Tenant Alterations Policy

01 April 2018

Title	Tenant Alterations Policy
Users of Policy	Colchester Borough Council and Colchester Borough Homes tenants and staff.
Date Adopted	April 2018
Date last Reviewed	February 2018
Review Frequency	Every 3 years
Best Before Date	31 March 2021
Scheme of Delegation	
Formation of Policy	Portfolio Holder(s) with delegated responsibility for the Financial Management of the Housing Revenue Account
Amendments	Portfolio Holder(s) with delegated responsibility for the Financial Management of the Housing Revenue Account
Monitoring	Housing Asset Manager
Implementation	Housing Asset Manager
Approval of requests	Housing Asset Manager delegated to Director of Property Services, Head of Operations, Head of Housing Management and Head of Asset Management, Colchester Borough Homes.

1. Aims of Policy

1.1 The aim of the Tenant Alterations policy is to set out Colchester Borough Councils approach to allowing tenants to carry out alterations to our properties.

1.2 The policy will also cover the approach to unauthorised tenant alterations.

2. Definition of an Alteration

2.1 Any changes carried out on a Council owned property, by the Tenant (or any person under the Tenants instruction), other than decoration.

3. Related policy and Guidance

3.1 If you are a secure tenant, you have the right to make alterations to your home and garden, however, it is a condition of your Tenancy Agreement that you must seek written permission from Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) as your Landlord's managing agent (Leaseholders may also need written permission for some home improvements – see Leaseholders Guide). Introductory tenants can decorate their homes, but do not have the right to alter their homes in any other way.

3.2 For works which require planning permission and building control, it is the tenants responsibility to ensure the appropriate permissions are gained and compliance is met. CBH will not approve requests without the necessary permission.

4. The Policy- general provisions

4.1 Tenants can apply for permission by emailing or writing to CBH, detailing the type of works being carried out, by whom and evidence of their competence. The location of the works and any drawings or photo's that would assist in the application should be included.

4.2 Acceptable alterations with written permission include:

- Refitting kitchens and bathrooms
- Replacing or upgrading electrical fittings
- Re-modelling the layout of the property
- Removal of doors or replacing internal doors
- Fitting satellite dishes
- Solid flooring which could include tiling or wood or laminate flooring
- Fencing or brick walls

4.3 Unacceptable alterations where written permission will not be provided include:

- Conservatories
- Car ports
- Loft conversions
- Decking and patio's
- Extensions
- Log burners
- Laminate flooring if you live in a first and second floor flat

The lists in 4.2 and 4.3 are not exhaustive and other requests will be treated on an individual request basis.

4.4 Permission will only be given if building control requirements are met.

4.5 It is the Tenants responsibility to repair and/or maintain the authorised alteration.

4.6 At the end of the Tenancy all alterations must be removed and the property reinstated to its original condition; otherwise this work would be rechargeable to the Tenant.

4.7 Prior to granting permission, we may need to visit your home to establish the suitability of the proposed alteration and to verify if certain conditions need to be adhered to.

4.8 Depending on the type of alteration carried out, CBH may need to inspect the work and you will be required to send us copies of relevant certification relating to gas and electrical works.

5. Unauthorised Alterations

5.1 If you carry out an alteration without permission, Colchester Borough Homes will need to carry out an inspection to grant retrospective permission. You may be charged for this inspection. In the event that retrospective permission is not granted you will be asked to remove the alteration and you may be charged for any remedial work.

6. Appeals Procedure

6.1 Appeals will be considered by a Colchester Borough Homes Officer where additional information is provided to support the applicants request or there is a material change of circumstances. A more senior Officer will review the decision made taking into account any new supporting information provided by the applicant. The Reviewing Officer may consult with the Officer whom made the original decision.

6.2 Where an applicant is appealing against how the policy and procedure have been applied a Senior Officer will investigate the case and respond using the Colchester Borough Homes Complaints Procedure.

7. Service Standards

7.1 All authorised alterations must be carried out to the current and appropriate planning consent, building regulations and any other legislation.

7.2 All authorised alterations must be carried out in a safe manner and where used, contractors must be competent.

8. Monitoring and Review

8.1 We will monitor that the Service Standards set out in this Policy are met.

8.2 The policy will be reviewed every 3 years to make sure the policy continues to be efficient and effective, whilst ensuring it still meets current legislation and the Council's Constitution.

9. Communicating the Policy to Staff

9.1 Managers and staff involved in the implementation of the Policy will receive a copy of the policy including:

Housing Officers, Visiting Officers, Asset Management, Adaptations, Customers Services, Members

9.2 Colchester Borough Homes will provide sufficient training to enable staff to understand and comply with the Policy.

9.3 A copy of the Policy will be placed on the internal 'Hub' and websites of Colchester Borough Council and Colchester Borough Homes.

9.4 Any amendments to the Policy will be communicated, in a timely manner, to managers and staff involved in implementing the policy. Revised Policy documents will be circulated and placed on the 'Hub'.

10. Communicating the policy to customers

10.1 The policy will be communicated to customers using the following methods:

- Articles regularly in Housing News and Views
- Sheltered Scheme newsletters
- Colchester Borough Council and Colchester Borough Homes websites
- Social Media