



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Jim McMahon OBE MP  
Minister for Local Government and English Devolution  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

28<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Dear Jim

**Cleat Hill Gas Explosion: Financial Support for Bedford Borough Council**

There was a gas explosion at an address on Cleat Hill on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October which sadly caused a fatality and a serious injury at one of the properties.

Approximately 15 weeks earlier on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July, a pocket of natural gas was hit approximately 102 metres underground whilst a borehole was being drilled for a ground source heat pump.

There is an investigation underway to determine the reasons for the explosion on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October and this may well include investigation of the actions taken from the original identification of gas on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

Currently approximately 40 – 50 households are directly affected by a cordon and evacuation with most being housed in temporary accommodation. Efforts to resolve the situation are underway but this may well take some weeks and there is considerable anxiety amongst residents about the safety of a return.

I would be very grateful for the opportunity to meet with you or your staff to discuss the situation generally and more specifically to ascertain:

1. Will you request your department to see what financial support might be made available to Bedford Borough Council to continue their support for displaced families?
2. In assessments for financial support, will the department take account both of the extraordinary (ie non-budgeted costs) arising from the Cleat Hill incident **and** the extraordinary costs incurred by the council in dealing with recent flood relief?
3. Can the department provide any advice to families concerned about the impact of this incident on i) their home insurance premiums and ii) any diminution of the valuation of their homes?

Yours sincerely

Richard Fuller MP

