NORTHERN LIGHTHOUSE BOARD
NAVIGATION AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES – 7 AUGUST 2024

PRESENT:	Hugh Shaw	Chair
	Brian Archibald	Commissioner
	Jamie Finlay	Commissioner
	Dick Welsh	Commissioner
	Mike Bullock	Chief Executive
	Phil Day	Director of Operations
	Mairi Rae	Director of Business Services
	Peter Douglas	Navigation Manager
	Andrew Stevenson	Asset Manager
	Paul Hudson	Programme and Renewals Manager
	Joe Jeffrey	Delivery and Planning Manager
	Gillian Burns	Navigation Officer
	Elaine Wilkinson	Commissioner (Observer)
	Ron Robson	Commissioner (Observer)
	Karen Charleson	Senior Executive Assistant (Notes)

ASSURANCE STATEMENT

The Navigation and Operations Committee met on 7 August 2024. The agenda covered key areas including: Navigation, Operations and Business Services reports; Recent marine incidents and assessment of AtoN adequacy; Engineering requirements for existing AtoNs and future options for forthcoming projects; NLB lighthouse tender fleet status and helicopter operations; and Climate Change operational adaption measures.

The Committee can confirm that assurance was received in relation to all key issues.

- The Executive provided the necessary assurance that every effort was being made to attain, or exceed, the IALA recommended CAT 1 AtoN availability level.

- The Capital and Maintenance Programme remains under review and is subject to modification as operational priorities change.

- The Risk Cards for Aids to Navigation Provision, Asset Loss or Damage, Information Technology and Operational Technology, Technological Change and Obsolescence and Natural Events have been viewed by the committee and are updated on a regular basis.

The Committee wishes to draw the Governance Board's attention to the following issues:

- The AtoN Category 1 availability is currently at 99.84%, is a slight increase since the last meeting, and exceeds the IALA recommended level. This reflects the teamwork and tremendous commitment, dedication and effort by all those contributing to operations from across the organisation. Category 2 and 3 availabilities are well above the IALA Standard.

- Four incidents have been reported since the last meeting:

    - On 13 June the coaster CEG COSMOS carrying timber ran aground in the Sound of Islay. She subsequently refloated and proceeded to Ayr for an inspection.

- On 30 June the coaster VERTOM EVA ran aground in the approaches to the River Tay. She refloated at the following HW and was escorted into the Port of Dundee.

- On 4 July the 16m fish farm landing craft JULIE ANN sank on her mooring in the Sound of Mull.

- On 22 July the dive vessel JEAN ELAINE sank following a grounding in Deer Sound, Orkney Isles. No further action was deemed necessary by OIC Harbour Master.

None of the incidents were as a result of an AtoN failure.

- Corran Point – Redevelopment of both terminals of the Corran Ferry
NLB have received a Scoping Report of behalf of Highland Council. The relocation of the Ardgour (West) Terminal presents no issues, however the proposed development of the eastern Corran breakwater and berthing structure is North of the existing terminal and will obscure the Corran Narrows NE directional and all-round lights. NLB Navigation and Assets have met with Highland Council and their consultants to discuss the likely impacts and potential mitigations which would involve relocation of one or more lights to the end of the new breakwater, and ultimately removal of the existing structure.

- 2023/24 Annual Report of Inspection/Audit of Local Aids to Navigation, Offshore Infrastructures & Aquaculture Sites
The Committee thanked all involved in the inspections/audits and to produce a very comprehensive document. During the year, 2118 of the 2377 Local Lighthouse Authorities (LLAs - this is ordinarily the local harbour authority) AtoNs (89.1%) were inspected, however it was disappointing to note that since 2022/23 there has been an increase in the failure rate and for the 2023/24 period 176 were found to be defective representing a deficiency rate of 8.3%. Across the aquaculture sector, inspections found that only 40.5% were marked correctly.

  The GLAs have very limited powers to follow up on deficiencies in the provision of AtoN by LLAs or other bodies. It is intended to seek clarification of these powers in any revision of the Merchant Shipping Act.

  In the meantime, the Chair of NavOps will write to ‘targeted’ LLA AtoN providers to remind them of their obligations under existing statutory requirements and/or the conditions of their licence.

  Pending some minor amendments, the Committee approved the document for issue to DfT, Scottish Government and the Isle of Man Government.

- AtoN Review – In accordance with the agreed schedule, the Committee reviewed the proposals for Area 6 – Shetland Islands, Area 7 – Noss Head to Rattray Head, and Area 8 – Rattray Head to St Abbs Head.

  The review included addressing any changes to AtoN made in the last 5 years, changes outstanding, any significant traffic changes or commercial developments, potential traffic changes due to offshore wind farm infrastructure and unlit beacons.

  The NavOps Committee will meet in late August to make any final changes before NLB’s Review is forwarded to the other GLAs for further discussion/comment.

  Final approval dates for the NavOps Committee and the GLA CEO’s Meeting are scheduled for January 2025.

- Project Site Access
  Bass Rock – approvals were obtained from NatureScot to permit access by barge in advance of the open season to progress the repairs to the landing. Unfortunately, once obtained no barge was available throughout Scotland due to renewable energy charters. Works will therefore commence in October using the helicopter with ongoing risks of early season weather disruptions.

- Virtual Automatic Identification System (VAIS)
  The 2020 AtoN Review identified a number of sites where Automatic Identification System (AIS) base stations should be installed with the capability of deploying temporary virtual AIS as a response to a wreck or new danger. The first site at Duncansby Head has been installed (along with a permanent virtual AIS AtoN marking Sandy Riddle). The second site at Buchan Ness is being prepared.

- Aviation Services Project
  The project was progressing well until the Should Cost Model (SCM) was presented to IL and TH on 24 May. Although the SCM is a theoretical affordability ceiling the other GLAs challenged the results and started to review the previously agreed operational requirements. There was a risk that based on the notional cost of the new contract the other GLAs were reverting to an input based rather than output- based specification which would not have delivered the additional flying requirements. This debate resulted in delays which meant that the CAB and Tier 2 board which were scheduled for July and September had to be cancelled. An emergency project board was held in person on 10 July in TH and the technical working group was challenged to review and agree the requirements. This was completed with word changing but with an acceptable way forward to meet NLB objectives. A significant amount of time has been spent educating and influencing and we now believe we have an agreed way forward which was formally accepted by the ASP board meeting on 2 August.

  NLB's lawyers, CMS, identified that a clause in the Note Verbale indicated that although it expires in August 2025 it would prevent IL participation in tri-GLA procurement after the new procurement reform act commences on 28 October 2024. DfT and the other GLAs were advised of this issue. DfT have informed DoT and are exploring an amendment to the Note Verbale to allow joint procurements to continue beyond 28 October. The IPT have revised timelines to establish a route to ensure the procurement is advertised before 28 October. While this timeline is achievable, with the support of external parties, it puts a lot of additional pressure on a few key NLB personnel particularly in the Procurement team.

- Escalated Risks and Risk Cards Review

  There were no escalated risks.

  The Committee reviewed Risk Cards Numbers: 8 – Exploitation of Reserve Capacity; and 9 – Technological Change

  The remaining Risk Cards applicable to NavOps were noted.

It was agreed that any approvals would be dealt with as they arise rather than wait until Agenda Item 10. It was also agreed to conduct the AtoN Review after Any Other Business to allow for more time.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Commissioner Charteris, Ewen MacKerchar (Marine Operations Manager), Adam Lewis (Coastal Inspector) and Karl Davies (Coastal Inspector).

Observers
The Committee welcomed Commissioners Wilkinson and Robson as observers.

Declarations of Interest
There were no declarations of interest highlighted at the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Subject to a review of the wording under "Asset Management Strategy", the Minutes of the Navigation and Operations Committee meeting held on 17 April 2024 were agreed and can be published on the website.

Action: Chair/Senior Executive Assistant

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted the update provided within the meeting pack.

Butt of Lewis, Galson Trust – The Business Services Manager, has researched long term leases and has received details of the requirements that Galson Trust would need included. An update will be provided to the next meeting.

Action: Asset Manager

Calmac/Sconser Ferry – The Navigation Manager has confirmed that this is not a harbour area. There is a meeting planned with Highland Council Harbours where this will be a topic for discussion.

Action: Navigation Manager

Tri-GLA GMNP – A presentation will be given at the User Group Meeting in November 2024.

Action: Director of Operations

Eileanan Dubha (Lochalsh) - A tabletop review from an engineering perspective e.g. power consumption, battery size, etc is still to be undertaken and will be brought back to the Committee in due course.

Action: Director of Operations

Ruff Reef Perch (Cantick) – A Structural Assessment, carried out by an External Consultant, has advised that the structure has a residual life of 40 years for the legs and 10 years for the bracing. The technical note details the repairs required. It was noted that the residual life was based on the structure being in place for 71 years where it is actually closer to 120 years which should provide a larger residual life.

The Navigation Manager has discussed with Orkney Islands Council Harbour Master and Northlink Ferries (Hamnavoe) and both have confirmed that they would be content with the proposal that an East Cardinal Virtual AtoN be broadcast at the 5 metre contour (1.3c distant) from either Duncansby Head or Stroma, and the perch reduced to an unlit beacon.

Commissioner Archibald asked if the smaller non-AIS users were onside with Ruff Reef being replaced with a virtual AtoN and whether the structure would be allowed to deteriorate naturally or become a day mark (unlit beacon). The Director of Operations advised that further consultation will be required with some users but the AtoN Review will inevitably dictate what will be done in this location.

4. NAVIGATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The Committee noted the report and discussion took place on the following items:

Incidents

- CEG COSMOS - The coaster CEG COSMOS (1139GT / 63m) carrying logs ran aground in the Sound of Islay at 1951 on 13 June 2024. She refloated at high water and went into Ayr for inspection.

- VERTOM EVA - The coaster VERTOM EVA (88m) ran aground on the entrance to the River Tay at 1230 on 30 June 2024. She refloated at 1830 and was escorted into Dundee.

  Commissioner Archibald enquired as to whether the buoys in the area belong to the harbour authority. The Navigation Manager confirmed that they are all harbour authority buoys. The Navigation Officer added that AtoN reviews have been done extensively and the harbour authority is looking at this particular incident and others. NtMs have been issued around using the centre line and there will be a change to the charting. The harbour authority has been exposed to bad weather and given the sandbank movement they survey the area regularly however there is very little that can be done to make passage any better. Any developments/updates will be provided to Committee.

  Action: Navigation Manager

- JULIE ANN - The fish farm landing craft JULIE ANN (16m) sank on her mooring at Fiunary, Sound of Mull on 4 July 2024.

- JEAN ELAINE - The dive vessel JEAN ELAINE (21m) sank after grounding at the upper end of Deer Sound, Orkney on 22 July. No action was considered necessary and this was confirmed by Orkney Islands Council Harbour Master.

None of the incidents were as a result of an AtoN failure.

Loch Etive

The Navigation Manager visited Loch Etive on 1 May 2024 and met with Mowi. A number of potential AtoN improvements (4 buoys and 2 perches) were identified and are being progressed by Mowi.

Corran Point

NLB have received a Scoping report on behalf of the Highland Council for redevelopment of both terminals of the Corran ferry. Relocation of the Ardgour terminal presents no issues, however the proposed Corran development (breakwater and berthing structure) is North of the existing terminal and will obscure the Corran Narrows NE directional and all-round lights to some extent (dependent on height of user eye and height of tide, and whether the ferry is alongside).

Navigation and Assets met with consultants Affric and Highland Council on 1 July 2024 to discuss impacts and potential mitigations which would involve relocation of one or more lights to the end of the new breakwater and removing the existing structure. The light would also become a main powered light as opposed to solar. It is expected that most of the cost of relocating the light will be met by Highland Council.

Commissioner Archibald asked if the light was relocated to the end of the new breakwater with the ferry behind if there would be a conspicuity issue with regard to background light. The Director of Operations advised that it is a daylight light which reduces its intensity at night. If background light becomes an issue the intensity could be increased.

The Navigation Manager/Asset Manager will keep the Committee up to date with any development.

Action: Navigation Manager/Asset Manager

2020 AtoN Review
The Committee noted the updated tracker of the 2020 AtoN Review.

Civil Hydrography Programme (CHP)
The Committee noted the recent, current and planned CHP which was provided for information.

The Chair asked with the MCA consult the GLAs before they release with final programme. The Navigation Manager advised that NLB is invited to various Civil Hydrography Group meetings.

GNSS update
Galileo satellites FM25 and FM27 were successfully launched from Kennedy Space Centre on 28 April and are currently under commissioning.

Aids to Navigation Inspections
At the end of June 2024 257 LLA AtoN had been inspected out of a possible 2370 (10.8%) against an inspection target of 70%. 123 AtoN are recorded as not inspected within the last 3 years, however this includes newly established and occasional AtoNs, as well as some not visible from inspecting ships. 88 faults remained outstanding at the end of the month and are being followed up by Navigation staff.

248 NLB AtoN have been inspected out of a possible 485 (51.1%). 6 NLB AtoN are currently out with the 3 year maximum inspection period (East of Shetland & Foula).

Annual Offshore Oil & Gas Inspection voyage
NLV PHAROS undertook the annual offshore inspection voyage between 30 November 2023 and 5 December 2023. Platforms to the West and East of Shetland, and as far South as the Scott Field, were inspected before the weather broke. Attempts to schedule further inspections were unsuccessful.

Inspection results were positive - 53 inspections were undertaken with only 3 failures identified.

There were 4 partial inspections where platforms were either day shift only and unable to sound fog signal manually or were unmanned at the time – in all cases the in-field ERRV was contacted and details of monthly AtoN checks were provided when requested.

Marine Licence and Sanction Requests
The Committee noted the summary of Marine Licence Activity and Sanctions for the establishment/ disestablishment of AtoN as required under the Navigation Committee Terms of Reference.

Resourcing
The Committee noted the workload of the Navigation team, in terms of licensing cases, over the last two years. There has been a surge since summer 2022, partly driven by Marine Scotland addressing a backlog of aquaculture site applications, and by the Scotwind data-gathering phase, which has generated a number of meetings and applications for data gathering buoys & seabed sampling to date.

Annual Report
The Committee reviewed the Annual Report of Inspections of LLAs, Offshore Installations and Aquaculture.

The Committee noted the disappointing trend in LLA inspection failure rates (8.3%). The Committee discussed how issues could be highlighted/followed up with the relevant LLAs while ensuring good relationship are maintained noting that NLB does have the power to issue formal direction. It was agreed to liaise with Marine Directorate to ascertain what their current policy is and discuss further at a future meeting.

Action: Director of Operations

Commissioner Welsh asked for the distribution of the Annual Report be extended to include Isle of Man Harbours and the Isle of Man Department of Transport. The Navigation Manager will update the circulation list.

Action: Navigation Manager

Commissioner Welsh highlighted the proposals for Logan, Morgan Developments and Mooir Vannin offshore wind farm developments and asked for them to be included in the report. The Navigation Manager advised that this was an omission and a paragraph would be added.

Action: Navigation Manager

The Chief Executive advised that some of the boxes at Annex F were blank. The Navigation Manager will review and update accordingly.

Action: Navigation Manager

The Chair asked if there was any mechanism for recording areas that require reviewed in the Merchant Shipping Act. The Director of Operations advised that there is a document that has been created to capture any gaps. Current Officials are well aware that there are aspects that NLB/GLAs would wish to change.

Commissioner Finlay asked, if the opportunity arises, if he could join a trip to build an understanding of LLA inspections. The Navigation Manager advised that, if there were no biohazard restrictions, he would be happy for Commissioner Finlay to join either an audit visit, aquaculture inspection or join the vessel for LLA inspections in due course.

The Committee commended the very comprehensive document and acknowledged the time and effort required to carry out the inspections. Subject to the amendment discussed, the Committee approved the Annual Report for distribution.

5. OPERATIONS REPORT

The Committee noted and discussed the Operations report:

AtoN Availability
The Committee noted the 3 year rolling availability figures to 29 July 2024.

Category 1 availability is at 99.84% which is on the IALA standard and a slight increase since the last meeting.

Category 2 and Category 3 availability remains above the IALA standard.

Outages
Since the last committee there has been no significant failures to note.

Ships Downtime
There has been no further downtime for the vessels since the last meeting.

Maintenance
The Committee noted the Q4 Dashboard. Overall Planned maintenance overdues are reported as 1671 out of a total of 5593 equalling 28.87% an 8.11% increase from the last report. The are a number of reasons for the increase notably that there has been a new safety critical medical assessment provider which resulted in a number of technicians being pulled off the roster until aspects of their medical history could be checked with their doctor. While NLB are reassured they are good provider it did cause operational difficulty when technicians could not go out to site.

Operations Projects
The Committee noted the Project Dashboard. Temporary lights for project work remain at, Fair Isle South (Skadan), Lunna Holm, Oigh Sgeir and Sumburgh Head.

Project Site Access
Bass Rock - approvals were obtained from Nature Scot to permit access by barge in advance of the open season to progress the repairs to landing. Unfortunately, once obtained no barge was available throughout Scotland largely due to renewable energy charters. Works will therefore commence in October using the helicopter with ongoing risks of early season weather disruptions.

Sule Skerry - the temporary light will be installed in September with work progressing to obtain permissions for site access through the summer of 2025. The NLB retained Engineering consultants are providing the environmental competencies for the necessary appropriate assessment.

Assets

Access Roads – The Committee noted the update on access roads.

AtoN Lightning Protection - The follow up training course, with members of staff from NLB, TH and IL was successfully held on 13/14th May 2024.

Commissioner Archibald advised that there had been a slight question mark over whether NLB's lightning protection was not as good as could be in some cases and asked if this course has provided the information to give more confidence. The Asset Manager advised that NLB is aware that lightning protection is compromised on various sites with lack of ground anchors or, where it is out at sea, no plates are left but nothing has been highlighted as at risk. The course was set up to give all electrical engineers within the GLAs an understanding of the requirements of the current lightning protection standards and how to undertake a risk assessment. It was felt that it was a very worthwhile course and has provided a way forward.

Sanda – The flat roof on the low level tower ceiling has collapsed and is leaking. Emergency plans are in place to resolve the issue. Access in the meantime has been limited however technicians can still access via the top level door in an emergency situation.

Escalated Matters

AIS - The 2020 Aton Review identified a number of sites where AIS base stations should be installed with the capability of deploying temporary virtual AIS as a response to a wreck or new danger. The first site at Duncansby Head has been installed (along with a permanent virtual AIS Aton marking Sandy Riddle) with the second at Buchan Ness being prepared. The operational processes necessary to deploy these temporary virtual Aton are being developed and until these are in place the system will not be live.

Monitoring - 5 RTU have been installed since the last committee. 10 RTU remain to be replaced across the estate.

NLV POLE STAR Crane – NLV POLE STAR's Effer Crane, used for launching and recovery of the workboat, has been condemned due to corrosion. This will not be replaced but instead the workboat will be repositioned to the main deck for the main crane to access.

Commissioner Finlay asked if the using the main crane for launching the workboat meant any additional operating limitation and if there are any risk assessment, mitigations or considerations that need to be in place. The Director of Operations advised that the workboat is launched uncrewed. The lifting plans have been updated to reflect the change but it is not believed it brings any additional restrictions on the boat.

Oban Harbour – The Committee noted the update on progress regarding the Harbour Revision Order.

Environmental

The Committee noted the Initial Eco steaming data for the GLA fleet for the 1st quarter of the FY2024/25. All of the GLAs are committed to carbon reduction and the data will be useful to use for benchmarking across the GLAs.

6. BUSINESS SERVICES

Procurement

Aviation Services Project (ASP) – The Committee noted the update on the ASP. Following some debate between the GLAs on the Should Cost Model an agreed way forward was formally accepted by the ASP Project Board on 2 August. However, the debate resulted in delays which meant that the Commercial Assurance Board (CAB) and the Tier 2 Board which were scheduled for July and September had to be cancelled.

Meantime, NLB's lawyers identified that a clause in the Note Verbale indicated that although it expires in August 2025 it would prevent IL participation in tri-GLA procurement after the new procurement reform act commences on 28 October 2024. DfT have informed DoT and are exploring an amendment to the Note Verbale to allow joint procurements to continue beyond 28 October. ASP timelines have been revised to establish a route to ensure the procurement is advertised before 28 October 2024. NLB is working with DfT to ensure that all signoffs required by the various Centres of Excellences, are achieved in this timeline. Dates for CAB and Tier 2 Board are now scheduled in October 2024 but no further slippage is available. While this timeline is achievable, with the support of external parties, it puts a lot of additional pressure on a few key NLB personnel particularly in the Procurement team.

Should the timeline not be achieved this will result in an operational gap, however discussions have taken place to ensure mitigations are in place.

Preparation for Procurement Reform October 2024 - Training is now available, and the Procurement Team are all completing nine modules in advance of the new regulations coming into force. The senior members of the team will then complete 3 consecutive days of Deep Dive Training. The Executive Group has been provided with the training modules to consider which other NLB roles should be completing the training. This training requirement may impact procurement timelines so is being closely monitored.

NLB also require to update policies and procedures to align to Government, however many of the policies have not yet been issued so quantifying the resources required is not possible. NLB continue to monitor the workload requirements and are seeking to find additional temporary resources to support the core team.

7. NOTICES TO MARINERS

Notices to Mariners 04 of 2024 – Cava Re-Establishment of Performance Light; 05 of 2024 – Start Point Re-Establishment of Permanent Light and 06 of 2024 – Duncansby Head AIS were published since the last meeting.

It was noted that the Commissioner members of the NavOps Committee had not been receiving NtMs when issued. The Navigation Officer will work with the Senior Executive Assistant to get this issue resolved.

Action: Navigation Officer

8. ESCALATED RISKS AND RISK CARD REVIEW

Escalated Risks

There were no escalated risks for discussion at this meeting.

Risk Card Review
The Committee reviewed Risk Card Numbers 8 – Exploitation of Reserve Capacity and 9 – Technological Change and Obsolescence.

Exploitation of Reserve Capacity

- Additional Action – Delete "Finance Team Reviewing the scope of financial checks to be completed prior to contract acceptance." as this is a duplication of "Business Support manager Introducing a New Client Form (with key company details and contacts) to be completed for all new customers which will form part of a new 'due diligence' check."
- Additional Action – Review "ISO internal audit scheduled for 23/24 covering Oban Berthing Protocols and Liabilities." to either change the date or confirm that it has been completed.

Technological Change and Obsolescence

- Additional Action – Review the last 2 bullets "Review of 2G obsolescence due for switch off in 2033. Currently however, outages are not being prioritised by network providers, resulting in extended outages." and "Review of 2G obsolescence ongoing – due for switch off in 2033, however, outages are not being prioritised by network providers, resulting in extended outage impact." as there appears to be an overlap.

Risk Cards Numbers: 5 – AtoN Provision and 6 – Information Technology and Information Technology; 10 – Asset Loss/Damage; 12 – Natural Events and 15 – Climate Emergency (Adaptation) were noted.

The Chair requested that, following discussion on the Annual Report, an additional action be included in the relevant Risk Cards - "Follow up on the Annual Report by engagement with certain LLA".

It was noted that the risks around 2G/3G obsolescence there is now a technology solution to integrate the 4G lanterns into Ignition which will guarantee the monitoring for 2G until it is switched off and the lanterns can be replaced. The scope for this project is currently being drafted.

9. POLICY APPROVALS

Any approvals required were covered under the appropriate Agenda Item.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2025 AtoN Review Proposals
The Committee noted:

- Changes made in the last 5-year programme
- Changes outstanding
- Signification Traffic changes in last 5 years
- Developments within the last 5 years
- Potential traffic changes
- Unlit beacon in the area

Area 6 – Shetland Islands
Initial recommendations:

- Replace Firths Voe lighthouse with new tower and 10NM LED sector light (replaces both PEL and sector lights) (previously discussed at Committee)
- Replace Rova Head sector and PEL lights with 10NM LED sector light (previously

discussed at Committee)
- Gruney – re-engineer as WR 7NM light (was 8/6NM)
- Skate of Marrister – re-engineer; maintain 4NM light

The Committee discussed:

- Firth Voe – There are 3 similar structures in the plan and instead of looking at a SPLAT was to look at a GRP structure which more in keeping with the existing cast iron structure. Doing this at the 3 locations, the economies of scale for getting the GRP panels and molds done makes more sense. The project team has started working on the new footprint and securing the necessary piece of land for a mains fed GRP structure.

  Commissioner Welsh enquired as to the recyclability of a GRP structure. The Programmes & Renewals Manager advised that it is at the very early stages of design. It is a proven technique and there are currently similar structures on site. All of these structures are coming up for around 30 years and have very little deterioration.

- Rova Head – Trials have taken place by NLV PHAROS in conjunction with Lerwick Port Authority and there is agreement in principle from Lerwick Port Authority that it would be acceptable to remove the PEL light and replace with a single LED Sector light.

The Navigation Manager gave a demonstration of the QGIS platform. This provides a live feed from UKHO for vector charts. NLB currently have this on a 3 month trial basis.

Area 7 – Noss Head to Rattray Head
Initial recommendations:
- Replace racon at Halliman Skerries buoy with AIS
- Cairnbulg beacon – add AIS to beacon
- Riff Bank South buoy – relocate approx. 3c to West to facilitate access and egress to Port of Ardersier
- Chanonry - re-engineer; maintain 12NM light
- Longman Point – re-engineer as WR 5NM light (was 5/4NM)

The Committee discussed:

- Cairnbulg Beacon - The Navigation Manager is in discussion with the Harbour Master to see if there is anything NLB can do to mark this awkward site. The visual conspicuity and radar conspicuity stand out well. Following an incident and MAIB discussion the light was improved from a 6 mile to 10 mile range. This is one of the cast iron structures discussed earlier in the agenda. Cairnbulg is a significant beacon and needs to be maintained.

- Riff Bank South buoy - Discussions have been held with the Harbour Master to consider whether the buoy should be handed over to the new port authority, change the buoy or discontinue the buoy. The conclusion was that the main value of the buoy was for traffic coming out of the Inverness Firth and heading to the East and it would be good retain the existing South Cardinal buoy as an obvious mark. Further discussions are to be held with the developer.

- Craigton Point - Commissioner Archibald asked if the light at Craigton Point was NLB's or of the Port Authority's and had there been an alteration to it. The Navigation Manager advised that the light on the North Side beside the Coastguard Station belongs to NLB. The Asset Manager added that the light is a mains light with battery backup. The batteries are in a room used by the Coastguard. NLB is looking to replace the light with a self-contained light out on the balcony where the light is at the moment so the batteries can be removed from within the Coastguard Station, part of this is a reduction in range.

Commissioner Archibald asked if NLB were content with the light provision for vessels going both East and West. The Navigation Manager undertook to carry out a review and discuss with the locals on what can be achieve at this site.

Action: Navigation Manager

Area 8 – Rattray Heat to St Abb's Head
Initial recommendations:

- Discontinue South Carr buoy
- Bass Rock – re-engineer; maintain 10NM light

The Committee discussed:

- South Carr buoy - Following the 2005 AtoN Review, NLB tried to light the unlit beacon. For several years NLB tried to establish the landowner of the beacon but was unable to do so subsequently it was decided to put the buoy there in substitute for lighting the beacon. The buoy does not seem to be contributing to the safety of traffic and therefore the proposal is to discontinue it. It was agreed that the breakdown of the traffic will be provided to the next meeting to see where the larger commercial vehicles are going, however it is thought it is mainly passenger boats.

  Commissioner Archibald highlighted that vessels may be choosing to pass inside at a reasonable distance to the buoy and if the buoy disappears, they have lost a reference and perhaps the Committee should revisit the previous reviews and consider lighting the beacon.

Summary of AtoN Review proposals for further discussion - It is proposed to focus the late August meeting on the proposals where the navigational impact is significant (i.e. where a Navigational Rick Assessment is required) noting that some items scheduling may change as a result of forthcoming review of Capital Works Programme.

Following the August meeting, a peer review will be carried out with the other GLAs before it goes to the Chief Executives' and respective Boards for approval. It will then be presented to the Joint Users Group in September 2024 and the NLB Users Group in November 2024. The document will then be finalised by the end of the year. The NavOps Committee will have an opportunity to see the document again at the October 2024 and January 2025 meetings. The document can be circulated out of committee if required.

11. ASSURANCE STATEMENT

The Chair will circulate a draft Assurance Statement following the meeting. Committee Members are requested to send any comments/amendment to the Chair over the next few days.

Action: All

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Navigation and Operations Committee will take place on 16 October 2024 – time to be confirmed. This will be a virtual meeting.