



The future priorities for and delivery of the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund – April 2008 to March 2011

**A Heritage Link response to a DEFRA consultation
29th April 2008**

Heritage Link brings together 86 voluntary organisations concerned with heritage in England representing interests from specialist advisers, practitioners and managers, volunteers and owners, to national funding bodies and local building preservation trusts. Much of the historic environment is cared for - supported, managed or owned - by these organisations. Many of them and their members - from local civic societies to the national amenity societies with statutory consultee status - have had firsthand experience of the Aggregates Sustainability Fund (ALSF) and the communities that have benefited from it. The ALSF grant scheme features on our free online Heritage Funding Directory. This response comes from our Funding Working Group, comprising of members most closely concerned with sources of funding and facilitating access to them.

Heritage Link welcomes the opportunity to contribute to DEFRA's consultation on the future priorities for the ALSF. The ALSF has made a substantial contribution to ensure that both affected communities and the historic environment considerations are integrated strategically in sustainable development for the aggregate industry.

Heritage Link's response to the consultation is as follows (not all questions below were relevant for our response).

Question 1: Do you agree with these aims and the overarching themes for the programme?

We support the overarching themes for the programme in tackling the causes and consequences of climate change.

Question 7: Do you agree with the proposals for the communities theme?

Heritage Link agrees that DEFRA's high level objectives for the Fund are sound and relevant and that the five overarching themes identified are well-focused and support the objectives. We are however concerned to see the disproportionate reduction in the proposed themes of the overall funding for both communities and the historic environment. For example, funding of *Theme 5 Communities* in the period since 2004/05 has been cut altogether from £0.81m in previous period.

We strongly support the need to maintain the level of funding in all areas and believe that the cut to the community-based theme will be particularly detrimental. It is regrettable that the opportunity is being lost for communities affected by aggregates extraction to be engaged through heritage projects. In the past the relatively simple application process made this funding both accessible and appealing to local groups.

The scheme is particularly valuable in view of the increased pressure on existing funding for the historic environment from reductions in Heritage Lottery funding and English Heritage grants. We urge therefore that a high priority should be given to allocating funding for *Theme 5 Communities* in order to develop active involvement of local communities in schemes that benefit their local heritage.

Heritage Link wishes to highlight the unmistakable and highly valued benefits of previous years' funding and believes that this disproportionate level of cuts will not only severely reduce the reach of the Fund but will also devalue the outcomes of the community based programmes.

Heritage Link
28th April 2008

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