

Mark calls for review after internet reveals refuge

Mark Lancaster has called for a review of internet regulations after the whereabouts of a women's refuge was revealed by Google.

The Milton Keynes North MP was speaking in a debate yesterday (Thursday) on internet privacy when he mentioned that the refuge, whose anonymity is crucial to the safety of its residents.

However, when the search engine set about mapping the entire country with street-level photographs for its Street View facility, the hostel's picture and location were displayed online.

Even when the organisation requested to have it removed, Google did not respond.

As Mr Lancaster explained the incident to fellow MPs in Westminster Hall: "It is staggering that the privacy of an organisation whose purpose it is to protect others is allowed to be invaded in that way."

This was not the first time there has been an issue with Google in Milton Keynes, he told colleagues.

Back in April 2009, residents of Broughton village challenged a Street View driver as he attempted to take photographs of their homes.

Rather than leaving Broughton off the map, residents were told they would have to apply to have the images removed once public – something Mr Lancaster called 'simply unacceptable'.

He added: "I acknowledge that a legislative approach would have consequences for freedom of information, but does the Minister accept that, following the situations that occurred in my constituency, and Google's reluctance to do anything about them, the time has perhaps come for, at the very least, a review of the kind suggested by my hon. Friend?"