

PORTFOLIO HOLDER
SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES
DECISION NOTICE

Publication Date: 25th June 2021

At the meeting of the Portfolio Holder – Safer and Stronger Communities, held on the 24th June 2021 the following matters were discussed. The decisions of the Portfolio Holder are set out below in each item along with reasons for the decision and other options considered.

DNPH.SSC.1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made with regard to any items on the agenda for this meeting.

DNPH.SSC.2 NEW FEES AND CHARGES FOR SERVICES UNDERTAKEN BY PORT HEALTH WITHIN REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

The Portfolio Holder considered a report that proposed an annual update to these statutory and locally set charges to keep in line with inflation a review of fees and charges to ensure that the Council maintains its income base with rising cost and generates income to support provision of services within the agreed budget envelope.

RESOLVED – That the new fees and charges be approved, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report and authorises the Commercial Regulatory Manager to immediately so implement.

REASONS FOR DECISION –

1st January 2021 marked the end of the European Union (EU) Exit transition period, resulting in additional controls being placed on the movement of goods between the UK and EU.

NELC Commercial Regulatory Team provide Export Health Certificates (EHCs) for the movement of food products (mainly fish) destined for EU or non-EU countries and carry out import controls for products arriving from outside the UK into Grimsby & Immingham, with a phased introduction of such controls on EU origin products underway.

There has been a substantial and anticipated increase in demand for EHCs since our departure from the EU, for which we had prepared through recruitment and investment in systems/accommodation. In addition to this, we have experienced multiple requests to amend or reissue EHCs which places additional pressure on the service. It is proposed to introduce additional administration charges to ensure the Council achieves full cost recovery for providing the service. These proposed charges can be found in Appendix 1.

Grimsby is a major national and international food manufacturing, storage, and distribution hub, with consignments always leaving the borough through the day/night. The service has been approached to provide EHCs outside of core working hours to facilitate the movement of goods including live, chilled, and frozen fishery products. Officers will be remunerated for agreeing to provide this service and therefore the Council wish to recover this additional cost from the businesses, which will also impact on service delivery during normal working hours.

From 1st October 2021, all product of animal origin (POAO) imports from the EU and European Economic Area (EEA – e.g., Iceland, Norway, Faroes Islands) will require health certification and prenotification of arrival on the UK's import control system. Port Health Authorities such as NELC will be required to check these documents and must ensure they have the appropriate staffing and resource in place to do so. We are awaiting instruction from the Central Competent Authorities on the proposed charging regime; however, we are aware other Port Health Authorities are proposing their own charges in the absence of any clear instruction from central government. We too are proposing to do the same and these proposed charges can be found in Appendix 1.

Research recently undertaken on 2021/22 fees (detailed in Appendix 2) across local and Port Health Authorities confirms that some already charge businesses for EHC amendments and out of hours services to ensure they receive full cost recovery. In addition to this, we have also reviewed fees and charges in relation to Import controls to ensure full cost recovery.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED –

1) One option considered was for charges for the service to remain as is. This is not recommended as the current charging framework does

not account for all the additional costs of providing certain aspects of the services, especially their provision outside of normal working hours and therefore the Council would not achieve full cost recovery.

2) A further option considered was to wait for the Central Competent Authorities to advise on a charging mechanism from 1st October, however this is not recommended as we are close to that date and businesses should be given the appropriate time to prepare. If charging information is received from the Central Competent Authorities, the Council will align costs to any harmonised charging mechanism. Any announcements from Central Competent Authorities are not likely to cover export health certification services, as this remains a discretionary function of local authorities and therefore requires a locally applied charging mechanism.

3) To only provide a service inside core working hours was also considered, however this would place limitations on businesses in relation their operational hours and potentially impact on trade flows through the ports.