

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Housing and Environment
DATE	14 <sup>th</sup> January 2014
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Proposed Improvements in Service and Changes in the Charging Regime for Fish Health Export Certificates issued by the Environmental Health Service
REPORT NUMBER:	H&E/13/008

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report proposes increases to the charges and an extension to the availability of the fish export certificate service provided by the Environmental Health Service. An earlier version of this report was presented to this Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013, and following a request to consult the Aberdeen fish processors the report has been amended.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee

- (i) approves the improvements in service provision and the revised charging regime as detailed in Appendix 1 following consultation with businesses utilising this service with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 and that the charges are reviewed on an annual basis.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The introduction of a new charging scheme will fully cover the cost of the provision of this service. The current charges do not cover costs and as such are a cost pressure on the Service.

### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

If the current charging regime is continued, then the parameters of the service delivered will have to be reinforced. This will mean that two full working days notice will be required for export certificate requests and

the service would be limited between the hours of 9am-4pm on normal council working days to ensure that out of hours work is minimised.

## 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Export of fish and fishery products ensures Scotland's presence in the global market and in so doing enhances the political and economic profile of Aberdeen.

The conditions permitting the export of fish and fishery products to non EU countries are set by the importing countries food health administrators. Exported products require to be accompanied by Export Health Certificates that attest to the fulfilment of these conditions.

There are no additional controls on businesses exporting food; they are simply required to comply with relevant food law, as is the case with all businesses in this sector. The issue of export certificates is not a statutory function, i.e. the Council is under no obligation to provide this service. It is without doubt, however, that business in the Aberdeen City area would be unable to export food products without an export certificate. The Aberdeen City Council's Environmental Health Service provides these documents to assist local businesses who wish to trade abroad.

A number of factors prompted the review of the export certificate charges. These are:

- a) The Service continues to see a steady rise in the demand for fish export health certificates.
- b) There is an increasing tendency for food businesses to expect the current "same day service" to mean a turnaround time of 2-3 hours from request to certificate issue. This is unrealistic, and places excessive pressure on both professional and administrative staff.
- c) Some food businesses frequently make last minute changes or additions to their exports, in some cases after a certificate has been prepared. This necessitates the generation of a new certificate and increases the workload and costs to the Service.
- d) In order to reduce the risk of food fraud and establish the authenticity and provenance of food to be exported, officers of the Service are spending more time at businesses checking consignments and relevant paperwork prior to export health certificate issue and product dispatch.
- e) There have been requests by fish processors for export certificates to be provided out with normal office hours. This would increase the costs to the Council of providing this service.

A total of 43 businesses were initially consulted on the changes in March 2013. The list of consultees is contained in Appendix 3. Listed are 42 companies because one has ceased trading.

One business did not support the changes, and suggested that the consultation process was not undertaken appropriately, in that they and some other businesses had not received copies of the proposed pricing structure. In order to ensure that all fish processors had been made aware of the proposals, a further consultation was undertaken in September 2013. This was achieved by staff from the Environmental Health Service visiting the businesses in Aberdeen with copies of the proposed changes and obtaining a receipt confirming that they had been duly received.

Discussions with the business that did not support the proposed changes to the charging regime have been on-going to alleviate their concerns and objections.

Another business has said they would welcome an "out of hours" service.

An analysis of the service between January and August 2013 showed that there were three companies exporting on a regular basis, and a total of 7 that had requested export certificates. During this period, 291 certificates had been issued with 149 being requested by one company; although, by weight, this company only accounts for 3.76% of product exported from Aberdeen.

Indication is that the fish export market is growing, and the service anticipates that requests for certificates will increase from the current seven businesses. It is unknown if the remaining 35 fish processing businesses will look to enter the export market.

The amended pricing structure is contained in Appendix 1, while Appendix 2 contains the current costs applied to businesses in order that a comparison can be made between what we are currently charging and propose to charge.

The revised scheme reflects the additional costs to the Service of requests for, and changes to, export certificates at short notice, effectively keeping costs down for those businesses that plan ahead.

It also improves and extends the service currently provided to meet the increasing demand, thereby providing a more responsive service to businesses. Officers will be available to inspect consignments and issue export health certificates on evenings, weekends and some public holidays, although this will inevitably mean an increased cost to the Service due to out of hours working, which is reflected in the fee.

There is an indication that the service provision proposed in Appendix 1), items c) to h) inclusive, would only be used by the industry in exceptional circumstances. There will be a need to review the proposed new service in terms of meeting customer demand and the

impact on the environmental health service, following a period of operation.

Due to increasing demand, maintenance of the current level of service with the existing charges is not sustainable, and if the proposed new charging scheme is not adopted, the Environmental Health Service will have to limit the service to between 9.00am - 16.00hrs Monday to Friday, and require two full working days' notice of the need for an export certificate in order to accommodate the request and prioritise workloads accordingly.

It is not intended to provide a fish export certification service on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Hogmanay and New Year's Day or their equivalent week day holidays.

In summary, the new charging regime brings about the following improvements:

- The revised scheme improves and extends the service currently provided to meet the increasing demand.
- Officers will be available to inspect product and issue this documentation on evenings, weekends and some public holidays; thereby improving the service to local businesses.
- The Service will be able to meet the needs of the businesses by responding to requests at short notice.

While this report recommends an increase in the current charges, the results of a recent survey of health export certificate charges conducted by Shetland Council reveals that the proposed charges are not excessive compared to those charged by many other Local Authorities within the UK (Appendix 4)

## 6. IMPACT

Corporate –

1. **Business Plan.** The Service has a flexible, skilled and motivated workforce who makes best use of the financial resources available, delivering improvement in the most cost effective manner.
2. **Links to Community Planning Aberdeen Single Outcome Agreement 2013.** The work of the Environmental Health Service contributes to making Aberdeen a highly successful City which is a great place to live, work and visit.
3. **Links to Aberdeen- the Smarter City.** The Service Plan also has links with the visions contained within Aberdeen- the Smarter City. The Service assists with the promotion of Aberdeen as a great place to do business and visit and works with partners to promote the city as a place to export from.

4. **Public.** This report will be of interest to businesses in Aberdeen exporting fish.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

**Risks to the Council**

Not providing this service would damage the reputation of the City as being a place that welcomes businesses and encourages export trade.

**Risks to Businesses**

Failure to offer this service would impact severely on businesses that wish to export their products to countries not in the European Union.

The number of staff employed in fish processing premises is to some extent reliant on the company's ability to fulfil export orders out with the European Union.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 Proposed Fish Export Health Certificate Charges.

Appendix 2 Current Fish Export Health Certificate Charges.

Appendix 3 List of Consultees.

Appendix 4 Survey Results.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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## APPENDIX 1

### FISH EXPORT HEALTH CERTIFICATE CHARGES (as proposed)

Certificate Issue Times	Charging Structure
<p><b>a) Monday to Friday 09:00-16:00hrs</b></p> <p>Where Environmental Health Service is given a <u>minimum of 24 hours notice</u>.</p> <p>(E.g. A call before 9:30hrs on a Tuesday would mean a certificate being issued the following morning (this would be on a Monday if the call is received on a Friday)).</p>	<p>Initial charge of £60.00 (this includes travel time, administration and issue of 1<sup>st</sup> Certificate) up to a maximum time of 1 hour.</p> <p>An additional charge of £30.00 per officer per hour or part thereof will be payable per officer after the first hour (two officers may be required depending on size of consignment).</p>
<p><b>b) Monday to Friday 09:00-16:00hrs</b></p> <p>Where Environmental Health Service is given <u>less than 24 hours notice</u>.</p> <p>(E.g. A call before 12:00hrs on a Tuesday would mean a certificate being issued that afternoon. A call after 12:00hrs would mean a certificate being issued the following morning (this would be on a Monday if the call is received on a Friday)).</p>	<p>Initial charge of £120.00 (this includes travel time, administration and issue of 1<sup>st</sup> Certificate) up to a maximum time of 1 hour.</p> <p>An additional charge of £30.00 per officer per hour or part thereof will be payable per officer after the first hour.</p>
<p><b>c) Monday to Friday after 16:00hrs</b></p> <p>Where Environmental Health Service is given a <u>minimum of 24 hours notice</u>.</p> <p>(E.g. A call before 16:00hrs on a Tuesday would mean a certificate being issued in the evening of Wednesday)</p>	<p>Initial charge of £150.00 (this includes travel time, administration and issue of 1<sup>st</sup> Certificate) up to a maximum of 1 hour.</p> <p>An additional charge of £45.00 per officer per hour or part thereof will be payable after the first hour of the visit.</p>

<p><b>d) Monday to Friday after 16:00hrs</b></p> <p>Where Environmental Health Service is given <u>less than 24 hours notice</u>. (E.g. A call before 12:00hrs on a Tuesday would mean a certificate being issued that evening).</p>	<p>Initial charge of £200.00 (this includes travel time, administration and issue of 1<sup>st</sup> Certificate) up to a maximum of 1 hour.</p> <p>An additional charge of £45.00 per officer per hour or part thereof will be payable after the first hour of the visit.</p>
<p><b>e) Weekend visits (Saturday and Sunday) 09:00-16:00hrs.</b></p> <p>Where the Environmental Health Service is given <u>at least 24 hours notice</u>.</p> <p>(e.g. a call received by the service before 16.00hrs on a Friday would mean a certificate being issued on a Saturday or Sunday)</p>	<p>Initial charge of £200.00 (this includes travel time, administration and issue of 1<sup>st</sup> Certificate) up to a maximum of 1 hour.</p> <p>An additional charge of £45.00 per officer per hour or part thereof will be payable after the first hour of the visit.</p>
<p><b>f) Weekend visits (Saturday and Sunday) 09:00-16:00hrs.</b></p> <p>Where Environmental Health Service is given <u>less than 24 hours notice</u>.</p> <p>(E.g. A call after 12:00hrs on a Friday would mean a certificate being issued on Saturday or a Sunday as agreed with the business). (This certificate would be issued by the Standby Duty Officer for Environmental Health)</p>	<p>Initial charge of £250.00 (this includes travel time, administration and issue of 1<sup>st</sup> Certificate) up to a maximum of 1 hour</p> <p>An additional charge of £45.00 per officer per hour or part thereof will be payable after the first hour of the visit.</p>

<p><b>g) Visits on Public Holidays 09:00-16:00hrs (excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day and 1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2014 ).</b></p> <p>Where the Environmental Health Service is given <u>at least 24 hours notice</u>.</p> <p>(E.g. A call, at the latest, before 12:00hrs on a normal working day preceding a public holiday would mean a certificate being issued on the arranged public holiday). (This certificate would be issued by the Standby Duty Officer for Environmental Health)</p>	<p>Initial charge of £200.00 (this includes travel time, administration and issue of 1<sup>st</sup> Certificate) up to a maximum of 1 hour.</p> <p>An additional charge of £60.00 per officer per hour or part thereof will be payable after the first hour of the visit.</p>
<p><b>h) Visits on Public Holidays 09:00-16:00hrs (excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day and 1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> January).</b></p> <p>Where Environmental Health Service is given <u>less than 24 hours notice</u>.</p> <p>(E.g. A call after 12:00hrs on a normal working day preceding a public holiday would mean a certificate being issued on the arranged public holiday). (This certificate would be issued by the Standby Duty Officer for Environmental Health)</p>	<p>Initial charge of £250.00 (this includes travel time, administration and issue of 1<sup>st</sup> Certificate) up to a maximum of 1 hour.</p> <p>An additional charge of £60.00 per officer per hour or part thereof will be payable after the first hour of the visit.</p>



<p><b>i) Visits on 27<sup>th</sup> through to 31st December and on 2nd January 09:00-16:00hrs. (where these fall on a week day)</b></p> <p>Where Environmental Health Service is given <u>at least 24 hours notice</u>.</p> <p>(This certificate would be issued by the Standby Duty Officer for Environmental Health)</p>	<p>Initial charge of £150.00 (this includes travel time, administration and issue of 1<sup>st</sup> Certificate) up to a maximum of 1 hour.</p> <p>An additional charge of £60.00 per officer per hour or part thereof will be payable after the first hour of the visit.</p>
<p><b>j) Additional Certificates.</b></p>	<p>During normal working hours (9.00-16.00hrs Monday–Friday) where more than two export certificates (up to a maximum of seven) are being issued during the same visit the exporting company will be charged the discounted amount of two times the relevant certificate charge applicable at that time.</p> <p>(As long as the inspection and certification process can be carried out within the same working day.)</p>

## **General Requirements relating to All Requests**

Requests for export certificates will normally not be accepted out with normal office hours (09.00-16.00hrs).

Requests for weekend visits should be received by this Service no later than 14.00 hrs on the Friday before.

## **Additional Administrative Charges Which May Apply**

Should a business require amendments to a certificate which has already been requested and generated, an administration fee of £20 will be payable.

If a certificate has already been issued to a business, and the business requires changes to the document resulting in it being reissued there will be an additional charge of £60, which will cover the administration costs and the cost of the revised certificate being delivered to the business.

Amended certificates are defined as alterations to the original information provided to the Environmental Health Service which will materially alter the information detailed on the certificate and therefore necessitate either changes to the initial information supplied or the generation of a new certificate.

In instances where an officer visits the premises with certificate to be informed that it is no longer required the £60.00 fee will still be charged.

**APPENDIX 2****Current Fish Export Charges (2013/14)**

<b>Fish Export Certificates</b> [a] Per visit [week days] including cost of first certificate	£60.00 [For requests made before 9.30am Monday-Friday.] Requests made after 9.30am for same day service charge £120.00 + £25.00 per additional certificate	
[b] Per visit [Saturdays] including cost of certificate	£120	Saturday charge reflects the staffing costs associated with standby costs and out of hours working
[c] Each additional certificate	£25	

**APPENDIX 3 List of Consultees**

<b>Name of Company</b>	<b>Address1</b>	<b>Address 2</b>	<b>Address 3</b>	<b>Post Code</b>
A G D Duff and Partners Ltd	2 Stell Road	Torry	Aberdeen	AB11 5QR
A. Divers	6 Russell Road	Aberdeen		AB11 5RB
Anglo Nordic Trading Ltd	South Esplanade East	Torry	Aberdeen	AB11 9PB
Allan Dey Ltd	45 Sinclair Road	Torry	Aberdeen	AB11 9BG
B Fraser	26 Russell Road	Aberdeen		AB11 5RB
Brian Strachan	66 Sinclair Road	Aberdeen		AB11 9PP
Colin Fraser Fish	15 Raik Road	Aberdeen		AB11 5QL
Coupers Ltd	18 South Esplanade West	Aberdeen		AB11 9AA
Coupers Seafoods	20 Murrays Lane	South Esplanade West	Aberdeen	AB11 9AE
D H Clark	17 Crombie Road	Torry	Aberdeen	AB11 9QQ
E Anderson	29 South Esplanade West	Aberdeen		AB11 9AA
G H Robertson Jnr	Poynernook Road	Aberdeen		AB11 5QX
Gar Fish Ltd	Poynernook Road	Aberdeen		AB11 5RU
Granite City Fish Ltd	Poynernook Road	Aberdeen		AB11 5QX
H & H Fish	Poynernook Road	Aberdeen		AB11 5QX
Highland Fish	31 Sinclair Road	Torry	Aberdeen	AB11 9PL
J Charles	19/UNIT 4 Crombie Road	Torry	Aberdeen	AB11 9QQ
J S Stephen t/a J S Fish	4 Russell Road	Aberdeen		AB11 5RB
John Ross Junior	84 Sinclair Road	Aberdeen		AB11 9PP
Joseph Robertson Ltd	45-47 Sinclair Road	Torry	Aberdeen	AB11 9BG
Lunar Freezing	Craigshaw Street	West Tullos	Aberdeen	AB12 3AE
Mara Fish Company	18 Cabels Lane	South Esplanade West	Aberdeen	AB11 9AD

Merchant & Reid	8 Russell Road	Aberdeen		AB11 5RB
Morco	9 Raik Road	Aberdeen		AB11 5QL
Nolan Seafoods Ltd	Craigshaw Drive	West Tullos	Aberdeen	AB12 3AN
Nor Sea Foods	Broadfold Road	Bridge Of Don	Aberdeen	AB23 8EE
Pearsons Seafoods	7 Cabels Lane	South Esplanade West	Aberdeen	AB11 9AD
Piper Seafoods Ltd	South Esplanade West	Aberdeen		AB11 9AA
R McDonald	South Esplanade East	Aberdeen		AB11 9PB
R W Henderson	24 Russell Road Lane	Torry	Aberdeen	AB11 5RB
Raysalmon	Old Ford Road	Aberdeen		AB11 5RL
Seatern Brand	6A Cabels Lane	South Esplanade West	Aberdeen	AB11 9AD
Skateraw Fisheries	Old Ford Road	Torry	Aberdeen	AB11 5RL
Thistle Fish Exports Ltd	Poynernook Road	Aberdeen		AB11 5QX
Topsail	1 Russell Road	Torry	Aberdeen	AB11 5RB
Trawlpac Seafoods	Craigshaw Place	West Tullos	Aberdeen	AB12 3AH
D & G Nolan	Craigshaw Drive	West Tullos	Aberdeen	AB12 3AN
King Foods	11/15 Crombie Road	Torry	Aberdeen	AB11 9QQ
Norwest Foods International Ltd	3 Haig Court	Haig Road	Knutsford	WA16 8XZ
Salmac Seafood Ltd	55 Carden Place	Aberdeen		AB10 1UN
Sea Pac	20 Donmouth Road	Bridge of Don	Aberdeen	AB23 8DR
Seafood Products	Meridan House	A1 Endeavor Place	Coxbridge Business Park	Farnham, Surrey GU10 5EH

#### **APPENDIX 4 Results of survey conducted by Shetland Council**

<b>Scottish Authorities (Number of Certs issued)</b>	<b>Certificate cost</b>
Edinburgh (33)	£40 +vat
Falkirk (6)	£30
South Lanarkshire	£38
South Ayrshire	£18.83 / £25.89 out with working hours
North Lanarkshire	£27.65
Dumfries (120)	£63.50 (+ £27.50 where inspection required)
Western Isles (130)	£10 less than 5kg £19 greater than 5kg less than 5 tonnes £37 China +£11 less than 24hrs notice
Angus (60)	£30.80 (+£6.20 for additional certs signed the same day)
Highland	£17
Argyll & Bute	£36.75 (first cert) £18.40 (2-4 certs) £9.20 (4+ certs) Annual agreement by negotiation
Scottish Borders (10-15)	£19.20 (+£56 if visit/inspect)
Glasgow (149)	£70 Recharge full amount if business makes a mistake
Aberdeenshire (600)	£37 per certificate/batch £77.75 Chinese visit + cert
Fife (581)	£56
Orkney (100)	£32.40 Certificate issued if visited in last 6 weeks may increase to 3 months.
West Dunbartonshire (500)	£34.61 + VAT = £41.53 (under review)
West Lothian	£70.38 Copies at the time £6.21 /£12.42 if after original
Moray	£34
East Lothian (70-80)	£68.99
North Ayrshire	No charge – under review
Stirling	£99.56 £24.53 – subsequent certs
Shetland (973)	£65 per cert £20 copies/amendments £55 if inspection required £20 if less than 24hrs notice

<b>English Authorities</b>	
Liverpool	£66.50 for first 5 then £1 for each extra on same day for same batch
East Riding	£60 for 3 hours then £60 per hour thereafter
East Staffordshire	£51.50
Wigan Council	£105 standard but can vary
Melton	£31.50 plus officer inspection time
Bassetlaw	£70
York	£49.42
Ealing	£69
East Cambs	£95.00
Peterborough	£162
South Cambs	£120
Huntingdonshire	£70.30
Fenland	£68.30
South Somerset	£52
Rossendale	£46.29
Charnwood	£69
Basildon	£22 admin+ £40 officer per hour
Bradford	£78 - monthly cert 12 max per month £600
Staffordshire Moorlands	£109
Spelthorne	£130 if visit £65 if not
Cheshire East	£60
Mid Suffolk	£81
Bexley	£295
High Peak	£109
Bedford	£39.50
Richmond	£46
Arun	£250
Torridge	£46.35 + £33/hour if inspected
Sunderland	£50
Stoke	£10
Woking	£57
New Forest	£65 in working hours / £100 outside
Watford	£35
Scarborough	£30 + £30 if visit
Stevenage	£83.50
East Devon	£200
Stroud	£33 more than 120 certs per year =£22 +inspection charge when required
Solihull	£49
Elmbridge	£402