



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>UEFA Conference League Final 2023</b>
<b>Date:</b>	25th March, 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Eimear Henry, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide details of a recent request from the Irish Football Association (IFA) for the Council to support its bid for the UEFA Conference League Final 2023 and agree the Council's position in relation to this.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. note the details of the imminent bid by the IFA;</li><li>ii. consider the request to provide support, as set out in the appendix;</li><li>iii. note the possible future request for financial support if the bid is successful to host the UEFA Conference League Final 2023 and that such support is not in the medium-term financial planning. Should the IFA be awarded this event, a report will subsequently be brought to Committee outlining resource implications; and</li><li>iv. authorise officers to engage with the IFA in this development process.</li></ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>In August 2021, Belfast hosted the UEFA Super Cup final at the National Stadium. The Council provided support of £200,000 to the IFA for the event, with this being allocated to areas such as City Animation, Fan Mobility and Fan Experience, the Formal Dinner in the City Hall and other City logistics.</p>
3.2	<p>An estimated 12,725 bed nights were created in Belfast, generating £1.12 million for the local accommodation sector. A further £700,000 was spent by attendees while in Northern Ireland for the match. The direct economic impact of the event has been measured at £3.9 million with a total economic impact of over £4 million. The benefits generated by the Super Cup also extend beyond the economic impacts. The match was aired on television and digital media all around the world, attracting an audience of 24.4 million (source: independent socio-economic report commissioned by the IFA). It should also be noted that this event was impacted by the pandemic.</p>
3.3	<p>Council officers have now received a request from the IFA to support its bid for the UEFA Conference League Final 2023. This is a new competition and this bid is for the second year it takes place, the first final will be in Albania in June, 2022. As far as the infrastructure and expectations for the event, they are similar to the UEFA Super Cup Final hosted last year. There is no historical information on the impact of this particular final event.</p>
3.4	<p>To present an understanding of the timelines involved, UEFA's Evaluation phase is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- February/March 2022: Potential site visits by UEFA</li> <li>- April 2022: Evaluation finished</li> <li>- May 2022: Appointment of the Host Association by the UEFA Executive Committee</li> </ul>
3.5	<p>The IFA reached out to the Council for a letter of support as the bid deadline was February. Following the issue of a letter of support from the Lord Mayor, (which did not indicate any financial commitment), UEFA has since requested that the Council sign a 'Host City Authority Undertaking' letter to further confirm support for the bid. UEFA has given the IFA a deadline of 24<sup>th</sup> March for return. This outlines a number of obligations the host City would have if hosting and has been reviewed by Legal Services. The advice given is that political approval is required prior to the Council agreeing to the terms of the document. This document is included at appendix 1.</p>
3.6	<p>Furthermore, should the bid be successful, it is anticipated that there will be a financial ask - there is, however, no indication as yet of what this might be. The profile of the UEFA Conference League Final 2023 is possibly on a par with that of the Super Cup, and therefore there is the possibility of a similar request for the 2021 event. In addition, officers from the City Events Unit provided significant support to the IFA during the delivery of the Super Cup.</p>

3.7	<p>This potential financial support is not in the medium-term planning. In addition, it should also be noted that 2023 is a year of significant major event activity for Council, including the hosting of One Young World, the staging of the now biennial Maritime Festival signature event and preparation for 2024 Year of Culture, along with annual programme of events and potentially early planning of the Fleadh Cheol. These exiting commitments have been considered within the division's resource planning which did not include provision for this event.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.8	<p>There are currently no resource implications, however, Members should be aware that a request for financial support will follow should IFA be successful in its bid for Belfast to host this event. No provision for financial support has been planned for in financial forecasts. A subsequent report will be taken to Committee.</p> <p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p>
3.9	<p>There are currently no equality and good relations implications.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Document Attached</b></p>
4.1	<p>IFA Host City Undertaking – Letter of Commitment</p>