



INSTITUTE OF HISTORIC BUILDING CONSERVATION

Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
House of Commons
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Dear Secretary of State

Heritage Regeneration and Funding

The historic environment has a key role in the regeneration of cities, towns and rural areas all around the UK, especially in helping to transform previously failing areas into high value sustainable communities. Historic buildings have been used to attract funding and accommodate a range of employment, residential, cultural and community facilities including affordable housing, city living accommodation, creative industries, education facilities, small business enterprise units, voluntary action accommodation, health care facilities, etc. The most successful economic transformations of recent years have taken place in areas that have adopted strong design and conservation policies as part of their economic development strategies. Conservation is also crucial to delivering more sustainable forms of development.

Given this crucial role in delivering urban renaissance and sustainable communities, it is baffling that the Government and the DCMS in particular is affording the historic environment such low priority and is diverting funds away from heritage management and regeneration. Whilst appreciating that Planning and Regeneration experts are located in other Government Departments, it is essential that the DCMS embrace new urban practices and take on a more pro-active role in delivering economic and physical regeneration.

The IHBC is concerned that some recent announcements and proposed changes are harmful to economic development and likely to have very destructive consequences for the historic environment. These concerns are as follows:

- Clause 7 of the Lottery Bill currently being considered by Parliament would allow funds to be reallocated from one lottery distributor to another. This would mean that funds allocated by the Heritage Lottery Fund to Townscape Heritage Initiatives and other projects would be at risk, removing the certainty that is essential for successful project delivery, compromising match funding bids, harming developer and business confidence and undermining partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors. This clause demonstrates no understanding of the

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realities of delivering economic and physical regeneration.

- Clause 8 of the Lottery Bill would result in the interest on lottery distributor's accounts being redistributed. This would lead to a £15 million reduction in the Heritage Lottery Fund's already thinly spread resources.
- The English Heritage funding settlement represents a reduction in funding in real terms. The DCMS needs to appreciate the important role of English Heritage in supporting heritage-led regeneration and providing expert advice to local authorities to support their planning and regeneration functions. The reduction of funding is unsustainable and harms the effectiveness of the organisation at a crucial time given the range of current programmes for housing renewal and physical regeneration.

The impact of the above measures and funding cuts will be especially devastating in areas suffering from market failure, where there is a particular reliance on financial and technical assistance.

The IHBC would urge the DCMS to consider the historic environment against a wider economic and social context. There is a need to better appreciate the needs of the private sector, regeneration practitioners, project managers and others involved in the delivery of beneficial schemes. The Government should be creating the conditions for entrepreneurial activity and growth and adopting a facilitating approach to those delivering beneficial projects, not promoting regressive, anti-regeneration measures such as those outlined above.

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation is the professional body representing conservation specialists and practitioners in the public and private sectors in the United Kingdom. The Institute has around fourteen hundred members and exists to establish the highest standards of conservation practice, to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment and to promote heritage-led regeneration and access to the historic environment for all.

The Institute is a member of Heritage Link and supports the statement of concern issued by that organization last week.

Yours faithfully

David Lovie
President

cc. Rt Hon Lord McIntosh, Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Media and Heritage)