

SPSO decision report

Case: 201203256, Business Stream
Sector: water
Subject: incorrect billing
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained on behalf of a company who obtained planning consent from the local council to open a food processing site close to their main site, which is on a river estuary. The main site had inherited a deep water outfall from its previous use as sawmills, which was controlled by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. The company intended, as an interim measure, to transfer effluent by tanker from the secondary site to the main site while a pipeline was constructed between the two. However, this did not prove necessary and from the first day of operations, effluent between the two sites was pumped by pipeline and the trade effluent was never released to the Scottish Water waste water network.

There is provision (process 27) in the arrangements between licensed providers and Scottish Water for a licensed water provider to submit a trader information and allowance form for a 'non-return to sewer' allowance in cases such as this. As Scottish Water do not grant retrospective consent, the licensed provider (in this case, Business Stream) should seek the relevant information from the customer in advance and submit it to Scottish Water for approval. This did not happen here, although the allowance was later given from April 2012. We upheld the complaint that Business Stream unreasonably delayed in advising the company to submit the form, and we made a recommendation about this.

Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream:

- further consider reimbursing the company for waste water charges for the period from the commencement of their operations at the secondary site until 11 April 2012.