

Report of the Chief Executive

REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 20001. Purpose of report

To inform members of the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) powers and to amend the Policy and Guidance document. And update members on the outcome of the most recent Inspection.

2. Detail

The Policy and Guidance document should be regularly reviewed by members to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

The Council has made no use of the RIPA powers since July 2015. This is due to the fact that the only use being made by the Council was in connection with investigations into benefit fraud, and this function transferred back to the Department of Works and Pensions. However, Officers are required to undergo refresher training under the e-learning system to prepare for the possibility of the RIPA powers being used in a new area.

In July 2019 the Policy and Guidance document was updated to include a revised list of authorised officers following the re-structure of the senior management team in February 2019. In March 2020, just prior to the lockdown, the RIPA inspector attended the Council offices to carry out an inspection and has since sent through her report. It is pleasing to note that the Inspector was satisfied that the previous recommendations from the last inspection in April 2016 had been complied with. Following the inspection, the Inspector made only one partial recommendation regarding an update to the policy and two further observations to provide for the wider circulation of supplemental material provided by an external trainer to a wider audience than those who attended and to consider a reduction in the number of authorising officers. In response to the latter observation the list has been reduced to include the Monitoring Officer, Head of Public Protection, Head of Revenues and Benefits and Head of Housing.

3. Financial implications

There are no financial implications.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the use of RIPA powers and RESOLVE that the Policy and Guidance document be amended to include the reduced number of authorising officer.

Background papers

Nil