



# ALSF Grant Scheme 2009-2011

## Applications for Grant Aid

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## Guidance Notes

The following pages provide general guidance on the nature and procedures of the Natural England ALSF Grants Scheme for the financial years  
April 2009 – March 2010  
April 2010 to March 2011.

### Contents:

1. **Background to the ALSF Grant Scheme**
2. **Linking a project to Aggregates Extraction and its' effects**
3. **Eligible Projects**
4. **Aims, Examples & Priorities for 2009-2011**
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6. **Post-Application and Award procedures**

### CONTACT POINT

The Natural England ALSF Grant Scheme is being administered through a single office. If you have any questions about the scheme, how it operates, or whether your project is suitable, you should initially contact:

#### **ALSF Grants Management Team**

**Telephone:** 0161 234 0206

**Email:** [alsfgrants@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:alsfgrants@naturalengland.org.uk)

#### **Postal Address:**

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c/o Natural England  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Bridgewater House  
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## 1. The Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF)

The Aggregates Levy is a tax on the commercial quarrying of certain aggregates. It came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002.

A proportion of the money raised by the Levy goes to make up the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF), which is intended to provide funding for projects that reduce the effects of past, present and future aggregates production, or reduce the need for primary aggregate extraction.

In the first six years of its operation, ALSF grants were distributed by a number of bodies; including Mineral Industry Sustainable Technology Programme (MIST) as part of Mineral Industries Research Organisation (MIRO), Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), English Nature, The Countryside Agency, English Heritage, and the some county councils.

Full details of the organisations involved and successful ALSF projects may be obtained from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) website: [www.defra.gov.uk/funding/schemes](http://www.defra.gov.uk/funding/schemes)

### Natural England

Natural England has been formed by bringing together English Nature, the landscape, access and recreation elements of The Countryside Agency and the environmental land management functions of the Rural Development Service.

Natural England will work for people, places and nature, to enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas: promoting access, recreation and public well-being and contributing to the way natural resources are managed so that they can be enjoyed now and in the future.

Natural England is working towards the delivery of four strategic outcomes, which together deliver on our purpose to conserve, enhance and manage the natural environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

- **A healthy natural environment:** England's natural environment will be conserved and enhanced.
- **People are inspired to value and conserve the natural environment:** more people enjoying, understanding and acting to improve the natural environment, more often.
- **Sustainable use of the natural environment:** the use and management of the natural environment is more sustainable.
- **A secure environmental future:** decisions which collectively secure the future of the natural environment.

For the Natural England ALSF Grant Scheme during 2009-2011 we have an initial indicative allocation of approximately £3.8 million each year.

We will continue to work closely with English Heritage and other distributors on schemes that have joint interests.

### **Purpose of the Fund**

The broad purpose of the Fund is to reduce the effects of aggregates extraction on the environment and local people. We will award grants in support of projects which involve and will deliver clearly defined benefits in terms of one or more of the following general themes:

- Landscape & Nature Conservation\*
- Access & Informal Recreation
- Health and Wellbeing
- Education and Understanding
- Evidence Gathering

\* NB. Nature Conservation includes both Biodiversity and Geodiversity.

Further details of what is meant by these themes, and some examples of the types of projects we are looking for, may be found in Section 4 - Aims, Examples and Priorities. Definitions are also available by selecting the individual theme names in the application forms.

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## 2. Establishing the Link to Aggregates Extraction - Guidance notes on the relationship between your project and aggregates extraction

It is very important that all applicants

- **establish a clear and valid link between their projects and aggregate extraction that has attracted the Levy**
- **demonstrate the impacts of this extraction upon people and the environment**

We will seek professional advice from our in-house or external specialists. Your application may be processed or reviewed by a geologist or someone with experience in geodiversity and the minerals industry. They will check the details you supply.

The following notes are designed to help you complete the application forms. In order for you to get the best from this process it is important that you read them carefully. If after reading them you are uncertain as to whether or not your proposed project qualifies, or would like to discuss the link between aggregates extraction and your project, please do not hesitate to contact the ALSF team.

Applicants should show

- **that there is, or has been an impact directly attributable to aggregate extraction and its associated activities, upon the environment, local area and community.**
- **how the project reduces the impact**
- **what benefits it will provide for the environment and/or people.**

However, the impact of aggregate extraction is not always a negative one, and there can be many longer-term advantages. Extraction can create new habitats, allowing endangered and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species and habitats to recover. It can also reveal important geological exposures and specimens and create nature reserves and recreational or amenity areas. It may also create research opportunities not hitherto available. **Projects which aim to document, enhance and manage these positive effects are also eligible for an ALSF grant.**

Projects may address the impacts of past, current or future extraction sites and activities.

Where your project is sited on or adjacent to a working or former aggregates quarry you should provide evidence, from the relevant planning authority, that the proposed project and its outcomes lie outside the scope of site restoration works required by the planning conditions placed on the operator of the site.

Those projects connected to long-disused ‘crushed rock’ or sand and gravel sites that pre-date 1930 will only be considered where the impact of aggregate production can still clearly be demonstrated. For all disused sites, the applicant must establish, as far as is practical, that the bulk of the material extracted was an eligible aggregate and that this would have therefore attracted the Levy if it had been in place at that time.

This grant scheme only covers the effects of the quarrying of aggregates. Not all forms of quarrying are subject to the Aggregates Levy and not all rock types or deposits qualify as aggregate. Therefore, only projects that can provide evidence that they are linked to the effects of aggregate quarrying and that the Levy has been paid by the quarry company (or would have been paid in the case of former and redundant quarries) will be considered for funding.

**Establishing that there is a clear and valid link between your project and the effects of aggregate extraction is fundamental to your application. A project can only be considered for funding if such a link exists.**

**In order for you to gain the maximum benefit from the application process you should spend some time carefully reading the following notes before completing your application for grant aid.** You will be asked to answer a series of questions about the relationship between aggregates extraction and your project. These will cover such themes as:-

- type of quarry site – e.g. single, multiple, dispersed, county-wide etc.
- quarry name, location and operator/owner
- quarry status – e.g. disused, dormant, active etc.
- aggregates levy – has, or would this have been paid?
- aggregate rock type
- is aggregate the primary product at the site; in what proportion?
- overburden (the material that overlies the natural resource quarried)
- impacts from the quarrying activities on landscape, nature conservation, access, informal recreation , health and wellbeing
- opportunities arising from quarrying activities for landscape, nature conservation, access, informal recreation , health and wellbeing, education, understanding and evidence gathering

**The relationship between your project and the impacts of aggregate extraction**

Your project and the opportunity it provides for education and evidence gathering should reflect **the scale of the effects** of aggregate extraction on biodiversity, geodiversity, access, informal recreation, communities or landscape. **Please provide supporting evidence that the extraction activities are the major cause for such effects where applicable.**

It may be linked to the effects of former, dormant or active aggregates extraction sites but please note that any project works proposed must be over-and-above statutory

works carried out or due to be carried as part of the planning conditions placed on the operator of the site.

Site-based projects must be located within **8 kilometres** (approximately 5 miles) of the quarrying you have cited.

Where the effects of quarrying have been beneficial, such as exposing hitherto hidden local geology, creating new habitats or encouraging endangered species the sites selected by a project for scientific surveys and audits must relate directly to aggregate extraction. i.e. they must all be current or former extraction sites.

It is within the 8 km radius that local impacts are most acutely felt and are not significantly diluted by other factors, (e.g. the impacts of aggregate transportation on surrounding communities and road networks). Effects on biodiversity and geodiversity are likely to be minimal the further from the extraction site and in such cases you must prove conclusively that aggregates alone has had a detrimental effect on biodiversity or geodiversity. Depending upon the type and scale of the effect that quarrying has had, a case may be made for considering site-based work beyond this. In all cases you must provide evidence, such as traffic surveys and other documentary proof of the effects.

Where a county- or region-wide link to the effects of aggregate extraction is proposed and duly accepted, the scope of the proposed project must reflect this, and site-based projects must be located in an appropriate place.

Where aggregate quarrying activities have had significant negative impacts on local communities through issues related, for example, to transport, or where the effects are felt over a wide area, projects need not be adjacent to the quarries cited. In such cases, the scale of any impact **proven** to be solely due to transport of aggregate, or other area-wide effect, will be used in assessing an application. Applicants should supply sufficient evidence that the major cause of such nuisance or safety issues is directly related to extraction activities, and has not been diluted by other unrelated factors such as non-aggregate traffic flow at a distance from aggregates extraction sites.

All projects must meet certain key criteria. In order for us to assess fairly the merits of your project for biodiversity, geodiversity and affected communities, we need to know what the impacts of aggregate extraction have been on each of these and how you will be addressing them. **Please supply information on this.**

Mitigating the environmental impacts of aggregate extraction means 'reducing' this impact, and is quite distinct from 'compensating' for it. Natural England's ALSF Grant Scheme does not support projects we deem to be compensatory. For example, the project may plan to reduce the negative impacts on a community by the planting of trees to act as a baffle thus reducing noise or dust pollution; **similarly**, the creation or replacement of important habitats and recreational space lost to or damaged by aggregates extraction may be considered within this area but only subject to supporting evidence. This is especially true if the project is located elsewhere other than directly

where extraction has taken place. We will consider such cases on their merits and all applicants must demonstrate conclusively that they are either recreating or restoring a BAP habitat or recreational space lost or damaged by extraction or are working to recreate or restoring another BAP habitat or recreational space within 8 kilometres of the quarrying that has caused the initial loss or damage. If your project's link to extraction is that your proposal will, for example, replace BAP habitat lost due to aggregates quarrying then you must supply evidence that the habitat lost was present on the site prior to extraction e.g. documented information available from old maps, previous surveys etc.

However, in many cases it may well be that aggregates extraction has also created opportunities i.e. there is a positive effect of extraction for biodiversity gain, geological exposures and peoples' access to nature – a typical example is new wetland habitats created by sand & gravel extraction with access boardwalks and viewing facilities.

The impact of aggregate extraction is therefore not always a negative one, and there can be many longer-term advantages for people and the environment. Extraction can create new habitats, allowing endangered and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targeted species and habitats to recover. It can also reveal important geological exposures and specimens and create nature reserves and recreational or amenity areas. It may also create research opportunities not hitherto available. **Projects which aim to document, enhance and manage these positive effects are also eligible for an ALSF grant.**

### **Aggregates**

The notes below largely paraphrase the information currently available from HM Revenue & Customs. For full (and current) details please refer to the website: [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

Additional information on the quarrying you cite in your application could be obtained, for example, from the quarry operators (establishing an initial contact here is encouraged and is usually beneficial), land owners, the Mineral Planning Authority for your area, the British Geological Survey or a local Geological Society, Geology Trust or RIGS Group.

### **What type of aggregate was extracted? Was the Aggregates Levy paid?**

Not all rock types and deposits are quarried for use as aggregate and only some are subject to the Aggregates Levy. You will need to supply evidence that an eligible aggregate has been quarried and that the Aggregates Levy has been paid or, in the case of older and now disused quarries, that it would have been paid had the extraction site been active today. This will be discussed during your application.

Examples of **eligible aggregates** are:-

- **sand & gravel** - most deposits (but see exceptions below)
- **crushed rock** - typical rock types – included are limestone, sandstone, granite, diorite, dolerite and basalt

Examples of **ineligible aggregate, rock types and deposits** include the quarrying of the following :-

- chalk, unless it can be shown that it was extracted for use as an aggregate; flints associated with chalk may qualify, if they are/were produced in significant quantities
- limestone that is/was used for other industrial processes such as lime and cement manufacture, or in iron and steel making and by-products relating to these processes
- rock sequences such as interbedded mudstone and limestone quarried for use in cement manufacture
- sandstone, limestone, granite, diorite, dolerite and basalt etc. used as a source of ornamental, dimension or building stone, or walling stone. Off-cuts produced in significant quantities by the quarrying process may qualify, but in such cases you will have to produce proof of such use and due payment of the Levy by the quarry operator
- certain 'sands' e.g. silica (glass) sands and foundry moulding and refractory sands
- slate
- shale, mudstone and clay used, for example, for brick-making
- china clay
- ball clay (for ceramics)
- coal and lignite
- ironstone
- mineral deposits such as gypsum and fluorspar
- glacial boulder clay (Till) and related deposits e.g. glaciolacustrine (glacial lake) clays
- soils and other organic deposits such as peat

However, if the **overburden** (the soil, deposits and rocks removed in the process of gaining access to these rock types) is or was **sold and taxed** as aggregate in significant quantities, a project may still be eligible. In such cases, the negative effects that quarrying has or has had on communities and the environment are almost exclusively related to gaining access to these non-aggregate resources. The removal of soils and overburden will have had a clear effect, especially on biodiversity and landscape. If, in the case of your project, it is the type, removal and use of this overburden that qualifies as aggregate, then you must supply documentary proof of the proportions concerned, end-use, and that the Levy was or is being paid. For active quarry sites and in cases where you can trace the ownership of the quarry if operations have ceased, this will involve obtaining a letter of confirmation from the aggregates company.

Aggregate types that are exempt from the Levy (or tax reclaimable), and therefore not qualifying include:-

- spoil aggregate arising from the processing of industrial minerals e.g. fluorspar etc.
- aggregate arising from the excavation of new building sites, navigation dredging or highway construction
- recycled aggregate

The Aggregates Levy does not apply unless the aggregate is sold or used for a commercial purpose. Additional information may be obtained from HM Revenue and Customs .

Telephone: 0845 010 9000

Website: [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

### **Scale and age of quarrying**

There should be a direct relationship between the scale and range of benefits of your project and both the scale and age of the quarrying you cite in your application.

Extraction may affect biodiversity, geodiversity, access, communities, informal recreation and landscape in different ways, with the impacts varying from those of a purely localised, single quarry, through to those of large-scale operations within a defined area, and also to broader county-wide, regional or national ones.

If your project claims that aggregate extraction has had, for example, a countywide or regional impact on people and the natural environment, or it is more strategic or research oriented, it must address these impacts at a similar suitable scale.

The impact that aggregates extraction has is not simply defined by considering the tonnage of aggregate won although this may inform transport-related issues. For example a deep, narrowly constrained, crushed-rock quarry may have had comparatively little impact on biodiversity or landscape relative to that of shallow but geographically spread out sand and gravel workings producing the same tonnage. Also, and especially at larger scales, using figures of tonnage per unit head of population within proximity to the quarrying or per unit area of habitat lost is a more important indicator.

Demand for aggregate has increased dramatically over the last 75 years or so and with it the scale and significance of the impacts of extraction on the environment and people even though modern mineral planning requirements do impose strict environmental conditions on operators. The adverse impacts of the older extraction generally speaking reduce over time and consequently the impacts that are still felt today are also reduced. There is often considerable difficulty in establishing that long-abandoned ‘crushed rock’ quarries, for example, produced mainly aggregate; as necessary, such cases will be reviewed by an officer with knowledge of the geological make-up of England. As a consequence we will consider projects linked to non-sand and gravel quarrying that pre-dates 1930, but only where the production of aggregate is obvious from the rock-type quarried and the scale and lasting effects of impact are clearly demonstrated.

### 3. Project eligibility - What types of projects and activities will we fund?

We will fund a wide range of activities.

For details of Natural England's priorities for the current grant scheme please refer to Section 4. This includes listings of the types of activity we typically support; these are indicative only and not intended to be either prescriptive or exhaustive.

For the 2008-2011 grant scheme we will in addition, give a measure of priority to projects working towards the achieving results in the following :-

- Bringing England's SSSIs into favourable management
- Health & Wellbeing of affected communities
- Ecosystem Services
- Soils

We are also keen to support projects that provide novel and innovative proposals and in particular, address issues that may be unique to your own area or situation. Also, projects offering a holistic approach to nature conservation and people are strongly encouraged. All projects should aim to deliver long term sustainable improvements as well as short term benefits. They should also offer equal opportunities and wherever possible always involve consultation with the local community and the aggregates industry.

#### What types of activity are we not able to fund?

The following activities are **not** eligible for funding:-

- ongoing running costs of an organisation, although we can normally contribute up to 20% of eligible staff costs towards necessary overheads of employing dedicated project staff during the term of the project
- work started **before** formal offer of grant is made
- work on projects beyond the agreed finish date as specified in any offer of grant
- work on projects which run beyond 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011
- activities outside England
- political activity
- projects designed to be profit making and resulting in personal or commercial financial gain e.g. where the applicant is also a commercial organisation who will carry out the work for profit
- secondary grant schemes

#### What project expenditure are we not able to fund? (i.e. exclude from proposal)

- legal fees and other costs associated with land purchase
- legal fees and other costs associated with obtaining permissions e.g. planning permission

- insurance (other than Public Liability relating to project-specific public events and access requirements)
- contingency fees
- project proposals which compensate for local aggregates extraction activities
- computers and other major capital equipment that will have a long life after the project ends. You should demonstrate a clear need for any such equipment and present a good case for a specific purchase
- overheads cost in excess of 20% direct staff costs even if the balance is as an In-kind contribution
- contributions to an organisations on-going costs or core activities

### **Who may apply?**

Any individual, company or organisation may apply for grant aid. Applicants e.g. consultants must not make a profit from the work covered by the grant.

Although it is not a requirement, we encourage projects to involve a range of local partners. A project is more likely to be granted funds if you can involve and engage relevant interest groups, especially at the local community level and also gain the support of the aggregates industry, whether formal or informal, at all stages. In the case of partnership projects, the roles of the various partners should be clearly defined and the lead partner identified.

### **What funding is available?**

ALSF grants can be awarded up to a total value of £350,000 per project. Larger grants may be considered, but the timescale for the funding decision will be much longer. We will not normally consider applications for less than £5,000.

### **What proportion of expenditure can be funded?**

We will accept grant requests of up to 75% of the total eligible project costs.

Exceptionally, we may fund up to 95% of the total eligible project costs, but our expectation is that the applicant should contribute at a level appropriate to the scale of the project and their circumstances. We can only fund VAT for goods and services if you are **not** eligible to re-claim it.

For land purchase grants, we will only fund up to 75% of the total cost of the land, based on the District Valuer's valuation of that land. Legal fees and other costs associated with land purchase cannot be funded.

### **Advance Payments**

In exceptional circumstances we may agree to an Advance Payment of grant. Individual Advance payments will be set at a **maximum of 25%** of the total grant and in total, over the duration of a project amount to no more than 75% of the grant. Any request for a further advance will only be considered in the most deserving of cases when a successful applicant is able to provide evidence of potential hardship and only if the previous advance is fully cleared by a valid grants claim. We regret that we cannot

make advance payments covering work in the final quarter of the financial year due to the risk that the final claim would be less than the advance.

### **What is allowed as match funding?**

We ask you to supply a breakdown of total eligible project costs. These will include **all** the services, capital items, staffing and support costs you need to carry out your project. This includes **all match-funding** and an estimate of the financial value of **all in-kind contributions**.

As outlined above, we can only fund up to a **maximum of 75%** (95% in exceptional circumstances) of project expenditure and consequently the shortfall in funding must come from other sources; this is 'match funding'. This will be discussed with you during your application.

Match funding may come from a wide variety of sources and includes both 'cash' and 'in-kind' contributions from either **other sources** and/or yourself (**own contribution**). It covers, for example, such items as non-Exchequer grant funding, donations, subsidies, work/services 'in-kind' (including volunteer time) etc.

In-kind contributions are for those items and services for which no money is changing hands. They may take various forms, such as staff time, use or gifts of equipment, use of facilities, subsidies and volunteer time. In calculating the level of match funding, please give all in-kind contributions a monetary value equivalent, as they are an important part of overall project costs. You must supply full justification for all staff costs and rates used, whether these are your own direct organisation salary costs, in-kind costs and volunteer costs. Remember that you may also be asked to verify these figures when making a claim for grant.

Where salaried staff are providing an in-kind time then this must be included at the salary rate and not the volunteer rate.

Volunteer time, costed at the rates shown below may be used as match funding. It is about measuring a voluntary contribution which sets a value on the time people are giving to a project and it should be costed at a reasonable rate that reflects the value of everyone's contribution within that project. It should be calculated at the following rates.

- **General, unskilled labour** (for example, supervised scrub clearance, ditch-digging, planting, basic administrative support) - £6.25 per hour; £50 per day
- **Specialist, skilled, trained labour** (for example, operations for which certificated training is a requirement, such as operating dangerous equipment, driving off-road vehicles, using chemicals) - £18.75 per hour; £150 per day
- **Specialist services**, (for example, supervising, training labour teams, surveys, counts, trapping, ringing, diving, printing, designing, photography) - £31.25 per hour; £250 per day
- **Professional services** (for example, consultants, lawyers, planners, engineers, scientists, accountants, auditors) £50 per hour; £350 per day

**It is important to remember that costs you claim for volunteers, whether real or in-kind must relate to the expertise required to carry out the task being performed and not only to the levels of expertise of those carrying out that task. For example, we are unlikely to agree high rates for management, site monitoring and attendance at non-technical meetings.**

**In all cases you must always provide evidence and fully justify the use of the rates you cite.**

**Restrictions as to the level of funding you can obtain from 'Exchequer sources'**

We will normally offer grants of up to 75% of eligible project expenditure; in such cases the remaining 25% is considered match funding. As the ALSF has an Exchequer source, you must ensure that any additional Exchequer funding your project receives does not push the total beyond **95%**. The remaining percentage must therefore come from another, non-Exchequer, source. This will be discussed with you during your application.

Total match funding from Local Authorities or Lottery or Landfill Tax grants is acceptable but funding from government departments and agencies is considered as coming from Exchequer sources and with any grant offered by us, must not exceed our funding limit.

The availability and status of match funding will be taken into account when evaluating grant applications.

**Community Involvement** applications should, if possible, **always** involve local communities in the initial consultation, planning and implementation of the projects and wherever practical, a degree of contact with the local aggregates industry. You should provide evidence that the outcomes of your project suit the location and aspirations of the user community.

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## 4. Aims, Examples & Priorities for 2009-2011

The following paragraphs describe the 5 themes under which Natural England ALSF grant applications will be considered for 2008-2009.

**They state our aims and priorities for each of these and list some of the typical things previous ALSF projects have provided in the past. These lists are not exhaustive and are for indicative purposes only.**

### **SPECIFIC PRIORITIES TO 2009 – 2011**

For the current ALSF Grant Scheme, our list of relative priorities will also now include the themes of Health & Well-being, Ecosystem Services and Soils.

#### **Health & Well-being**

This replaces our previous Communities theme, but has much the same aims as before. It now includes reference to the topic - Ecosystem services (see below).

#### **Ecosystem Services**

These are the conditions and processes through which natural ecosystems and the species that make them up, sustain and fulfil human life. They maintain biodiversity and the production of ecosystem goods, such as seafood, forage timber, biomass fuels, natural fibre, and many pharmaceuticals, industrial products and their precursors. Ecosystem Goods (such as food) and services (such as waste assimilation) represent the benefits human populations derive, directly or indirectly, from ecosystem functions. In the context of ecosystem services, a benefit is any component of nature, directly enjoyed, consumed or contributing to human well-being.

**Soils :** The role of and impacts of soils in mineral extraction and in the restoration of aggregates sites and so helping to raise the profile of soils, recognising them for the vital functions they provide.

Should you require any information or help regarding our Aims, Examples and Priorities please contact a member of the Grants Management Team.

## Theme 1

### Landscape and Nature Conservation

#### Statement

To provide and promote practical conservation and improvement of the Landscape, Biodiversity and Geodiversity elements of the natural environment by supporting projects which address or prevent damage arising from aggregates extraction in areas of high nature conservation or landscape value or which consolidate the positive effects of aggregate extraction.

#### Projects typically include

- site or landscape management
- practical works on habitat and species management (habitat creation, restoration)
- site and geological face clearance
- rescue of geological specimens or recording of threatened geological features
- landscape improvements
- land purchase or buy-out of mineral rights where there is no other way of securing site management
- good practice & practical trials
- restoration / improvement of important landscape features
- mitigating the visual impact of extraction on the landscape
- sustainable plans for future management and improvement

#### Priorities

- projects in Designated Areas e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Local and National Nature Reserves (LNRs & NNRs), National Parks etc. supporting delivery of national, regional and local targets for Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs), Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) and Species Action Plans (SAPs)
- supporting delivery of some actions within Geodiversity Action Plans (GAPs)
- support delivery of objectives of local and national policies and plans, e.g.: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), Local Conservation Areas (LCA's), Country Parks etc
- projects supported by long term site management plans
- voluntary and community sector involvement
- integrated (or holistic) projects dealing with biodiversity, geodiversity and soils
- demonstrating working with, and/or support from local aggregates producers
- geological conservation of Quaternary soft-sediment sequences
- soils

## **Theme 2**

### Access & Informal Recreation

#### **Statement**

To provide and improve peoples' access to the natural environment on or near sites affected by aggregates extraction.

#### **Projects typically include**

- footpaths
- multi-use paths
- non-motorised links to other transport routes and trails
- boardwalks
- viewing platforms and associated equipment
- seating and benches
- signage, including way-markers, interpretation panels and educational information
- gates / stiles
- bridges
- steps and / or ramps
- safety barriers (including fencing)
- water transport on waterways e.g. lakes for access, information gathering, visitors etc
- land purchase where there is no other method of securing a site for public use
- sustainable plans for ongoing site management and/or improvement

#### **Priorities**

- improvements to the utility of a site for the purposes of public health and well-being
- provision / improvement of disabled access in line with recognised standards
- delivery of the objectives of recognised strategies / plans / programmes
- encouraging diverse access to, and enjoyment of, the outdoors

### **Theme 3**

#### Health and Wellbeing

#### **Statement**

To address the direct effects that aggregates extraction has on communities thereby improving their health & well being, through building capacity within communities and those organisations providing and delivering benefits to them.

#### **Projects typically include**

- improved safety provision
- reduction in visual impact of quarrying on the landscape
- reduction in the impacts from noise and dust
- bringing together the community, aggregates industry and other organisations
- employment of dedicated project officers
- employment of Community Liaison Officers
- volunteer involvement
- support for school or community visits to sites
- purchase of tools, equipment & materials
- engagement of local and wider communities
- sustainable plans for ongoing site management / improvement
- empowerment / capacity building within communities
- use of green space for the purpose of improving health and well-being
- community events such as guided walks, talks on suitable themes, workshops

#### **Priorities**

- voluntary or community sector leadership or involvement
- working with, and/or gaining support from, local partners including local aggregates producers
- active engagement / ownership of communities in project design and implementation
- sites close to a centre of population
- provision of opportunities for communities to improve their Health and Well-being
- Ecosystem Services

## **Theme 4**

### Education & Understanding

#### **Statement**

To provide educational and interpretive opportunities relating to the Landscape, Biodiversity and Geodiversity elements of the natural environment on and near sites affected by aggregates extraction.

#### **Projects typically include**

- interpretation panels/ boards
- leaflets
- trail guides
- guided walks
- events such as talks on suitable themes,
- workshops
- educational packs and/or equipment
- themed open days
- support for school visits to sites
- websites
- educational videos, DVDs and CDs
- awareness of the potential of green space for the promotion of health and well-being
- promotion of the need for sustainability

#### **Priorities**

- holistic or integrated approach within wider landscape
- consideration of 'Access for All' and diversity standards
- national curriculum priorities
- innovative approaches to education and interpretation
- promoting awareness of the value of green space for health and well-being
- demonstrating working with and/or support from local aggregates producers
- soils
- Ecosystem Services

## **Theme 5**

### Evidence Gathering

#### **Statement**

To provide opportunities to gather evidence in support of Themes 1 to 4. To gather evidence about the effects of aggregate extraction on the natural environment and affected communities and to provide data informing longer term mitigation, management and conservation issues for Themes 1 to 4.

#### **Projects typically include**

- audits/surveys of the nature, extent and distribution of geological/landscape features, habitats, species and soils
- production of Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs)
- production of Geodiversity Action Plans (GAPs)
- site designation e.g. Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)
- database compilation
- site management plans
- feasibility or scoping studies
- data on the effects of aggregate extraction, identifying and providing solutions for mitigation
- strategic and coordinated approaches to identified problems and opportunities
- good practice
- innovation
- advice on the best use of green space for health and well-being

#### **Priorities**

- research leading to the production of BAPs
- research leading to the production of GAPs
- projects which bring together a broad cross section of interests
- visitor surveys
- effective dissemination of information
- demonstrating working with, and/or support from local aggregates producers
- soils
- Ecosystem Services

## 5. How to Apply for a Natural England ALSF Grant

For the first round of Natural England ALSF grants in 2009-2011, we will be operating a single-form application process.

Having initially contacted our Manchester Office, the next stage is for a potential applicant to telephone the relevant Grants Adviser (depending on the location or type of the project) for an initial discussion to assess general eligibility. This would cover establishing a suitable link to aggregates extraction and the type of work being done ranged against the Scheme's aims, examples and priorities.

### Grant Advisers – Regional Allocations

Defra region	Main Counties in that region	Contact
<b>North West</b>	Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Lancashire, Cumbria	Rachel Howgate 0161 234 0207 Rachel.howgate@naturalengland.org.uk
<b>North East</b>	Cleveland, Durham, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, Leeds	Wendy Wilson 0161 234 0206 Wendy.wilson@naturalengland.org.uk
<b>Yorkshire &amp; Humber</b>	North, South and West Yorkshire, former county of Humberside, Sheffield	Ian Williamson 01476 584835 ian.williamson@naturalengland.org.uk
<b>East Midlands</b>	Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire	Jonathan Clarke 01223 533641 Jonathan.clarke@naturalengland.org.uk
<b>East of England</b>	Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk	Diana Curtis 01223 533642 Diana.curtis@naturalengland.org.uk
<b>South East</b>	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, West Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Greater London, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey	Jonathan Clarke 01223 533641 Jonathan.clarke@naturalengland.org.uk
<b>West Midlands</b>	Herefordshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, West Midlands	Wendy Wilson 0161 234 0206 Wendy.wilson@naturalengland.org.uk
<b>South West</b>	County of Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Scilly Isles, Wiltshire	Rachel Howgate 0161 234 0207 Rachel.howgate@naturalengland.org.uk
<b>RSPB</b>		Jonathan Clarke 01223 533641 Jonathan.clarke@naturalengland.org.uk
<b>Geological Groups &amp; Geodiversity Projects</b>		Ian Williamson 01476 584835 ian.williamson@naturalengland.org.uk

Applications can only be accepted on an official Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund Grant Scheme form. These forms are only available On-Line and can be accessed through the Natural England Website ([www.natural-england.org.uk](http://www.natural-england.org.uk)) following the links through conservation, grants & funding to the ALSF page.

**What happens next?**

On receipt by us, your Application form will be acknowledged and you will be told a reference number for the application. If you are posting supporting information please wait until you have the reference number and include it so we can reunite it with the form. The application will be passed to a Grants Adviser who may contact you for further information prior to starting the assessment process.

Once we have all the necessary details of your project, the Grant Management Team (GMT) will then assess your project before presenting it, dependant upon the size of grant requested, to either the Independent Grants Panel or the Grants Management Team Panel. This process may also involve consultation with national and local specialists in the type and scope of the work proposed.

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## 6. Post Application and Grant Award procedures

### Timing

The decision process may take between 8-9 weeks from the final date for submission – this should be factored into your work schedules and effective project start date.

### Decisions

Funding decisions for smaller grant applications up to £75,000 in each financial year are taken by members of the Grants Management Team. Decisions on larger grants are normally taken by an independent Grants Panel.

### Monitoring

The type of post-offer monitoring required for your project will be specified in the grant offer letter. The minimum level of monitoring will require you to include brief interim achievement reports with each grant claim and a final report with photographs (or other illustrative material) of the work achieved. In many cases there may be a site visit from a member of staff, or we may ask that Natural England is represented on Management or Steering Groups. Projects perceived by the Grants Management Team as being novel, high value or of high risk will be monitored more closely.

In line with our financial management system, you will be required to supply the Grants Management Team with monthly spending figures.

All successful projects with Biodiversity objectives relevant to Local or National Biodiversity Action Plans must, as a Special Condition of Grant, complete an on-line **Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS)** report during the course of the project. BARS is an information system that supports the planning and reporting requirements of national, local and company Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs). It also allows users to search a comprehensive database to learn about the progress being made with local and national BAP species and habitats and to find out what conservation action is happening locally.

### How do I claim grant funds?

All grants must be claimed on the Grant Claim Form, a copy of which you will be sent along with specific Guidance Notes, when you receive your offer of grant.

In general, grant funds can only be **claimed in arrears**, but special arrangements may be made for payments in advance in **exceptional** circumstances. Formal requests for advance payments must be discussed beforehand with the Grants Adviser followed by a formal request in writing. **All payments in advance must be completely cleared by valid grant claims before any further advance payment can be considered** and by the end of the financial year in which they were made. For land purchase, we will pay upon proof of Exchange of Contracts.

We will require proof of expenditure totalling the full cost of the project in any claim period, not just to our percentage contribution.

**Because the Fund has no end-of-financial-year flexibility, it is essential that your project actually delivers the results expected within the financial year.**

We normally expect quarterly claims, but we may agree to interim claims more frequently if you have had particularly large items of expenditure or cash flow issues.

For all items and services that you have bought, we will require sight of the original invoices showing **proof of payment**, or copy invoices duly certified as having been paid by someone in your organisation with the necessary financial authority. In the application form you are asked to supply the name and position of this person.

For items which you will not necessarily have invoices for (e.g. staff costs, some forms of overheads, travel expenses, volunteer time etc.) we will require formal statements of expenditure for these items signed by a financial manager or equivalent, together with details and other proof, such as copies of payroll information, internal claim forms and timesheets for volunteers.