

Report

Report to:	Community and Enterprise Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	4 May 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Introduction of New Charge - Export Health Certificate Supporting Attestation
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise the Committee of the introduction of a national charge for the issuing of food export health certificate's 'Supporting Attestations' from 1 January 2021

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the introduction of a new charge of £100 for the issuing of an Export Health Certificate Supporting Attestation be noted.

3. Background

3.1. On the 31 December 2020, the transition period for the UK leaving the EU ended and new rules for exporting came into effect. From 1 January 2021 the UK is considered by the EU as a 'Third Country' for purposes of trade and businesses exporting products of animal origin to the EU and Northern Ireland will require an Export Health Certificate (EHC). EHCs are evidence that a consignment meets EU import health requirements. Businesses will be unable to trade with the EU without them.

4. Export Health Certificates and Supporting Attestations

4.1. The EHC for products of animal origin for human consumption must be signed by an appropriately designated Certifying Officer (CO), which can be an Official Veterinarian (OV) or a Food Competent Certifying Officer (FCCO). Environmental Health Officers within South Lanarkshire Council are designated as FCCO's for fishery products, live bivalve molluscs such as oysters, mussels, clams and scallops, and certain composite products (foods containing a mixture of products of animal origin, e.g. - egg and products of plant origin, e.g. - wheat).

4.2. In order to reduce both the financial and administrative burden associated with the issuing of EHC's for every consignment of fishery products exported to the EU or Northern Ireland, logistic\commercial hubs were created to allow multiple batches of similar fishery products to be consolidated into a single consignment travelling under one EHC. One such logistics hub is in South Lanarkshire, DFDS, which is located at Larkhall.

4.3. DEFRA issued guidance to food business operators and Certifying Officers outlining the process by which fishery products can be certified at a logistics hub. Fundamental to this process is that goods arriving at logistics hubs must be accompanied by a

'supporting attestation' from the Local Authority who inspect these products at their place or origin. This supporting information is subsequently used by Certifying Officers at logistics hubs to facilitate certification of goods and the issuing of EHC's. The Attestation confirms that, from the documents provided with the application, the product has been produced\manufactured or otherwise processed or stored at a premise which is subject to official controls including inspections.

- 4.4. The frequency by which 'supporting attestations' require to be provided to exporting businesses utilising logistics hubs is determined using a risk-based approach aligned with the food hygiene scoring system outlined in Food Standards Scotland's 'Food Law Code of Practice'. The current maximum interval permitted between the issuing of 'supporting attestations' requires a new attestation to be issued every 6 months, with the maximum frequency being every 1 month. 'Supporting attestations' may only be issued following a random export related inspection of the exporting business.
- 4.5. South Lanarkshire Council currently has 2 fishery product premises who have requested 'supporting attestations' to allow them to utilise the services provided by both the logistics hub located at DFDS, Larkhall, and in addition at two other logistics hubs located in North Lanarkshire Council, Mesquen, Harthill and O'toole, Bellshill. These fishery premises are listed in appendix 1. For both food businesses 'supporting attestations' were issued with their period of validity being 6 months from the date of issue.

5. Introduction of a New Charge

- 5.1. The existing charging regime for export health certificates will continue. South Lanarkshire Council currently charge £45.64 for export health certificates, which are required to allow food manufacturers to export their products globally to countries such as China, Dubai, UAE, Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Trinidad, Saudi Arabia and the Philippines. 194 export health certificates were issued to local businesses during the 2020/2021 financial year.
- 5.2. The 3 logistics hubs located in North and South Lanarkshire are operated by Food Standards Scotland who has developed a charging model for the issuing of EHC's at these locations. This is a National model, included in which is a standard charge for the issuing of 'supporting attestations' by Local Authorities in Scotland. The standard charge for 'supporting attestations' was introduced from 1 January 2021 and is currently set at £100 per attestation issued and is subject to review. Food Standards Scotland have requested that Local Authorities invoice them quarterly to recover the cost of issuing 'supporting attestations'. This report is to make Members aware of this national charge being applied by South Lanarkshire Council.
- 5.3. Currently South Lanarkshire Council has only been asked to provide 'supporting attestations' for food businesses utilising the 3 logistics hubs located in Lanarkshire. Other UK wide schemes such as the 'Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme' (GEFS) are in existence and it remains a possibility that the Council may be asked to provide 'supporting attestations' in respect of such schemes. In addition, the Council may in future be asked to provide 'supporting attestations' for logistics hubs operating in other parts of the UK, or by OV's or other FCCO's providing EHC's for products of animal origin away from the place of origin. In such cases the Council would seek to apply the same national standard charge currently applied by Food Standards Scotland, thereby being consistent with the national charging model.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1. There are no employee implications.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. Food Standards Scotland have introduced a national charge for food export 'supporting attestations' to reflect the costs associated with Local Authorities administering and issuing these attestations. This level of charging, currently set at £100, will be reviewed in line with Food Standards Scotland's national charging model.
- 7.2. Two food businesses have indicated they would require attestations to access the Lanarkshire export hubs. Based on current food safety risk ratings, and the fact that separate attestations are required for each logistics hub used, this would require 10 attestations per year, giving an estimated annual income of £1000.

8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 8.1. There are no implications for climate change, sustainability or the environment in terms of the information contained in this report.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1. There are no other issues arising from this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1. There are no requirements to carry out an impact assessment in terms of the proposals contained within this report.
- 10.2. There was no requirement to undertake any consultation in terms of the information contained within this report.

Link(s) to Council Objectives and Values

- ◆ Council Value: Focused on people and their needs.
- ◆ Council Value: Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
- ◆ Council Priority Objective: Promote economic growth and tackle disadvantage.
- ◆ Council Priority Objective: Make communities safer, stronger and sustainable.

Michael McGlynn

Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

9 April 2021

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

None.

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact: -

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APPENDIX 1

Fishery Products Exporters	Address
Dawnfresh Seafoods Ltd	Bothwell Park Industrial Estate Uddingston Lanarkshire G71 6LS
Braehead (SFO) Enterprises Ltd	Hornal Road Uddingston Bothwell Park Industrial Estate Glasgow G71 7EE