



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rushanara Ali MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

27th November 2024

Dear Rushanara,

Cleat Hill Explosion: Shallow Gas Reservoir Assessment

I am very grateful for your response to the Adjournment Debate last week regarding the impact of the gas explosion at Cleat Hill on local residents and their wider families.

During the debate, I raised a concern about the absence of a detailed survey to ascertain the scale and scope of the reservoir of gas at Cleat Hill. I am writing in furtherance of this concern and to request advice from your department.

Surveys have been undertaken at Cleat Hill to provide information about the levels of gas in ground and in air. This has been of assistance to the creation of Risk Assessments for each affected property which, in turn, have been the basis for the provision of appropriate monitoring devices. It is to be hoped that these measures will provide some reassurance for families that wish to return.

I write “some reassurance” as these efforts do not provide answers to two critical questions:

1. What is the scale and scope of the shallow reservoir of gas at Cleat Hill?
2. Will the venting of gas for 109 days (at high pressure) from the gas reservoir have implications for the stability of the formation below Cleat Hill residences?

A full assessment to answer these questions will potentially require the expertise of other third parties potentially including businesses with oil and gas exploration expertise.

I would be grateful if your department could advise what steps they may be able to take to assist local agencies in Bedfordshire to enable a full assessment of the shallow gas reservoir at Cleat Hill or the reasons why the government does not believe that such an assessment is necessary.

Sincerely

Richard Fuller MP
cc: Tom Wootton, Mayor of Bedford Borough
Laura Church, CEO Bedford Borough
Andrew Hopkinson, Chief Fire Officer Bedfordshire
Paul Bradley, Health and Safety Executive

