

Minutes of the CITB Board meeting held at 8.30am on 26 February 2026 at the Holiday Inn London Bloomsbury, and remotely via Microsoft Teams

FOI Notice

Where asterisks (*) appear, these sections have been excluded from the minutes before placing on the website as the subject under discussion falls within one or more of the exemptions contained in Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and can be reasonably withheld.

PRESENT

Peter Lauener	Board Chair – <i>items 1–3</i>
Rachael Cunningham	Board Trustee
Nikki Davis	Board Trustee
Stephen Gray	Board Trustee
Michael Green	Board Trustee
Julia Heap	Board Trustee
Owain Jones	Board Trustee
Herman Kok	Board Trustee
Kevin McLoughlin	Board Trustee
Holly Price	Board Trustee
Sophie Seddon	Board Trustee – <i>remote</i>

STAFF INVITEES

Tim Balcon	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Adrian Beckingham	Executive Director, Strategy & Policy
Kirsty Evans	Executive Director, Education and Training
Martina Doyle-Turner	Executive People Director
Deb Madden	Executive Director, Customer Engagement and Operations
Nick Payne	Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
Nadine Pemberton Jn Baptiste	Executive Director, Legal, Governance & Compliance
Angela Alabi	Head of Corporate Governance and Board Secretary
Hannah Stroud	Corporate Governance Manager

IN ATTENDANCE

Angela Forbes	Scotland Nation Council Chair
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GOVERNMENT OBSERVERS

Kevin Dixon	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
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STAFF INVITEES FOR SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS

Rachael Baker	Head of Business Planning and Performance Management – <i>remote – item 3</i>
Angela Hayward	Performance and Portfolio Director – <i>remote – item 3</i>
John Raffel	Finance Director – <i>remote – item 3</i>
Colin Chaplin	Head of Levy Strategy, Review & Consensus – <i>items 5–7</i>
Louise Hicks	Estates Coordinator, and Colleague Ambassador – <i>remote – item 9</i>
Sommer Leach	Senior Campaign Executive – Communications, and Colleague Ambassador – <i>remote – item 9</i>

APOLOGIES

None

ITEM 1: WELCOME, APOLOGIES, AND KEY AIMS OF THE MEETING

1.1 Peter Lauener (PL) welcomed all attendees and confirmed that the meeting discussions would be recorded solely for minute-taking purposes. The recording would be deleted following approval of the minutes. All attendees agreed to this arrangement.

1.2 It was noted that PL would chair the meeting until 10:45am, after which Stephen Gray (SG) would chair for the remainder of the meeting as PL had a conflicting other commitment.

1.3 PL provided a brief update on the previous evening's Board dinner presentation and discussions, which included guest Mark Reynolds, Co-Chair of the Construction Leadership Council (CLC). This had been well received by all trustees and was indicative of strong employer commitment to improving the skills pipeline into the industry.

1.4 PL updated trustees on the latest position with the proposed consultation on a possible merger of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB). He shared that it was expected that Government would shortly publish a consultation document seeking employer views on this. Once the document was published, it would be appropriate to convene a special Board meeting to consider the CITB's approach to this matter and to be briefed on their fiduciary duties as trustees.

1.5 ACTION: The Board to hold an extraordinary meeting in April or May 2026 to consider the Trustees' fiduciary duties as part of charitable law, in response to the ALB Review and possible merger of CITB and ECITB into one body. The extraordinary Board meeting to be held following the publication of the Consultation document by the DWP, expected in March 2026.

1.6 It was noted that it was Nick Payne (NP)'s final Board meeting as CFO before his retirement. PL thanked NP for his significant contributions to CITB's strategy, estate management, and financial and performance management. Board members expressed their appreciation to NP, and their welcome for the plan that NP would be continuing with CITB part-time for a fixed term, to continue support for the DAWN Programme.

1.7 The Board Trustees agreed that agenda items 11–18 would be considered noted and approved unless any Trustee requested further discussion.

ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest made in addition to those already recorded on the Board's Register of Interests.

Rachael Baker (RB), Angela Hayward (AH) and John Raffel (JR) joined the meeting.

ITEM 3: BUSINESS PLAN 2026-27

3.1 NP introduced the supporting reports and summarised that the proposed Business Plan 2026-27 was affordable, though there were recognised challenges anticipated in 2028-29, when cash balances were projected to fall below the Board's agreed policy thresholds.

3.2 Adrian Beckingham (AB) presented supporting slides outlining the actions, financial variance to the draft Business Plan 2026-27 presented to the Board in November 2025, and the financial risk to the Business Plan, for each intervention within the pillars of:

- 1) Inspire and enable diverse and skilled people into construction
- 2) Develop a training and skills system to meet current and future needs
- 3) Support the industry to train, develop and retain its workforce

3.3 PL raised that the 'Industry Placement commitment' was not anticipated to proceed on the original timetable due to current lack of demand for housebuilding and requested that Kevin Dixon discuss this matter with AB further outside of the meeting.

3.4 ACTION: AB to follow up with Kevin Dixon (KD) offline in relation to the Industry Placement commitment, to confirm that the commitment would be planned over a longer timetable to match demand.

3.5 It was noted that the Industry Funding Committee (IFC) had begun to consider where caps to funding could be appropriate, from 2027-28 onwards, but also within 2026-27 if required.

3.6 ACTION: IFC Trustee Members to report back to the wider Board at its next meeting on 4 June 2026, following further IFC discussions, regarding any potential funding changes required for 2026-27.

3.7 The Board observed that funding for pilot projects aimed at improving workforce retention had been reduced since the previous draft of the Business Plan 2026-27. It was noted that if the Board decided to continue this work after the pilots, that would need to be considered in the context of substituting other elements within the Business Plan 2026-27. It was noted that IFC had already considered this issue. A further discussion to reach agreement on the scope of CITB's interventions on productivity and retention was welcomed for the next Board meeting in June 2026 before launching any R&D pilots.

3.8 ACTION: An agenda item to be added to the Board's Forward Work Plan for the June 2026 meeting to agree the scope of CITB's interventions on productivity and retention, before any R&D pilots are launched.

3.9 In relation to the interim offer for Large Employers, Deb Madden (DM) confirmed that £18,000 would be available for all Large Employers for 2026-27 and that this would be communicated to the relevant companies the following week. Rachael Cunningham (RC), Herman Kok (HK), Holly Price (HP), and Sophie Seddon (SS) volunteered to help DM form the communication to be sent to Large Employers about the interim offer.

3.10 ACTION: DM to liaise with RC, HK, HP and SS to form the communications to be sent to Large Employers regarding the interim 2026-27 offer for Large Employers.

3.11 The Board noted the planned improvements for Levy debt collection once responsibility is transferred from SSCL to CITB. However, the Board questioned how Levy debt collection could be improved before that. It was confirmed that the Levy Strategy Committee (LSC) was prioritising this issue. It was also clarified that as a public body CITB could not insure debt. The Board expressed concerns over the current level of outstanding Levy debt. * Consequently, the Board requested that a report be presented at the June 2026 Board meeting outlining the status of Levy debt collection and detailing any actions that could be taken in the interim, prior to the in-house transition to CITB.

3.12 ACTION: The Executive Team to present a report at the June 2026 Board meeting regarding the status of Levy debt collection and detailing any actions that could be taken in the interim, prior to the in-house transition to CITB.

3.13 The Board advocated that the NCC needed Capital investment. It was noted that CITB did not have powers to borrow or to engage in novel contractual arrangements, which would require Cabinet Office and HM Treasury oversight and approval, but Michael Green (MG) and NP agreed to discuss potential alternative ways to secure funding for NCC Capital investment over the long term.

3.14 ACTION: MG and NP to discuss potential alternative ways to secure funding for NCC Capital investment over the long term.

3.15 The Board noted that the Business Plan 2026-27 did not provide any resources that might be required following the outcome of the ALB Review.

3.16 The Board reviewed the decisions that were required in relation to the Business Plan 2026-27.

3.17 DECISIONS:

- a. The Board **agreed**, in principle, with the need to implement changes to Apprenticeship Grants in 2027-28 and beyond, to bring them under budgetary control and to release funds to support investment in Additional Routes to Competence (accepting no specific proposals yet exist).
- b. The Board **approved** the proposed Capital investment plan.
- c. The Board **approved** the planned Reserves and Cash position through the life of the Strategic Plan 2025-29, including:
 - i. agreement to plan to go below the required Working Capital Policy threshold at the end of the Strategic Plan 2025-29, but to take corrective action in future years to avoid this happening;
 - ii. acceptance that within the constraints of CITB's Reserves and Working Capital Policies, there was no financial contingency to address downside risk and, therefore, any changes to the Business Plan 2026-27, would require delaying Capital investment again in Estates, PME, or DDaT, or reducing funding to support industry,
- d. The Board **approved** the overall Business Plan 2026-27 and 3-year financial envelope.
- e. The Board **approved** the three proposed Board KPIs for 2026-27.

3.18 The Board agreed that the text for the Business Plan 2026-27 to be published (Appendix I) should be refined, and PL and SG agreed to work on it.

3.19 ACTION: PL and SG to review and propose amendments to the Business Plan 2026-27 text for publication (Appendix I).

3.20 The Board requested that Trustees contribute to the communications to industry to be released alongside the publication of the Business Plan 2026-27. PL, RC, HK, HP, and SS volunteered to contribute to the communications to be published alongside the Business Plan 2026-27, such as vox pops videos and quotes from Trustees, and possibly a podcast recording.

3.21 ACTION: DM to liaise with PL, RC, HK, HP, and SS to contribute to the communications to be published alongside the Business Plan 2026-27, such as vox pops videos and quotes from Trustees, and possibly a podcast recording.

3.22 DECISION: The Board **agreed** that PL, RC, HK, HP, and SS could be called upon on an ad hoc basis to provide input and advice on CITB's other future communications, including the delivery of strategic messages.

PL, AH, RB & JR left the meeting.

SG took over chairing the meeting.

ITEM 4: HEADCOUNT PLAN FOR 2026-27

4.1 The Board considered the proposed Headcount Plan for 2026-27, and it was noted that the Nomination, Appointments and Remuneration Committee (NARCO) had already reviewed and scrutinised the Headcount Plan for 2026-27 before being recommending to the Board for approval today.

4.2 It was reiterated that additional resource may be required following the outcome of the ALB Review.

4.3 The Board recognised that CITB's headcount before services were outsourced to SSCL was at 1,375, which was higher than the proposed 2026-27 headcount of 1,292. It was noted that many CITB roles were integral to delivering the Business Plan 2026-27, such as trainers and assessors at NCC, rather than being counted as part of Running the Business costs.

4.4 Risks associated with the first year of transitioning services from SSCL to CITB were discussed, with assurance given that these were captured in the DAWN Programme risk register, which is monitored by the DAWN Programme Board.

4.5 The Board endorsed the proposed Headcount Plan 2026-27, and highlighted the importance of appropriate external messaging when the Business Plan was published. The Executive Team emphasised that the main message should focus on achieving savings of £5m pa, which would be realised by bringing SSCL services back in-house, followed by additional efficiency improvements once the initial transition was complete.

4.6 DECISION: The Board **approved** the Headcount Plan for 2026-27, namely £68.0m for an Establishment cap of 1,292 roles.

Colin Chaplin (CC) joined the meeting.

ITEM 5: PO APPLICATION

5.1 CC provided a verbal summary of the supporting paper.

5.2 The Board reviewed the application from the National Access & Scaffolding Confederation (NASC) to become a Prescribed Organisation (PO). Assurance was provided by the Executive Team that CITB also maintained a productive working relationship with the Scaffolding Association, another scaffolding employer federation that was not a PO. The Board welcomed the prospect of CITB engaging directly with NASC's members should NASC be granted PO status. The Board agreed to approve the application for NASC to become a new PO.

5.3 DECISION: The Board **approved** the application for the National Access & Scaffolding Confederation (NASC) to become a new Prescribed Organisation (PO).

ITEM 6: REVIEW OF CONSENSUS

6.1 The Board reviewed the recommendations from the LSC outlined in the supporting paper.

6.2 The Board accepted the LSC's recommendations and highlighted that when communicating with industry about the next Consultation on the Levy Proposals ahead of the 2028 Consensus, it should be clearly stated that whilst a minimum of 2,000 responses was required, there would be no maximum limit and, therefore, all non-PO Levy registered employers would be encouraged and able to participate.

6.3 DECISIONS:

- a. The Board **approved** using the Reasonable Steps option of a hybrid online and telephone survey, to include an online survey open to all non-PO Levy registered employers, plus telephone calls undertaken by an independent agency to achieve a minimum of 2,000 responses but with no upper limit.
- b. The Board **agreed** to retain the current Consensus question for the 2028 Consensus: "Do you agree that the Levy Proposals are necessary to encourage adequate training in the construction industry?"

- c. The Board **supported** exploring further the option of increasing the duration between Levy Orders to five years (to align with the Parliamentary cycle) following the 2028 Consensus.
- d. The Board **supported** further investigation into replacing Consensus with Joint Consultation.

ITEM 7: ITB REVIEW / ALB REVIEW

7.1 The Board were notified that the legal advice document, which was originally planned for discussion at today's meeting, would instead be presented at the extraordinary Board meeting to take place in April or May 2026, where the legalities and practicalities of a possible merger between ECITB and CITB would be discussed.

7.2 AB presented a verbal summary of the supporting paper on the 'Implications of ALB Reform Options'. It was noted that the DWP was expected to announce the Consultation on the principle of ECITB and CITB forming a single body, following the Levy Order debate in the House of Commons on 3 March 2026.

7.3 The Board discussed the challenge of not pre-empting the result of the Consultation but needing to have adequate time to prepare for the move into a single body if that was to be the outcome. KD confirmed that if a single body was created, the 2026 Levy Order to be confirmed by Parliament in March 2026 could be revoked when a single body was formed, and a new Levy Order for the new body would need to be confirmed by Parliament.

CC left the meeting, and Louise Hicks (LH) and Sommer Leach (SL) joined the meeting.

ITEM 8: ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM COLLEAGUE AMBASSADORS

8.1 LH and SL presented their supporting slides.

8.2 The Board thanked LH, SL, and the wider Colleague Ambassadors for their valuable contributions and commended the achievement of securing Colleague Ambassador membership across England, Scotland, and Wales, and within all CITB Directorates. However, the Board raised concerns about the current under-representation of men and the lack of ethnic diversity within the Colleague Ambassadors group. It was noted that in the most recent recruitment round, only one male candidate had applied to become a Colleague Ambassador. LH and SL confirmed that increasing the diversity of the group, both in terms of gender and ethnicity, would be a key priority during the next recruitment round.

8.3 Martina Doyle-Tuner (MDT) thanked NARCO members for attending Colleague Ambassador meetings over the past year.

ITEM 9: NATION COUNCILS – STRATEGIC QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

9.1 SG outlined that the context for this agenda item was the recommendation from the External Board Effectiveness Review that CITB create a clearer, more visible, purpose for meetings of the Nation Councils, such as forming an agenda with specific strategic questions to be addressed.

9.2 The Board proposed that the agendas for Nation Council meetings could be revised to reflect the updated Board agenda format used since November 2025, prioritising extended discussions of key strategic topics at the beginning of meetings, while other items could follow for information only.

9.3 ACTION: The Corporate Governance Team, Nation Council Chairs, DM and Engagement Directors to work together to review and propose improvements to the Nation Council agendas.

ITEM 10: EXTERNAL BOARD EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

10.1 Angela Alabi (AA) presented the draft External Board Effectiveness Review Action Plan that had been produced by the Corporate Governance Team and PL. From the 19 recommendations from the 2025 Stone King report. PL had proposed to accept 16, partially accept one, and reject two.

10.2 In response to recommendation 2.2 of the Stone King report, Board members suggested removing the restriction that meeting reports be limited to four pages. Instead, it was agreed that paper authors should exercise discretion to ensure papers remained concise, while acknowledging that some reports may need to exceed four pages to provide Trustees with all the necessary information to make informed decisions.

10.3 ACTION: Remove the limit to reports being capped at four pages in response to recommendation 2.2 of the Stone King report, as part of the external Board Effectiveness Review Action Plan.

10.4 DECISION: The Board **approved** the External Board Effectiveness Review Action Plan.

ITEM 11: MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS, ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING

11.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 20 November 2025, and the extraordinary Board meeting held on 26 January 2026 were reviewed and approved as an accurate record of the meetings.

11.2 It was noted that all previous Board meeting actions had been completed.

ITEM 12: CEO REPORT, PERFORMANCE & STRATEGIC RISKS Q3

12.1 The Board noted the supporting reports.

ITEM 13: 2026 LEVY RETURN FORM

13.1 DECISION: The Board **approved** the 2026 Levy Return Form.

ITEM 14: BUSINESS ETHICS AND COUNTER-FRAUD REPORT

14.1 The Board noted the annual Business Ethics and Counter-Fraud report.

ITEM 15: POLICY APPROVAL

15.1 The Board noted that the Risk Management Policy and Protected Disclosure – Whistleblowing Policy had been reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) and were being recommended to the Board for approval. The Board noted that the Fairness, Inclusion and Respect Policy had been reviewed by NARCO and was being recommended to the Board for approval.

15.2 DECISION: The Board **approved** the following policies:

- Risk Management Policy
- Protected Disclosure – Whistleblowing Policy
- Fairness, Inclusion and Respect Policy

ITEM 16: NATION COUNCILS – BOARD CONSOLIDATED RESPONSES

16.1 It was noted that the recent draft Nation Council meeting notes were available for Trustees to view in the Document Library of Convene. The Nation Council Chairs shared verbal updates from the main business conducted at their January 2026 meetings.

16.2 DECISION: The Board **approved** the proposed responses to the key feedback raised by the three Nation Councils from their January 2026 meetings.

ITEM 17: COMMITTEE REPORTS

17.1 It was noted that the recent draft Committee meeting minutes, and draft meeting notes from the monthly Finance Monitoring Group, were available for Trustees to view in the Document Library of Convene.

17.2 DECISION: The Board **approved** the reappointment of Clare Smithson onto the Industry Funding Committee for an additional four years.

17.3 DECISION: The Board **approved** the appointment of Stephen Gray as Industry Funding Committee Chair, and noted that Holly Price would continue on the Committee as a Trustee Member.

17.4 DECISION: The Board **approved** the appointment of Matt Bridge from Colonial Construction as the England Nation Council Member on the Levy Strategy Committee.

17.5 It was noted that NARCO had delegated authority from the Board to appoint members of the Executive Team. Nikki Davis (ND) and Tim Balcon (TB) provided an overview of the recruitment process for a new Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to succeed NP following his retirement, including candidate interviews that took place on the previous day. The interview panel presented its recommendation to appoint the preferred candidate. It was highlighted that the recommended candidate did not possess the preferred breadth and depth of experience in leading a Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) function at scale and, therefore, the Executive Team would need to determine how the leadership of the DDaT function within CITB would be managed separately to ensure that this area was appropriately covered.

17.6 DECISION: The Board considered the interview panel's recommendation regarding the appointment of a new Chief Financial Officer to replace NP on his retirement. NARCO members **approved** the recommendation to invite the preferred candidate to accept the role, and all other Board Trustees confirmed their endorsement of this decision.

17.7 MG and Kirsty Evans (KE) informed the Board that CITB's Ofsted report following its inspection on 13 January 2026 had been published today, with a rating of 'Expected Standard' across all key judgement areas. The Board congratulated KE and NCC colleagues on the transformative work undertaken at NCC over the past two years, and agreed that a letter should be sent to NCC colleagues on behalf of the Board to thank the NCC team.

17.8 ACTION: MG and PL to draft a letter to send to NCC colleagues on behalf of the Board, to thank them for their work which resulted in the January 2026 Ofsted inspection report result.

17.9 The Committee Chairs shared verbal updates from the main business conducted at their January and February 2026 Committee meetings.

ITEM 18: GOVERNANCE MATTERS

18.1 The Board noted the supporting reports.

18.2 DECISION: The Board **approved** the Board Standing Orders.

18.3 DECISION: The Board **approved** the Code of Conduct for Board Trustees, Committee Members, and Nation Council members.

18.4 DECISION: The Board **approved** the Conflict of Interest Policy for Board Trustees, Committee Mand Nation Council Members.

ITEM 19: MEETING EVALUATION

19.1 Trustees evaluated the success of the meeting and agreed that all the key aims of the meeting had been achieved.

ITEM 20: CHAIR'S ANY OTHER BUSINESS

20.1 It was confirmed that the next Board meeting would be held on Thursday 4 June 2026 in Edinburgh, with a Board dinner, as usual, the evening. SG gave his apologies for this Board meeting.

20.2 The meeting closed at 2:10pm.