



REPORT of DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

to
COUNCIL
2 SEPTEMBER 2021

SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To change the procedure for the sealing of documents.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That paragraph 3.1.2 of the Responsibility and Functions General Provisions document that forms a part of the Constitution be amended to require only one employee to sign whenever any document needs to be sealed.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Constitution requires that two senior employees should sign any document that is sealed. The relevant part of the Constitution reads;

“The Seal shall be attested by any two of the following: a Director, any manager who reports directly to a Director any employed Solicitor, barrister or legal executive. An entry of every sealing of a document shall be made and consecutively numbered in a book kept for the purpose and shall be signed by the two officers who have attested the Seal.”

- 3.2 Many authorities now only require one senior employee to sign a sealed document. For example, Essex County Council have had this arrangement for several years. The signing procedure is administrative and does not involve the senior officer understanding the document but only fulfilling the requirements of constitution as it presently stands.

- 3.3 In the past the signature of two officers has not been problematic however during the lockdown it has been because there are a restricted group of employees who can sign and they are not readily available in the offices. This will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future. In the last year there have been delays in sealing documents. Furthermore, there is the time-consuming process of making arrangement for two employees to come into the offices at the same time.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The amendment is in line with the practice of many other authorities and would make the sealing process more efficient and cost saving.

5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

5.1 None

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – Will speed up the sealing of documents.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – None.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – None.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – Time saving.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – None.
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** – None.

Background Papers: None.

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