

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY IN RELATION TO THE REGULATION OF
INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000**

To: **Constitution and Ethics Committee**

Meeting Date: **19th November 2015**

From: **LGSS Director of Law, Property & Governance and
Monitoring Officer**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **N/A** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **For the Committee to consider a report of Council activity
under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
(RIPA) for 2014 – 15**

Recommendation: **That the Committee note the report.**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council's RIPA policy requires the LGSS Director of Law, Property & Governance to provide Members with an annual update of the use by the Council of authorisations under RIPA for covert surveillance and their circumstances. The object of it is to achieve transparency and accountability for authorisations made.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 For the financial year 2014 – 15 two authorisations for directed surveillance have been granted. Both applications arose from investigations by the Council's Trading Standards team.

The Council has made no authorisations for the use of covert human intelligence sources.

The RIPA monitoring officer should be immediately informed of any RIPA authorisations undertaken.

- 2.2 The limited number of authorisations reflects the cautious approach adopted by Officers to the use of surveillance in recent years and in particular following changes to the RIPA regulations introduced in 2012 which restricted the scope of offences for which the Council may make use of RIPA authorisation. No authorisations for directed surveillance authorisations were granted in 2013 – 14 or in 2012 – 13.

2.3 Visit by Assistant Surveillance Commissioner in June 2015

His Honour Norman Jones QC, Assistant Surveillance Commissioner, undertook an inspection of the Council on 10th June 2015 and met with a number of Officers, including the Council's Monitoring Officer, the RIPA Monitoring Officer and the Head of Supporting Businesses and Communities (which includes the Trading Standards Team). The Commissioner also considered the Council's central record of authorisations and Trading Standards documentation relating to the authorisations.

- 2.3.1 The Commissioner's report concluded that the Council's overall RIPA performance had improved substantially since its previous inspection in 2012. It went on to make a number of recommendations. These have been noted by the RIPA Monitoring Officer and will be implemented within the coming weeks.

2.4 RIPA policy

- 2.4.1 The RIPA Monitoring Officer will review and update the Council's policy, in line with the Commissioner's recommendations.

Policy is publicised internally on an annual basis around the same time as the annual report. This will serve to remind officers of the possible uses for RIPA but also remind officers of the circumstances when a RIPA authorisation is required.

Source Documents	Location
None	