



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

David Hughes
Chief Executive Officer
East West Railway Company Limited
Sent by email.

28 November 2024

Dear David Hughes

Cleat Hill Explosion: Proposed Actions by East West Rail in Ravensden

I have been notified by residents in Ravensden that East West Rail (the “Company”) is proposing to undertake ground investigations which will include the drilling of bore holes in the area. The Company has provided residents with details of what may be involved in these investigations in the “Guide to the Access Agreement for Ground Investigations and other Intrusive Surveys.

Section Three of the Guide provides details of the types of work that may be undertaken including: cable percussion boreholes, rotary boreholes, sonic boreholes, dynamic sampling, cone penetration sampling, dynamic probing and trial pits. Many of these types of work include the drilling of boreholes into the ground or other intrusive movements or actions on the ground. For example, the guidance for rotary boreholes states that it involves drilling a “bore through hard soils and rocks down to 50m depth.”

As you may be aware a gas reservoir was encountered at a shallow depth of 100metres at Cleat Hill in Ravensden. There was a subsequent explosion at the property which resulted in the deaths of two people and the evacuation of approximately fifty households: most of which are ongoing. The levels of anxiety are high. The lack of understanding of the scope and scale of the gas reservoir has heightened these anxieties and I have written to the Government to ask that they conduct a proper assessment of the gas reservoir in order to protect my residents.

In the circumstances, it does not seem appropriate for East West Rail to conduct its ground investigations in Ravensden. Certainly not at the moment and, in my opinion, not until a full assessment of the gas reservoir in the area has been undertaken.

I would be grateful if you would be able to provide me with an assurance that East West Rail will not begin any new drilling operations or other ground investigations and cease any such operations or investigations in the Ravensden area. I would further ask that you seek confirmation from the local agencies involved in protecting residents at Cleat Hill before resuming such operations and investigations. Further, I think it would be helpful if East West Rail would, at that stage, also be willing to host a local information session in Ravensden so that residents can learn more about the proposed work and gain further reassurance of the precautions that East West Rail will then have in place.

Sincerely

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

Richard Fuller MP

