Board Meeting

Friday, 22 May 2026 8:00am to 1:00pm
In person in Westport Woods Hotel, Co Mayo

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

In attendance: Graham Long, Carmel Beirne, Elsa Flanagan, Rachel Downes, Caroline Mitchell, Gary Watters, Katrina Bruna (minutes)

Meeting was suspended at 11am to facilitate Minster Dara Calleary's attendance until noon. The Minister's advisor Craig Dwyer was also in attendance.

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.
3.	**Minutes of Previous Meeting**
	The minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2026 were proposed by Sarah Harte and seconded by Mary Corcoran. There were no matters arising. <u>Board Meeting on 5th June</u> It was agreed that the June 5th meeting will be held online from 9:00am to 10:30am to review and approve 2027 Estimates documentation, including submissions from the Service Delivery Companies.
4.	**Report from the Chief Executive and Chair (for discussion)**
	The Chief Executive's report was circulated in advance of the meeting. The Chief Executive and Chair provided an overview of key areas: • AskCI has been nominated for a Better Public Services award with the DSP as our sponsoring Department. The awards ceremony will take place on 25 June. There has been an increase in AskCI queries, and it is progressing well with increasing scale. • The DSP has approved CIB's request to reallocate premises funding intended for Clondalkin CIC to Ennis and Mullingar CICs due to lack of suitable premises in the Clondalkin area. • All SDCs have received a copy of the Impacts Framework report for their relevant service offer and CIB will meet with CIS and MABS Regional Managers to discuss the rollout of the standardised Impact and Outcome Framework. MABS have commenced using the impacts survey with client at case closure stage and CIS will commence from 1 June 2026.

	DSP Management Board Meeting • The Chairperson and Chief Executive attended the DSP Management Board meeting on 14 May and reported a very positive engagement. • Discussions covered the need to review CIB's legislation to ensure it remains aligned with CIB's vision and mission, the upcoming recruitment of a Chairperson and Ordinary Members, the distinct and continued value of in-person services, and the use and future role of AI. • The Board was commended for its approach to governance and the quality of its communications. 'It Makes Sense' loan • The Chief Executive outlined the Memorandum of Understanding with the Social Finance Foundation, which continues to hold funds for personal microcredit project management costs. • CIB was approached regarding the use of approximately €64,000 in remaining funds to support project management costs for a new Credit Union microcredit product. • Pending discussions with the DSP, the Chief Executive recommended retaining the funds with the Social Finance Foundation. The Board supported this recommendation and noted the recently announced Credit Union Strategy Project. Credit Cards and Petty Case in the SDCs • Following the Board's decision to discontinue the use of credit cards and petty cash in SDCs, CIB has received correspondence from some companies in relation to this matter. • A request for mediation from the CIS has been received and responded to, with a further request also received. Given the decision made, there would appear to be insufficient scope to engage in a mediation process. • The Board noted that alternative arrangements had previously been considered by the FAR Committee. • The decision was reaffirmed as a risk mitigation measure informed by audit findings. • The potential impact on relations with the companies was noted, and possible engagement options were discussed. Branding • The ICT, Digital and Data Committee had previously expressed concern regarding a lack of clarity around the purpose and rationale for the branding project and whether there was a sufficient requirement for change. • The Chief Executive provided a progress update and outlined the project's background, context and rationale for undertaking the research. Update on Board Recruitment • The draft PAS booklet for the recruitment of a Chairperson and three Ordinary Members is nearing completion, and vacancies will be advertised shortly. • In the interim, members of the Governance Committee will chair Board meetings on a rotating basis and support the Chief Executive as required. Mary Dorgan will act as the main contact for the Executive and report to the Board on Governance Committee matters.
5.	**Strategy 2026-2029 (for approval)**

	The draft Strategy 2026 – 2029 had been updated following the meeting between Grant Thornton and the Board on 14 April 2026. The Chief Executive provided an overview of the proposed strategic objectives and themes and presented the draft strategy to the Board for review and approval. In line with CIB's legislation, the strategy is due for submission to the Minister for approval by 12 June 2026. The Board approved Strategy 2026-2029, subject to a few small amendments, and noted the strategy is well written, clear and well positioned to support CIB in strengthening its role at the forefront of digital developments and as a leader in the misinformation space.
	Minister arrival and debrief
	The Board met with the Minister for Social Protection, Dara Calleary TD. The Minister commended the Board and organisation for the role it plays in supporting people across Ireland accessing trusted information via the citizensinformation.ie website, and the key services provided to people via the CIS and MABS offices. The Chairperson will write to the Minister and his officials at the end of her term in July 2026. Particular attention will be given to Board vacancies, legislative reform, strategic priorities and organisational resource requirements. Members agreed on the importance of highlighting CIB's achievements and role as a trusted source of information.
6.	**2027 Estimates (drafts for discussion)** Following the March meeting of the Board, and an estimates meeting with the DSP in April, the Executive has developed a set of 11 draft business cases for service developments in 2027. The SDCs are due to submit their Existing Level of Service (ELS) estimates and business cases by 22 May 2026. The Board provided feedback on the initial business cases, noted that the short format works well and the overall presentation of business cases has improved over time to support the DSP in advocating for resources. The Board reiterated the importance of a comprehensive summary document. It was noted that budgets across public sector organisations may be tight in 2027. The estimates will be discussed in more detail at the 5 June Board meeting, following submissions from the SDCs.
7.	**Committee Reports**
7(a)	**Report from the ICT Digital and Data Committee, 6 May** The Chair provided an update on the recent meeting, including updates on AskCI and plans for launch, branding project and declining website engagement metrics due to the impact of AI. The Chairperson confirmed that the website statistics were discussed at the Management Board meeting. The DSP is aware of the impact of AI and does not view the decline in click-through rate as reduced engagement.

	AskCI Launch and Communications Plan A communications plan was circulated to the ICT, Digital and Data Committee meeting following their recent meeting. The Board noted the need for a creative launch while being cautious around communications and mitigating risk in relation to negative media coverage as recently seen with the launch of gov.uk Chat assistant.
7(b)	**Report from the Governance Committee, 21 May** The Chair provided a brief update on the recent meeting, which focused on Committee reports, review of Board agenda and key discussion items for 22 May.
7(c)	**Report from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, 13 May** The Chair provided an update on the recent meeting and report, which focused on: • Review of internal audit plan and outstanding internal and external audit findings, two procurement requests, approval of reprofiled budget, review of 2027 estimates and approval of updated Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Committee. • The FAR Committee held a separate risk management session on 21 April to review findings from the risk management framework review conducted by Sumer NI, review the risk register and risk categories, guidance around near misses and events, escalation of unit risks to strategic, risk training for Board, FAR and staff. • The Board noted the positive risk culture and openness within CIB and at Board level and commended the Finance Manager for maintaining a high standard of risk management. • The Board noted that an increasing number of PQs and FOI requests are written and submitted using AI.
8.	**Finance Matters**
8(a)	**Budget Monitoring Report (for review)** CIB's budget for 2026 is €69.69m. The Finance Manager provided an update and explained variances. At the end of April, CIB had an excess of income over expenditure of €3.91m.
8(b)	**Procurement (for approval)** The Board's approval was sought to award contract for Total Facilities Management (TFM) Services for 6 years and budget of €2.357m. This contract will cover planned and reactive maintenance of premises and work to reduce CO_2 emissions. The Board approved the request.
9.	**Risk Management**
9(a)	**Strategic Risks (for review)** Updates to CIB's strategic risk register, containing ten risks, were presented to the Board for review. Risk Management Framework Review The Finance Manager provided an overview of the risk management framework review undertaken by SumerNI and outlined a number of key actions to be addressed by the Board and management to strengthen CIB's risk management process. Several findings have already been implemented, and others will be addressed over the coming months.

10.	**Annual Report 2025 (for approval)**
	The draft Annual Report 2025 was presented to the Board for review and approval. In line with CIB's legislation, it is due for submission to the Minister by 30 June 2026. With some minor amendments, the Board approved the 2025 Annual Report and thanked the Corporate Services team for their work on the document. <u>Page 65 - 'Citizens Information Customer Satisfaction Survey'</u> The Board suggested that it may be useful to commission an independent customer satisfaction survey facilitated by an external provider to reduce the risk of potential bias. The Head of Division Standards and Development outlined recent progress on the impacts framework project and confirmed that the project will introduce automated surveys to strengthen the process for gathering feedback and reduce the risk of bias. Both the Standards and Development Committee and the ICT, Digital and Data Committee have considered this matter separately and will meet later in the year to provide joint oversight.
11.	**AOB**
	<u>Chairperson's End of Term</u> Catherine Heaney will conclude her term as Chairperson of the Board on 6 July 2026. The Board expressed sincere appreciation for Catherine's leadership and commitment during her time as Chair and acknowledged her strong stewardship of the Board, constructive approach to governance, clarity and direction she brought to Board deliberations and support to members of the Board and Executive.
	Date of next meeting
	The next meeting, focusing on the 2027 Budget Estimates, will take place online on Friday, 5 June from 9am to 10.30am.