



Chelmsford City Council Governance Committee

31 October 2022

Senior Responsible Officer's report in relation to the Council's RIPA arrangements

Report by:
Senior Responsible Officer

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Purpose

To update members on the Council's RIPA arrangements.

Recommendations

1. To note the annual update for members.
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1. Background

- 1.1. RIPA relates to covert investigatory powers given to local authorities for specific and limited purposes. For local authorities such as Chelmsford City Council only three types of activity may be authorised and this includes

directed surveillance, the use of covert human intelligence source and the acquisition of communications data. These powers are overseen by the Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office (IPCO) who undertakes periodic RIPA inspections. Details of how these types of activity could be authorised by the Council are set out in detail in two policies – the RIPA policy and the RIPA social media policy.

- 1.2. In terms of number of authorisations granted, as has been the case for some years, the Council has not needed to obtain any RIPA approvals during the past year. However, the Council needs to make sure that it remains ready to do so if necessary and that staff are properly trained to ensure investigations continue to be undertaken in a lawful and appropriate way. Ongoing annual reviews of RIPA arrangements are undertaken to support this.
- 1.3. Inspections by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) usually take place every few years. The last inspection took place in 2020 and was reported to the committee at the time. No inspection is currently scheduled.

2. Annual Review 2022

2.1 Both the Council's RIPA and RIPA Social Media Policies were reviewed post inspection and again last year. The RIPA policies have been further reviewed but as anticipated no updating has been necessary.

2.2 Training of key personnel is complete although new staff and refresher training is part of ongoing training reviews. RIPA policies together with training needs will continue to be reviewed at least annually together with any ongoing actions through the RIPA officer working group. Part of the annual review process also involves providing an assurance report to the Governance Committee, usually in the autumn.

List of appendices:

Nil

Background papers:

Nil

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: These are set out in the RIPA policies referred to in the report

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees: none

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Current RIPA and RIPA social media policies
