



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

11 June 2026

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Policy Update

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Richard Overton – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Safer Streets and Better Housing Cllr Zona Hannington – Cabinet Member: Finance and Resident Services
Lead Director:	Anthea Lowe – Director: Policy & Governance
Service Area:	Policy & Governance
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	SMT – 12 May 2026 Business Briefing – 21 May 2026 Cabinet – 11 June 2026

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Notes the Council's use of, and compliance with the requirements of, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 for the years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The report seeks to update Cabinet on the use of surveillance powers in 2023, 2024 & 2025 by officers of the Council, in line with the Council's Regulation of Investigatory Powers ("RIPA") Corporate Policy & Guidance (adopted February 2023).

3.0 Background

- 3.1 There are 3 types of surveillance that come under the auspices of RIPA, namely:
- Directed Surveillance
 - Intrusive Surveillance
 - Covert Human Intelligence Sources
- 3.2 Local authorities are not empowered to undertake intrusive surveillance, so this report deals only with any work carried out under Directed Surveillance and any Covert Human Intelligence Source authorisations issued to the Council.

4.0 Summary of RIPA activity

- 4.1 All employees of the Council must comply with the Council’s RIPA policy at all times during their work when considering the use of covert surveillance.
- 4.2 The table below sets out the number of times that the Council has sought to exercise the use of its RIPA powers over the course of the last 3 years and the authorisations issued in accordance with RIPA.

	2023	2024	2025
Use of Directed Surveillance	0	0	1
Use of Covert Human Intelligence Sources	0	0	0
Number of Directed Surveillance applications rejected by Authorising Officer	0	0	0
Number of Directed Surveillance applications granted by Authorising Officer	0	0	1
Number of Authorisations Presented to Magistrates	0	0	1
Number of Authorisations approved by Magistrates	0	0	1
Number of Authorisations rejected by Magistrates	0	0	0
Number of Directed Surveillance Operations	0	0	0

remaining extant			
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- 4.3 The Council has made one application to use Directed Surveillance in this reporting period. The application was made by the Trading Standards team in 2025 with regards to the test-purchasing of age-restricted products.
- 4.4 A decision was made to undertake a test purchasing exercise from a number of premises where all members of the Trading Standards team were known to members of shop staff, either:
 - a) From previous underage sales exercises, or
 - b) From enforcement work undertaken at the premises related to the sale and supply of illegal cigarettes and/or vapes.

During this exercise, the young person volunteer wore a covert recording device (video camera) to capture evidence of what went on instore. The volunteer was not accompanied by a Trading Standards Officer when they attempted each purchase.

- 4.5 As the sales were to be covertly video recorded, a Directed Surveillance application was completed, authorised and legal approval was granted. Following the completion of the exercise, the RIPA authorisation was cancelled as required under RIPA guidance.
- 4.6 Footage obtained in premises where the volunteer was not sold any age-restricted products was deleted from the recording device and not retained for any purpose.

Communications Data

- 4.7 In the reporting period, there were 3 applications made under the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 for communications data. Each application was for ‘entity data’. Entity data is information which links a person to a communications service (e.g. a subscriber to a telephone or broadband account).

	2023	2024	2025
Requests made under Investigatory Powers Act 2016 for Communications data	0	2	1

5.0 Training

- 5.1 The Council ensures that Officers who consider whether RIPA is applicable to their investigations receive training at timely intervals. This includes specific training for Officers who oversee its use and authorise applications to the Court for formal approval. The most recent training took place on 15 May 2026 where Officers and Authorising Officers received appropriate training suitable to their roles.

6.0 Key Risks

6.1 Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights (incorporated in to UK Law by virtue of the Human Rights Act 1998) provides for the Right to Privacy of the individual. By complying with the policies and procedures contained within the legislation and policy, the Council has assurance that Officers are acting in accordance with the law when undertaking any enforcement activity.

7.0 Council Priorities

The recommendations in this report about the use of the Council's covert surveillance powers through its enforcement work support the following Council priorities:

- Everyone benefits from a thriving economy.
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live.
- Our natural environment is protected, and the Council is taking a leading role in tackling the climate emergency; and
- A community-focused, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 There are no direct financial implications that arise from this report. Enforcement activities, training for Officers, and the use of covert surveillance are met from existing budgets.

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 The Council has a legal requirement to consider the use of its RIPA powers regularly. The policy provides for best practice on the use of RIPA powers and ensures that the Council meets its legal obligations to regulate the use of intrusive covert surveillance. The Council reports on an annual basis to IPCO about its use of these powers.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 There are no specific ward implications arising from this report.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 The use of RIPA powers assists the Council to detect and prevent crime within the Borough and further afield. In this recording period, the use by the Council of RIPA powers was directly linked to crime that impacts the health and wellbeing of young people particularly the sale of products known to be deleterious to health. Furthermore, the sale of age-restricted products to children has a negative impact on society in terms of anti-social behaviour and associated problems to residents of the Borough.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 Whilst there are no specific equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report, the Council and its officers will, at all times, ensure that the use of covert

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surveillance powers are not used in ways which would not be in accordance with its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. This is supported through the RIPA Corporate Policy & Guidance.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

13.1 No specific climate change or environmental implications arise from this report.

14.0 Background Papers

[Corporate RIPA Policy, Cabinet, 16 February 2023](#)

15.0 Appendices

None.

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	06/05//2026	07/05/2026	ACL
Legal	05/05/2026	05/05/2026	DTW
Finance	05/05/2026	05/05/2026	ER