

WDC RIPA Inspection 2021: Action Plan

Comments/Recommendations	Current Position
Covert Surveillance Policy	
The Inspector recorded that he was "impressed with the Council's RIPA policy", noting that it was "clearly written, easy to follow and covers all the relevant points in sufficient depth without being unnecessarily wordy."	No action necessary in terms of general depth and breadth.
The Inspector noted that "Paragraph 5.3 details incorrectly the level of authorisation for applications likely to acquire confidential information" and recommended that it "should be amended to refer such applications to the Chief Executive."	Addressed. Paragraph 5.3 of RIPA Policy amended.
The Inspector recommended that "The variation in the authorisation period for a Juvenile CHIS should also be highlighted."	Addressed. Variation highlighted in RIPA Policy.
The Inspector noted that "While there is a specific Data Management policy in place for the organisation, this subject is not covered in the RIPA policy." The Inspector went on to recommend "The management of any surveillance product should be included, with clear reference to the safeguarding measures outlined in the Home Office Codes of Practice for Covert Surveillance and CHIS."	Addressed. Now included in RIPA Policy.
Training and awareness	
The Inspector noted that "training had not been conducted for at least 18 months which, although not ideal, is understandable taking into account the ongoing pandemic." He commented that "Although training budgets are somewhat limited and Warwick District Council has not conducted any RIPA activity in recent times, RIPA training could easily slip down the list of priorities." The Inspector went on to note that "Many RIPA errors occur because of the lack of knowledge" and recommended that "some method of raising awareness across the organisation should be implemented."	A half-day RIPA awareness training session was run for all affected staff (approx. 25 WDC employees, including the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive) in January 2022.

<p>The Inspector concluded that “although the Council is a limited user of its surveillance powers, regular, ongoing internal oversight of the actual or potential use of powers is important.” The Inspector also noted that the “organisation appears to be in good hands through a knowledgeable RIPA Coordinator and a well-informed Senior Responsible Officer.”</p>	<p>Comments noted – no action necessary.</p>
<p>Merger Issues</p>	
<p>The Inspector noted the ongoing consultation relating to the proposed merger with Stratford District Council and wished to be kept informed of any developments.</p>	<p>Note made in Audit and Risk Manager’s online calendar to update the Inspector with details of the merger situation at end of 2022/23 financial year.</p>
<p>General</p>	
<p>The Inspector required the Council to acknowledge receipt of the report within two months.</p>	<p>Done.</p>