Resilient Allen Valleys

**Project Plan**

## Contents

1. Project summary
2. Project rationale - ***The need and opportunity that the project addresses***
3. Outputs & Activities - ***What we expect to have done & how we will do it***
4. Outcomes - ***How we will deliver HLF Outcomes***
5. Organisational structure and processes – ***How we will work***

## Appendices

***Appendix 1*** *Resilient Health Checker outputs*

***Appendix 2*** *Theory of change model*

***Appendix 3*** *Activity timeline*

***Appendix 4*** *Contractor brief for heritage-community sector analysis*

***Appendix 5*** *AONB Partnership organisational structure*

***Appendix 6*** *Project Development Officer job description*

***Appendix 7*** *Project budget and monitoring spreadsheet*

***Appendix 7a*** *Full Cost Recovery calculator*

## This Activity Plan accompanies the application to HLF for Resilient Heritage funding, and should be read in conjunction with it.

# Project summary

**The Resilient Allen Valleys** **project will enable the Allen Valleys community to capitalise on their work and that of the AONB Partnership through the successful Allen Valleys Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS). It will further embed the scheme outcomes in the community and maximise the chances of long term, sustainable gains for heritage.**

This Resilient Heritage application is unusual in that it is an application on behalf of at least 10 community organisations, from social enterprises and charities to non-constituted groups, which make up the Allen Valley community-heritage sector. All are responsible for key aspects of our local heritage, and now need support to carry out this responsibility effectively and for the long term.

The size and length of this project reflects the complexity of working with at least ten community organisations, and developing shared purpose and common practice.

Following the successful Allen Valleys LPS, the AONB Partnership helped to set up several new community organisations and social enterprises to develop and manage heritage assets, and celebrate and raise awareness about our heritage. We also helped existing organisations to take on this role.

New/existing social enterprises (listed alphabetically):

* Allen Valleys Enterprise (NEW. *Heritage assets managed: Barney Craig Mineshop & camping barn; North Pennines Observatory; Growing Together garden)*
* Allen Valleys Promotions (NEW. *Heritage assets managed: Allen Valleys Folk Festival*)
* Allenheads Trust (EXISTING. *Heritage assets managed: Allenheads Village, Blacksmith’s Shop and mineyard access*)
* Fawside (EXISTING. *Heritage assets managed: Deneholme Wood*)
* Higher Ground (FORMED INDEPENDENTLY during the LPS. *Heritage assets managed:* *AVEL tenants and managers of the Growing Together garden*)

New community groups (listed alphabetically):

* Allen Smelt Mill Volunteers
* Allen Valleys Local History Group
* Deneholme Wood Volunteers
* North Pennines Astronomy Society
* Visit Allen Valleys network (*Promotion of heritage to support a sustainable visitor economy*)

All are responsible for key aspects of our local heritage, and now have come together to seek support to carry out this responsibility effectively and for the long term. We have formed an advisory board for this application and its members have a key role in coordinating and developing the project.

Through the Resilient Allen Valleys project these organisations will be supported to

* work together to share resources and develop appropriate shared structures & processes
* boostkey income generating assets through effective marketing and promotion
* prepare and enactbusiness plans whichare robust and realistic
* invest effectively in ICT systems for long term sustainability
* identify and developkey skills for long term sustainability of the community-heritage sector in the Allen Valleys
* manage the heritage assets of the Allen Valleys

# Rationale – *the need and opportunity that the project addresses*

A great deal of work has taken place in the last six years through the development and delivery stages of the Allen Valleys Landscape Partnership Scheme to engage the Allen Valleys community in the conservation, enhancement, interpretation and celebration of a wide variety of heritage. This has been hugely successful and has generated new activity amongst some existing organisations and a number of new groups and organisations have been set up too.

For all of this new activity to be sustained and to flourish it needs nurturing and support. The Allen Valleys community-heritage sector as a whole needs help to build its resilience and capacity, as does each of the various organisations or groups, requiring tailored support.

By way of example Allen Valleys Promotions was the first new group we established (in 2014/15, the first delivery year of the LPS) and it is now fully independent, although still with work to do to enable it to secure its future. However, most of the organisations we established with the community came together later in the scheme, and consequently are at earlier stages of development and have a variety of developmental and support needs. These various needs are outlined below, organisation by organisation, in the order they appear in the project summary.

What all these groups have in common is their determination to build on the legacy of the Allen Valleys Landscape Partnership Scheme, and make the most of this platform for further community development. They are increasingly keen to work together to achieve this outcome, as evidenced by the feedback they gave to the final evaluation workshop for the Allen Valleys LPS in May 2018.

This project is their opportunity to work together to embed the successes of the LPS in the Allen Valleys and to ensure that they are sustained over the long term. The project aims to ensure that all groups, individually and together, which are responsible for heritage management in some way, are as resilient as they can be at the end of an 18 monthdevelopment and support period. Each group has identified support and development that they need to build their capacity, their income streams and to deliver their ambitions.

This is also our opportunity to support andstreamline the work of all these organisations in the community-heritage sector in the Allen Valleys, through joint working, new structures, shared costs, shared expertise and possibly shared assets.

## Resilient Heritage Strength Checks

Three of the four social enterprises have completed resilient health checks on-line ([www.resilientheritagechecker.org.uk](http://www.resilientheritagechecker.org.uk)). The results are included as ***Appendix 1***. For all three there are some sustainability issues highlighted, and asset acquisition and management is a key area for development for AVEL and Allenheads Trust. As a new organisation AVEL faces the most challenges on a number of fronts.

## Partners and beneficiaries

### Allendale and West Allen Parish Councils (Advisory Board members)

Are not the subject of this application, but have been key partners on the board of the Allen Valleys LPS, important actors in the community, sometimes as a backstop for other community organisations, and will be critical members of the advisory board for this project.

**Allen Valleys Enterprise Ltd (Beneficiary & Advisory Board member)**

AVEL is a new social enterprise (in the form of a Community Benefit Society) which was set up through the LPS in 2015. AVEL was established in order to further the scheme’s ambition to establish an income stream for future heritage management through the development of micro-hydro-electric projects. Feasibility work has not demonstrated that this will be possible. However the group has gone on to take on responsibility for three other projects within the Scheme’s portfolio, all of which are providing an asset for the community, and which could provide an income stream for the community too.

***Need/Opportunity:*** AVEL requires support with business planning, marketing and product development for all three of these projects, which are the North Pennines Observatory, Barney Craig Camping Barn, and the Growing Together garden in Allendale. Investment in an ICT membership platform across these and other projects will also help reduce admin costs/time in the long term.

**Allen Valleys Promotions Ltd (Beneficiary & Advisory Board member)**

AVP is a new social enterprise (in the form of a Company Limited by Guarantee) formed in 2015 in order to run the Allen Valleys Folk Festival which had been developed as part of the LPS as an annual festival.

This organisation has three highly successful festivals under its belt (four including 2014, which was run by the same individuals but under a different structure), and has well established policies and procedures. However, the end of the time-limited subsidy through the LPS has required the group to look continually for ways to increase income and reduceexpenditure in order to sustain the festival into the future. It has done this successfully enough to be confident to sell tickets for the October 2018 festival and start planning for 2019.

***Need/Opportunity:*** Going forward there is a structural deficit of a couple of thousand pounds which will need to be met by efficiencies and/or increased revenue. Venues are now at capacity in the village during the festival. Some increase in ticket price may be possible, but AVP would also benefit from some investment in festival signage and design costs for an annual programme to reduce annual costs over the next four years, and to develop its merchandising capacity through investment in trial new lines, such as bags and badges.

### Allenheads Trust (Beneficiary & Advisory Board member)

Allenheads Trust is a charitable trust and company limited by guarantee established in 2002 in response to poor publicity about the ‘death’ of the village of Allenheads. The Trust now holds small income generating assets in the village (a gallery, flat and a café), and takes responsibility for the maintenance of the public areas of the village.

During the LPS Allenheads Trust were active consultees on the work on interpretation and signage, the observatory and new nature trail, and have been actively represented on the LPS board. Following the work of the LPS the Trust has taken on further maintenance liability with the new signage, interpretation and access into the mineyard.

***Need/Opportunity:*** Currently the Trust wish to further develop the potential of the village to provide a unique visitor experience by enhancing the interpretation of the Armstrong Engine in the centre of the village and making use of the ground floor of the Old Blacksmith’s Shop. This would also free up a little used asset (the upstairs rooms of the old bus garage) as a potential alternative source of income. Help with business planning, product development, fundraising and marketing, and with architects’ plans and permissions are all required.

### Fawside (Beneficiary & Advisory Board member)

Is a charitable trust and company limited by guarantee established in 2003 as a development trust for Allendale and had some early successes with the restoration of Deneholme House and many community projects in the nineties and noughties. They have since been less active, but still provide administrative support to the community, and look after Deneholme and draw an income from its tenancy.

During the LPS Fawside took on ownership of a new area of woodland at Deneholme. AONB staff and volunteers restored the woodland and worked with Fawside and others to produce a new woodland management plan across the whole of their Deneholme site. Fawside has taken on responsibility for the management plan and is developing its relationship with a new volunteer group, supported by the AONB Partnership.

***Need/Opportunity:*** Needs help to explore joint working with other organisation, pooling costs and risks for more effective heritage management across the sector, and more resilience as an organisation.

**Higher Ground (Beneficiary)**

Higher Ground are a new social enterprise formed in 2016 to develop gardening activities for people with mild mental health issues. Looking for a space in which to develop their project they teamed up with AONB Partnership staff to develop ideas for the new Growing Together garden in Allendale. Currently Higher Ground lease the garden from Allen Valleys Enterprise who were granted an asset transfer for the land from Northumberland County Council. Higher Ground manage the garden for both public access, and restricted access for their therapeutic and training activities.

***Need/Opportunity***

The asset transfer and subsequent lease and sublease were only signed in March 2018 and so it is early days for this garden. Higher Ground would benefit from all the business planning and marketing help which will be available through the Resilient Allen Valleys project. They would also benefit greatly from the more joined up working in this sector that will result from the project, including the sharing of resources, risks and expertise.

**Allen Smelt Mill Volunteers (Beneficiary)**

This group of volunteers is now well established, although small in number, and has no official structure, other than a Facebook presence to organise events. The volunteers and the landowner, on whose land they work, have been assisted, under the LPS, to establish proper health and safety procedures and to ensure that insurance is in place, as well as receiving training in archaeological recording and conservation management techniques.

***Need/Opportunity:***The volunteers and landowner would like to establish a social enterprise to take on future management of the site, but income generation is a problem. It is not obvious that a new social enterprise is the right solution, but existing organisations have been reluctant to take this site on.

Our sector-wide analysis should help to identify the best solution for this site and its supporters, inside or outside of private ownership. A second order problem is to ensure that the volunteers have a sustainable recruitment programme and a permanent site base and tool store.

**Allen Valleys Local History Group (Beneficiary)**

This group has been supported in its development since 2016 and is now constituted and independently chaired. It has its own website [www.allenvalleyslocalhistory.org.uk](http://www.allenvalleyslocalhistory.org.uk) and is organising its own meetings, events and projects, and is starting its first funding applications for new work.

***Need/Opportunity:***The group has expressed an interest in setting up an income stream from services to householders wishing to investigate the history of their own homes in the Allen Valleys and more widely in the North Pennines, and research their family trees. It would benefit from expertise in marketing, market research and product development in order to do this successfully. Investment in an ICT membership platform jointly with other projects will also help reduce admin costs/time and build a basic income stream in the long term. Shared insurance and audit costs would also help reduce overheads.

**Deneholme Wood Volunteers (Beneficiary)**

Established and led originally by AONB staff and trainees, this group of volunteers worked to implement the management plan for Deneholme Wood. Recently the group has established its own committee and now organises its own tasks and events in the wood. Up to this point AONB staff have facilitated liaison with the owners – Fawside.

***Need/Opportunity:***The group would benefit from some training and continued support from the Project Development Officer whilst it further established its governance, policies and procedures as well as its relationship with the landowner. Continued assistance with promotion and event management would help the group to grow in confidence as they shift into taking on more responsibility for Deneholme Wood.

The group would also benefit from a permanent toolstore on the site and additional tools to make woodland management work easier. There may also be scope to offer paid-for events for schools and families.

**North Pennines Astronomy Society (Beneficiary)**

This group has been supported in its development since 2016, however as the observatory build was delayed until its completion in October 2017, the group has had little to work with until very recently. The groups is still small, and although membership is building through the ICT platform built by AVEL to support membership, the small number of active members need support to make this group sustainable.

***Need/Opportunity:*** This group would benefit greatly from some work on business planning, product development and marketing, alongside AVEL, who operate the observatory. First the group requires some basic support in setting up its governance and structures and recruiting key committee members such as a treasurer. It will also need continued support from the Project Development Officer until it has a season or two of stargazing events under its belt.

**Visit Allen Valleys Network (Beneficiary & Advisory Board member)**

VAV is a group of visitor businesses and professionals from the tourism sector who meet regularly to discuss joint working to promote the Allen Valleys to visitors and develop their tourism offer based on its heritage assets. AONB staff members have supported the group throughout the LPS but, as the end of the LPS approaches, minds are concentrating on establishing a stand-alone organisation with membership income in order to continue the useful collaboration that has led to successful familiarisation days, Heritage Open Days, and joint promotions. VAV have recently expressed an interest in taking on more responsibility for managing the newly established allenvalleys.com website, which was established under the LPS and which is owned by Fawside.

***Need/Opportunity:*** VAV now require help to form a stand-alone organisation and to establish their forward plan. They would also like help with fundraising and the development of new visitor products for the Allen Valleys, and to engage with visitor businesses and tourism associations locally and regionally. The work to co-ordinate the wider community-heritage sector will also help VAV establish its place within it. Training support in ICT and marketing will help with the longer-term management of the community website

# Outputs & Activities – *What we expect to have done & how we will do it*

This section follows from our Theory of Change Model – ***Appendix 2***

Our **Activity Timeline** - ***Appendix 3*** shows when we plan to do these things

## Community-Heritage sector resilience

One of the main thrusts of this project is to ensure that the many community actors in the Allen Valleys with a responsibility for heritage are all working effectively and collaboratively. Currently there is an overlap of effort and interest between local organisations. Many local organisations share some of the same challenges, including the standing costs of insurance and audit, the recruitment of treasurers and effective chairs, and the marketing of their offer, but their individual assets and income streams are small and disparate.

There may be benefits, therefore, in sharing both assets and risks in an attempt to be more resilient as a sector, and in coming together with a clearer and more united offer to their various audiences (local public, visitors, funders etc.).

### An agreed community sector level organisational model, which allows sharing of resources, personnel, and costs

We will contract a professional advisor (see ***Appendix 4*** – **main contract brief**) to **lead on a review of the current situation in the Allen Valleys community-heritage sector,** to identify potential solutions to streamline and unify the sector and to make it more resilient, focussing on income generation and collaboration. This workwill form the basis for all future joint working and co-operation in this sector.

The Project Development Officer will work closely with the professional advisor throughout the project to ensure that there is full consultation with the heritage-community sector, to help with **visits to other projects with good models to follow**, to facilitate agreement about the way forward, to ensure complete and ongoing buy-in to solutions from all stakeholders and to help monitor outcomes. The professional advisor will be retained as a critical friend throughout the lifetime of the project, meeting regularly with the board.

### Individuals and groups trained in fundraising, governance, event management, merchandising, first aid, board roles, website management, ICT, as appropriate.

The Project Development Officer will identify individual trainers and training organisations, and **engage trainers** to meet the needs identified as a result of a **skills audit,** and throughout the project in response to demand from participants.

### An ICT platform or platforms to manage membership, bookings, income and event management (such as Wild Apricot) for several heritage initiatives

AVEL already uses a membership based ICT system to organise membership and events for the observatory. This works very well, reducing administration time for the social enterprise and provides a smooth service to members/supporters. ICT systems are also needed to reduce administration and increase income across other initiatives.

We will invest in expansion of this system or something similar, and to share the system (and its costs and benefits) across several initiatives (including the new camping barn at Barney Craig for example), or to find bespoke solutions for each initiative as appropriate. Increased membership / bookings will eventually pay for the ongoing costs.

The Project Development Officer will help with the **establishment of ICT systems**, and the **training of new users**, across several organisations once a solution is identified. We have some existing in-house expertise within AVEL which could help us.

## Organisational Resilience

Individual organisations, however they combine to work together, need robust individual business plans, including reliable income streams, and effective marketing. Income generation is key to the resilience of all our organisations and this section of the project addresses this need, which varies from organisation to organisation.

For example, Allen Valleys Promotions was established in 2015 and the annual Folk Festival that it runs is now well established. Their strategy and forward plan is fairly well developed, but they could benefit from a critical friend. To sustain the Festival in the long term they have themselves identified some potential ongoing costs savings and income streams that could be developed through a small investment at this stage. On the other hand, the Allen Valley Local History Group was only independently established in 2017, and although it is now organising its own events, and applying for its own grants, some help with business planning and product development and marketing to develop its income stream will be important.

### Strong governance models for all groups

Good governance is the basic building block upon which all the other work with our individual groups will stand or fail.

Northumberland County Council’s Community Regeneration Officer will provide a review of governance for each of our various groups. This work represents a donation in kind from Northumberland County Council.

### Robust business and marketing plans for all groups

Business planning and product marketing is a basic requirement, for which most groups will require considerable help.

We will **run workshops and provide follow-up advice for groups in business planning and marketing** to help underpin the income generation required for each organisation.

### Accreditation for businesses to include: Stay and gaze, Walkers & cyclists welcome,

The Visit Allen Valleys Network includes many small visitor businesses who have indicated that they would like help to become accredited as good places for walkers, cyclists, stargazers, wildlife-watchers and so on, as part of their joint work to use the heritage of the Allen Valleys as a marketing tool.

We will use Northumberland Tourism and other regional tourism experts to facilitate this and will run **accreditation workshops and follow up support for local businesses**.

### Merchandising developed for appropriate outlets

Merchandising is likely to contribute to the income streams for the North Pennines Observatory, Allen Valleys Promotions , the Allenheads Trust and possibly the Allen Valleys Local History Group. The risk of investing in new product lines and the cost of design work has stopped this potential income stream being explored in the past.

We will help groups to trial new merchandise as part of the business plan and marketing strategies by **providing some design input for new products and helping with product development and marketing**.

### Better equipped observatory, able to exploit demand for star-gazing experiences

The North Pennines Observatory opened in October 2017. The North Pennines Astronomy Society, which runs events at the site and whose members provide the event organisers for the AVEL who operate the site, would like to make the facility more attractive to users to increase revenue, and help make our dark skies more accessible to visitors.

We will assist AVEL and the North Pennines Astronomy Society to raise funds to meet their need for new equipment.

### Better equipped volunteers at Deneholme Wood, Allen Smelt Mill with secure storage

The Deneholme Volunteers are a new group who meet regularly to take on maintenance and conservation tasks at Deneholme Wood.

We will provide them with **skills and training** to sustain the work of the group, provide **support for income generation** around family activities and coppice products, for example.

### A more efficient and financially sustainable Allen Valleys Folk Festival

Annual overheads for the festival need to be reduced in the medium term whilst additional income streams are developed.

We will invest in **design and artwork** costs to help with the development of new merchandise.

### Local history group equipped has developed income stream through product development

The new Allen Valleys Local History Group has developed some expertise in the research methods needed to investigate the history of individual buildings, and family histories, as part of the Allen Valleys LPS. The group now aspires to develop an income stream from these activities in the North Pennines.

We will work with the group and designers and artists to develop a product that could be sold to individual households. We will provide **training and mentoring** on local history research and on market research, product development and marketing.

### Development of properties in Allenheads as heritage tourism products for Allenheads and to provide an income stream for the Allenheads Trust

The Allen Valleys Landscape Partnership has enabled significant development in Allenheads in the last few years to improve signage, interpretation, and new access to the recently restored Allenheads mineyard. The Allenheads Trust has taken on responsibility for the maintenance of much of this, and looks after the fabric of the village itself.

Further work at the Wheelhouse in the centre of the village (housing a unique, working, Armstrong designed, Hydraulic Engine) has been beyond the scope of the LPS, but a costed plan for its refurbishment and interpretation was part of the LPS output. This is a key element of the village infrastructure from a visitor and interpretation perspective.

Developing the unused ground floor of the Old Blacksmith’s Shop Heritage Interpretation Centre to accommodate some of the interpretive artworks currently displayed in the upstairs rooms of the old bus garage (sometimes referred to locally as the Heritage Centre – see below), would enhance the interpretation centre and free up room which could be used to generate income.

We will **commission architects to provide detailed, costed options** for the conversion of these properties which will allow the Trust to applyfor the funds to make these plans a reality.

## Sustainable and co-ordinated activity for heritage management and celebration

### Heritage Open Days and familiarisation days, run by local businesses through the Visit Allen Valleys network

We will support the Visit Allen Valleys network to help develop activity of benefit to the group and to the promotion and celebration of our heritage. This help will include **arranging training, professional advice, fundraising support,** and **product development.**

### Regular activity days at Deneholme Wood, North Pennines Observatory and through the Local History Group

We will continue to **support the volunteer groups** responsible for these projects to ensure there are no barriers to their continued activity during the lifetime of the project.

### Fundraising activity by our new groups

We will assist all groups to **identify and apply to appropriate funds** to meet their objectives.

# Outcomes - *How we will deliver HLF outcomes*

## Heritage

### Heritage will be better managed, in better condition, better interpreted and explained, better identified and recorded.

Barney Craig mineshop, Allen Smelt Mill, Allenheads Blacksmith Shop Interpretation Centre, Allenheads Historic Centre, Allenheads Mineyard, North Pennines Observatory, Allen Valleys Folk Festival, Allendale Growing Together garden, Deneholme Wood. These are all important heritage assets which have been developed by the Allen Valleys Landscape Partnership Scheme, and which are now either in the ownership of a local community organisation, or reliant on such an organisation for its ongoing operation, interpretation and/or maintenance.

Resilient Allen Valleys will help our community-heritage sector to develop the skills, capacity and resilience to manage these assets into the future. A few examples:

1. Barney Craig mineshop is a scheduled ancient monument on the at risk register. In 2016 this was a crumbling shell of a building owned by Allendale Estate with no more than two winters left before the roof (and subsequently the rest of this building) fell down. Because of the LPS this building is now restored and in use as a simple camping barn, in the ownership of a new community company called Allen Valley Enterprise Ltd (AVEL). AVEL plans to develop the income generating potential of this structure by working with the local residents of Carrshield to design and fundraise for a small community hall on the building’s ground floor. We will assist AVEL with fundraising, business planning and marketing to enable this to happen.
2. Allenheads Trust is a charity that has worked with the AONB Partnership to develop the visitor potential of Allenheads village through new signage and interpretation, a lead mining interpretation building, and joint work with Allendale Estate to agree access into a newly consolidated mineyard. Allenheads mineyard is a Scheduled Ancient Monument now removed from the at risk register because of the work of the LPS. Allenheads Trust plans to develop further the income generating potential of one of its other buildings - the Old Post Office – by consulting local residents and then commissioning architects and fundraising for a refurbishment. Income from these types of projects allows the Trust to continue to maintain the heritage assets of the village, which, in the future, will include updating and maintain the Info-Point digital interpretation available across the village. We will help Allenheads Trust with fundraising, business planning, marketing and architect’s services to help them develop this work.
3. Deneholme Wood is a newly opened up community asset in the heart of Allendale Village. It is owned by local charity Fawside, and managed by the Deneholme Wood volunteers. The volunteers organise regular working parties, events and open days and follow a woodland management plan written for Fawside by the AONB Partnership. The volunteers plan to continue this work on behalf of Fawside and the community and to keep this wonderful wildlife site and community resource open into the future. We will assist Deneholme Volunteers to build the capacity of their group through training, forward planning, fundraising and with a permanent toolstore/shelter to ensure they can continue their work.

## People

### People will have developed skills, learnt about heritage, had an enjoyable experience and volunteered their time

Hundreds of people in a dozen or more groups have already done these things through the work of the LPS. The recent final evaluation workshop for the Allen Valleys LPS has emphasised the value that individuals and local community groups have derived from their involvement in this work.

Resilient Allen Valleys will provide additional training to those groups and key individuals now responsible for heritage management, who continue to volunteer their time. It will support them to continue their work to raise the profile of local heritage, and to involve more and more people in local heritage management.

The training focus will be determined by a skills audit early in the project and by the recommendations that fall out of the main contract to analyse the resilience of the community heritage sector in the Allen Valleys. Training is likely to include organisational skills such as marketing, business planning, fundraising, governance, website management, other ICT training, but may also include specific heritage-related training, for example archaeological recording.

We will continue to engage with volunteers on the basis that people do not do things for very long unless they are enjoying themselves. Timings, venues, catering and structure will all be thought about carefully when designing an event, and feedback will be sought to help us improve.

## Communities

### More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage

The projects managed by the community-heritage sector in the Allen Valleys are diverse, and allow for the greatest possible engagement by the community. They range from the North Pennines observatory, which attracts special interest groups including scientists and contemporary artists, as well as school groups and families, to our Growing Together garden, which provides a space for people with mild mental health issues, as well as nature exploration for the local pre-school group.

This engagement will be expanded further by improved marketing of assets and products such as the North Pennines Observatory, the Allen Valleys Folk Festival, and the broader interpretive offer of the Allen Valleys and its rich mining history.

We will facilitate more joint working and co-ordination between all the groups in this sector. This will encourage cross fertilisation between users of groups and further widen engagement.

### The local economy will be boosted

It is a fundamental aim of the Resilient Allen Valleys project to increase revenue to those organisations and groups responsible for heritage asset management. By doing so, and providing organisational resilience, a series of well-managed heritage assets will attract more visitors to the area, in turn supporting local businesses such as cafes, pubs and B&Bs.

We already know this has started. The Allen Valleys Folk Festival provides a significant boost to local business in late September/early October each year, and Allen Valleys Promotions is now increasing its event activity throughout the year. Allenheads village has seen a growing numbers of visitors over the last few years according to the local café, no doubt due, in part, to the increased profile of the area, and the increasing visibility, accessibility and interpretation of its heritage assets. Foot traffic has increased on the Isaac’s Tea Trail due to increased promotion through the LPS.

Resilient Allen Valleys will encourage the joint working, and provide the skills and resources needed, to allow us to embed these early successes, and build on them for the future.

### The Allen Valleys will be a better place to live, work or visit

The LPS has already created newly accessible spaces and facilities such as the North Pennines Observatory, Deneholme Woodland walks, the Growing Together garden, Allenheads mineyard, Allen Smelt Mill, Ninebanks Hearse House, Barney Craig camping barn.

Interpretation of our cultural and natural heritage now takes places at these places and throughout our landscape, providing a much better offer to visitors than before the LPS. Local residents and visitors have embraced the new walks in Deneholme Wood, and are becoming increasingly engaged in the Growing Together garden in Allendale village. Over one hundred people have become supports of the new North Pennines Observatory.

Resilient Allen Valleys will ensure these gains are embedded, sustained and developed.

### The community-heritage sector will be more resilient

This is the overall aim of the project. Our focus on the sector as a whole, rather than individual organisations, is unusual but will encourage joint working, sharing of assets, sharing of risks, and build more resilience for the sector than simply a series of individual interventions.

# Organisational structures and processes – *how we will work*

## Staff recruitment and management

The lynchpin of the project is the Project Development Officer who will manage and co-ordinate all professional services and contracts on behalf of the partner organisations. The officer will manage the project budget and reporting, and provide support and advice directly to the groups and individuals involved in the project. This will include assistance and advice relating to funding applications for a number of capital projects or for project development. It will also include advice and support relating to the procurement, appointment and management of contractors, including professional services. Taking a Community Development approach the Project Development Officer will take every opportunity to turn these advice sessions into learning opportunities for group members, helping build group skills and capacity.

The Project Development Officer will be an employee of the North Pennines AONB Partnership (Durham County Council), and line managed through the AONB Partnership’s Programme Development Manager according to the **organisational structure** in ***Appendix 5***. They will be recruited in accordance with Durham County Council’s recruitment policy. The panel will comprise of members of the Advisory Board and an AONB Partnership representative.

***Appendix 6*** is a **Job Description for the Project Development Officer**

## The Advisory Board

An Advisory Board will guide the day-to-day work of the Project Development Officer. We have already formed this advisory board, which is made up of the main social enterprises involved in the project plus Allendale Parish Council, which has a strong interest in ensuring the health of the local community sector, and Northumberland County Council, which provides support to social enterprises as part of their remit. The organisations represented on this new advisory board include the local organisations currently represented on the advisory board for the Allen Valleys Landscape Partnership Scheme, ensuring that there is a good understanding of the gains that the LPS has made and the rationale for this project. We currently envisage the advisory board will be made up of the following representatives:

**Anne Lawson** (Northumberland County Council)

**Jan Simmonds** (North Pennines AONB Partnership chair, also Allendale Parish Council)

**Margaret Stonehouse** (Fawside, chair) / or **Larry Winger** (Fawside)

**Peter Aldcroft** (Allen Valleys Promotions - Folk Festival)

**Robert Phillipson** (Allendale Parish Council, also Allenheads Trust)

**Steve Agar** (Allen Valleys Enterprise Ltd - chair, also West Allen Parish Council)

## The Community Heritage Forum

The composition of the advisory board may change. In particular, we may wish to expand the group to include some representation from the non social enterprise groups, such as the Local History Group, Deneholme and Allen Smelt Mill volunteers, or partner social enterprises such as Higher Ground.

We will also have regular meetings with a broader selection of representatives from community organisations (a community heritage forum), including those mentioned above and the 10 organisations listed at the top of this Project Plan. The evaluation process for the Allen Valleys Landscape Partnership Scheme has already instigated this co-ordination, and participants are keen to see it continue as part of this project.

## Procurement

Any contract or purchase over £5000 will be subject to three quotes or a full tender, following Durham County Council’s procurement rules

## Budget and management

***Appendix 7*** show the **Budget and Monitoring spreadsheet** for the project.

The post holder is responsible for controlling and monitoring all income and expenditure for the project, and will be supported in making financial claims by the AONB Partnership’s Finance Officer.