



Subject:	Girdwood Hub Progress Update
Date:	6 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan - Director of City & Neighbourhood services
Contact Officer:	Godfrey McCartney – Good Relations Manager Leanne Holmes – Community Engagement Co Ordinator

### Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

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### Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
<b>1.1</b>	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress to date at Girdwood Community Hub.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>2.1</b>	The Committee is asked to note that a proprietary funding agreement regarding the Collaborative Shared Space Programme will be agreed via delegated authority for a period of up to 2 years until 31 March 2027 and to endorse the emerging business case to support the proprietary use of local community organisations to deliver a robust youth engagement and activity programme.

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	Background
3.1	In relation to the Girdwood site, Members will be aware that Council manages the delivery of the Hub, and the Department for Communities (DfC) are currently leading on the wider development of the Girdwood Park site.
3.2	Girdwood Community Hub has the principles of shared space built into its core and, to enable the facility to benefit inter and intra community relations, the Council set up a dedicated. Community Hub Forum whose role is to promote and help advise on enhancing the hub as a welcoming, open, shared, and safe space. The Girdwood Community Hub Forum is chaired by the Council with representation from local community and voluntary representatives, stakeholders, and statutory agencies alongside two Elected Members.
3.3	A working group which reports to the Forum has been set up to cover the programming of the youth space within the Hub and delivery of shared space programmes. This was set up to ensure that work was focussed and coordinated prior to any proposals being brought forward to manage the youth space from the Girdwood Community Trust. As part of this process in the interim, the youth organisations on the working group have been drawing up proposals to deliver shared space programmes to animate the space on the Girdwood site.
3.4	Given the importance of subsidiarity in the delivery of youth services at Girdwood and as an interim measure to ensure that the space is animated appropriately, Council has previously supported a collaborative activity programme which is designed and delivered in partnership with local youth providers, namely those from six-neighbouring community/youth organisations - Lower Shankill, Lower Oldpark, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum and New Lodge Arts, TAMHI and Our Club Our Community. Since the opening of the centre, the Girdwood Hub Forum have supported these neighbouring organisations as they are best placed to deliver youth-based engagement and activity programmes being delivered and have positively impacted on the current aims and objectives around good relations, shared space, and interventions. Critically, these locally based youth organisations have the capacity and grassroots relationships to expedite a rapid response to address issues which arise as well as ASB in parallel to the delivery of an activity-based programme that seeks to change the attitudes of the young people using the Hub.
3.5	The period would be for one year with a caveat of a break clause included. This would reduce the risk to Council in the event of a proposal being submitted by Girdwood Community Trust regarding management of the Youth Space and approved by Council in future. (More detail on the background to this is provided in paragraphs 3.10 & 3.11.) This would bring a stop to the short-term funding and the proprietary agreement would cease.
3.6	Programme delivery from the local organisations has been shown to contribute to the reduction of ASB at the site and has also delivered on other important outcomes linked to good relations and shared space. The summer programming has always contributed towards Girdwood being considered a safe and welcoming space for all and proves important during times of potential tension. The programme offer is diverse and makes use of the different and innovative aspects of the facility.
3.7	Delivery is collaborative in nature involving local community youth providers, primarily funded by the Council. The programme is agreed quarterly in advance with the Working Group and includes sessions in arts, IT, sports, personal development, and good relations and encourages access to other services within the Hub. The programmes also include outreach and detached work which aims to support local young people at risk, reduce ASB on site and

	<p>encourage involvement in the Youth Space and Hub. The youth programme has developed and evolved and now offers activities 6 days week. In a climate where central government are announcing reductions in budget such as the Education Authority and TEO, this provision at Girdwood would be most needed to keep a consistency of relevant programming at the surrounding site.</p> <p><b>Request</b></p>
3.8	<p>Therefore, as in previous years, Officers have developed a business case for approval under the scheme of delegation for the Director of Neighbourhood Services to procure services for youth programming promoting shared space from the six-neighbouring community/youth organisations - Lower Shankill, Lower Oldpark, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum and New Lodge Arts, TAMHI and Our Club Our Community. The request is for members to note that a proprietary funding agreement which has been previously agreed, however it will now cover the period from April 2025 to end March 2027, with a break clause in place should a Youth Space with a Management proposal in draft to be considered for approval for handover to the Girdwood Community Trust.</p>
3.9	<p>To date financial support for the youth programme has been funded through the Girdwood Youth Space budget and includes procurement of facility hire, coaching and facilitator costs, tools and materials and sessional fees for youth workers. Community based staffing in the form of sessional youth workers is currently largely funded by The Executive Office, however, with some organisations facing delays in their letter of offers from TEO delays, this poses financial difficulties for some of the organisations.</p> <p><b>Proposal for Youth Space Management</b></p>
3.10	<p>Over the development of this project, the local community have expressed an ambition for future community management of Girdwood Community Hub. Given the stated ambition of the local community to develop the capability to support community management in the future, Council agreed that a useful first step to develop confidence by all parties would be to develop and consider an SLA for community management of the dedicated Youth Space. This identified pilot will in effect support the development of trust, relationships, and capacity among the local community groups towards their aspiration of community management.</p>
3.11	<p>Members may wish to note that Girdwood Community Trust have submitted a preliminary draft proposal to Council regarding management of the Youth Space and that details are being worked through with Council Officers. When discussions have been finalised, a report will be brought to Members for consideration in due course</p>
3.12	<p><b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b> Programme resources for these services are within service revenue estimates.</p>
3.13	<p><b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b> The aim of the Community Hub and the associated programme is to promote shared space which will contribute to the enhancement of good relations.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	None