

MP seeks reassurances over houses after Fishermead tragedy

AN MP has called for a debate on houses in multiple occupancy after a mother and toddler died in a fire.

Mark Lancaster spoke in Business Questions this morning (Thursday), after the tragedy in Fishermead at the weekend.

The MP for Milton Keynes North said that he raised the issue of houses in multiple occupancy (HMOs) three years ago in Westminster Hall, during which he pointed to the fire safety hazards involved in such home conversions.

"Sadly, last weekend my worst fears were realised," he told Sir George Young.

The Leader of the House replied that he was very sorry to hear about the loss of life.

There will be new housing legislation which will provide an 'opportunity to revisit this issue', he said.

He added: "We don't want to do anything that makes HMOs more dangerous."

Mr Lancaster said afterwards that his aim is to seek reassurances that any change in Government legislation towards HMOs will improve safety standards.

He spoke in his adjournment debate in June 2007, saying: "HMOs bring with them a major increase in the risk of fire, particularly where five individuals all cook separately and overload electric sockets in a house that was originally designed for a single family. Milton Keynes council has confirmed that a large proportion of the recent increase in the number of fires in Milton Keynes has been in HMOs."