

Date: 8 February 2024

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Dear Mr Gove

s.15 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 intervention in the St Albans City & District Council Local Plan

I refer to your letter of 19 December 2023 and your direction under s15(8)(b) of the above Act. In your letter you direct that St Albans City & District Council revise its Local Development Scheme (LDS) within 12 weeks.

Please find an updated LDS February 2024 attached. The table setting out the key dates is reproduced below:

	Regulation 18 Consultation	Regulation 19 Pre - Submission Publication	Submission	Examination	Adoption
Local Plan	July – Sep 2023	Oct-Dec 2024	March 2025	March 2025 - Feb 2026	March 2026

These new dates reflect a report to our Planning Policy & Climate Committee on 12 December 2023. I am pleased to confirm that this Council met the timescale set out in our previous LDS (September 2022) for the Regulation 18 consultation to take place in July-September 2023. This consultation has been reported in full to our Planning Policy & Climate Committee, but in short, no 'red flags' or 'showstoppers' for the draft Plan or the timescale for taking it forward have been identified.

Continued./..

The new dates set out in our new LDS for Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Publication and Submission are realistic and achievable and show that this Council is on course to achieve Submission of the Plan before the June 2025 deadline for the current system.

My officers have been in regular contact with your officials since the Government's letter regarding potential intervention in 2017. My officers have also been in contact with your officials with specific regard to your 2023 letter on 19 December 2023 and 10 January 2024. Your officials offered a package of Planning Advisory Service Local Plan support which my officers have taken up and are progressing with.

Given the fact that this Council is on course to submit before the June 2025 deadline and is in regular contact with your officials, we cannot see any public benefit in further intervention action with regard to our Local Plan process. Indeed, if anything, further intervention action could undermine the progress which the Council is determined to maintain.

For the avoidance of doubt and as discussed with your officials, the recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (19 December 2023) will not affect our ability to meet the timescales set out in our new LDS (February 2024).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raj Visram', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Raj Visram
Vice Chair of Planning Policy & Climate Committee
St Albans City & District Council

enc