

Up on the Downs

Stepping Stones Micro Project Risk Report

1st August 2018



This report has been prepared by Up on the Downs on behalf of Dover District Council.

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1. Introduction and background

1.1. A legacy for Up on the Downs

The Up on the Downs Landscape Partnership has now completed the delivery of its Heritage Lottery Funded project in the Dover and Folkestone area. The next phase of work involves looking at the legacy of the partnership. To achieve this an Up on the Downs Futures Steering Group was established to guide further work. This led to two documents that detail how activities might be prioritised.

Taking the Next Step (a short 8 page summary):

<https://www.uponthedowns.org.uk/Documents/Resources/Up-on-the-Downs-Taking-the-Next-Step.pdf>

Taking the Next Step - A Prospectus for Continued Partnership Working (a more detailed document): <https://www.uponthedowns.org.uk/Documents/Resources/Taking-the-Next-Step-A-prospectus.pdf>

As part of this process, members of the Up on the Downs Futures Group and members of the wider partnership involved in the delivery of Up on the Downs were invited to put forward projects to be developed. These projects were prioritised at two workshops held in November and December 2017. One of the most popular projects put forward was one that increased levels of skill within those that were furthest from the labour market.

1.2. What is Stepping Stones?

An opportunity was identified to apply for Interreg funding through the Channel programme to provide training opportunities for those that are furthest from the labour market whilst allowing Dover District Council (DDC) to meet some of its objectives as an organisation (primarily White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP) and Parks and Open Spaces.)

With the help of one of Kent County Council's very experienced European funding team we have recruited project partners and developed an application. All of the activities will fall into three work packages:

1. Countryside Engagement (delivery of John Muir Awards in UK and France – WCCP delivering up to 100 awards over two years)
2. Countryside Skills (delivery of week-long training programmes – WCCP at least 10 programmes plus 8 short-term 2 month contracts for those that progress through training)
3. Evaluation of project and production of prospectus that shows value of the project.

The ultimate outcome of the project will be to trial new ways of providing routes to the workplace and providing evidence to:

- referring organisation that the results that can be achieved are both worthwhile and value for money
- partner organisations that changes in recruitment and engagement of people furthest from the labour market can be changed

More detailed information can be found in the PowerPoint presentation entitled 'Stepping Stones Micro Project'.

This document is designed to help identify some of the risks that DDC will be taking and putting them into context. This will be done as a series of questions.

1.3. What are the risks?

Who are the partners?

Canterbury Christ Church University

Les Blongios

CPIE

The Bay Trust

Who is the Lead Partner?

Dover District Council

How big is the project?

Up to €500,000 – probably at least €450,000

How much of the cash is coming Dover's way?

Yet to be finalised but approximately £150,000

What is the intervention rate?

The project is 80% funded though staff time is effectively funded at 95%. By using the funding to pay for existing staff it could actually lead to a surplus for WCCP.

How long does the project last for?

27 months with 24 months of project delivery – starting spring 2019

Is European funding secure after Brexit?

Yes, or at least the UK government has said that it will honour any European funded projects that are approved before the UK leaves the EU.

What is the risk of being Lead Partner?

The lead partner is responsible for preparing the application – this cost is covered by Up on the Downs

The lead partner is responsible for claims and co-ordinating other partner's activities – we will have a part-time member of staff to do all of this

What is the financial risk to DDC?

Minimal – if you don't do the work you don't get paid. Any partner can pull out

DDC is not responsible for the work of other partners

If other partners don't deliver then they don't get paid. DDC does not get penalised.

Is there a formal partnership?

Yes, there is a standard partnership agreement that most projects use without amendments (e.g. KCC use this) though this will be shown to the legal team at DDC and additional clauses can be added.

What about De Minimis state aid?

Good question!! Dover will need to declare if it has received De Minimis state aid and how much. We are looking into this but shouldn't be a problem.

Will this cause financial difficulties for WCCP?

It shouldn't. As the project is 80% funded and it will pay for existing staff the project should create a net financial gain. Staff that are used to deliver can be backfilled by creating additional posts.