

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL.

COMMITTEE	Public Protection Committee
DATE	4 th July 2018
REPORT TITLE	Implementation of the approved recommendations of the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) assessment of the Aberdeen Scientific Services Laboratory (ASSL).
REPORT NUMBER	CUS/18/015
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Mark Reilly
REPORT AUTHOR	James Darroch
TERMS OF REFERENCE	3.1 and 3.2

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Committee on the status of UKAS accreditation and the progress of recommendations of assessment of the Aberdeen Scientific Services Laboratory.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee :-

- 2.1 Notes the work being undertaken to implement and develop the recommendations of the 15th and 16th March 2018 UKAS surveillance report; and
- 2.2 Endorses the continuation of accreditation as a license to operate.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 ASSL is a laboratory based at Old Aberdeen House, providing analytical services to a wide range of local authority and private clients. It is a team of 20 staff within Operations and Protective Services, consisting of 17 technical and 3 support staff.
- 3.2 ASSL provides both chemical analysis and microbiological examination analytical services on a range of sample types, principally food products, agricultural products, potable water, swimming pools, legionella monitoring, air monitoring and surface/ground waters and leachates from landfill site monitoring. It provides support for the Environmental Health services and plays

an integral part in the process of protecting the health of the people of the North East of Scotland.

- 3.3 ASSL is an Official Control Laboratory (OCL) as designated by the Food Standards Agency under EU legislation (Regulation (EC) 882/2004). Without OCL status, the laboratory would not be able to undertake any enforcement work. ASSL also employs, as specified in the Food Safety Act 1990, a Public Analyst who has been appointed by Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils.
- 3.4 ASSL has successfully maintained UKAS accreditation status since 1994. On 15th and 16th March 2018 the laboratory received a Surveillance assessment by UKAS. This highly successful, surveillance visit was the third visit of the current 4 year accreditation cycle for the laboratory (2016 to 2019). Next year will see UKAS deliver a full re-assessment audit, prior to the start of another 4 year cycle.
- 3.5 During the course of the 2018 assessment, a number of findings were raised that identified areas where the quality system procedures could be improved further. These findings were addressed, with evidence submitted to UKAS, and on the 17th May 2018 confirmation was received from UKAS that the findings had been cleared and that accreditation was being maintained for a further 12 months.
- 3.6 UKAS assessments (whether Re-assessment or Surveillance) are all encompassing audits of ASSL's operating and technical practices. Work undertaken by the Laboratory, including the implementation of the Quality Management System, are assessed against the ISO standard criteria, Food Standard Agency and Drinking Water Inspectorate guidelines.
- 3.7 As legislative and technical amendments are made accreditation requirements adapt to reflect and accommodate best practice. As such, the UKAS technical assessors make annual reports on surveillance visits of ASSL. The findings of the 2018 surveillance assessment are attached in Appendix A for reference.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The estimate of total expenditure required by UKAS to maintain the 4 year accreditation cycle is approximately £45,000.
- 4.2 The estimate of the total expenditure, including laboratory staff time, required by the Council to allow ASSL to maintain accreditation and implement recommendations over the same period is approximately £80,000. All costs of maintaining accreditation are built into existing budgets.
- 4.3 The expenditure is required as the maintenance of UKAS accreditation, including to the Drinking Water Testing Specification (DWTS), forms part of existing service level agreements with local authority partners. Local authority

income currently forms approximately 85% of the £1.2 million turnover of the laboratory.

- 4.4 UKAS accreditation is also required by most private customers seeking analytical services.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 6.1 Section 6.5.1 of the current service level agreements with Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Moray Council state that “The Provider (i.e. ASSL) shall perform the analysis and examination of samples consistently and accurately according to recognised procedures. These procedures will be validated regularly by UKAS/DWTS accreditation and assessment, and by internal quality assessment procedures.”
- 6.2 Failure to acquire, and maintain, UKAS/DWTS accreditation would mean that the laboratory would be unable to provide an analytical service, which currently accounts for 85% of the income of the laboratory, to these local authorities.

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	Loss of significant part of local authority client base due to failure to maintain UKAS accreditation, as required by existing service level agreements.	M	Continue to invest the necessary time and resources required to maintain UKAS accreditation.
Customer	Loss of private customers due to failure to maintain UKAS accreditation.	M	Continue to invest the necessary time and resources required to maintain UKAS accreditation.

Technology	Lack of investment in the development of new technologies, and in the maintenance of existing technologies, restricting the ability of ASSL to maintain its current status as an Official Control laboratory.	M	Seek additional sources of capital investment. Seek sources of additional income so that ASSL can self-finance some of the investment in technology.
Reputational	Loss of credibility of ASSL, with clients and other organisations, in ability to provide quality services through failure to maintain UKAS accreditation.	M	Continue to invest the necessary time and resources required to maintain UKAS accreditation

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	The provision of quality analytical services to local authority and private customers supports those organisations in providing the services that they , in turn, provide to their own customers and the community.
Prosperous People	UKAS/DWTS accreditation enables the Laboratory to maintain its status as an Official Control Laboratory and provides confidence to customers and clients (both private and local authority) of its ability to maintain high quality performance and service in its role of helping to ensure the safety of food and water that we all consume, and of the air that we breathe.
Enabling Technology	UKAS/DWTS accreditation dictates that the Laboratory strives to maintain and develop the services that it provides through the acquisition of modern equipment and the development of new technologies.

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Customer Service Design	None.
Organisational Design	None.
Governance	External audit and accreditation provides assurance to Aberdeen City Council regarding the quality of the laboratory service
Workforce	None.
Process Design	None.
Technology	None.
Partnerships and Alliances	None.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	Not required.
Privacy Impact Assessment	Not required.
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not applicable.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

10. APPENDICES

Appendix A: United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) Assessment Report detailing the visit made to Aberdeen Scientific Services Laboratory on the 15th and 16th March 2018.

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	James Darroch
Title	Laboratory Manager
Email Address	jdarroch@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Tel	01224 491648