



Northern Lighthouse Board

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NLB-FOI-0127 Lighthouse buildings empty, unused, for sale

25th March 2022

Dear Hayley Smith

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your email dated 2nd March 2022 in which you requested information under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act relating to Lighthouse buildings empty, unused, for sale.

Your request has been handled in accordance with your 'right to know' under section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), which entitles you to be provided with any information 'held' by a public authority, unless an appropriate exemption applies.

Having reviewed your request I can now advise that the required information is supplied below.

Your request

1. A list of lighthouses/building that are laying empty and/or unused as at the date of this FOI request?
2. A list of your lighthouses/buildings that are for sale as at the date of this FOI request?
3. A list of your buildings that will be coming up for sale within the next 12 months starting from the date of this FOI request.
4. Copies of any official minutes relating to the last four meetings of your orgs property committee appropriately redacted to avoid unnecessary refusal of this FOI request)

Our Response

Question 1

Under Section 193 of the [Merchant Shipping Act 1995](#), the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses are appointed as the General Lighthouse Authority for Scotland and its adjacent seas and islands, in addition to the Isle of Man (IoM). Together with Trinity House and Irish Lights, we form the General Lighthouse Authorities (GLAs) for the United Kingdom and Ireland. Under Section 195 of the act, NLB are vested with responsibility for the superintendence and management of all associated lighthouses, buoys and beacons, referred to as Aids to Navigation (AtoN), for Scotland, its adjacent seas and islands and the IoM.

At the end of March 1998, Fair Isle South, became the last of our lighthouses to be automated, since that time none of our buildings have been occupied, except whilst work is being carried out. We do maintain some basic facilities in order to provide accommodation whilst work is being undertaken on sites where either accessibility, or finding temporary accommodation locally is problematic.



The three GLAs jointly review the provided Aids to Navigation (AtoN) against the needs of mariners, the output from these reviews informs the GLAs' work plans for the following five years, establishing our Engineering priorities to meet the identified navigation requirements. This approach is designed to ensure the delivery of cost-effective aids to navigation that fulfil the requirements of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) commitment by the UK and Ireland, for Aids to Navigation. A key part of the review is the assessment of the use and condition of the AtoNs' in our care. Following the review any works identified are logged onto our Asset Management database for action.

Question 2

NLB currently manage 209 lighthouses and associated buildings (see <https://www.nlb.org.uk/lighthouses/>), all our lighthouses are in operational use, with none being identified in the current five-year plan (2020 - 2025) as being surplus to requirement. We do not specifically catalogue individual unused buildings associated with the Aton's, as we have no operational need to do so.

In 2017 we revised our Estates Guidance and concluded that when considering the disposal of property all factors must be considered particularly NLB's long-term operational requirements. Unless there is a clearly sustainable alternative use with long-term viability (eg community trust, National Trust for Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage or similar) then our remaining property should be retained. Consideration would also be given to exploring lease arrangements for ancillary properties to secure alternative use where NLB maintains long-term control, rather than outright sale.

Question 3

At present none of our Aton's or their ancillary buildings have been identified by NLB as being surplus to requirements. We do, however consider any offer that is made to us. In recent months we have been approached in respect of property at Rattray Head, which, subsequent to this request we have decided not to sell. We have also been contacted in this respect for property at Winkie IoM, which is still under consideration.

Question 4

See attachments

- Estates Group Meeting - Minutes - 03.02.2022 REDACTED
- Estates Group Meeting - Minutes - 13.10.2021 REDACTED
- Estates Group Meeting - Minutes - 20.07.2021 REDACTED
- Estates Group Meeting - Minutes - 23.11.2021 REDACTED

I hope you find the information provided useful. If however you are dissatisfied with this response, wish to request an internal review of our decision, or want to make a complaint about how your request has been handled, you should email, within 40 working days of the date of this letter, clearly marking your email 'FAO the Director of Business Services' at enquiries@nlb.org.uk. We would prefer that you do not write to us (in hard copy) however if you wish to correspond with us via the post, please do so to the address below.

If following internal review you remain dissatisfied with our response and wish to request a further review of our decision, or to make a complaint about how your request has been handled, you should write to the Information Commissioner, contact arrangements are available via their [Contact Page](https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/) (<https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>) which is on the [ICO website](https://ico.org.uk) (<https://ico.org.uk>).

Yours sincerely,

Trish Donaldson
Compliance Officer
Northern Lighthouse Board
Email: foienquiries@nlb.org.uk



Privacy Notice

NLB take seriously the protection of your privacy and confidentiality, and understand that you are entitled to know that your personal data will not be used for any purpose unintended by you. In line with our Data Retention Policy and the associated document retention schedules, the records related to this request will be retained on our live internal system for 2 years before being archived. Archived copies may be retained indefinitely in the public interest. Redacted versions of Freedom of Information requests are made available in line with NLB's publication scheme on our website, you can read our Website Privacy Notice via the following link:
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