

Emergency Response and Recovery



Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

- BFRS remains at the scene to support partner organisations in the on-going activities in the cordon area.
- We continue to work as part of the multi-agency investigation team, focusing our work on the fire investigation.
- BFRS continues to manage the command and control and secretariat functions of the incident for the local resilience forum (LRF) to ensure all agencies work together to deliver a safe resolution.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Current Situation

- Drilling fluid displaced by water and 15 metre plug at bottom of the borehole proved gas tight.
- Cemented –20 metres of surface.
- Gas readings under continuous monitoring.
- Controlled sequence of operations.
- Continuous monitoring and checks.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Next Steps

1. Allow cement to cure for at least 24 hours.
2. Establish monitoring pipe within the borehole, with pressure and gas flow capability.
3. Seal to surface.
4. Continue monitoring.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Cordon

- Cordon remains in place until all of the operations described have been completed.
- Monitoring will inform when the decision is made to allow people back into their homes.
- This will be a multi-agency decision.

What are we doing

- We have provided an overview of the underlying geology and a specialist team has been on site since Monday 21st October
- Our team have conducted a first pass soil gas survey and are now undertaking a repeat surveys in order to monitor the dynamic system
- We are monitoring for atmospheric, subsoil and transfer of ground to air gas at outdoor locations
- We are increasingly turning resources to interpreting the data.



Our data

- Observing fluctuations in readings over time
- Methane in soil 29th October
- To note:
 - Above baseline on Wagstaff Cl
 - Above baseline Glenrose Av (outside/edge of cordon)



Latest data (readings from BGS and Cadent)

- In house Cadent
- Outside BGS
- In air measurements
- 3rd November



Latest data (BGS soil gas)

- Soil gas readings
- 3rd November



Summary

- At present - our monitoring operations are recording relatively consistent reduced levels of gas
- Latest BGS data support the suggestion that gas flow from the borehole has been restricted, if not stemmed,
 - however ongoing work is seeking to understand the potential impact that changes in **environmental conditions** have on gas levels and flow (low pressure front/wind/rain and increased water pressure)
- BGS priority remains providing a robust set of data that the incident response coordinators can use in their decision-making, with our team remaining on site to continue monitoring work and collecting further readings.

Ground Source Heat Pump Association

Current Situation

This is the only occurrence of shallow gas known in over 25 years of GSHP operations in the UK, and many more years for water/mineral/site investigation drilling.

Advise to Residents

Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS). Sets and maintains Standards within the small-scale heat pump industry.

There have been 32,498 ground source heat pump installations registered with MCS since 2009 in the UK. The majority of these use boreholes.

At least as many boreholes drilled for large-scale, commercial (non-MCS) systems.

Ground Source Heat Pump Association

- The GSHPA will remain fully engaged and provide information to Residents and the Authorities throughout this process
- The GSHPA and others within the drilling sector will take learnings from this tragedy to ensure all operators are aware of the issues and, where required, procedures developed to minimise risks going forward

Bedfordshire Police

- We are continuing to work with partners to conduct a thorough investigation into the cause of the explosion. This includes reviewing any previous issues reported in the local area and ensuring sufficient resource of any post incident demand
- We have and will continue to support the partnership response by staffing the cordons and maintaining a police presence in the area. This includes the safe keeping of property keys and conducting regular patrols of the area
- In coordination with partners, we will also support with efforts to escort people inside the cordon to attend the properties when it is safe to do so

Housing:

- 31 households accommodated

Welfare Assistance:

- 43 households paid
- 96 clothing payments through our financial support package
 - Financial Package payments are being made on a weekly basis

Emergency Helpline:

- 331 calls answered in total
- Average waiting time on line 2mins

Bin Collections:

All black bins that we had access to were collected on Wednesday.

Postal Service:

- Currently post is being held at Ford End Road for collection, or being redirected to St Mark's Church and Community Centre.

Bedford Borough Council

Answers to some of the questions you raised:

- The brook was raised as a safety concern for playing children and young people. Our Environment Team reviewed the routes of overnight security with the company, and they agreed that they would increase the patrols in those areas.
- It was asked if once investigations are finished, does this get registered with land registry? Our Environment Team have advised that the questions answered as part of a search are set by the law society currently there is no question in relation to natural gas. A solicitor can submit their own questions as part of the search process. Aside from the search process, when you sell your house, you fill out a home report which goes to the buyer's solicitors, it may have to be declared there

Bedford Borough Council

Outstanding but in hand:

- Will there be full written guarantees for residents of safety. This could affect house sales/prices. ***Richard Fuller MP taking forward***
- You said responsibility was for the borehole was with the drilling company. Will they be compensating us for the negligence? ***The Council to discuss and respond to residents when a response is available from Richard Fuller MP.***
- What plans are there for monitoring gas levels after the operation to plug the borehole? ***Contact made with Environment Agency.***

Local Resilience Forum Action Plan

The following action plan sets out the Safe System of Work to enable residents to gather belongings with a view of being away from their property for up to 4 weeks:

LRF ACTIONS PLAN (+ 4 WEEKS) RESPONSE PHASE	RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY	TIMESCALE
Gas specialists are continuing their onsite resource to support the resident's safe returns to collect belongings.	Specialist Contractor	Specialist contractors procured in order to provide ongoing technical support as the incident unfolds until residents are able to return to their properties
British Geological Survey (BGS) resource for in-ground gas monitoring continuing support.	BGS	Ongoing as incident continues and will continue until residents are able to return to their properties.
Information Centre/Assistance Centre continues to be in Place at St Marks Church	BBC	This will continue to be provided to residents as the incident develops and needs change
24/7 Call centre in place to provide residents 24/7 support, reassurance and information.	BBC	Ongoing support provided until residents are able to return to properties.
Support packages including financial support, in place and this will continue for those affected as the incident progresses.	BBC	Ongoing support provided until residents are able to return to properties.

Daily review of safety cordon to ensure its suitability depending on risk and reduce where appropriate (subject to safety advice)	LRF/Police/HSE	Daily reviews undertaken until suitable mitigation is in place to ensure safety of residents and the removal for the need of a cordon.
Ongoing review – dependent upon borehole site activities and related risk supported by in-property and in-ground gas monitoring results	HSE	Daily reviews undertaken until suitable mitigation is in place to ensure safety of residents
Officer representations across LRF providing on ground support until residents fully back to their properties.	LRF	Continue until residents are able until suitable mitigation is in place to ensure safety of residents and the removal for the need of a cordon
Professional security have been employed to enhance the police presence on the ground around the boundary of those properties that back onto the golf club and/or depot/brook area	BBC/To liaise with Police	From 24/10/24 (evening) and will continue until residents are able to return to their properties
Organise question and answer page for residents and populate with ongoing questions as received from residents in addition the Creation of Resident Forum Group to directly liaise with comms team to update.	BBC - Comms	From 28/10/24 and weekly ongoing
Regular weekly public meetings organised until further review	BBC - Comms	Ongoing as incident continues and will continue until residents are able to safely return to their properties
Continue resident communications including text messages and calls	BBC - Comms	Ongoing as incident continues and will continue until residents are able to safely return to their properties

Ensure that inner and outer cordons are maintained and appropriately resourced for the period that they are required.	Bedfordshire Police.	Ongoing as incident continues and will continue until residents are able to safely return to their properties
Undertake a coronial investigation alongside HSE aiming to understand the cause of the explosion, and identify any responsibility.	Bedfordshire Police.	Ongoing as incident continues and will continue until residents are able to safely return to their properties
To support community reassurance visits and engagement with impacted community in support of Bedford Borough council.	Bedfordshire Police.	Ongoing as incident continues and will continue until residents are able to safely return to their properties
Continue to have representation at warning and informing, and Humanitarian assistance cells whilst these remain in place.	Bedfordshire Police.	Ongoing as incident continues and will continue until residents are able to safely return to their properties
Provide specialist support to the investigation to determine the cause of the explosion and fire.	BFRS	Ongoing as incident continues and will continue until residents are able to safely return to their properties
To provide specialist support to the delivery of the LRF functions	BFRS	Ongoing as incident continues and will continue until residents are able to safely return to their properties

To provide resources that support partner agencies in delivering their respective responsibilities.	BFRS	Ongoing as incident continues and will continue until residents are able to safely return to their properties
To facilitate the collection of waste (that is accessible) and where its not accessible will make a commitment to provide support for waste to be removed immediately once residents repatriated with their property	BBC	Start collections week beginning 28/10/24 and as and when residents return to their property
Health advise, long-term health risks where residents did not experience any symptoms at the time of the exposure to methane, are unlikely. W	Public Health	Anyone who may have experienced symptoms or is concerned is advised to speak to their GP or contact NHS111.
Health screening of the local population is not required as methane is not expected to result in health effects on a long-term basis where symptoms did not occur at the time of exposure.	Public Health	Anyone who may have experienced symptoms or is concerned is advised to speak to their GP or contact NHS111.
Remain in response (+ 4 weeks phase) until there is clear undertaking from Scientific & Technical Advisory Cell that the incident can move into a recovery phase (i.e. at the point where it is deemed safe for residents to be able to safely return to their properties	LRF	Revaluation of + 4 Week plan to include a suitable recovery plan to support residents through recovery phase of incident.
Recognise opportunities to adjust the plan for residents or circumstances change to allow more flexible approach.	LRF	Continue to liaise with all stakeholders on an ongoing basis and adjust plans accordingly until residents are able to safely return to their properties

Q & A