



Northern Lighthouse Board

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**From Mike Bullock OBE
Chief Executive**

To Whom it May Concern

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Letter of Support: Fair Isle Ferry - Application to UK Government Levelling Up Fund – Round 2

Formed by statute in 1786, the Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) is the General Lighthouse Authority for Scotland and the Isle of Man. NLB is responsible for the superintendence and management of all lights, buoys and beacons within our area. This vital safety service makes a significant contribution to the prevention of accidents and incidents around the coastline, safeguarding not only lives and property, but also protecting the precious marine environment. NLB is an Arm's Length Body (ALB) of the UK Department for Transport (DfT).

NLB operates and maintains an extensive network of over 200 Lighthouses including two major stations on Fair Isle, both of which were established in 1892. This means that the relationship with the people of Fair Isle is very strong and the corporate understanding of the challenges of living and working in this remote location is comprehensive.

The two Lighthouses are crucial Aids to Navigation (AtoN) for commercial traffic transiting to and from Shetland to Orkney and the UK Mainland as well as international traffic travelling to and from the Americas and Northern Europe. Although both stations are now automated (Fair Isle South was manned until 1998), to ensure reliability NLB Technicians based in Lerwick regularly visit Fair Isle to carry out essential maintenance and, if necessary, urgent defect rectification following a breakdown.



Fair Isle North



Fair Isle South

Currently, to allow NLB to carry out its statutory duties as set out in Section 193 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 and to discharge the obligations of the UK Government for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention, by necessity the default option is to use NLB's contracted helicopter service to transport people and light equipment, or a combination of the helicopter and NLB's vessel NLV PHAROS to deliver cargo. The provision of a reliable and fit for purpose ferry service for the island would be transformational for the logistic support to NLB's operations on Fair Isle. The ability to easily transport not only personnel but larger equipment and bulk materials would mean that maintenance and project support could be delivered without the use of ship and helicopter operations. This will result in significant carbon saving which will help towards NLB's adherence to the UK Government's Greening Government Commitments and the organisation's own goal for operations to become fully sustainable as soon practicable.

NLB is in the process of procuring a new hybrid-powered vessel to replace the aging and increasingly unreliable buoy tender NLV POLE STAR. As a result the Integrated Project Team leading the work have gained a wealth of knowledge and experience of HM Treasury's Green Book process, engaging with the shipbuilding market and most significantly the DfT's assurance and approvals process. We are aware that other transport related levelling up projects are being assured by DfT. Having received generous help from other organisations at the start of our project we would be delighted to offer assistance to Shetland Islands Council with this important project.

Yours faithfully
Mike Bell

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