

Subject: Royal College of GPs: Planning and Infrastructure Bill - NC46

Dear

I am writing from the Royal College of GPs ahead of Report Stage of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill taking place on Monday 9 June.

[Recent polling](#) has shown that improving GP access tops the list of public concerns about the NHS. However, we know that new housing projects often neglect consideration of GP premises despite population growth that demands more health and social infrastructure.

Even when commitments are made as part of a new development, the process of getting a practice up and running is often hampered by bureaucracy and fragmented working between developers, local authorities, ICBs, and providers – often at significant time delay. Without proper consideration and successful end-to-end delivery of essential health and social infrastructure, i.e. GP clinics, there is a real risk that new developments could exacerbate existing health inequalities, particularly in underserved or high-growth areas. As the government look to deliver 1.5 million new homes, it is vital that sufficient primary healthcare infrastructure is not only prioritised in the planning process but also delivered.

With that in mind, we are very pleased you are supporting [NC46](#) tabled by John Milne MP which aims to ensure that commitments to provide local infrastructure such as schools and GP clinics, approved as part of a development, are permanent and legally binding.

If you have any questions or would like any further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch. In the meantime, please find below some further background information.

Background

- **Existing GP premises are not fit for purpose.** According to the RCGP's latest poll of members, over a third (34%) of GPs say that their practice building is not fit for purpose, with 88% of those citing insufficient numbers of consulting rooms and 75% citing insufficient space to take on additional GP trainees. 57% of GPs said their practice requires additional works to improve or upgrade their premises in order to meet the needs of their patients. Of those who need funding to improve their premises, 37% estimated the cost to be over £100,000 and 14% estimated this figure to be over £500,000.
- **Sufficient healthcare infrastructure** must therefore be prioritised alongside any new housing. The RCGP has long advocated for this, recognising that general practice, located in the heart of the community, is crucial in alleviating pressures on the NHS when properly resourced, and greater investment is needed to deliver on Government's 10 Year Health plans of shifting more care into the community with a greater focus on prevention.
- **Greater collaboration is needed between planning authorities and health commissioners** to anticipate population growth and build capacity.
- **Local planning authorities also need to be given the necessary powers and resources** so they can properly hold developers to account and ensure they properly engage with NHS bodies &/or Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to ensure health infrastructure needs, particularly GP practices and community health services, are in place to serve communities.