

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL.

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Public Protection Committee
<b>DATE</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> June 2019
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Implementation of the approved recommendations of the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) assessment of the Aberdeen Scientific Services Laboratory (ASSL).
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Rob Polkinghorne
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Mark Reilly
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	James Darroch
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	3.1 and 3.2

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee :-

- 2.1 notes the work being undertaken to implement and develop the recommendations of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019 UKAS re-assessment report.
- 2.2 endorses the continuation of accreditation as a license to operate.

### 3. BACKGROUND

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.

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.

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.

ASSL has successfully maintained UKAS accreditation status since 1994. On 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019 the laboratory received a Re-assessment Audit by UKAS. This highly successful, visit was the final visit of the current 4 year accreditation cycle for the laboratory (2016 to 2019). Next year will see UKAS deliver the first Surveillance audit, marking the start of another 4 year cycle. During the course of the 2019 re-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. The Laboratory is currently awaiting confirmation from UKAS that the findings had been cleared and that accreditation was being maintained for a further 12 months.

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.

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 2019 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.

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.

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

- 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.”
- 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.
- Whatever the outcome of Brexit, whether the UK leaves the EU with or without a deal, UKAS will continue to be recognised by the UK Government as the UK's sole national accreditation body.

	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Financial</b>	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.
<b>Customer</b>	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.
<b>Technology</b>	Lack of investment in the development of new technologies, and in the maintenance of existing	M	Seek additional sources of capital investment. Seek sources of additional income so that

	technologies, restricting the ability of ASSL to maintain its current status as an Official Control laboratory.		ASSL can self-finance some of the investment in technology.
<b>Reputational</b>	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

<b>Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Prosperous Economy</b>	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.
<b>Prosperous People</b>	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.
<b>Enabling Technology</b>	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.

<b>Design Principles of Target Operating Model</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Customer Service Design</b>	None.
<b>Organisational Design</b>	None.
<b>Governance</b>	External audit and accreditation provides assurance to Aberdeen City Council regarding the quality of the laboratory service

<b>Workforce</b>	None.
<b>Process Design</b>	None.
<b>Technology</b>	None.
<b>Partnerships and Alliances</b>	None.

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Equality &amp; Human Rights Impact Assessment</b>	Not required.
<b>Privacy Impact Assessment</b>	Not required.
<b>Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty</b>	Not applicable.

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## 10. APPENDICES (if applicable)

**Appendix A : United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) Assessment Report detailing the visit made to Aberdeen Scientific Services Laboratory on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> February.**

## 11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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