

Notes for Holly Lodge estate TRA meeting with officers from LBC's heating and hot water project team

09/07/2018

Time: 7.00pm

Attendees:

Judith Walker HLLA (Holly Lodge Leaseholders Association_

Andrea Westall Holly Lodge Residents Association

Richard Molineux HLLA (Holly Lodge Leaseholders Association_

Grainne Ennis Holly Lodge Residents Association

Oliver Lewis Cllr

Anna Wright Cllr

Nina Rusowicz - Energy Efficiency and Performance Team Leader

Primesh Kalia – Team Leader Planned Works

Eva Taylor - Consultation Officer

Apologies Sian Berry Cllr, Deborah Froome LHS association rep block 277-294 HLM

1. Introduction

ET explained that we are not as far along in the project as we hoped when last LBC had discussions with the TRA in January. This is due in part to the death of their colleague Derek. His passing was sudden and, as such, they had no handover with him on any of his projects, nor had they managed to replace him yet. The current situation is that they are a new team picking this up. They have had to go off what information they have managed to gather from emails etc. from Derek and the cllrs, and hope to move this project forward together with the TRA. ET introduced the team. Their jobs, names and job titles are on the agenda. ET agreed to take notes and distribute to the TRA and Cllrs for checking.

The TRA said they get many questions from residents about what is happening with heating and hot water that they feel unable to answer. They do not know whom best to speak to and there is no obvious 'main' contact. ET advised that usually it would be the contract manager but they are currently without one. The TRA can send enquires to PK and ET for now until there is a new officer.

2. The project

PK is the new Team Leader for Mechanical and Electrical works. He is also a qualified engineer so explained the technical aspects of the project. The TRA have a very good understanding of the technical aspects due to long involvement with the project. So PK did a brief summary.

The current situation onsite is that there have been temporary boilers for 2 ½ years. The cost is £132,000 a year approx.. Camden don't own them. They are rented so cannot stay forever. They want to try and secure the supply for the estate for the future, which is the main aim of this project. The current boiler house is tiny and not fit for purpose. It also has a CHP unit which is not used due to noise. Maintenance access of the plant behind the CHP is now even worse. New boilers which were installed around 2012 failed. That is why the

Abbreviations:

Cllr – Councillor

HL- Holly Lodge Estate

HGNT – Highgate Newtown estate
also known as Whittington

OA – Options Appraisal

TGA- the consultants

LHS – leaseholders

HIU – Heat Interface Unit

CHP – Combined Heat and Power
unit

PHX – plate heat exchangers.

estate is on temporary boilers. LBC recognises this and we will try and address this as part of the process.

In order to address the issues on the estate, LBC will approach in two stages - distribution first, issues in dwellings second. Work to remove the temporary boilers needs to take priority. The current proposal is to connect to HGNT estate and relocate the CHP plant so that they can start using the CHP and get a heat exchange plate put in.

The 2nd phase would be to look at distribution pipework on the estate. This also includes the pipework and works within the dwellings. The advantages of this proposal is that they remove the temporary boilers, and small boiler house, therefore sharing maintenance costs with HGNT, as there will be two estates sharing one plant. The cost of the gas supply would also be shared, air pollution level would be reduced as nothing will be generated on HL, with just a plate heat exchange - no flues or chimneys.

Question: Are we saying there is enough capacity in HGNT for HL?

There does need to be some remodelling and re-engineering to the plant in HGNT. By using the redundancy in the current plant design and increasing the diversities, this will help to accommodate the additional load from HL. With the addition of the relocated CHP plant from HL to HGNT this will help contribute to the additional load and make the system more energy efficient.

Question: But Holly lodge is bigger and higher up does this not present its own set of issues?

Yes HL has more residents. *What about the pressure?* The design of the pipework from HGNT to HL will take into account the pipe size, the pump size and hydraulics of the network. There will be some pipework losses but the new pipework is better and pre-insulated so you do not need to make it excessively hot at the source. The distribution at HL estate from the PHX would be fed into the sub-plant rooms which then feed into the dwellings.

Question: But the issues are currently at the sub-plant rooms in between the flats not the main boiler room?

Noted

Question: Are we saying this is the choice? The TRA feel that in the interim period since the last meeting, they have not heard much. We are hearing that you have chosen an option and need to know how LBC have arrived at the decision. In addition, there has been no official LBC response to the indepth analysis and commentary done by the TRA on the OA that were sent to Derek, only a TGA response.

We are saying that, because of the circumstances with the temporary boilers being in operation for over two years, this is our preferred option. We need to make some decisions for this estate as the project has been going on for a long time.

With reference to the TRA OP analysis we apologise. We were not aware this had not been responded to. We have read it and did not have time since we received it (a week ago) to form a proper response. It is very detailed and warrants a similarly detailed response. We will respond, as soon as all the information is gathered.

We want LBC to consider and appropriately evaluate the option of individual boilers as currently feel it has not been considered properly.

Noted

Question/s: If linked to HGNT, what about the risk of two estates going down, as it is HL had one block off for two months?

What about the pipework, seem to think the pipe connecting Alexandra & Ainsworth Estate has split in two because we couldn't get it to work?

With reference to the boiler plant going off line; this is possible depending on the fault. If there are any power or utility supply issues. However the design has multiple boilers, pumps and separate distribution pipework to the blocks. Therefore it is possible to isolate individual blocks whilst keeping the system working for the rest of the estates.

With reference to the Alexandra road estate this is a different issue design. We will be using new pre-insulated pipework similar to the systems used in Scandinavia, which has been tried and tested.

Question: TRA feel a proper appraisal needs doing of the individual boiler option, TRA feels it may be a lot simpler than all the work required to connect to HGNT?

We will look into this option to make sure it is properly considered. In a conservation area the boiler flues would need to be at the side of the blocks, although several people already have them at the front. PK says that some of them are illegal installs, that is to say they did not get relevant permissions.

TRA is keen to make sure LBC does not use conservation as an excuse not to do a comprehensive option appraisal. GE is on the conservation board and conservation rules are open to interpretation by LBC, decisions are not always consistent, so there is room to consider what would be acceptable .

TRA feels that retro fitting of district heating is very difficult. RM feels that TGA came up with a DH system when they are not members of a district heating system association or have details of heating projects on their website, so does not feel they are credible.

PK stated that Camden has a duty to provide the residents with heating and hot water for a comfortable environment within their flats. With this in mind existing systems are replaced with new. Camden has a Heating Policy which states that existing district heating and hot water installations will be renewed with a new district heating system.

TRA feels the policy should be 'fit for purpose' and like for like is not always best.

Cllr Wright asked if it was correct that this was LBC's policy, Cllr Lewis advised he was not sure it was official but certainly becoming more common in recent years to do like for like. However, he had heard of some blocks being replaced with individual boilers instead. ET and KP advised this generally applied to smaller blocks of less than 20 or so units which had other issues and were uneconomical to renew.

TRA mentioned some serious ongoing issues at HGNT and advised that they have been attending meetings at HGNT.

ET has put HGNT on the agenda to discuss as we are aware of close relationship between the estates and the obvious interest HL residents would have in the HGNT project if we were to link the two. PK advised that issues at HGNT/Whittington are that there were issues with the old system and new system water contamination resulted in blockages and the loss of flow. Over the last few months the blockages have been cleared and the system commissioned which has reduced the large number of breakdown callouts.

Question: Is there any way of waiting until HGNT is 100% done before start work at HL?

HGNT is nearly done. Extra work to clear filters has been done, and actual breakdowns are now very low. We don't need to wait because Phase one would not be to do with the internal distribution which is what has caused issues at HGNT.

TRA does not want to take this approach. It would mean phase 2 would then be a foregone conclusion if LBC goes ahead and does phase one with the pipe to HGNT.

Question: Have we done a full survey of where a new boiler house could go on HL itself?

PK says he hasn't personally, and the link to HGNT would be cheaper. PK is happy to build a new boiler house if they want but he doesn't think it's going to be cheaper.

Question: TRA don't agree land on which boiler house is stood is worth a million pounds and had an estate agent value it who advised this was not a likely sum. How can we sell it if we are putting a plate heat exchanger in the boiler house anyway?

LBC agree that the cost of the land needs to be confirmed which does fluctuate over time. That part of the OA may need further exploration, particularly in terms of understanding whether Camden own the land or lease it.

Question: What about electric heating? Feel gas is unsustainable in the future

NR advised that LBC (through OA) always takes into account capital costs, running cost for both fuel and maintenance and environmental impact (carbon and NOx emissions) when reviewing each option. Electricity is, and looking at the predicted energy prices will continue to be, more expensive than gas and this is not a preferred fuel source at the moment.

Nearly half the flats are leasehold, so TRA feel residents should have more say in the options because of the amount of money to be spent, and not have a position forced upon them.

Question: Why can't we put a boiler house, for example, where the garages are (or in another location on the Estate)? We also want LBC to look properly into the individual boiler idea.

We can look into the garages idea, not sure at the moment we know the garage area well enough.

Question: What will it mean to us in terms of costs like decorations, moving out etc.?

Previously the TRA and Derek had a meeting with the whole estate and residents were very keen on the above being explained, some genuine thought needs to go into what the impact physically will be in terms of effect on resident's flats, the potential extra costs likely to be incurred by both tenants and leaseholders etc...

Noted

TRA raised issue of HL currently being a mishmash of different heating and hot water systems (fully communal, hot water only, and separate from the communal system)

Noted, we are aware of the different supplies to the blocks and this is something that makes this site difficult.

Overall the TRA feel the OA was a poorly executed piece of work with lots of mistakes in it. For example, why were options included if they are not possible?

Question: What about leaseholders who are either not on the system at all or only have hot water? They could argue that their leases do not enable Camden to enter flats and/or impose changes to their current heating and hot water systems.

We are aware of some leases at HL being somewhat different to other estates; we are waiting for a colleague to return from a break to advise us what our position is on this so that we can share this with the TRA and use this info to shape some of our options.

PK advised we could do distribution up to the flat and let leaseholders do the insides. For blocks that just have hot water, we could put both heating and hot water through the HIU rather than just one if lhs wanted this. This would need to be explored in any presentation we would give.

Question: Would this be reflected in the charge?

Well LBC would deduct the internal cost from our bill but obviously they would need to hire their own contractor to do the inside distribution. So how much it would ultimately cost would vary.

Question: Has there been any thought about disruption to the buildings which are going through FRA works, why can't it all be done now/together?

FRA works are being done as a priority, and we can't really speed up the heating project, but where we can join up we will. We do it with kitchen and bathrooms projects; we get the contractor to do the heating pipes when they fit the kitchen units so that they can be fitted easily, so we do have experience of joined up working. We know the flats are small, we would try not to have too many people in the flats all at once.

TRA feel there is not enough details on what we will do to minimise disruption to the estate. Want to revisit the options appraisal, maybe even by another consultant.

PK RLO's are there to try and minimise the disruption.

TRA not confident about this response, since there had been major works on the estate before.

Cllr Lewis – Cllr Apak is very keen on the process being very resident-led. Imposed schemes do not end well. All agreed. LBC wants to work with the TRA and residents but we do need to make decisions soon as has been ongoing for a long time.

How to move forward? TRA wants to reduce and better analyse the options in the options appraisal, PK agreed.

Question: why are there so few costs, makes the OA a bit meaningless to ordinary residents?

We can do some costs, but we can only really do capital budget costs as we can't get individual flat's estimated bills until we get a design agreed and go to tender.

TRA understands this but they want everyday costs like how much it will cost energy wise now vs new system?

Consultants can only do hypothetical running costs and upfront costs.

TRA understand that, but the current one didn't even have hypothetical costs.

Noted.

Question: The OA needs to contain info on whether they (tenants and lhs) will need to re-decorate, will they need to move, how much time will it take in each flat? Essentially, what is Camden actually offering us? Are we saying we will do it within x number of days, and put dust sheets down and have it signed up within two weeks or? There is no details of how it will effect residents day to day.

Intention is not to go in and cause need for total refurbishments.

TRA worry about amount of surface run pipework potentially required in such small flats as layout is very unique with two separate hot and cold water feeds?

Noted

RM felt that currently heating and hot water works fine apart from odd issue, so why would residents agree to a project when they feel they have no problems. The TRA members disagreed, citing examples of multiple problems relating to plant room failures over the last couple of years. The problems in the plant room are LBCs problems not the residents'.

PK advised LBC can't leave it as it is because the temporary boilers are not ours. They are rented and must be removed. The heating and hot water only works because the temporary boilers are there.

PK suggested how about we just change the energy supply to HL, and the sub-plant rooms and leave the distribution pipework? We can certainly look into it as part of the options appraisal.

TRA noted that TGA said previously that this is not an option. They are happy to discuss if it is but feel like they have been told for two years that it's not. TRA agrees this to be listed as an option in a new OA.

Question: Some works were needed in the sub plant rooms which were held off because everything is waiting for this, so may be works on hold to look into it?

Noted

Question: Are there any other options?

Total options at this point seem to be as follows:

1. Change to individual boilers
2. Build a new plant room somewhere onsite and renew everything
3. Build a new plant room somewhere onsite, install new boilers and associated plant, and renew estate distribution pipework to and including the sub plant room. Leave internal systems within the flats, with a future programme in the next 5 years.
4. Dig down existing plant room and extend to make it bigger. Renew everything.
5. Dig down existing plant room and extend to make it bigger, install new boilers and associated plant, and renew estate distribution pipework to and including the sub plant rooms. Leave internal systems within the flats, with a future programme in the next 5 years.
6. Connect to HGNT with PHX in existing HL plant room, renew everything.
7. Connect to HGNT with PHX in existing HL plant room, renew the distribution pipework to the sub plant rooms and replace all plant in the sub plant rooms. Leave internal systems within the flats, with a future programme in the next 5 years.

ET to distribute the notes at which point the group can confirm if the above list is correct.

TRA also want a proper look into the costs of the land and whether it's even feasible to sell.

Next stages

LBC needs to do more work before meeting the rest of the estate, TRA not convinced on the current OA nor on the proposal to connect to HGNT yet.

Revise the options appraisal as a matter of urgency, ET and PK to come back to TRA with an estimate date of next meeting.

Could potentially have a meeting where we update the estate about having an options appraisal and what we are currently doing?

Idea discounted as group decided there is a lot to discuss before the proposal is in a good enough shape to be presented to the estate, TRA makes many valuable contributions to proposal ideas so would be better to see them first.

Question: What shape will our meetings take, in previous meetings drawings were not readily available to look at as either too small to see or not enough copies?

ET advised on other estates she has set up a website and offered to use the current TRA website to host drawings etc.

TRA happy with this as long as it's not used solely; some people still like paper copies.

ET advised that's fine, meeting invites will always be letters, and then the meeting can be laid out with an area set aside for each block with their drawings there to be viewed, and addresses taken for anyone who wants paper copies.

TRA has never spoken to anyone who was allegedly visited by TGA when the OA was being drawn up, how did they get accurate info and drawings without visiting?

Noted, does anyone from TRA want to offer access to come inside?

TRA can name a few people and give some options.

ET to put time-frame in the email and send notes round for when the next meeting could be.

Question: Can we think about having a new consultant? As Alex at TGA would have to go against his own work and words in previous meetings if we go ahead and look at some of the options discussed above?

PK currently feels confident in Alex Maguire, TGA. He has a lot of background information and the work done to date, which a new consultant would have to revisit and capture would cost more and take longer to deliver. PK to speak to AM about producing a new OA and if he has reason to think he will not be able to produce it he would consider a new consultant.

End

Amendment 1.16/07/2018

NR recalled the TRA were quite concerned about the route for the pipework (connection with Highgate Newtown) as apparently the road is frequently flooded.

Ideally, that should be part of the next options appraisal report – to review the problems of the road to date, assess whether there are any issues for the proposed pipe route and also include an assessment of the existing. This would allow us to

see how “congested” the route is and essentially if there is sufficient space for the proposed pipework.