



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning

**Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local
Government**
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

Rob Huntington
Chief Executive
Rossendale Borough Council
The Business Centre
Futures Park
Bacup
OL13 0BB

15 June 2026

Dear Rob,

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 Rossendale Borough Council (“the Council”) in relation to the quality of decision making on planning applications for major development.

On 27 March 2026, the Chief Planner wrote to you confirming that the Council was at risk of designation for quality of decision-making for applications for major development, based on data for local planning appeals for the two years up to the end of March 2025 and appeal decisions to the end of December 2025. For this period, the performance of the Council was 15.4%. This exceeds the threshold of less than 10% of an authority’s decisions being overturned at appeal.

I have considered the submission you have put forward which, in your opinion, demonstrate exceptional circumstances which would make designation unreasonable. However, on balance I have concluded that the evidence presented does not demonstrate exceptional circumstances as set out in the published criteria document, “Improving planning performance – criteria for designation”. I have therefore decided to designate the Council in respect of major development 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 15 June 2026.

You are expected 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 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.

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@communities.gov.uk).

A copy of this letter has been sent to your local MP: Andy MacNae MP.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Pennycook', with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning.