

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Governance and Policy	Governance Committee	25 January 2017

RIPA - INSPECTION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To update members on the recent RIPA inspection.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. To note the content of the Inspectors report and recommendations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. Chorley Council is inspected every 3 years by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner to assess compliance with our obligations under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.
4. In 2016 the OSC introduced a new lighter touch regime to reflect the reduced use of RIPA by local authorities. This enabled the inspection to be undertaken remotely by the review of the Council's policies and procedures that support our RIPA regime.
5. An inspection was undertaken in September of last year and a report was sent to the Council in October.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	X

BACKGROUND

7. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act provides a framework within which Chorley Council must comply when undertaking certain investigatory powers in relation to the use of covert surveillance.
8. In compliance with our obligations the Council have a RIPA policy and a number of procedures and guidance notes to assist staff. These are available to all staff on the loop.
9. The Council however do not make use of the powers under the act, preferring to use prevention and overt surveillance to meet Council aims.
10. Previously, the Office for the Surveillance Commissioner would undertake onsite inspections every three years. These would involve an inspector usually spending half a day to a day on site, considering the Council's RIPA policy, procedure documents, training records and interviewing staff. In recognition of a wider decision taken by many council's

across the country not to use the RIPA powers a lighter touch inspection regime has been implemented. Instead of an onsite visit the OSC request a suite of documents and will review their fitness for purpose. In addition they will satisfy themselves the Council have trained relevant staff sufficiently.

THE REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2016

11. Members are invited to review the report which is appended to this. Chorley Council have not granted a RIPA authorisation of any sort for many years and none since the last inspection. The report therefore confines itself to addressing how the Council complied with the recommendations of the last report and a review of the current systems.
12. Members are particularly directed to 3 items. Firstly, there is a recommendation in the body of the report to review and update the RIPA Policy to reflect factual changes. There is nothing to suggest that the policy itself is not fit for purpose. These have been accepted and are being completed.
13. Secondly, the OSC recommends that guidance on the use of social media should be expanded with more action taken to draw it to officers attention. This recommendation has been accepted and the guidance note will be reviewed. It should be noted though that this is substantially similar to the guidance issued by the OSC.
14. Finally, it was recommended that the policy on the use of CCTV be reviewed and updated. This is a piece of work that is being undertaken jointly with the police to reflect that the CCTV suite is primarily used by them, and indeed is situated within the police station.
15. The recommendations have been accepted in full and have been, or are in the process of being actioned.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

16. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	X	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

17. No comments

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

18. Comments contained in the body of the report.

CHRIS SINNOTT
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND POLICY

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Letter and Inspection Report	September 2016		Appended hereto

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Chris Moister	5160-	17 January 2017	