and Head of Division will review responses. **Standards and Development Committee** Catriona Curtis and Sarah Harte have joined the Standards and Development Committee to fill the two vacancies.
6.	**Finance Matters**
(a) **(b)** **(c)** **(d)**	**Budget Outturn 2025 (for review)** The Finance Manager presented the 2025 budget outturn and explained significant variances. There was a request to show plus/minus variances on the summary sheet from the Board. **Budget Monitoring Report, January 2026 (for review)** The Finance Manager provided an update and explained variances. **2026 Estimates (for noting)** The Board and FAR Committee approved the 2026 estimates in December 2025. The Finance Manager provided an update on the five changes made to the estimates since then. These changes have no effect on the overall allocation for 2026. The Finance Manager noted that the SAGE upgrade project is proceeding, with testing due to commence in the next few weeks. This will close off several outstanding internal audit actions. The internal and external audit recommendations tracker was noted as a very positive oversight tool. **Procurement (for approval)** The Executive sought the Board's approval for the following procurements: • Procure Moodle support for E-Learning platform. The Board approved the request.
7.	**Risk Management**
(a)	**Strategic Risks (for review)** Updates to CIB's strategic risk register, containing eleven risks, were presented to the Board for review. Comments were added to three risks: • Risk that CIB's cybersecurity measures are breached • Risk that CIB is diverted from the approved strategy due to reactive work • Risk that CIB staffing and capacity is not sufficient to meet compliance, operational and strategic goal Following a discussion at the FAR Committee meeting, it was noted that the Commissioner McGrath event and 'Trusted Source' media campaign should be noted as a mitigant for the Misinformation

	risk i.e. CIB's engagement with external stakeholders. The Board agreed and noted the AskCI tool is another mitigant. The Finance Manager noted that the draft fraud risk assessments from the CIB divisions will be discussed at the FAR meeting in March.
(b)	**Risk Register (for review)** The Finance Manager provided an overview of the top organisational risks as well as changes and new risks added since December 2025.
8.	**Board Succession Planning**
	This was discussed under item 05(a) as part of the Governance Committee report.
9.	**Closed Session: Chief Executive PMDS**
	The Board agreed the CEO's PMDS and thanked him for his work in 2025. Mary Dorgan and Bríd O'Donovan were appointed as the PMDS team for 2026.
10.	**Strategy 2026-2029 Consultation with Grant Thornton**
	A strategy consultation session was facilitated by Grant Thornton from 1pm to 3:30pm.
	Date of next meeting
	The next meeting will be held in-person at 10:30am on **Friday, 27th March 2026.**