



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Association Football Coverage on Ulster Television
<b>Date:</b>	14 June 2012
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
	<p>At the Council meeting on 1 May 2012 Alderman Rodgers moved the following motion:</p> <p>“This Council acknowledges that Association Football is one of the most popular sports for both participants and spectators in the City of Belfast and throughout Northern Ireland. Therefore, the Council expresses its concern at the decision of Ulster Television (UTV) to stop showing highlights of Irish Premier Division football games as part of its news converge from the beginning of the next soccer season.</p> <p>The Council calls upon UTV to reverse this decision in the interest of sport in Northern Ireland. “</p> <p>This was referred to the Parks and Leisure Committee and was discussed by the Committee at its meeting on 10 May 2012 and it was agreed that the Director would write to UTV seeking clarification of their position.</p>

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
	<p>The letter of response from UTV is attached to this report for consideration. It includes as an appendix a copy of a letter which UTV had sent to the Chairman and managers of the Irish League clubs outlining their position.</p> <p>The main points of clarification of UTV’s position are as follows:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2012 UTV wrote to the Chief Executives of football, rugby and GAA stating that the company was no longer willing to pay for news access to sporting events. Not other broadcasters in the UK or Ireland pay for this access nor do newspapers or photo agencies.</li> <li>• In the past two seasons UTV's contracts for rugby and GAA have ended and through positive dialogue coverage has continued of both sports.</li> <li>• UTV's contract with IFA runs until the end of his season. UTV have had a number of meetings with representatives of the IFA to see if any sort of sponsorship partnership can be put in place with football in Northern Ireland as they have with the other two major sporting bodies. To date these discussions have been unsuccessful.</li> <li>• UTV have stated that they wish to continue to cover football on the same terms as they now cover all sports in Northern Ireland.</li> </ul>
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<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	None.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
	None.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	The Committee is asked to note the content of this report and to consider any further action they wish to take.

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	UTV      Ulster Television GAA      Gaelic Athletics Association IFA      Irish Football Association

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 – Letter from Michael Wilson, Managing Director of UTV dated 22 May 2012.