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## Chelmsford City Council Governance Committee

**18 October 2023**

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

Report by:  
Senior Responsible Officer

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#### Officer Contact:

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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 and provide assurance.
- 1.3. Inspections by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) usually take place every few years. An inspection was undertaken over the summer by way of a written response being provided to the inspectors for consideration. The inspectors were satisfied with the Council's arrangements and the response provided. The next inspection will take place in around 3 years.

## 2. Annual Review 2023

- 2.1 Both the Council's RIPA and RIPA Social Media Policies were reviewed in some detail during the previous inspection in 2020. Further technical updating is necessary as a result of legislative changes under the CHIS (Criminal Conduct) Act 2021 and the new CHIS Code of Practice. A personnel update is also necessary as a result of the appointment of a new RIPA Co Ordinating Officer earlier this year. The policy updates are being made by the SRO under officer delegation.
- 2.2 Training of key personnel is complete although new staff and refresher training is part of ongoing training reviews. Further refresher training is currently being planned for the Autumn. 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

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## 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

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Consultees: none

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### Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Current RIPA and RIPA social media policies

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