

REPORT TO:	ETHICS COMMITTEE 28 February 2018
SUBJECT:	CORPORATE RIPA (REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000) POLICY REVISIONS
LEAD OFFICER:	DIRECTOR OF LAW AND MONITORING OFFICER
WARDS:	ALL
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Hamida Ali - Communities, Safety and Justice
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: Monitoring compliance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act supports the Council's approach to corporate governance.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT The recommendation contained in this report has no financial implications.	
KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO: This is not a key decision.	

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to:

- 1.1 Note the revisions to the corporate policy and procedures managing the use of Covert Surveillance authorised under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 by the Council arising from the Office of Surveillance Commissioner's recommendations following a Council inspection in 2017.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Committee were informed of the results of an Office of the Surveillance Commissioner's inspection of the Council's use of RIPA at their meeting held on 6 September 2017. This report provided details of the inspectors finding and recommendations made.
- 2.2 The inspection report concluded that there was a clear commitment on the part of those officers involved in both operational and supervisory roles, to maintain proper standards.

3.0 KEY FINDINGS

- 3.1 As part of the inspection, the Inspector considered and commented on the Council's Policy document. The Inspector commented that the Council's current Policy document did not include the use of social media. Therefore, a recommendation was made that this should be included. This can now be found at Section 17 of the attached policy. The opportunity has also been taken to revise other parts of the Policy, to include guidance on particular issues that had been previously provided to investigators in Sections 15, 16 and 18.
- 3.2 The Inspector further commented that Policy and Procedure was of high quality and was balanced and easy to follow. Members may wish to note that in addition to the Council's RIPA Policy document, an Aide-memoir had been issued to the Council officers who undertake RIPA activities, which included the use of Social Media in investigations in addition to specific pieces of advice provided separately in respect of individual investigations. This now forms part of the of the revised policy document.
- 3.3 The Committee may also wish to note that during the coming year training events will take place for officers whose role requires the potential use of surveillance. It is hoped to host a training event facilitated by the National Anti-Fraud Network in April, with a further training event later in the year.

4.0 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal consequences arising from the contents of this report beyond those set out in the body of the report.

CONTACT OFFICER: Jacqueline Harris-Baker, Director of Law and Monitoring Officer (ext 62328)

BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Corporate Policy & Procedures