

YOUNG PERSON'S MENTORING PROGRAMME

PEOPLE & PLACES ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 6 October 2022

Report of: Chief Officer People & Places

Status: For Consideration

Also considered by: N/A

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: Young Person's mentoring Programme

This report supports the Key Aim of: Community & Corporate Plan

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Dyball

Contact Officer(s): Kelly Webb, Ext. 7474

Recommendation to People & Places Advisory Committee

To note the report

Introduction and Background

- 1 In April 2021 following a concern of the number of young people suffering with mental health following the pandemic. Jenny Godfrey submitted a bid to KCC Helping Hands. Below is the application for the programme

Costs for a project that reaches out and engages with young people (aged 11 to 18) in the Sevenoaks District that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

This pilot project will give each supported young person HOPE by providing them with:

- A mentor from the community (sport, art, music, dance, writing, other) that works with them to listen and give them the opportunity to go back to an activity they dropped or try something new.
- Financial support for equipment, lessons, travel to enable access to the mentor and chosen activity
- A chance to express themselves, recording through sport, art, music, writing, dance, other, the affect the pandemic has had on them. This will be showcased through an end of project 'Exhibition of Expression' (online and in person) and will include

feedback from the supported young people about their new HOPES and future aspirations.

- Guidance to enable them to continue in a chosen activity – signposting to other services; funding etc.,
- Follow up interview to find out how they have got on.

We will use the youth clubs and hubs, SDC Housing team, Early Help, KCC, other partners to identify those most affected and likely to benefit from the project. We will work with known partners that can assist with counselling and talking therapy where required. Given the short timescales for delivering this project, the mentors will be those already working in the district in sport, art, music, dance, writing other that have the necessary safeguarding checks in place. The Council will use its extensive partnerships to ensure the young people are appropriately matched and supported. We will ensure that all mentors are fully supported in their role. The budget for this pilot project does include for training to be made available to these mentors in supporting young people should they need it, i.e. in mental health first aid for young people. However, we will also look to KCC's partners that provide access to free training.

The budget for the project allows for some SDC officer time to coordinate and manage this pilot. This will be undertaken as an additional responsibility by an existing experienced community project officer.

A project board will be established drawing from representatives of the Sevenoaks Area Youth Assembly and other young people involved in youth clubs and hubs and partners such as charities, community wardens, the police, housing and health workers. This board will steer the design and delivery of the project but will also be in a good position to ensure the young people continue to be educated in complying with any Covid-19 restrictions, keeping themselves and others safe.

This project is based on a case study from Sevenoaks District of the impact of the pandemic on a young person (referred to here as 'Cassie' – see below) and how fortunate she was to be able to access mentors she could relate to and trust. **What if every young person could be given this opportunity?** This pilot project is aimed at starting to level out the inequalities that are emerging and to target those young people with additional barriers such as low income, financial distress and digital poverty. This will be a district-wide project but it will concentrate on areas of greatest deprivation for example Swanley (within top 10% of deprived areas in Kent).

Cassie's Story

Cassie was an extremely active "on the go" 12-year old pre-Covid, passionate about so many things including swimming, creative writing, engaging with friends and like many her age, learning and trying new things. Lockdown 1 saw the beginnings of a difficult time for Cassie. The loss of access to water, school, friends, peers and doing anything 'normal' resulted in a diagnosis of loss and bereavement. Cassie lost interest in all activities, only

partaking in limited on-line schooling. Cassie's family found her some counselling and group based talking therapy support. Lockdown 2 exasperated the situation and Cassie barely left her room, refused to engage, would not participate in online schooling and found everything tiring and pointless.

Throughout the pandemic Cassie was fortunate enough through her swimming club to have a mentor, someone outside of her family setting she could regularly talk to. Someone that knew first-hand the challenges of the sport (physically and mentally) and could understand how the effects of the pandemic might translate when back swimming (anxiety; loss of confidence/fitness/speed etc.,) but also generally about mental health. Cassie says "My coach was amazing. I could relate to him and I trusted him. He understood and listened to me. Without him I would not have had hope and would not be back in the pool, seeing my friends in the club, training and having fun."

Cassie was also fortunate that she was given the chance to sing at school once allowed back. Naturally a quiet, reserved young person who always used to shy away from performing, Cassie flourished. The singing teacher again was a strong mentor for her. This resulted in Cassie singing solo in front of her school. The song was "She Used To Be Mine" from the hit West End Musical The Waitress (the lyrics are set out below). Cassie says "The words have a different meaning to me: they are exactly like me: messy but kind! And, they express my longing of wanting back what was taken away by Covid-19 and the Lockdowns, that is 'the old me'. I face this feeling every day but I am better able to manage it with the help I have been given."

It's not simple to say
Most days I don't recognize me
These shoes and this apron
That place and its patrons
Have taken more than I gave 'em
It's not easy to know
I'm not anything like I used to be
Although it's true
I was never attention sweet center
I still remember that girl

She's imperfect but she tries
She is good but she lies
She is hard on herself
She is broken and won't ask for help
She is messy but she's kind
She is lonely most of the time
She is all of this mixed up
And baked in a beautiful pie

She is gone but she used to be mine

It's not what I asked for
Sometimes life just slips in through a back door
And carves out a person
And makes you believe it's all true
And now I've got you
And you're not what I asked for
If I'm honest I know I would give it all back
For a chance to start over
And rewrite an ending or two
For the girl that I knew

Who be reckless just enough
Who can hurt but
Who learns how to toughen up when she's bruised
And gets used by a man who can't love
And then she'll get stuck and be scared
Of the life that's inside her
Growing stronger each day
'Til it finally reminds her
To fight just a little
To bring back the fire in her eyes
That's been gone but it used to be mine

Used to be mine

She is messy but she's kind
She is lonely most of the time
She is all of this mixed up and baked in a beautiful pie
She is gone but she used to be mine

If successful with this bid and pilot project, the Council will seek further funding to extend it to beyond March 2022.

- 2 A powerpoint presentation at the meeting will show how the programme has progressed

Key Implications

Financial

Staff Time but all externally funded

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

None

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment

Wellbeing

This document supports wellbeing and looks at this throughout the document.

Conclusions

For the Committee to note the report

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

Sarah Robson

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - People & Places