

Portfolio Holder for Housing

Item

Insert date

Report of	Assistant Director of Place and Client	Author	Suzanne Norton
Title	Approval of reviewed and updated Electrical Safety and Testing Policy		
Wards affected	All Wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Electrical Safety and Testing Policy has been reviewed and revised as part of our ongoing programme of reviewing and refreshing housing policies. This is the first review since the policy was adopted in April 2018. The review provided the opportunity to ensure the policy was up to date with current legislation, that the aims of the policy were still fit for purpose and reflected current procedures.
- 1.2 The policy was reviewed by officers from Colchester Borough Council (CBC) and Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) with responsibility for ensuring the policy is implemented. To ensure the policy provides clarity and continued functionality with current procedures and working practices the policy has been updated to apply to domestic properties only.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To approve the updated Electrical Safety and Testing Policy.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 All policies should be reviewed regularly, usually a minimum of every 3 years or sooner if a significant or legislative change is required. This is the first review following the policy being adopted in April 2018.
- 3.2 To ensure that the Council policy on Electrical Safety and Testing continues to provide guidelines on testing and inspection at appropriate frequencies and to the required legal standards, in order to minimise the risk of fire, injury and / or death.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 To continue with the existing policy adopted in April 2018. However, the policy is out of date and does not reflect the Council's current priorities or procedures.
- 4.2 To not implement the revised policy proposed. To not have the revised policy does not reflect the Council's current priorities and would leave the Council at risk of not complying with current legislation and good practice.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The purpose of the policy is to set out specific guidelines to enable the Council to be assured that fixed electrical installations and portable appliances are tested and inspected at appropriate frequencies and to the required legal standards, in order to minimise the risk of fire, injury and / or death.
- 5.2 The updated policy refers to domestic dwellings only; the safety and testing of electrical installations and appliances in non-domestic settings is covered by separate procedures, legislation and regulation.
- 5.3 All fixed electrical installations within the Council's housing stock are subject to regular inspection and testing.
- 5.4 All electrical equipment owned / or managed by CBC is subject to an annual portable appliance test (PAT).
- 5.5 The revised policy has been reviewed and updated to cover domestic testing only; electrical safety and testing in commercial properties is subject to different legislation and inspection and testing frequencies so these elements have been removed from this policy.
- 5.6 The duties and responsibilities of Colchester Borough Homes employees are clearly set out in the policy including the role of the Duty Holder who is responsible for actions and requirements defined by the Policy.
- 5.7 The responsibilities of Tenants and Leaseholders are clearly set out in the Policy.
- 5.8 The requirements of authorised inspectors and testers are clearly set out in the Policy.
- 5.9 The frequency of inspection and testing is set out in the Policy (Appendix A Table T1); the test and inspection frequency will never be longer than the maximum recommended frequency.
- 5.10 Full periodic inspection and testing of all buildings shall be at the prescribed frequency as set out in the Policy (Appendix B Table T2).
- 5.11 The updated policy is attached to this report as Appendix A.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 The Council completes Equality Impact Assessments for policies, procedures and practices that have an impact on customers and employees. The EIA for the Electrical Safety and Testing Policy is part of the Housing Asset Management Strategy and can be viewed here, <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/info/cbc-article/?catid=equality-impact-assessments&id=KA-03059>

7. Consultation

- 7.1 Consultation was undertaken with CBC and CBH officers whilst reviewing and refreshing the policy.

- 7.2 Following the review of the policy no changes have been made that will impact tenants affected by the policy, therefore no additional consultation has been undertaken with tenants on this occasion.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 The policy will be widely communicated to staff of CBC and CBH, Members, Tenants, Leaseholders and prospective tenants.
- 8.2 The policy will be available on the CBC website at <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/info/category/?id=policies>

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 The policy aligns with the investment priorities and plans contained within the Housing Asset Management Strategy 2018-2022.

10. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 10.1 Through continued monitoring and inspection of properties and communal areas of housing stock, CBH, through its role of providing Housing Management Services to tenants and leaseholders, will ensure that they feel safe in their home and surrounding area. Continued consultation and monitoring of services by tenants and leaseholders will enable this to occur.

11. Health and Safety Implications

- 11.1 Through the role of Contract Administrator, CBH will be responsible for ensuring Health and Safety requirements are fully complied with through current and future programmes of work associated with the policy.

12. Risk Management Implications

- 12.1 The continuous review and updating of the policy helps to manage risks to the Council fulfilling its legal duties as a landlord by clearly setting out the approach to electrical safety inspections and testing.

13. Standard References

- 13.1 There are no particular references to the Strategic Plan or environmental and sustainability implications.

Appendices

Appendix A – updated Electrical Safety and Testing Policy.