

Councillor Bethia Thomas

The Rt Hon Wes Streeting
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Dear Secretary of State,

Urgent Action Required to Deliver Great Western Park Health Centre, Didcot

I am writing on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council to express our deep concern regarding the continued delay in delivering the Great Western Park (GWP) Health Centre in Didcot, a facility that has been promised to our residents for many years. This health centre is urgently needed to meet the growing demand for primary care services in an area that has experienced significant housing development and population growth over the past 15 years.

Despite repeated assurances, progress has stalled due to the financing model being used and its acceptability to the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB), NHS England and the district valuer. Under the current arrangement, the health centre will be built by a private company using private investment and then leased to the GP practice that will operate it. The rent payments, largely funded through NHS allocations, must be agreed before construction can begin. At present, the rent level that was sought by the private finance company was significantly higher than what a GP practice could reasonably afford and thus BOB ICB has ceased the relationship with the developer. The council understands that BOB ICB are undergoing a process to identify a new developer under the same private investment model.

A major factor driving the unacceptable rental position presented to date is the cost of private financing, which is estimated to be approximately double the cost of Government borrowing. This disparity not only inflates costs but creates delays and uncertainty, as negotiations over affordability stall progress.

While we do not wish to jeopardise the GWP project at this late stage, these interminable delays highlight the fundamental weaknesses of the private finance model in delivering healthcare estate projects across the UK. The consequences for our residents are real and immediate limited access to GP services, increased pressure on existing practices, and growing health inequalities in one of Oxfordshire's fastest-growing communities.

The council therefore urge the Government to:

1. Take immediate steps to unblock this project and deliver the GWP Health Centre in a financially sustainable way, ensuring timely access to essential health services for our residents.
2. Review current policy on private finance in healthcare delivery, using the lessons from GWP to inform improvements for future projects nationally.
3. Recognise the clear financial and deliverability advantages of direct Government funding for essential health infrastructure, which would provide certainty, reduce complexity, and accelerate delivery.

The delivery of this health centre is not just a local issue; it is a test case for how we fund and deliver critical health infrastructure across the country. We ask that you act now to resolve this matter and ensure that the residents of Didcot and the surrounding area receive the healthcare provision they urgently need.

Copies of this letter have been sent to all MPs representing the Vale of White Horse District, and we ask for their support in contacting Ministers to reinforce the urgency of this matter.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We look forward to your response and to working with you to achieve a positive outcome for our residents.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Bethia Thomas
Leader of the Council