

NORTHERN LIGHTHOUSE BOARD

MANAGING BOARD

MINUTES – 12 November 2020

PRESENT:	Mike Brew	Chair
	Alastair Beveridge	Vice-Chair
	Elaine Wilkinson	Commissioner
	Hugh Shaw	Commissioner
	Brian Archibald	Commissioner
	Rob Woodward	Commissioner
	Mhairi Stephen	Commissioner
	Alison Di Rollo	Commissioner
	Phil Day	Director of Operations
	Mairi Rae	Director of Business Services

IN ATTENDANCE:	Jim McBrier	Risk and Improvement Manager
	Karen Charleson	Senior Executive Assistant (minutes)

This meeting was held by Zoom due to COVID-19.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Apologies were received from Mike Bullock, Chief Executive.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Managing Board meeting held on 10 September 2020 were agreed as a correct record and could now be published on the website.

Action: Senior Executive Assistant

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Managing Board noted the Matters Arising paper and reviewed the following items:

Apprentices – The Young Persons Guarantee Scheme has now been launched. Commissioner Woodward will make the necessary introductions.

Action: Commissioner Woodward

Project Restart - Lessons continue to be identified. The Staff Engagement Survey has captured opinions on homeworking which will be evaluated and in parallel the Space Audit is examining best use of 84 George Street.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The Managing Board noted the report from the Chief Executive, highlighting items from the Departmental reports and backed up by the full reports.

Safety

There have been no reportable incidents since the last Managing Board.

HS&E

Noise Assessments – A number of noise surveys are being conducted with the first one having been carried out in Oban Base. The results of the survey are awaited, however initial indications are around excess noise coming from the power pack and pressure washer pump inside the buoy store which is being looked at. Further noise surveys will be conducted on the ships in due course. They will be carried out while sailing to run the machinery, drive the crane, etc which is difficult to do fully in a harbour setting.

Commissioner Shaw enquired if there was an opportunity to carry out an assessment of the noise coming from one of the vessels while berthed in Oban to provide baseline data for the Vessel Replacement Business Case. The Director of Operations undertook to ask the question.

Action: Director of Operations

Commissioner Archibald asked whether there was any indication that noise levels might be higher than was expected and therefore was consideration being given to health monitoring e.g. hearing tests particularly shore-based staff as mariners should be checked via medicals. The Director of Operations confirmed that the evaluation will identify which staff members might be affected and carry out appropriate health surveillance. Ships staff do have a basic hearing test as part of their medical but consideration is being given to putting some ships staff through an industrial hearing test. It was noted that health surveillance is a broader piece of work that is being reviewed to look at all aspects of staff activity.

Operations Report

Outages - Since the last meeting there have been a number of outages over 72 hours many of these are AIS units which are Category 3. Chicken Rock (Cat 1) has been out for a few days. Technicians are on the Isle of Man but the weather is precluding getting the aircraft to site. Skerryvore (Cat 1) is also at reduced range and again adverse weather is preventing access but it is hoped to attend site in the next few days.

NLV PHAROS – The vessel has been deployed on helicopter operations in support of maintenance and project work as well as undertaking buoy work, LLA inspections and completing a number commercial contracts. The Starboard windlass clutch issue will require manufacturer attendance in February 2021.

The vessel responded to reports of containers lost overboard in the Pentland Firth at the end of October spending two days assisting the MCA.

Commissioner Beveridge highlighted the number of incidents in the Pentland Firth which are weather related and asked whether NLB should suggest that in these conditions there should be a broadcast or warnings on charts/pilot books emphasizing that this is an area that should be avoided. The Director of Operations will ask the Navigation Manager to contact the MCA Navigation Safety Team and include this matter as an Agenda item for the next appropriate Navigation Committee.

Action: Director of Operations

Commissioner Stephen commented that what NLB may do may also have implications for the P&I Club that insure vessels because if they persist in ignoring warnings there could be indemnity consequences. It is a complex matter that should be remitted to the Navigation Committee to consider but there may be other wider implications as well.

NLV POLE STAR – Dry-docking was successfully completed and the vessel returned to operation on 27 September to undertake buoy work in the Sound of Harris and the Clyde area.

The vessel was briefly mobilised to assist in the search for a missing fish farm vessel set adrift in storms but was recalled when the vessel was located sunk at the Shiants with no navigational danger.

Following an internal promotion to Master an external applicant has been recruited for the role of Chief Officer and will be joining NLB very shortly. An appropriate handover will be carried out. Another Master has indicated their intention to retire in April 2021 which may also result in an external applicant being recruited.

Commissioner Archibald enquired as to whether there are any existing staff qualified or willing to apply for the post. The Director of Operations explained that there is a study leave programme which has been severely disrupted by the pandemic and has resulted in individuals not being qualified as expected. The recruitment process has also been enhanced to include an Assessment Centre approach for Ship Masters and Senior Managers. Work is being undertaken to try and improve existing staff's preparedness for future opportunities.

EU Exit – The Managing Board received an update on developments regarding the helicopter contract and notwithstanding some concerns were relatively comfortable with the current position.

Oban Base - In addition to routine operations supporting cargo preparation, audits on Aviation Fuel and Port Security have been completed. The paint system has been restored to full working order and buoy painting is now back on schedule.

Programme and Renewals - Work continues at Cape Wrath, Stroma, Butt of Lewis, Barra Head, and Sound of Harris. There have been some delays again at Barra Head and Cape Wrath but they are the normal delays encountered with weather and delivering materials. Butt of Lewis is substantially complete with only a section of handrail outstanding. The contract for the new sector light at Corran Narrows has been awarded and the contractor intends to mobilise to site w/c 9 November.

Monitoring Project – The Managing Board noted the update on the monitoring project. There has been some delay caused partly by the pandemic and partly because of issues concerning the installation of NLB servers/routers. Internal communication issues have been investigated and addressed.

Delivery and Planning - Near normal technician operations continue. Although there are still a number of the outstanding works from pre-2017 there is now a decrease in planned maintenance over-dues in 3 out of the 4 areas. The fourth area has been effected by long-term absence.

Oban Bay - The Stakeholder Group has made significant progress in developing a business case as well as Harbour Orders. Public consultation on outer harbour areas is to be launched mid-November and a draft harbour order is expected for January 2021.

HR Report

Sick Absence - Sick Absence remains steady with long-term cases being high. There are a few cases that have been unable to progress due to the NHS not prioritising specialist reports. Shore-based short-term absence has declined and it is likely this is due to most employees working from home where they are less exposed to illnesses/infections.

Commissioner Archibald sought clarification on a particular long-term absence, not included in the figures, that had resulted from an incident on one of the ships about a year ago where there was no apparent action being taken. The Director of Operations provided an explanation on the complex and unique circumstances surrounding this absence.

Engagement Survey - The closing date for the NLB Engagement Survey was 9 October 2020. 137 responses were received which is the same as last year. Analysis of the results has been sent to Directors and the results will be discussed with Senior Managers at the Executive Group in November 2020. A report will be submitted to the next Managing Board.

Action: Chief Executive

Business Services Report

ICT - The new fire suppression system is now operational. A small number of issues have recently been raised at the HSE Committee which will now be followed-up.

Office 365 - Work is progressing on the O365 project with significant restructuring of the network completed to support the new active directory setup. Groups of users have successfully transitioned to email access in the cloud and once mailboxes are transferred work will commence on the communication elements of MS Teams. Preparation work is underway to support the transfer of SharePoint.

Touch Free Door Entry - New touch free door entry systems have been installed in Edinburgh and Oban to allow visitors to swipe across a sensor rather than touch button to indicate they are awaiting entry. There is a video monitor which allows staff to view and communicate with visitors without opening the door.

Procurement - The procurement team are engaging with suppliers to ensure deliveries will continue to be made as planned despite the increased lockdown. To date there have been no significant issues.

There is a high volume of procurement changes in progress including the move to World Trade Organisation regulations from January 2021, new rules on social values, UK content and ethics. The procurement team and other NLB staff such as Directors and Project Managers are undergoing training on these various elements as more information becomes available.

NLB is also becoming more embedded in DfT procurement processes. DfT now require to see full visibility of NLB's future procurement work and in particular have an involvement in anything above the OJEU level. This will be discussed further with DfT, particularly through the Framework Review scheduled to start in January 2021, to ascertain what levels could be set that will not slow down NLB procurement and would not create problems for DfT in terms of their oversight.

SR20 (Spending Review) - The Spending Review has now been revised to only cover 2020/21 which means NLB has not received confirmation regarding funding for the Vessel Replacement Project.

Corporate Plan 2021-2026 - The Corporate Plan was submitted to DfT on schedule. DfT has advised the Light Advisory Committee regarding the one year break in the RPI-X efficiency measure.

Pay Award - The performance bonus payment for staff will be paid in the November payroll.

2020-21 Annual Report and Accounts and Audit - Indicative dates have been agreed with NAO for the interim and final audit work to be carried out on NLB's 2020-21 financial year. It is planned to complete the work remotely in January and July 2021. There is a slight change in the make-up of the NAO Team but there is still sufficient continuity.

Management Reporting pack – October 2020 – The Managing Board noted the Management Reporting Pack Period 7 – October 2020. Due to the timing of the meeting and the deadline to issue papers the October results were circulated separately.

Business Development - The Managing Board noted the update on business development.

Estates - A sale price (plus legal costs) has been agreed with the owner for purchasing the land for the new light at Rubha Cuil Cheanna (Corran Narrows South). The landowner has been very supportive of the project work being undertaken before the legalities had been concluded.

Risk & Improvement

ISO Certification – NLB has now had audits across the full range of ISO standards conducted by Lloyds Register Quality Assurance (LRQA). The Quality, Environment and Health & Safety audit highlighted a range of opportunities for improvement, one major non-conformity which was closed-out quickly and one minor non-conformity which is currently under action. An interim surveillance audit on the Information Management Security System was well received. All aspects of the audit were fully met and no non-conformities were identified. There has been added value by way of five opportunities for improvement which ICT are actively working through.

Escalated Risk Overview – There have been no escalated risks since the last Managing Board. The risk relating to the Failure of Lifting Equipment has been de-escalated and both the ICT data storage and project cargo handling risks have dropped below the target escalation level, via the application of effective actions.

Executive Group - Deep Dive Risk Reviews - Eighteen deep-dive reviews have now been completed across all Departments. The process continues to drive the effective early identification of risk in addition to providing increasing levels of collaboration and inter-departmental support via the Executive Group. The process is reported in detail to the Audit & Risk Committee along with details of the top 5 risks from each Department to provide a penetrative overview.

Commissioner Wilkinson, as Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, advised the Managing Board that the level of assurance that can be taken from management of risk, which is built into the day-to-day management practices, is of a high quality and facilitates continuous improvement.

Tri-GLA Brexit Risk Register - The Tri-GLA Brexit Risk Register was updated following review by IGC 6 on 6 November 2020 linking with reporting to the JSB on 18 November 2020.

Business Continuity - The Risk and Improvement Manager is continuing to review, in collaboration with the Executive Group, how NLB would manage a further compounding event or impact, in the light of the current response environment. An online table-top exercise has been planned for 11 December 2020 with Isle of Man Harbours and is designed to review the existing arrangements to respond to a new danger, or wreck, within the Isle of Man's territorial waters.

Organisation

84 George Street Refurbishment - A Space Audit has been completed which included staff surveys and interviews. The initial proposed layout has been reviewed by the Project Board, Stakeholder Group and wider consultation with staff. Implications post-pandemic and staff aspirations for working from home have been taken into consideration. Part of the proposal is the relocation of the Board Room, to the second floor at the front of the building within the original Georgian part of the building. The preferred version of the proposed layout will be brought to the next Managing Board.

Action: Director of Operations

Social Activities - As part of the ongoing efforts to maintain morale and engagement a number of activities have been arranged i.e. Virtual Quiz Night, Children's Christmas Card Competition and Virtual Raffle. The Friday Coffee Mornings also continue to be held.

External Engagement

The Managing Board noted the list of activities. The Director of Operations highlighted the following areas:

National Emergency Plan for Fuel (NEFP) - The GLAs have now been added to the list for priority fuel supplies under the UK's (NEFP). However, following clarification, the NEFP only covers road vehicle use and there does not appear to be any similar system in respect of vessels or aircraft. However, DfT has noted the importance of this matter to the GLAs and other organisations and it may be given consideration in future.

Maritime Minister – The Chief Executive virtually meet with the Maritime Minister, Robert Courts MP on 9 November. The meeting provided an opportunity to brief him about NLB, the Vessel Replacement Project and NLB's response to COVID. The Minister expressed great interest in NLB and particularly in visiting Oban as soon as circumstances allow.

Dashboard

The Managing Board noted the updated Dashboard.

5. ANY CLARIFICATION (BY EXCEPTION) ON OPERATING REPORTS

Commissioner Woodward asked what NLB were doing to compensate for the lack of learning opportunities for staff given the move to remote working. In other organisations he is involved in they are encouraging management teams to think about how younger members of staff and new starts, can be exposed to people they can learn from. The Director of Operations advised that Line Managers are actively being encouraged to host regular discussions. As a number of the younger members of staff are within the Programme and Renewals Team, individual project leaders are ensuring that they meet physically from time to time and project teams go to site together. In future, when normal office working can resume, staff might want to do more home-working. Consequently, NLB is conscious that whatever the policy is it includes engagement and contact time to ensure that that knowledge and experience is shared.

6. INTER-GLA MATTERS

RPI-X - Following consideration of the application of the RPI-X regime to the GLAs the new Minister has agreed to a one year break based on the concerns and additional pressures created by the current Covid 19 situation.

The Managing Board noted the current inconsistencies between the GLAs on RPI-X and the requirement for an agreed common approach in the near future.

Corporate Plans – The Director of Business Services briefed the Managing Board on the GLAs' Corporate Plans. NLB's Corporate Plan was submitted to DfT and Transport Scotland by the deadline (31 October 2020) and arrangements are being made to brief officials and the LAC.

Commissioner Wilkinson leaves the meeting

7. COVID-19

NLB's COVID response continues to be treated as a business continuity process. Meetings continue weekly to ensure that NLB's response to the situation remains current and appropriate. Project Restart meetings also continue to be held every 2 weeks. Many aspects of the restart are on-hold until Level 2 and 3 constraints are relaxed. There have been no positive COVID cases to date within the NLB, however there have been cases of individuals having to self-isolate.

The Chief Executive's Briefings continue to be circulated weekly.

Maritime Mutual Support - The NLB instigated Maritime Mutual Support Group (MMSG) continues to provide a helpful forum to participating organisations. The direct exchange of experience and best practice related to COVID continues but there have been other spinoff opportunities. NLB recently offered to engage with Highland Council to share experience and best practice as they embark on the procurement of two new Hybrid Ferries for the Corran crossing. The offer has been readily accepted. The frequency of the MMSG remains fortnightly but this will be kept under review and will be adjusted as necessary to meet the operational need.

Commissioner Beveridge asked whether Calmac would be willing to share their recent experience of dealing with COVID on a vessel. The Director of Operations will enquire at the next MMSG meeting.

Action: Director of Operations

8. VESSEL REPLACEMENT PROJECT

The Managing Board noted the detailed report provided. The project continues to progress to plan. A successful Commercial Assurance Board (CAB) Stage 0 was held on 8 September 2020. The next big milestone for the project is the DfT CAB Stage 1 meeting on 15 December 2020 where drafts of the Procurement Strategy and Outline Business Case will be submitted for CAB's scrutiny.

Commissioner Shaw advised that the Deputy Director for Procurement at the MCA will be providing assistance, along with Commissioner Beveridge and himself, at the internal trial CAB Stage 1 on 3 December 2020.

Commissioner Beveridge, as a non-Executive representative on the Project Board, advised the Managing Board that the project was progressing well with good communication between all parties particularly with respect to developing the General Arrangement. It was noted that the risk register continues to develop and is a fair reflection of the current stage of the project.

9. REPORT FROM THE HS&E COMMITTEE

The Director of Operations advised that the most recent HS&E Committee meeting was held on 11 November 2020. This was a good meeting with positive engagement from all present. In particular there were two issues raised concerning Skerryvore. Although the asbestos issue has largely been resolved by cleaning and repainting there is one area, the battery rooms, that still remain to be addressed. The scheduling of this work has been passed to the Asset Team

to progress. With respect to the problems with the battery banks, a Business Case is being put together to install the batteries from Cape Wrath as a temporary measure until such time as the station is refurbished. This is a significant logistics challenge and requires considerable planning.

10. REPORT FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

The Managing Board noted and commended the comprehensive update which covered a wide range of initiatives which are driven by staff.

Commissioner Woodward suggested that the initiatives should be included in future Corporate Plans and linked to the overall carbon commitment to ensure that a more holistic view is taken. Commissioner Woodward will discuss this further with Commissioner Beveridge.

Action: Commissioner Woodward

The Risk & Improvement Manager advised that the Carbon Management Plan and Baseline Carbon Inventory will help transition the information into the corporate reporting framework. This will be accompanied by a range of additional environmental indicators which are more aligned with routine environmental reporting e.g. air quality emissions. There will be range of detailed KPIs which will feature more prominently in the Corporate Plan and which will be underpinned by the work to reduce NLB's carbon footprint in a much more structured manner.

Commissioner Woodward also enquired as to why there was such a significant reduction in the carbon associated with helicopter fuelling. The Director of Operations advised that has been no positive drive to cut aviation hours within that period, therefore the reduction in carbon is attributable to more efficient use of the aircraft and that there have been more projects with good road access.

Commissioner Archibald suggested that in future progress reports attention could be drawn to where additional best practice has been brought in, objectives have been delivered, what the KPIs will be and when they reach particular milestones. After discussion it was agreed that a summary on the progress of the Environmental Committee would be included within the current HS&E Report but a more detailed report would be presented to the Managing Board on an annual basis. The Director of Operations will liaise with the HS&E Manager.

Action: Director of Operations

11. REPORT FROM THE NAVIGATION COMMITTEE

Commissioner Beveridge, as Chair of the Navigation Committee, gave an update from SUCG meeting that was held on 4 November 2020. The meeting was held virtually and he congratulated the Navigation and ICT Teams on achieving an excellent outcome. The uptake of participation was good and similar to previous years. From the success of this year and looking forward to next year there may be an opportunity to hold a composite meeting where people have the option to attend either virtually or in person.

As a consequence of not having the facility for external speakers, the Agenda focused on internal NLB issues which had not been done in any great depth previously. The two papers on projects and assets will be used as briefing and development opportunities for the Inspection Voyages next year.

The Wreck Response Exercise with Isle of Man Harbours has been organised for 12 January 2021 and a report will be provided to the next Managing Board.

Commissioner Beveridge highlighted the challenges in the next few years when the pillar rock projects will be undertaken.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Stephen

It was noted that this would be Commissioner Stephen's last meeting on the Managing Board. The Chair, on behalf of the Managing Board, thanked her for her valuable and pertinent contribution over the last 6 years.

Commissioner Turnbull will join the Managing Board at the January 2021 meeting.

13. CORPORATE CALENDAR

The Managing Board noted the Corporate Calendars for the remainder of 2020 and for 2021. Meetings would continue to be held virtually until further notice.