



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP  
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government  
Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government  
2 Marsham Street  
London, SW1P 4DF

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

**Unacceptable Delays in Funding Support Following Cleat Hill Gas Explosion**

I am writing to you regarding the Cleat Hill gas explosion that occurred in my constituency last year and the lack of response to date from your department to requests for financial assistance for the associated costs borne by local agencies, and in particular, Bedford Borough Council.

As you will be aware, this devastating incident led to the loss of two lives and caused significant disruption and distress to the local community. Over forty families were evacuated from their homes for many weeks and were re-housed at the expense of the local authority. Local police provided 24/7 security to the site for several weeks until people were allowed to return to their homes just before Christmas.

Last weekend marked the one year anniversary of the explosion and I spent time chatting with residents. You will be pleased to hear that, although there were some anxieties, people had pretty much returned to "life as normal".

There was much praise for the local authority and consternation that the national government is yet to provide any support whatsoever.

The financial burden on the Council has been considerable. In response, BBC submitted a claim under the Bellwin Scheme, alongside a request for Exceptional Funding to cover the costs incurred. A formal claim totalling £1.99 million was submitted on 27th March 2025, with supplementary information provided on 2nd and 19th May. However, despite repeated follow-ups, I understand that the Council has yet to receive a decision or any positive response from the Department.

May I request your personal attention to this matter to see if the assessment of this application can be brought to an early, and hopefully positive, conclusion?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Fuller".

Richard Fuller CBE MP

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