



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Lee Rowley MP

*Minister of State for Housing, Planning and
Building Safety*

**Department for Levelling Up, Housing &
Communities**

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London, SW1P 4DF

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Amanda Foley
Chief Executive
St Albans City and District Council
District Council Offices
St Peter's Street
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL1 3JE

6 March 2024

Dear Amanda Foley,

DESIGNATION UNDER S62A OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

It is essential that local planning authorities meet required performance levels in order to deliver the homes and investment the country needs. I am not satisfied with the performance of St Albans City and District Council in relation to the speed of determining applications for non-major development.

On 10 January 2024, a letter from the Director for Leasehold, Land and Planning Systems confirmed that St Albans City and District Council (the "Council") was at risk of designation for speed of decision-making for applications for non-major development, based on data for the two years up to the end of September 2023, where the performance of the Council was 69.3%. This does not meet the required threshold of 70% or more of an authority's decisions made within the statutory determination period or such extended period as has been agreed in writing with the applicant.

I have considered the exceptional circumstances you have put forward which, in your opinion, would make designation unreasonable. However, on balance I have concluded that the evidence presented does not adequately justify exceptional circumstances as set out in the published criteria document, "Improving planning performance – criteria for designation" and your authority's performance over the last four quarters has been persistently below the threshold. I have therefore decided to designate St Albans and City District Council under the powers conferred by section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. A formal notice is attached, which will have effect from **09:00 on 6 March 2024**.

You are required to prepare an action plan for approval by the Department identifying actions that address the areas of weakness that led to the Council being designated. We will work closely with you in developing this plan and ensure that you have the support you need to improve so that the designation can be lifted as quickly as possible.

The consequence of designation is that applications for non-major development can be made directly to the Planning Inspectorate, although applicants will have the option of continuing to

apply to your authority in the usual way, should they wish. As set out in paragraph 11 of the published criteria document, designation does not apply to householder applications and retrospective applications which will continue to be submitted to the Council.

Officials from this Department and the Planning Inspectorate will be in touch over the next few days to discuss the next steps with you. Should you have any questions about this letter, please contact Stephen Gee on 0303 444 0013 (Stephen.Gee@levellingup.gov.uk).

I am copying this letter to your local MPs Daisy Cooper MP and Bim Afolami MP.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is centered on the page.

LEE ROWLEY MP

Minister of State for Housing, Planning and Building Safety