

**132<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF THE FOYLE CARLINGFORD AND IRISH  
LIGHTS COMMISSION**

**Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 9.30am**

**Via Teleconference**

**Attendees**

**Present**

Heather Mackey (Chair)  
Conor Corr  
Fiona Walsh  
Frances Lucy  
Jack Keyes  
Laurence Arbuckle  
Niall Greene

**In Attendance - Loughs Agency**

Sharon McMahon – Designated Officer  
Laura McCready (Minutes)

**Non Attendance**

Terry McWilliams

Private Time for Board Members

The Board availed of private time before the Board Meeting commenced.

Designated Officer and Laura McCready joined the meeting at 9.45am.

Chair thanked Board Members for their attendance and advised that it has been a short time since the previous Board Meeting. She added that John McCartney, Director of Conservation and Protection and Dr Sarah McLean, Head of Science will be joining the meeting at a later stage.

Chair noted the presentation provided to the Board by the Head of Science prior to the meeting. She added that the format of the audio presentation was a welcome addition to papers and suggested that this format be used by the Senior Management Team going forward.

## **1. Apologies**

Danny Kennedy  
Declan Little

## **2. Conflict of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest with any agenda items.

## **3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

Proposed Frances Lucy  
Seconded Jack Keyes

### **3.1 Reserved Minutes**

The reserved minutes of the previous meeting were agreed by all.

Proposed Frances Lucy  
Seconded Jack Keyes

### **3.2 Matters Arising**

All matters arising from the previous meeting were complete.

## **4. CEO Progress Report**

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with a comprehensive overview of current significant issues, strategic updates and governance and accountability updates from the Designated Officer.

RESERVED

### Carlingford Office

Designated Officer advised that as the Board is aware the Agency submitted an Economic Appraisal for the refurbishment of the Carlingford Office to Sponsor Departments for approval in 2020. She added that given the delays in construction due to COVID-19 and the requirements to implement climate change initiatives, costs have increased exponentially.

Designated Officer advised that the Agency provided an addendum to the original Economic Appraisal to Sponsor Departments, however this was not accepted. Therefore the Agency has secured the services of the Strategic Investment Board to complete a new Economic Appraisal to be resubmitted to Sponsor Departments for approval.

RESERVED

#### **4.1 Court Case Update**

RESERVED

### **5. Senior Management Team Updates**

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with the current outturn against targets for their information.

Designated Officer advised that at the previous Board Meeting Board Members requested a change to the format of Senior Management Team reports. She added that the attached report provides Board Members with the current status of the 2022 Business Plan objectives.

Designated Officer provided a brief overview of a number of objectives that have not completed to date, however assured the Board that the majority of objectives will complete in year.

Designated Officer advised that Board Members will note from the report that the Carlingford Office will not complete in 2022. She added that the Business Case for the Health and Safety post has been drafted and will be sent to Sponsor Departments for approval.

Chair advised that she approves of the reporting format. She added that she found it easy to digest, however was concerned in relation to the number of objectives that have not completed to date.

Niall Greene drew attention to Business Objective 1.1 – Develop organisational capacity and capability and 1.5 – Lead and engage with others to improve Health and Safety. Niall advised that both objectives require Sponsor Departments' approval before they can proceed, however it is his opinion that these matters should be dealt with and approved by Board.

RESERVED

## **5.1 Meenbog Update**

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with an update paper from the Director of Conservation and Protection in relation to the above.

There were no questions / comments in relation to same.

## **5.2 Science Strategy**

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with Loughs Agency's Science Strategy 2022-2030 and a podcast presentation from Dr Sarah McLean, Head of Science.

Sarah McLean joined the Board Meeting at 10.30am.

Chair welcomed Sarah to the meeting. Chair advised that Sarah that she noted at the beginning of today's meeting the layout and presentation of the information provided to Board. She added that she appreciated the clarity of the presentation and asked Sarah to provide the meeting with a brief overview of the Strategy.

Sarah provided the Board with an overview of the Science Strategy 2022-2030 and asked if there were any comments / questions in relation to same.

Frances Lucy thanked Sarah for her presentation and asked if the Agency will work with other organisations to deliver an eco-systems approach.

Sarah confirmed that this will be a partnership approach. She added that whilst the Agency's core work is at the centre of the Strategy it is keen to include novel research on blue carbon etc. which will involve working with other likeminded organisations and academia.

Frances advised that she is very impressed with the Strategy, however it is very ambitious. She asked how the Strategy will be resourced.

Sarah advised that the Agency is currently rebuilding the Science section. She added that a number of extremely talented scientists

have recently been recruited, however more field staff are required. Sarah explained that currently field staff are recruited on a temporary basis during the summer months which results in the loss of trained staff on an annual basis, however this is also being reviewed.

Chair thanked Sarah for her presentation and her attendance at the Board Meeting.

Sarah left the meeting at 10.40am.

Designated Officer advised that as referred to during the Head of Science's questions and answers session, the Agency is currently completing a rationale for an organisational review, which will recommend additional staff resources for the Science section. She added that Board support would be welcomed when this rationale is complete.

## **6. Finance Update**

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with a Budget Report up to the end of September 2022.

RESERVED

## **7. Risk Register Update**

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with the Corporate Risk Register for information.

There were no questions / comments in relation to same.

## **8. Audit and Risk Committee Update**

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with a copy of the draft minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

Frances Lucy, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee provided the Board with an overview of the meeting.

## **9. Communications**

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with Communications Reports for September 2022.

Niall Greene asked if the Agency pays a fixed fee for the communications managed service or if each item is paid for individually.

Chair advised that she discussed this with the Designated Officer the previous day. She added that the Agency's contract with the managed service expired in September 2022, however up to this point the Agency paid a monthly retainer.

Designated Officer advised that the Agency has drafted an Economic Appraisal to procure a communications managed service which is currently with Sponsor Departments for approval. She added that the initial managed service contract was for 1 year, however the Economic Appraisal is for 3 years.

## **10. AOB**

### Training

Chair advised that the Board has been provided with a number of dates for training, however a suitable date has yet to be reached. Following a discussion in relation to same it was decided that training will be scheduled for January / February 2023.

### Staff Conference

Designated Officer advised that the Agency is hosting a staff conference on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022 which will include a lookback on 2022 and discussions around Business Objectives for 2023. She added that a similar conference was held in 2019, however due to COVID-19 restrictions the Agency has been unable to host an event since then.

Designated Officer advised that the Chair has advised that she will attend the conference and added that Board Members are welcome to attend if they so wish.

### Accolade

Niall Greene advised the Board that Board Member Professor Frances Lucy recently received an honorary doctorate from Mid

Sweden University for her outstanding achievements in science, for co-operative sustainability Erasmus programmes and in recognition of her research into invasive species.

The Board and Designated Officer congratulated Frances on this prestigious award. Frances advised that it was an unexpected honour to receive the honorary doctorate.

## **11. Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

The next Board Meeting will take place on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 11.30am in Loughs Agency Headquarters, Prehen.

Fiona Walsh asked if the dates for the 2023 Board Meetings can be issued as soon as possible.

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Expected Delivery Date</b>
11	Provide Board with dates for 2023 Board Meetings.	Laura McCreedy	ASAP