

Viewing of Social Networking Sites

Jackie Tatam, Data Protection Officer

Report to: Audit and Accounts Committee
Meeting date: 29 March 2021
Ward(s): All
Key Decision: No
Appendix 1: None

Papers relied on: Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 – Corporate Policy and Procedure on the use of Covert Surveillance

Office of Surveillance Commissioners Procedures and Guidance 2016

The Committee is recommended:

- To note the content of this report.

Background, corporate objectives and priorities

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) requires Members to have regular oversight of activities authorised under the Act.

An annual report will be provided regarding the use of RIPA. However, a summary of the viewings of social networking sites by officers will continue to be provided to each meeting of the Committee.

The annual report will be provided in July each year, unless a RIPA authorisation is granted, in which case a report will be made to the next meeting of the Committee.

A summary of the viewing of social networking sites for the period 1 November to 31 December 2020 is provided in paragraph 2.1 below.

This report accords with the council's Policy and Budget Framework and supports the development of an effective and efficient council

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
RIPA	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act
IPCO	Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office

Main considerations

1 Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides Members of the Committee with a summary of the viewing of individuals' social networking sites in an investigatory capacity for the period 1 January to 28 February 2021.

2 Viewing of Social Networking Sites

2.1 Information for the period 1 January to 28 February 2021 can be found below:

Date	Team	Site Viewed	Purpose
6/1/21	Internal Audit	Facebook	COVID 19 Business Grant – post payment assurance/fraud checks
6/1/21	Internal Audit	Facebook/Instagram	COVID 19 Business Grant – post payment assurance/fraud checks
7/1/21	Internal Audit	Facebook	COVID 19 Business Grant – post payment assurance/fraud checks
7/1/21	Internal Audit	Facebook	COVID 19 Business Grant – post payment assurance/fraud

			checks
8/1/21	Internal Audit	Facebook	COVID 19 Business Grant – post payment assurance/fraud checks
8/1/21	Internal Audit	Facebook	COVID 19 Business Grant – post payment assurance/fraud checks
8/1/21	Internal Audit	Facebook	COVID 19 Business Grant – post payment assurance/fraud checks
12/1/21	Internal Audit	Facebook	COVID 19 Business Grant – post payment assurance/fraud checks
13/1/21	Internal Audit	Facebook	COVID 19 Business Grant – post payment assurance/fraud checks
13/1/21	Internal Audit	Facebook	COVID 19 Business Grant – post payment assurance/fraud checks
14/1/21	Internal Audit	Twitter	COVID 19 Business Grant – post payment assurance/fraud checks
28/1/21	Internal Audit	Facebook	COVID 19 Business Grant – post payment assurance/fraud checks
17/2/21	Internal Audit	Facebook and Twitter	COVID 19 Business Grant – post payment assurance/fraud checks
24/2/21	Internal Audit	Facebook and Twitter	COVID 19 Business Grant – post payment assurance/fraud checks

2.2 A comparison showing the number of viewings of Social Networking sites is provided below:

	2020	2021
January	1	12
February	0	2
March	1	
April	0	
May	0	
June	0	
July	0	

August	8	
September	3	
October	4	
November	1	
December	4	
TOTAL VIEWINGS	22	14

Corporate implications

1 Legal

- 1.1 The council's policy in relation to covert activity and the viewing of social networking sites, together with the Home Office Code of Practice on covert surveillance and property interference, ensures such activity is undertaken in a lawful and proportionate manner.
- 1.2 The information provided in this report regarding the viewing of social networking sites falls outside the scope of surveillance and, therefore, does not require authorisation.

2 Financial

- 2.1 The cost of reviewing social network sites is met from within existing resources and there are no new financial implications arising from this report.

3 Risk management (must be completed in line with relevant council policy)

- 3.1 A risk assessment has been completed in accordance with the council's risk management process and has identified no significant (Red or Amber) residual risks that cannot be fully minimised by existing or planned controls or additional procedures.

4 Equalities

- 4.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

5 Climate change

- 5.1 There are no expected climate change implications arising from this report.

6 Consultation and communication

- 6.1 Information provided in paragraph 2.1 above has been obtained in consultation with the various teams within the council with an enforcement or regulatory role.

7 HR

- 7.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 The Committee is invited to note the report

Date: 29 March 2021

Decision taken by: Audit and Accounts Committee

Lead officer	<i>Fiona Thomsen – Head of Law and Governance</i>
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Dated	4 March 2021
Status	<i>Open</i>
Confidentiality	It is considered that information contained within this report does not contain exempt information under the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and therefore can be made public.