

# LOUGHS AGENCY

## BUSINESS PLAN 2016

1 October 2015



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## **FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

I am pleased to present the Loughs Agency Business Plan for 2016.

The Plan is set within the context of the challenging economic reality which we now face. It sets out our priorities and key goals for the coming year and how the delivery of the Business Plan will be measured.

I am pleased to report that 2015 was a very successful year for the Agency. The Foyle and Carlingford catchments continued to be a major tourist attraction. We continued to develop the Agency's role in marketing and promoting the resources of both Loughs through the support of the INTERREG IVa Programme. We also reached the conclusion of our very successful IBIS Research Project.

The Agency was delighted to be presented with the Employability Champion Award 2015 by NI Business in the Community. This award is given annually to an organisation that strives to become an employer of choice and best supports unemployed people by addressing employment across Northern Ireland through a wide range of initiatives.

With the impact of required savings on our core budget, we have been proactive in pursuing external sources of funding. The Agency will be seeking to access the next round of EU and other funding in 2016 and beyond based on the preparations made in 2015. Progress on these applications will be updated in future reports.

As an advocate of the conservation and protection of the fisheries resource of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas, we intend to maintain current protection initiatives and to increase public awareness and commitment to our environment and aquatic biodiversity.

Marketing and promoting the resources of both Loughs will remain one of our key priorities in 2016. We will also continue to run our well established community based programme of outreach events.

I want to pay tribute to our Chairman and Board for their support and direction throughout the year.

Finally, I want to thank the Loughs Agency's staff for their continuing dedication and commitment.

**John Pollock**  
**Chief Executive**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Loughs Agency (an Agency of the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (FCILC)) was established as one of the cross-border bodies under the Good Friday Agreement. Under the Agreement, the Agency took over the fisheries protection functions of the Foyle Fisheries Commission and was given both an additional cross-border operational area in Carlingford and the additional functions of developing aquaculture and marine tourism.

The FCILC is legislated by the North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (NI) Order 1999 and the British-Irish Agreement Acts 1999 and 2002. The Board of the FCILC reports to the North South Ministerial Council and sponsoring government departments both north and south – the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR).

### **What we do**

The Loughs Agency aims to provide sustainable social, economic and environmental benefits through the effective conservation, management, promotion and development of the fisheries and marine resources of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas.

The functions of the Agency are set out in North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (NI) Order 1999, the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999, the Foyle Fisheries Act (NI) 1952 (as amended) and the Foyle Fisheries Act 1952 (as amended).

These functions are as follows:

- The promotion of development of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough for commercial and recreational purposes in respect of marine, fishery and aquaculture matters;
- The management, conservation, protection, improvement and development of the inland fisheries of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas;
- The development and licensing of aquaculture and shellfisheries; and
- The development of marine tourism.

The Agency will exercise its functions to provide and develop sustainable benefits to the economy, the environment, and to society in the Foyle and Carlingford Areas, through the creation of partnerships with users and potential users and by raising awareness of these resources.

The main objectives of the Agency are:

- To conserve and protect salmon and inland fisheries of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas;
- To develop the salmon and inland fisheries towards their maximum sustainable productivity;

- To develop sustainable aquaculture through the provision of a licensing regime;
- To develop marine tourism;
- To pursue increased efficiency and continuous improvement in the delivery of services to all customers; and
- To ensure the efficient, effective and economic utilisation of resources available to the Agency.

## **How we operate**

Our Headquarters are located in Derry/Londonderry, with a regional office in Carlingford, Co Louth. The Agency currently employs 54 staff across a diverse range of functions including fishery protection, scientific research, development, marketing, and administration support. Resources are focused on delivery responsibilities, with the Agency working to ensure staff have the necessary skills, training and motivation. HR policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose and comply with the current legislation in each jurisdiction.

The Agency is fully committed to its statutory obligations in relation to Equality and Good Relations Duties and continues to meet its Equality Scheme commitments and the targets in its Audit of Inequalities.

As a cross-border body we operate under the policy direction of the North South Ministerial Council and the two Governments, and are accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Oireachtas. At an administrative level, we report to our Sponsor Departments.

Funding is provided by the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Oireachtas and is drawn down from our Sponsor Departments on a 50/50 basis. The Agency is fully committed to enhancing its focus on finding and securing funding from alternative sources to alleviate any shortfalls in our programmes in coming years. Additional saving opportunities will be realised by continuing to work with other Government Agencies and Public Bodies to share resources where feasible, and through transfer of knowledge and systems between organisations. The Agency continues to comply with corporate governance standards as defined in the Agency's Financial Memorandum which is under review by both Finance Departments.

The Agency is committed to the objectives of the NI Executive's Asset Management Plan.

## **CORPORATE PLAN 2014 – 2016**

The Corporate Plan 2014 – 2016 provides the strategic planning framework which maps out a clear direction for the Loughs Agency during the life of the Plan and beyond. Central to our vision for the future is the creation of a strategic plan for sustainable commercial and recreational development of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas. The Agency recognises the social and economic benefits which can be derived from the resources of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas. Through successful

delivery of our business objectives, we will strive to conserve, protect, sustain, develop and manage the Foyle and Carlingford Areas under our care.

### **Mission**

“To provide sustainable social, economic and environmental benefits to the communities of the catchments through the effective conservation, protection, management, research, promotion and development of the fisheries and marine resources of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas”.

### **Vision**

The Agency’s vision for the Fisheries and Marine Resources of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas is:

“That the recreational and commercial fisheries of the areas are sustainable and of international standing, that they are valued by those who fish them, those who rely upon them for their livelihood and also the local communities that surround them. The fisheries are recognised resources worthy of protection/guardianship, thereby guaranteeing users and local communities enjoyment of them in perpetuity”.

The many stakeholders in the two catchment areas have a vital role to play in the realisation of such a vision, but for our part, the Agency’s vision is that it will be a powerful agent for appropriate change.

## Core Values

To ensure delivery of our Mission, the Loughs Agency is committed to achieving excellence in all our activities. We have set high standards for the delivery of our Strategic Priorities, Business Objectives and Delivery Targets and these are guided by our Core Values. These Values provide the basis on which we carry out our business activities and how staff conduct themselves with our customers and stakeholders.

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Valuing Individuals | We will continue to employ talented staff.<br>As a good employer we will equip, encourage and develop staff to their full potential. We will acknowledge individual contribution to a job well done.   |
| Communication       | We will meet the communication needs of our internal and external stakeholders by developing a better understanding of their requirements and using the most appropriate tools and resources to deliver timely, accurate and consistent messages.  |
| Working Together    | We will work together, listen to and support each other, share relevant information and respect different views.<br><br>We will provide opportunities for everyone to contribute to corporate objectives and to work co-operatively with colleagues at all levels to achieve them. We will value contributions from communities and stakeholders and make decisions based on public good and sustainability. |
| Professionalism     | We will adopt and comply with the best professional standards, practices and methodology and consistently deliver work of the highest quality. We will search for continuous improvements in the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of our work.  |
| Integrity           | We will observe the highest ethical and personal standards and be honest, objective and transparent in our work.   |
| Equality            | We will treat each other equally, fairly and justly. We will be unbiased in our work and in our dealings with suppliers of goods and services.   |
| Adaptability        | We will embrace change through a proactive, flexible and innovative approach to our work at corporate and individual levels.   |

## **PERFORMANCE REVIEW AGAINST THELOUGHS AGENCY CORPORATE PLAN 2014 – 2016 AND BUSINESS PLAN 2015**

### **Conservation and Protection**

During 2015, the Loughs Agency's Conservation and Protection staff continued to ensure that targets and work commitments such as the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and Habitats Directive were met. Water quality and biological monitoring programmes continued to provide valuable information on catchments for management.

Status Reports have been completed and research work is continuing on conservation status by developing stock indices through the IBIS (Integrated Aquatic Research Management) Programme. The IBIS Programme came to an end during 2015 with results and findings continuing to be evaluated.

The Loughs Agency has just completed phase three of the four year Glenshane Pass native riparian tree planting project on the Roe catchment. Since the start of the year an additional 3,000 native broadleaf trees were planted bringing the total planted to date to approximately 10,000 trees.

### **Development**

#### **Status Reports**

Updating of the Development Status Reports for Marine Tourism, Angling Development and Riverwatch/Outreach has steered the direction of the Development Strategy and Action Plan for 2015-2022. The Development Strategy is ambitious and centred on cross-border partnership at all levels. The Agency will be applying for external, EU and other funds to underpin this Strategy.

#### **Sustainable Development Fund**

The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) provides support for small scale capital investment, training and events. The themes supported by the Scheme are closely aligned to the Agency's objectives. Closer involvement from tourism bodies has been an added benefit. 70 applications were received in 2015 for the development of marine tourism and angling activities and events, with the aim of supporting small businesses and communities.

### **Marketing and Promotion**

The promotion of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas has continued throughout 2015. The Agency built upon the Foyle Ambassadors theme with new education programmes such as 'Environmental Life' and the 'Maritime Ambassadors'. These



projects engaged young people in the significance and use of the river, resulting in qualifications in angling, canoeing and power boating. The Agency has continued to support promotional events and competitions. As part of the UK City of Culture Legacy Initiative, the Agency supported the 'River Project'. This suite of science projects delivered throughout 2015 was based on the use of technology. Various other events included the River Discovery Day, several food festivals and outreach educational activities for schools.

More than 1,000 anglers engaged in competitions in various venues across the three disciplines of game, coarse and sea angling. In partnership with Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), the Agency participated in a number of angling shows in Germany, France, Britain and Ireland. We facilitated visits from angling journalists to the Foyle and Carlingford Areas. A dedicated angling website and 'app', were also established to provide a one-stop-shop for tourist anglers.

### **INTERREG IVa Programme for Marine Tourism and Angling Development**

The full suite of INTERREG IVa funded marine tourism and angling development projects was completed in June 2015. These tourism based projects provide accessible infrastructure for visitors and local people alike. The completed angling developments at the Mellon in Omagh, Backwater near Strabane and Gribben Quay in Bready, provide accessible tourist beats. The tourism enhancements at Malin Head and Benone Beach are great examples of partnership working with Councils on both sides of the border. The Foyle Port and cruise ship quay has been enhanced further with additional smaller scale pontoon developments in Greencastle, Co Donegal. This successful project has been the centre point for several maritime festivals and hosted the Round the World Clipper Race in 2012 and 2014. Preparations are well underway for the return of the Clipper event in 2016.

### **Aquaculture and Shellfisheries**

The 2015 spring oyster stock assessment was completed. All oyster beds in Lough Foyle being surveyed, with over 700 sample points yielding 2,500 samples. Initial findings suggest the spat, which had settled in autumn 2014, has survived well with very little evidence of mortality. There was no evidence of any unusual mortality in the adult oyster stocks suggesting that *Bonamia* has not had a major impact on the population over the winter. As requested by Ministers at the North South Ministerial Council, the Agency has made positive efforts to ensure timely engagement with the Lough Foyle oystermen and to involve them in the decision making process.

The Aquaculture and Shellfish Directorate's scientific team completed a number of surveys in 2015 as part of the Agency's development of an enhancement project for the Native Oyster Fishery. The IBIS PhD project, researching the Native European Flat Oyster, has also produced valuable information to support management decisions. The Agency is also developing an enhancement project for the Native Oyster Fishery in Lough Foyle and is now exploring potential grant aid funding options.

The Agency's survey vessel, MMV Ostrea, undertook in excess of 75 days at sea in 2015, completing surveys, assisting in the IBIS students' fieldwork and sampling for both Food Standards Agencies. The Agency has undertaken further field work on a two year project for the delivery of a Carrying Capacity Model for Lough Foyle in conjunction with the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) during 2015.

## **Corporate Services**

The Agency continued to integrate and review good governance in all business functions and activities, overseen by regular Board Meetings and Accountability Meetings with Sponsor Departments. The Chief Executive and the Board met the DARD Departmental Board on 29 April 2015. A further meeting is planned for early 2016.

Our Audit Sub-Committee met quarterly throughout 2015. The Agency was pleased to receive a "Satisfactory" rating from Sponsor Departments' Internal Auditors.

The Agency held regular Risk Management Meetings and continued to develop the Risk Register in line with central guidance. The 2014 Financial Statements were certified by the Comptroller and Auditor Generals in both jurisdictions.

Budgets were monitored on a monthly basis through management reporting processes to ensure all programmes were delivered within the approved budget for 2015.

The procurement, implementation and enhancement of the Agency's information communication technology provision and financial systems, was regularly reviewed and updated throughout the year to ensure continuity of service and support to both internal and external users.

This included the introduction of a Project Accounting System which has led to more accurate and user friendly financial reporting on all projects for budget holders. To compliment this system, electronic purchase ordering was also introduced. Working together, both new systems have provided a more robust mechanism for the control and monitoring of budgets by the budget holder and finance staff.

Training and Development needs continued to be identified through the Performance Management System which helped identify and support personal and professional development of staff to ensure delivery of corporate objectives and business needs. A training plan was developed and implemented. All statutory training requirements continued to remain a priority.

The Record Management Strategy, which was developed during 2014, is now being rolled out.

On the 1 January 2015, Loughs Agency employees became members of the North South Pension Scheme. Throughout the year, Corporate Services staff successfully implemented processes to ensure a smooth transition of pension administration functions from the Foyle Fisheries Pension Scheme to the North South Pension Scheme. This included the introduction of the new Alpha Scheme on 1 April 2015.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR 2016

The 2016 Business Plan is aligned with key actions set out in our Corporate Plan 2014-2016, and takes account of the efficiency savings guidance issued by Finance Departments and the 2016 Business Plan and Budget/Grant Guidance for North/South Implementation Bodies. It also seeks to align with the priorities set out within the Programmes for Government of both jurisdictions and priorities identified by our Sponsor Departments. Cognisance has been taken of the objectives and delivery targets of Public Bodies that have cross cutting responsibilities with those of the Loughs Agency.

The key priorities and objectives for 2016 are detailed in the following tables. These priorities will continue to address the core requirements of the Agency's statutory remit and the economic and social activities that it is tasked to support and develop. The resource requirements for 2016, as referred to in Annex A, are the operational costs and include salaries, plant, equipment and running costs.

Our key priorities for 2016 are:

- To continue to develop and sustain an integrated approach to Marine Tourism and Angling, working in partnership with other Public Bodies;
- To further develop an Implementation Plan for Aquaculture in both Loughs together with an Operational Strategy for Aquaculture and Shellfisheries;
- To deliver on the Agency's responsibilities in fisheries and environmental protection;
- To pursue funding opportunities (EU and other) which will further enhance the work of the Agency;
- To develop a new Corporate Plan 2017- 2019;
- To apply regulatory and licensing requirements in a robust, fair and transparent manner;
- To work closely with Sponsor Departments, particularly as regards the restructuring of Departments in the North;
- To report to Ministers through the NSMC Aquaculture and Marine Sectoral meetings; and
- Sustain adherence to established best practice in Corporate Governance to ensure a transparent and accountable public service.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1**  
**TO CONSERVE AND PROTECT THE FISHERIES OF THE FOYLE & CARLINGFORD AREAS**

**Responsible Directorate: Director of Conservation and Protection**

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| Sponsor Departments Strategic Objectives | <p><b>DCENR:</b> To conserve the fisheries resource and to ensure effective conservation through the Loughs Agency of inland fish habitats and stocks.</p> <p><b>DARD:</b> To develop a more sustainable environment.</p> |
| Cross Cutting Agencies                   | Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure; Department of Agriculture, Food; and the Marine, Inland Fisheries Ireland.   |

| Business Objective   | Key Activities   | Delivery Target   |
|--|--|---|
| 1. To publish annual freshwater and still water status reports.  | Audit all relevant freshwater and still water measures, including habitat surveys and electro-fishing; collect and collate data on two freshwater lakes or low dynamic water bodies; liaise with stakeholders on results; and publish reports. | <p>Publish data on a yearly basis.</p> <p>Audit and data collection completed by 30 November each year.</p> <p>Liaise with stakeholders by 31 December each year.</p> |
| 2. To continue research on conservation status by developing stock indices for each of the sub catchments. | Develop an index that utilises egg deposition population surveys and habitat type in each sub catchment, in order to establish their conservation status; and inform stakeholders of results.  | Report by 30 June 2016.   |
| 3. To carry out enforcement duties,  | Carry out enforcement duties and progress  | Legislative proposals as per agreed Regulatory  |

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| and where necessary, develop appropriate Regulations to deliver statutory obligations on conservation and protection. | prosecutions, as necessary; carry out a review of current Regulations; recommend draft amendments; and initiate development of new Regulations, as necessary. | review document brought to Sponsor Departments by 31 December 2016.     |
| 4. To implement at least two river reinstatement projects.  | Design, implement and evaluate at least two reinstatement projects with the agreement of riparian owners and fishery interests.                               | Projects completed by 31 December 2016.                                 |
| 5. To accurately establish compliance of management targets for salmon returns to each river system.                  | Review efficiency of counters; establish catch data; and record salmon numbers accurately.  | Summary Report of migratory fish numbers completed by 31 December 2016. |
| 6. To establish baseline data for Brown trout, sea trout and coarse fish in two sites annually.                       | Accurately monitor and collect data to assess fish population levels in two sites.  | Reports completed by 31 December 2016.                                  |

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2**  
**TO LICENSE AND DEVELOP AQUACULTURE & SHELLFISHERIES**  
**Responsible Directorate: - Director of Aquaculture and Shellfisheries**

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| Sponsor Departments Strategic Objectives | <p><b>DARD:</b> To improve performance in the market, enhance fish health and welfare and develop a more sustainable environment.</p> <p><b>DCENR:</b> Develop sustainable use of the foreshore, promote economic, social and environmental sustainability and develop to the maximum potential the fisheries sector.</p> |
| Cross Cutting Agencies                   | Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Bord Iscaigh Mhara; Northern Ireland Environment Agency; Environmental Protection Agency.   |

| Business Objective  | Key Activities   | Delivery Target  |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Deliver scientific information to support informed sustainable management of commercial species and the natural environment. | <p>Undertake the necessary annual scientific surveying, monitoring and research to support delivery of annual production reports for aquaculture and commercial shellfisheries species.</p> <p>Present findings to stakeholders.</p> | <p>All reports for the 2014/15 Native Oyster Fishery to be completed by 30 June 2016.</p> <p>All status reports for 2015 to be completed by 30 June 2016.</p> <p>All surveys and research scheduled for 2016 completed in line with seasonal requirements by 31 December 2016.</p> <p>Hold at least two meetings with Lough Foyle Fishermen, ahead of the Native Oyster Fishery opening date, by 31 December 2016.</p> |
| 2. Develop and participate in monitoring programmes, policy development and   | Continue to develop draft Monitoring Programmes and Policies and consult   | Development of draft monitoring programmes and policies to be completed by 31 December 2016.   |

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| projects in partnership with other Public Bodies and funding bodies.   | with relevant industry stakeholders.<br><br>Undertake continuous environmental monitoring, data collection and maintenance of telemetry buoys in partnership with AFBI.  | All Reports on consultations and partnerships completed by 31 December 2016.   |
| 3. Enhance the environmental and socio-economic status of the Lough Foyle Native Oyster Fishery.                           | Continue to identify areas suitable for reinstatement/enhancement and the potential of spatting ponds.<br><br>Continue to develop MSC Certification for Lough Foyle Native Oyster Fishery.   | Report on suitable areas for reinstatement/enhancement by 31 December 2016.<br><br>Provide updated MSC progress report by 31 December 2016.  |
| 4. Develop Aquaculture Policy and Regulations and implement Licensing of Aquaculture in Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough. | Continue to develop all policies and procedures including draft documentation in line with established policy and legislation.<br><br>Liaise with Sponsor Departments, Crown Estates Commission and other relevant government departments and agencies as required, to progress the Management Agreement necessary to fulfil statutory obligations in licensing of aquaculture in both sea loughs. | Produce draft policies and procedures by 31 December 2016.<br><br>Progress Report on the Management Agreement completed by 31 December 2016. |
| 5. Support DARD in taking forward the All Island Aquaculture Shellfish Conference.   | Attend meetings with DARD, DAFM, other Public Bodies and stakeholders to support the Conference.   | Conference to take place by Spring 2016.   |

### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

#### DEVELOP MARINE TOURISM Responsible Directorate: - Director of Development

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| Sponsor Departments Strategic Objectives | <p><b>DCENR:</b> Facilitate the exploitation of inland fisheries on a sustainable and equitable basis.</p> <p><b>DARD:</b> Strengthen social and economic infrastructure of rural areas.</p> |
| Cross Cutting Departments and Agencies   | Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure; Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment; Northern Ireland Tourist Board; Fáilte Ireland; Tourism Ireland Limited; and Local Government.          |

| Business Objective  | Key Activities   | Delivery Target  |
|---|--|--|
| 1. To publish annual status reports for Marine Tourism, Angling Development, and Riverwatch programmes. | <p>Review 2015 Status Reports.</p> <p>Consultation with relevant stakeholders, sharing information and forming partnerships for effective implementation of recommendations. Implement recommendations throughout 2016.</p> <p>Review Status Reports quarterly and update when recommendations have been implemented.</p> <p>Evaluate targets and themes of 2015 and 2016 Reports by 31 December 2016.</p> | <p>Complete review of 2015 Reports by 29 February 2016 and submit to a subsequent meeting of the FCILC Board.</p> <p>Initiate delivery of recommendations by 31 December 2016 and source external funds.</p> <p>Consult quarterly with relevant stakeholders and report to the FCILC Board.</p> <p>Produce Evaluation Report on all projects undertaken by 31 December 2016 and submit to a subsequent meeting of the FCILC Board.</p> |
| 2. To promote the Foyle and Carlingford   | Review 2015 Marketing Communications Action Plan.  | Complete review of 2015 Plan by  |



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| <p>Areas for commercial and recreational purposes.</p>                                       | <p>Consultation with relevant stakeholders, sharing information and forming partnerships for effective implementation of recommendations. Implement recommendations throughout 2016.</p> <p>Review Marketing Communication Action Plan quarterly and update when recommendations have been implemented.</p> <p>Evaluate targets and themes of 2015 and 2016 Reports by 31 December 2016.</p> | <p>29 February 2016 and submit to a subsequent meeting of the FCILC Board.</p> <p>Initiate delivery of recommendations by 31 December 2016 and source external funds to assist implementation.</p> <p>Consult quarterly with relevant stakeholders and report to the FCILC Board.</p> <p>Produce Evaluation Report on all projects undertaken by 31 December 2016 and submit to a subsequent meeting of the FCILC Board.</p> |
| <p>3. To explore funding availability for the development of marine tourism and angling.</p> | <p>Review 2015 SDF projects.</p> <p>Implement 2016 SDF Programme.</p> <p>Evaluate targets and themes of 2015 and 2016 projects by 31 December 2016.</p>  | <p>Complete review of 2015 SDF projects by 29 February 2016 and submit to a subsequent meeting of the FCILC Board.</p> <p>Ensure implementation of SDF Programme by 31 December 2016<br/>Provide regular updates to the FCILC Board.</p> <p>Produce Evaluation Report by 31 December 2016. Submit Report to a subsequent meeting of the FCILC Board.</p>   |

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 TO EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY DELIVER OUR STATUTORY MANDATE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Responsible Directorate: Director of Corporate Services

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| Cross-Cutting Departments and Agencies. | North South Ministerial Council; Department of Communication, Energy & Natural Resources; Department of Agriculture and Rural Development; Department of Finance and Personnel; Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. |
|---|--|

| Business Objective   | Key Activities  | Delivery Target  |
|--|---|--|
| 1. To manage resources within the annual agreed budgets and continue to develop measurable efficiency savings. | <p>Prepare and present Financial Statements and Annual Reports in line with statutory requirements and deadlines.</p> <p>Working with the other Directors identify, develop and achieve a minimum of 4% cash releasing efficiency savings across all budgets and Directorates.</p> <p>Report any variances or issues to Sponsor Departments as necessary.</p> | <p>Submit draft 2015 Financial Statements to Northern Ireland Audit Office by 31 March 2016. Secure appropriate approvals. Ensure all recommendations are implemented with agreed timeframe. Submit draft 2015 Annual Report to Sponsor Departments by 31 May 2016.</p> <p>Realise minimum 4% cash releasing efficiency savings by 31 December 2016.</p> |
| 2. To implement a Quality Management System (QMS) for the effective administration of                          | Key elements of the QMS are documented and actioned as necessary:   |  |

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| <p>financial accountability and corporate governance in line with central guidance.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Quarterly Audit Sub - Committee meetings held, issues raised and followed up; and</li> <li>➤ Quarterly Risk Management Committee meetings held to update Risk Register.</li> </ul> <p>Continue to monitor and process supplier invoices within agreed timescales.</p> <p>Implement an effective Record Management System.</p> <p>Monitor financial expenditure monthly against agreed budget; and report variances, as necessary.</p> <p>Review corporate support systems to enable the effective and efficient operation of robust business functions; recommend improvements and implement.</p> <p>Ensure meeting of FCILC Board with the DARD Departmental Board takes place.</p> | <p>Actions from all quarterly meetings completed within agreed timescale.</p> <p>90% of supplier invoices processed within 10 working days of receipt.</p> <p>Record Management System successfully implemented by 31 December 2016.</p> <p>Monthly Management Reports produced within 7 days of month end. Monthly Variance reports completed.</p> <p>Review carried out and report drafted by 30 June 2016. Recommendations and findings implemented by 31 December 2016.</p> <p>Meeting to take place by 30 April 2016.</p> |
| <p>3. To enhance communication with stakeholders by implementing a</p>                  | <p>Monitor and assess effectiveness of current methods, including website and</p>   | <p>All updates and improvements implemented within 2 months of recommendation where</p>  |

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| communication action plan.                            | social media; recommend updates / improvements where necessary; and implement.   | feasible.  |
| 4. To provide an efficient and effective ICT service. | <p>Monitor and assess current ICT provision; recommend improvements and implement, as necessary.</p> <p>Carry out annual review of ICT disaster recovery plan.</p> | ICT provision updated as necessary by 31 December 2016. Disaster Recovery Plan reviewed, tested and updated by 31 December 2016. |

## **EFFICIENCY SAVINGS**

The 2016 Business Plan has been developed taking into account the Business Plan and Budget/Grant Guidance for North South Implementation Bodies issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Finance Departments).

Under the funding framework agreed for North South Implementation Bodies by the Finance Departments, the Agency has developed an Efficiency Savings Delivery Plan and has agreed to take steps to ensure the required 4% cumulative reductions in administration costs in 2016 against the 2015 baseline budget are achieved. The total efficiency savings are set at £176,108.

Tables outlining the proposed budgets for 2016 can be found in Annexes A and B.

Achievement of these reductions will be delivered through a series of efficiency measures which the Agency is committed to proactively pursuing and achieving by:

- Continuing to review staffing budgets and levels to optimise performance;
- Ensuring best practice and value for money in procurement;
- Continuing to implement improvements in transactional services and IT developments;
- Review of energy efficient systems and practices;
- Review all business processes to ensure a smarter, more efficient and effective service in response to customer requirements and business needs; and
- Strategic review of the Loughs Agency's premises and property.

The Agency will continue to work with Sponsor Departments to ensure that efficiency and value for money is achieved in all business areas whilst maintaining front line services.

## **EXPLANATION OF EXPENDITURE CHANGE FROM 2015 TO 2016**

### **Plant and Equipment**

The Agency's remit is to deliver Conservation and Protection, Aquaculture and its Management and Development functions throughout the Foyle Catchment (4,081 sq km) and the Carlingford Catchment (480 sq km). There is a total of 2,935 km of watercourses in these catchments and the Lough and Sea Areas extend 1,584 sq km. To fulfil these responsibilities, the Agency requires specialist plant and equipment and much of the Agency's expenditure is focused on purchase and maintenance in this area.

The key expenditure areas in this programme include:

- The retention of adequate operational equipment (vehicles, boats and ancillaries) to fulfil the statutory responsibilities of the Loughs Agency (capital based expenditure).

This budget is being reduced by £25,000 as part of the efficiency delivery plan. This will be achieved by extending the life of fixed assets with no detrimental impact on service delivery and operational efficiency.

### **Salmon and Inland Fisheries**

Key expenditure areas in this programme include:

- The implementation of the recommendations of the Status Reports (Enhancement and Reinstatement Works) (capital based expenditure); and
- Resourcing the development of Stock Indices and Still Water Status Reports (current based expenditure).

This budget is being reduced by £28,000 as part of the efficiency delivery plan. This will be achieved by re-prioritising habitat improvement schemes which will provide the best long-term return whilst maintaining service delivery and operational efficiency. In addition, the Agency will be focusing on the reinstatement funds set aside and administered by the Strule Trust and Rivers Trust.

### **Aquaculture and Shellfisheries**

Key expenditure areas in this programme include:

- The implementation of the recommendations of the Status Reports and Stock Assessments (Enhancement and Reinstatement Works) (capital based expenditure); and
- External support for the development of the Carrying Capacity Model in partnership with AFBI (Nutrient input data, shellfish growth/conversion rates, hydrological modelling etc.) (current based expenditure).

This budget is being reduced by £14,000 as part of the efficiency delivery plan. This will be achieved by a reduction in the rehabilitation programme for wild shellfisheries. It is intended that impact on service delivery will be minimised.

### **Marine Tourism and Recreational Fisheries**

Key expenditure areas in this programme include:

- Key Tourism Development projects (small scale capital expenditure from Marine Tourism and Development of Recreational Fisheries Programme Budget). These projects have been identified from the Marine Tourism Strategy and do not form part of the INTERREG IVa Programme of expenditure; and
- Angling Fair, promotional literature and events to encourage visitors and tourists to use the angling and marine resources of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas (current based expenditure).

This budget has been reduced by £27,000 as part of the efficiency delivery plan. This will be achieved by prioritising promotional events with the highest impact on development objectives. It is expected that impact on service delivery will be minimised.

### **Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)**

This budget is being reduced by £8,000 in respect of the administrative costs of the Scheme as part of the efficiency delivery plan.

### **Pay Costs/Pension Costs**

There is no change to the overall budget under these headings as the total amount specified is what is required to meet the Agency's pay and pension costs. The efficiency savings required within this current period will be met through other budgets.

### **Non Pay Administration Costs**

The direct running costs will be reduced by £74,108 as part of the efficiency delivery plan. This will be achieved through several initiatives referred to in the efficiency plan summary (including a review of monitoring obligations, procurement, energy and environmental efficiency and new licensing technologies) with no detrimental impact on service delivery.

### **Income**

The Agency's main income streams are from angling and oyster licence sales. It is anticipated that the current prices of angling and oyster licences will remain static. The Agency now anticipates total income to be in the region of £100,000 per annum due to the reduction in licence sales following the introduction of "catch and release" and the suspension of the commercial drift and draft net fishery.

### **Other Funding**

The funding expected to be received from the EU INTERREG IVa Programme and other sources has been excluded from the budget table. If it were included, the Agency's expenditure of these funds would be 'netted off' the total grant-in-aid figure by an equivalent amount of 'income received'. The Sponsor Departments are not involved in providing the funds for this Programme.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS**

### **Directorates**

Each Director will ensure a structured approach towards the delivery of their objectives. The Chief Executive will oversee the delivery of each Director. Operational plans and budgets will be agreed annually at the development stage of each new Business Plan. Performance will be assessed and discussed at individual Directorate team meetings. Minutes of the meetings and progress reports will be circulated to the Senior Management Team and published on the Loughs Agency's Intranet site.

### **Senior Management Team**

The Senior Management Team, consisting of the Chief Executive and Directors, will consider and report on progress against Corporate and Business Plan Targets at monthly meetings.

A comprehensive register will be maintained to identify potential areas of risk associated with the delivery of the objectives and targets. of the Body.

The minutes of these meetings will be published on the Agency's Intranet site.

### **The Board**

The Senior Management Team will report to the Board at each Board meeting (six per annum) and to the meeting of each Board Sub Committee; as appropriate. The Board and / or its Sub-Committee will review the performance of the Agency as reported by the Chief Executive and Directors and may seek adjustments in the strategy, objectives, targets and the deployment of resources as required. The minutes of the Board meetings will be published on the Agency's website when agreed. The Chief Executive and the Board will meet the DARD Departmental Board on an annual basis.

### **Sponsor Departments**

Operational/Accountability meetings are regularly convened between the Sponsor Departments and the Senior Management Team to review progress, forward planning and the resolution of emerging issues.

### **The North South Ministerial Council**

The Chairman and Chief Executive, supported where appropriate by other Agency colleagues, will provide a progress report on the Agency's activities to each Sectoral meeting of the North South Ministerial Council. The Agency will address any issues, recommendations or instruction raised or made by the Council.



## **The Advisory Forum**

The Advisory Forum is the Agency's local consultative group made up of representatives who are either from the Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough Areas or are members of stakeholder interest groups. Relevant interest groups include Aquaculture and Shellfisheries groups, Commercial Fishermen, Anglers, Fishery Owners, Tourism, Water/Sewerage, Industry, Council/Government, Port/Harbour, Environmentalists, Forestry and Agriculture. The varied backgrounds and interests of the members bring a wide range of views and experience to the Agency which allows holistic solutions to be developed.

The Agency will provide updates on its work to the Advisory Forum in the form of Directorate reports to at least two meetings per annum. It will also engage with the Forum's Focus Groups, including the Salmon, Inland Fisheries and Environmental, Aquaculture and Shellfisheries and Marine Tourism Focus Groups. The Agency will report on its activities, results and recommended actions. The Focus Groups will meet up to four times per annum.

## **Stakeholders**

The Agency will consult on all relevant issues with stakeholder groups or representatives in the Foyle and Carlingford Areas. Requests for meetings, reports or consultations will be responded to positively.

## ANNEX A

## Business Plan - Proposed 2016 Budget Allocation

| North South Body  | Approved Budget £   |                   |                     | Proposed Change £ |                   |                    | Proposed Budget £   |                   |                     |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
|   | 2015                |                   |                     | +/-               |                   |                    | 2016                |                   |                     |
|   | Current             | Capital           | Total               | Current           | Capital           | Total              | Current             | Capital           | Total               |
| €1 = £0.70 GBP  |                     |                   |                     |                   |                   |                    |                     |                   |                     |
| Programme   |                     |                   |                     |                   |                   |                    |                     |                   |                     |
| P&E   | 0.00                | 175,000.00        | 175,000.00          | 0.00              | -25,000.00        | -25,000.00         | 0.00                | 150,000.00        | 150,000.00          |
| Salmon & Inland Fisheries   | 38,000.00           | 150,000.00        | 188,000.00          | -3,000.00         | -25,000.00        | -28,000.00         | 35,000.00           | 125,000.00        | 160,000.00          |
| Aquaculture & Shellfisheries  | 65,000.00           | 54,000.00         | 119,000.00          | -8,000.00         | -6,000.00         | -14,000.00         | 57,000.00           | 48,000.00         | 105,000.00          |
| Marine Tourism & Development of Recreational Fisheries                                    | 86,000.00           | 131,000.00        | 217,000.00          | -11,000.00        | -16,000.00        | -27,000.00         | 75,000.00           | 115,000.00        | 190,000.00          |
| SDF   | 21,000.00           | 65,000.00         | 86,000.00           | -2,000.00         | -6,000.00         | -8,000.00          | 19,000.00           | 59,000.00         | 78,000.00           |
| <b>Total Programme Expenditure</b>  | <b>210,000.00</b>   | <b>575,000.00</b> | <b>785,000.00</b>   | <b>-24,000.00</b> | <b>-78,000.00</b> | <b>-102,000.00</b> | <b>186,000.00</b>   | <b>497,000.00</b> | <b>683,000.00</b>   |
| Pay Costs   | 2,057,000.00        | 0.00              | 2,057,000.00        | 0.00              | 0.00              | 0.00               | 2,057,000.00        |                   | 2,057,000.00        |
| Non Pay Administration Costs  | 993,484.00          | 0.00              | 993,484.00          | -74,108.00        | 0.00              | -74,108.00         | 919,376.00          |                   | 919,376.00          |
| <b>Total Administration Costs (excl Pensions)</b>   | <b>3,050,484.00</b> | <b>0.00</b>       | <b>3,050,484.00</b> | <b>-74,108.00</b> | <b>0.00</b>       | <b>-74,108.00</b>  | <b>2,976,376.00</b> |                   | <b>2,976,376.00</b> |
| <b>Total Expenditure (Programme &amp; Administration Expenditure, excl Pension Costs)</b> | <b>3,260,484.00</b> | <b>575,000.00</b> | <b>3,835,484.00</b> | <b>-98,108.00</b> | <b>-78,000.00</b> | <b>-176,108.00</b> | <b>3,162,376.00</b> | <b>497,000.00</b> | <b>3,659,376.00</b> |
| <b>Less Income</b>  |                     |                   | 100,000.00          |                   |                   |                    |                     |                   | 100,000.00          |
| NI share representing 50%   |                     |                   | 1,867,742.00        |                   |                   | -88,054.00         |                     |                   | 1,779,688.00        |
| IRL share representing 50%  |                     |                   | 1,867,742.00        |                   |                   | -88,054.00         |                     |                   | 1,779,688.00        |
| Pension costs - NI  |                     |                   | 107,500.00          |                   |                   | 27,500.00          |                     |                   | 135,000.00          |
| Pension costs - IRL   |                     |                   | 107,500.00          |                   |                   | 27,500.00          |                     |                   | 135,000.00          |
| Overall Total Expenditure for approval  |                     |                   | 3,950,484.00        |                   |                   | -121,108.00        |                     |                   | 3,829,376.00        |
| Total NI share, including pension costs   |                     |                   | 1,975,242.00        |                   |                   | -60,554.00         |                     |                   | 1,914,688.00        |
| Total IRL share, including pension costs  |                     |                   | 1,975,242.00        |                   |                   | -60,554.00         |                     |                   | 1,914,688.00        |
| Existing/Projected Staff Numbers 54   |                     |                   |                     |                   |                   |                    |                     |                   |                     |

**Narrative to support expenditure figures:**

Loughs Agency required 12% efficiency savings have been deducted from Total Programme & Administration costs, excluding Pension Costs. The Agency have increased pension costs by 25% (£55,000). This is due to the increase in Pensioners in 2015.

**Breakdown of Pension/benefit costs included in Business Plan**

|  | <b>NI</b>       | <b>IRL</b>      |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Pension/benefit costs for N/S Body service*  |                 |                 |
| Pension/benefit costs for service liability/ transferred in*                                 |                 |                 |
| Pension/benefit costs already in payment and subsumed into the N/S Body*                     | £135,000        | £135,000        |
| Administration costs due to Pension Administrator (included in non pay administration costs) | £5,000          | £5,000          |
| <b>Total costs of pensions/benefits included in Business Plan</b>                            | <b>£140,000</b> | <b>£140,000</b> |

## ANNEX B EFFICIENCY SAVINGS DELIVERY PLAN

### NORTH/SOUTH BODY: LOUGHS AGENCY

This Delivery Plan describes the measures the Loughs Agency will implement to achieve its target savings for 2014 – 2016.

#### Efficiency Programme

The Body will realise 12% efficiencies from 2014-2016 as shown in the Total Efficiency Table below.

#### Sterling

#### Euro

| <u>Total Efficiency Targets</u><br><u>(4% p.a.,</u><br><u>12% cumulative)</u> | <u>Baseline</u><br><u>&amp;</u><br><u>Total Efficiencies</u> | <u>2014</u><br><u>Efficiency Savings</u> | <u>2015</u><br><u>Efficiency Savings</u><br><u>(Cumulative)</u> | <u>2016</u><br><u>Efficiency Savings</u><br><u>(Cumulative)</u> | <u>Total Efficiency Targets</u><br><u>(4% p.a.,</u><br><u>12% cumulative)</u> | <u>Baseline</u><br><u>&amp;</u><br><u>Total Efficiencies</u> | <u>2014</u><br><u>Efficiency Savings</u> | <u>2015</u><br><u>Efficiency Savings</u><br><u>(Cumulative)</u> | <u>2016</u><br><u>Efficiency Savings</u><br><u>(Cumulative)</u> |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|---|
|   | £'000s   | £'000s                                   | £'000s  | £'000s  | €'000s  | €'000s   | €'000s                                   | €'000s  | €'000s  |
| Baseline<br>(2013 approved budget)  | <b>4403</b>  |  |   |   | Baseline<br>(2013 approved budget)  | <b>6,290</b>   |  |   |   |
| Total Efficiencies<br>Required  | <b>528</b>   | <b>176</b>                               | <b>176</b>  | <b>176</b>  | Total Efficiencies<br>Required  | <b>754</b>   | <b>251</b>                               | <b>251</b>  | <b>251</b>  |
| Total % Efficiencies<br>Required  | <b>12%</b>   |  |   |   |   |  |  |   |   |
| Indicative Budget   |  | <b>4226</b>                              | <b>4050</b>   | <b>3874</b>   |   |  | <b>6,037</b>                             | <b>5,786</b>  | <b>5,534</b>  |

## EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME SUMMARY TABLE

The areas that have been targeted as a means of realising cash releasing efficiencies are summarised in the first column of the table below. The monitoring arrangements and measures which will be put in place to ensure efficiency savings are delivered without impacting on targets and service delivery are detailed in the final column.

|   | 2016 Savings<br>£'000s | 2016 Savings<br>€'000s | Responsible Officer    | Monitoring arrangements / measures to ensure forecast level of savings are delivered without a detrimental impact on priority services.  |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--|
| (a) Admin   |                        |                        |                        |  |
| 1. Non-Pay Administration Costs                           | 74                     | 106                    | Senior Management Team | <p>The Agency will prioritise its statutory obligations and the compliance with the Regulatory regime in operation. It will review the level of biological monitoring undertaken to achieve the levels necessary to provide adequate management information. Electro-fishing surveys, habitat surveys and biological water quality monitoring will be among the areas included in this review. It is not envisaged that it will have a detrimental impact on service delivery.</p> <p>The Agency's Senior Management Team will monitor expenditure on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Contact with the Central Procurement Directorate will identify areas for further efficiency via various framework contract agreements and the aggregation of purchasing.</p> <p>Pursuing legislative change to enable the recovery of court costs/legal costs/introduction of fixed penalty notices.</p> <p>Development of electronic licensing.</p> |
| (b) Resource  |                        |                        |                        |  |
| 1. Salmon & Inland Fisheries                              | 3                      | 4                      |                        | Reduction in the number of project hours.  |
| 2. Aquaculture & Shellfisheries                           | 8                      | 11                     |                        | <p>Concentration in the development of in-house expertise.</p> <p>Reduction in the rehabilitation programme for wild shellfisheries.</p>   |
| 3. Marine Tourism & Development of Recreational Fisheries | 11                     | 16                     |                        | Further reprioritisation of promotional events and continuing partnership arrangements with other tourism and angling bodies.  |
| 4. Sustainable Development                                | 2                      | 3                      |                        | Reduce amount of grants allocated in respect of the administrative costs of the Scheme.  |

|   |     |     |  |  |
|---|-----|-----|--|--|
| Fund  |     |     |  |  |
| (c) Capital   |     |     |  |  |
| 1. Plant & Equipment                                      | 25  | 36  |  | This will be achieved by extending the life of fixed assets. For example, by retaining vehicles which meet operational standards. New procurement will be focused on those likely to provide the longest operational lifespan.   |
| 2. Salmon & Inland Fisheries                              | 25  | 36  |  | Reprioritise habitat improvement schemes and concentrate efforts into the schemes which provide long term return for the investment and seek other sources of funding. During the period of this Plan, the Agency will be focusing on best environmental outcomes and working in partnership with Strule Trust and Rivers Trust. |
| 3. Aquaculture & Shellfisheries                           | 6   | 8   |  | Reduction in habitat improvement schemes and seek other sources of funding.  |
| 4. Marine Tourism & Development of Recreational Fisheries | 16  | 23  |  | Reprioritise schemes for improvement, seeking best value for money.  |
| 5. Sustainable Development Fund                           | 6   | 8   |  | Reduction in the amount of grants awarded in respect of the Scheme. Applications will be prioritised.  |
| Total Savings   | 176 | 251 |  |  |
| Savings-NI contribution                                   | 88  | 126 |  |  |
| Savings-Irish contribution                                | 88  | 126 |  |  |

## ANNEX C

## DETAILS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND BUDGET ONLY

The Northern Ireland Sponsor Departments are required to provide some additional information on North South Bodies in order to reconcile to the budget position. The following table is required to complement the Northern Ireland information contained within the Business Plan Budgets. This information ensures that the full Budget costs to their departments are approved by Northern Ireland Executive Ministers.

|  | Current/Resource £ |           |
|--|--------------------|-----------|
|  | Non Cash           | Near Cash |
| <b><i>Northern Ireland <u>Non Cash</u> Costs (excl pensions)</i></b> |                    |           |
| <b><i>DEL:</i></b>   |                    |           |
| • <b><i>Depreciation</i></b>   | 300,000            |           |
| <b><i>Northern Ireland Pension Costs :</i></b>                       |                    |           |
| <b><i>DEL:</i></b>   |                    |           |
| <b><i>Increase in provision due to:</i></b>                          |                    |           |
| • <b><i>Current Service Cost</i></b>                                 | 250,000            |           |
| • <b><i>Transfers IN</i></b>   | 150,000            |           |
| • <b><i>Added years</i></b>  | 0                  |           |
| <b><i>Income from:</i></b>   |                    |           |
| • <b><i>Employee contributions</i></b>                               |                    | (50,000)  |
| • <b><i>Transfers IN</i></b>   |                    | (150,000) |
| • <b><i>Added years</i></b>  |                    | 0         |
| <b><i>AME:</i></b>   |                    |           |
| • <b><i>Use of Provision (benefits paid)</i></b>                     |                    | 135,000   |
| • <b><i>Release of Provision (benefits paid)</i></b>                 | (135,000)          |           |
| • <b><i>Interest on the Scheme liability</i></b>                     | 300,000            |           |

## For use by Department and DFP Supply:

### Reconciliation to DEL Budget:

| Description  | 2016  | £k |
|--|-------|----|
| Cash grant for approval                              | 1,915 |    |
| Add Depreciation                                     | 300*  |    |
| Add increase in provisions re pensions, etc          | 250   |    |
| Less Income from employee pension contributions, etc | (50)  |    |
| Other adjustments (please provide detail)            |       |    |
| Benefits Paid (AME)                                  | (135) |    |
| Net DEL for Body for 2016                            | 2,280 |    |
| Net DEL scoring in RBM for 2015/16                   | 2,244 |    |
| Net DEL scoring in RBM for 2016/17 (if known)        | NIL   |    |

\*The existing £210k depreciation baseline will be increased to £300k by DARD in-year as a result of an internal reallocation of budgets.