



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Lee Rowley MP

*Minister of State for Housing, Planning and
Building Safety*
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Chris Sinnott
Chief Executive
Chorley Council
Civic Offices
Union Street
Chorley
Lancashire
PR7 1AL

19 December 2023

Dear Chris Sinnott,

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 Chorley Council in relation to the quality of determining applications for major development.

On 6 July 2023, a letter from the Chief Planner confirmed that Chorley Council (the "Council") was at risk of designation for quality of decision-making for applications for major development, based on data for the two years up to the end of March 2022 and subsequent appeal decisions to the end of December 2022, where the performance of the Council was 17.9%. This does not meet the required threshold of less than 10% of decisions allowed at appeal.

Subsequent to the letter of 6 July 2023, two additional sets of data have been published by the Department which cover the two year period ending on 30 June 2022 and subsequent appeals decisions to 31 March 2023 and the two year period ending on 30 September 2022 and subsequent appeal decisions to 30 June 2023. The performance of the Council for the two year period up to the end of September 2022 and subsequent appeals to the end of June 2023 (15.6%), continues to not meet the required performance threshold.

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". I have decided to designate Chorley 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 Tuesday 19 December 2023.

You are required to prepare an action plan identifying actions that address the areas of weakness that led to the Council being designated. We will work closely 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 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. The Planning Inspectorate are ready to receive and determine applications should that be required.

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 Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP and Katherine Fletcher 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