

Meakin District Heating System Update

Thursday 30th January 2025, 6pm – 7:30pm, JMB Board Room

Attendees:

Ali Imam	Head of Property Services
Ian Cade (IC)	Interim Major Works Manager
Gina Bradley (CB)	Resident Services Manager
Igor Novokreshchenov (IN)	Resident Engagement and Board Support Officer

9 attendees (both residents and leaseholders)

Apologies: N/A

Minute-taker: Igor Novokreshchenov.

1	<p>Opening statement</p> <p>AI formally started the meeting and introduced himself and other JMB staff present. Attendees were asked not to talk over one another and leave questions until the end of the presentation. AI explained that the meeting is not being recorded but minutes are taken by IN.</p>	
2.	<p>Issues with the current district heating system on Meakin Estate.</p> <p>2.1 IC started the PowerPoint presentation with Meakin Estate site audit findings. Those are the summary of the comprehensive FairHeat study report, available to all on request to the JMB Repairs Team.</p> <p>2.2 FairHeat were appointed at the start of 2024, to conduct full site survey of Meakin, including some private properties that reported issues with their heating and hot water systems. The survey was completed by May 2024, with the above-mentioned report produced subsequently.</p> <p>2.3 IC explained what typical modern district heating system looks like, to which the Meakin one will be upgraded: an energy centre (Meakin Boiler House), feeding individual Heat Interface Units (HIUs) within each dwelling. HIUs provide residents with full individual control over heating and hot water output within their homes. It minimises heat losses while minimising complexity and operational risks and allowing for more accurate data capture.</p> <p>2.4 In their study, FairHeat first looked at individual dwellings, moving on to the network, and finally looking at the boiler room operations. IC explained FairHeat approach as initially focused on repairs (represented in more detail in Work Package 1), followed by</p>	

	<p>system upgrade and improvement (explored in more detail in Works Packages 2 & 3).</p> <p>2.5 Meakin heating system was first built in 1930s, with the current system installed in 2016. The system covers 123 dwellings and a community centre, and is made of 4 substations connected to the plant room via buried pipework that FairHeat was not able to access. The heat is generated by 2 Potterton gas boilers. The system is a 4-pipe one with no HIUs, and has no commercial or retail connections. There is no individual metering, as is now required by the new Energy Act, so that residents have more control over their energy use.</p> <p>2.6 Many properties were found not to have space heating controls. There is a low flow rate from hot-water taps. Pipework was inaccessible. Many residents were found to be bypassing provided thermostats, instead controlling their individual heating by turning the radiator valves.</p> <p>2.7 The network is made of plastic space heating pipework, with insufficient insulation thickness. Its inaccessibility makes it difficult to maintain.</p> <p>2.8 Numerous issues were observed at the 4 substations, such as oversized pipework and broken meters. Oversized equipment was also found to be utilised in the boiler room. The Building Management System that supposes to control the flow of heat and the boilers, was found to be inactive.</p> <p>2.9 Full list of issues found is given in the FairHeat final report.</p> <p>2.10 The main heat losses are in the pipework.</p>	
<p>3</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p>	<p>Work Packages 1, 2 & 3.</p> <p>IC explained that, although there were 3 Work Packages, the JMB decided to go with the 3rd package as the most comprehensive. This would involve the complete district heating renewal, including the boilers, the substations, and the pipework.</p> <p>Work Package 1 mainly focuses on improving parts of the existing system. JMB will look at implementing some of the recommended low-cost measures.</p> <p>Work Package 2 involves renewing the pipework as the primary cause of the heat loss.</p> <p>Work Package 3 encompasses all recommended measures from the first two packs but also includes the renewal of all other elements involved. The 4-pipe system will be replaced with the modern 2-pipe system, to enable the metering. Although the most costly, it will also provide the best outcome for the Meakin residents and the JMB.</p>	

<p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p>	<p>The estimated cost of the Work Package 3 is over £1.5 million. JMB will seek external funding to cover half of the costs. The consultant is currently developing the scope for the HNES application to the effect. To successfully apply, the JMB will work with the contractor to get an accurate understanding of the costs involved. Application submission approximate deadline is 1st August 2025.</p> <p>Once the outcome of the application is known, the JMB will proceed to the Stage 3 design, to be completed before the end of this year, followed by procurement at the start of 2026. Contract is expected to be awarded by March 2026. Works on site to start around May 2026 and be completed by the end of that year.</p> <p>IC stressed that this timeline may be subject to change.</p> <p>IC commented that compensations will be paid out to those residents who experienced loss of hot water and heating.</p>	
<p>4</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p>	<p>Open discussion.</p> <p>Q1: How long may the residents spend without heating/hot water during the works?</p> <p>IC: No more than three days.</p> <p>Attendees argue that that is too long and some residents may need to be temporary re-housed. Having no access to hot water is a health & safety risk. AI replies that JMB will look more closely into this when the scope of works is finalised.</p> <p>Q2: Attendees ask to clarify what is the funding that JMB is applying for to cover 50% of the costs, and what is JMB's recourse if the application is not successful.</p> <p>AI: It is a new government fund called Heat Network Efficiency Scheme (HNES) that was set up this year. JMB has hired FairHeat to help complete and file the application. Although there is no guarantee that it will be successful, not filing one is a missed opportunity. If unsuccessful, the JMB will still pursue the Work Package 3 as this will save JMB more costs on maintenance and repairs in the future – the whole cost will be covered by the JMB. Leaseholders will not be charged, as they already covered the cost of the initial installation of the 2016-17 system. A letter will be circulated to the effect.</p> <p>Q3: Would not installing individual boilers work better than a district heating system?</p> <p>IC and AI: District heating systems were found to be more energy efficient than individual boilers. HIUs will allow for more accurate control by residents of their individual energy use. JMB will share with the residents the technical reasoning behind this decision.</p> <p>Q4: How will the compensations be processed?</p>	

	<p>IC: The compensation is £3 per day for each day without heating & hot water. It is automatically calculated and then credited to the residents' accounts. Any compensations due to the leaseholders are being calculated by the JMB Homeownership Manager and will be credited to their service charge accounts.</p> <p>Q5: What the charges are estimated to be like when the HIUs are installed?</p> <p>4.5 IC: That will depend on the individual energy use by each resident.</p> <p>Q6: How many recommendations from the Work Package 1 will be implemented?</p> <p>4.6 IC: Whatever will be found of benefit to the system and within costs.</p> <p>Q7: Last time when the works were ongoing, there was no on-site manager provided. Will that be the case again?</p> <p>4.7 AI: Depending on the scope of works, if on-site presence will be required, it will be provided. As a minimum, a Resident Liaison Officer will be present. This will be reflected in the contract.</p> <p>IC: JMB team will have periodic meetings with the residents on-site, once the works start.</p> <p>Q8: Residents complained about the low quality of works being done by some contractors, using examples of OCO and Hyperoptic, with them having to intervene. The residents state that they must be able to stop works that are of sub-standard quality.</p> <p>AI: In line with the Building Safety Act 2022, JMB is liaising with Southwark to ensure that all contractors have their competency details properly checked, and the risk assessment method statement of the works is provided. Access to JMB sites will be in the presence of JMB staff. If residents are not happy with works that are being done and want them stopped, they need to refer the issue to the Interim Major Works Manager and / or Repairs mailbox repairs@lmjmb.org.uk</p> <p>IC: If residents suspect that the works are health & safety risk to them they can stop them immediately. Issues can also be raised and addressed at the bi-monthly Major Works Sub-Committee.</p> <p>Q9: Residents report that Repairs and Out-of-Hours services are often either hard to reach or inaccessible. It is also not clear who are the JMB staff responsible for dealing with particular issues. Also, the DLOs don't know the location of the valves, stopcocks etc. when coming to service issues relating to hot water/heating. Giving residents written flyer/instruction about this will help sort this out.</p> <p>4.9</p>	
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4.10	<p>Q10: What is the JMB response timeframe when repairs issues are reported?</p> <p>AI: Depending on the issue, it can be within 24 hours or can take up to 28 days. The timeframe is outlined in the Responsive Repairs Policy, available on the website: https://leathermarketjmb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/LJMB-Responsive-Repairs-Policy-.pdf</p>	
4.11	<p>Q11: How much misuse or lack of heating contributes to the damp and mould in the properties? Who is legally responsible for maintaining the property mould-free?</p> <p>AI: Heating may be a contributing factor but it is not the only one. Each case where JMB residents are involved, needs to be investigated to establish the cause. The JMB engages with damp & mould specialist on this matter. In case of leaseholders, they are legally responsible for their property's maintenance.</p>	
4.12	<p>Q12: Will the changes in the heating system drive up the rents?</p> <p>IC and AI: The rents are set up by the government, not the JMB. The maintenance fee currently charged by the JMB will discontinue, the rates for energy use will be charged individually. How this will be reflected on the leaseholders is not yet clear as the government guidance has not been published yet. Once this is clarified, a letter will be send around.</p>	
4.13	<p>Q13: Will the charges for hot water and heating be separate?</p> <p>IC and AI: No, it will be a single bill for overall kilowatt energy usage.</p>	
4.14	<p>Q14: Attendees commented that, in the absence of a recognised TRA, this meeting was helpful, and requested that such meetings be held regularly, possibly quarterly. Attendees would like to be</p>	

	<p>updated about important issues affecting the estate without having to be embroiled in TRA politics.</p> <p>AI: Ongoing meetings can be arranged, with frequency depending on JMB having the right information to bring to the residents' and leaseholders' attention.</p> <p>4.15 Q15: How long would installation of an HIU will take?</p> <p>IC: Half a day on average. Optional appointments will be provided.</p> <p>4.16 Q16: Can it be ensured that contractors use quality materials?</p> <p>AI: This will be written into the contractual specifications when the scope of works is finalised.</p> <p>4.17 Q17: Will new radiators be installed?</p> <p>IC: No, there were no issues found with existing units.</p> <p>4.18 Q18: Will exposed pipework in individual properties be boxed in?</p> <p>AI: This will be looked into individually. Residents are asked to flag this concern with their Resident Services Officer.</p> <p>4.19 Q19: What is the state of the Decima TRA Hall? How will it be managed?</p> <p>IC: There are structural issues with the ceiling that GAM are working on. The works should be over within a week.</p> <p>IN: The management of the hall needs to be discussed by the SMT and the Board once all works are complete and the hall is safe to be used.</p> <p>AI: An update can be provided at the next meeting regarding the progress with Meakin district heating system.</p> <p>4.20 Q20: Will JMB be replacing bathrooms and kitchens?</p> <p>AI and IC: The need for any such replacement will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>4.21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS.</p> <p>A resident at complained that the OCO has not been issuing her a compensation due for week-long loss of hot water/heating. AI will chase it up for her. IN recorded the details.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The meeting ended at 19:30pm.</p>	<p>ACTION: AI to chase up OCO compensation for the resident from Meakin Estate.</p>
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