

AUDIT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 4
16 MARCH 2015	PUBLIC REPORT

Cabinet Member responsible:	Councillor Seaton, Resources Portfolio Holder	
Committee Member responsible:	Councillor Lee, Chair of Audit Committee	
Contact Officer(s):	Kim Sawyer, Director of Governance Ben Stevenson, Compliance Manager (Governance)	☎ 452 361 ☎ 452 387

REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2015 TO 28 FEBRUARY 2015

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM : Kim Sawyer, Director of Governance	Deadline date : N/A
1. Audit Committee is asked to Receive, consider and endorse this report on the use of RIPA for the two months from 1 st January 2015 to 28 February 2015.	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

This report is submitted to the Committee as a scheduled report on the Council's use of RIPA in accordance with the established Work Programme 2014 / 2015.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Council's use of RIPA powers in the two months from 1 January 2015 to 28 February 2015. This report is to be considered in accordance with its Terms of Reference 2.2.1.14 - To monitor council policies on "raising concern at work" and the anti-fraud and anti-corruption strategy and the Council's complaints process.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) provides a statutory mechanism for authorising covert surveillance and the use of a 'covert human intelligence source' (CHIS) e.g. undercover agents. It now also permits Public Authorities to compel telecommunications and postal companies to obtain and release communications data, in certain circumstances. It seeks to ensure that any interference with an individual's right under Article 8 is **necessary and proportionate**. In doing so, RIPA seeks to ensure both the public interest and the human rights of individuals are suitably balanced.

3.2 Council officers and external agencies working on behalf of Peterborough City Council must comply with RIPA and any work carried out must be properly authorised

by one of the Council's Authorising Officers. The powers contained within the Act can only be used for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime or preventing disorder.

- 3.3 The Council has established strong governance around the use of RIPA and provides assurance to the citizens of Peterborough that the powers are only used where necessary and proportionate and in accordance with the law. The Council will continue to fully investigate matters such as fly tipping with RIPA applications only made where necessary.
- 3.4 In terms of the Council's use of RIPA powers for this period, it can be reported that there has been one as detailed below, with judicial approval obtained.

Date of authorisation	Type of Covert Surveillance	Reason	Outcome
11 February 2015	Covert	Test purchasing of age restricted products	The operation is due to be carried out after this report has been produced

4. CONSULTATION

Consultation has taken place between the following parties:

- Director of Governance
- Chief Internal Auditor

5. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

That the Audit Committee continues to be informed of the necessary and proportionate use of RIPA across the Authority.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the authority's responsible and low use of these powers, it continues to receive information on the use of RIPA on a quarterly basis and a report detailing the specific usage when appropriate.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The option is not to present an annual or quarterly report, which details the use of RIPA. This could result in a lack of assurance and a potential lack of support from the Audit Committee. Failure to report usage for Member review contravenes the RIPA Codes of Practice.

8. IMPLICATIONS

The implications of this report are that the Council will become more aware of RIPA and its value to the Council's many enforcement teams. The Council has already created a positive profile and has been congratulated on its adherence to the legislation by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

(Used to prepare this report in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

Covert Surveillance And Property Interference Revised Code of Practice