



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	UEFA Youth Final Tournaments 2017 – Request from Irish Football Association
Date:	11 September 2014
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Stephen Walker, Departmental Portfolio and Programme Manager

1. Relevant Background Information

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee that the Irish Football Association (IFA) is considering putting a bid into UEFA to host the U19 final tournaments in 2017 and to seek approval in principle from the Committee to support the bid.

Council Officers have met with representatives from the IFA. The IFA is currently carrying out a scoping exercise to ascertain if there are any available training venues in the greater Belfast area. A copy of the guidelines is attached as Appendix A for your information. The planning for the event is at an early stage and currently costs are unknown.

Preliminary discussions with the IFA have identified a number of potential training venues:

Blancheflower Stadium
Ulidia Playing Fields
Strangford Avenue Playing Fields
Victoria Park
Dixon Park Playing Fields

Three significant factors in reaching this preliminary list were:

1. Natural turf pitches only;

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The ability to meet UEFA standard pitch requirements in terms of size; and 3. The ability to restrict access to the site or part of the site for a period of up to 17 days during June / July 2017; <p>At this stage the IFA has asked that the Council agree in principle to use of these facilities during the period of the tournament, which is as yet unconfirmed. The IFA has submitted a reservation form in respect of each of the above sites, to the Council, a sample of this is attached as Appendix B. The Council is asked to sign these agreements to meet the requirements of UEFA as part of the bidding process.</p>
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2.	Key Issues
	<p>There are a number of issues for members to consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is a significant tournament and would be a high profile event for the city; 2. Similar competitions have been held in the past and have been successful; 3. If the bid is successful there will be operational implications for the Council in providing training venues; this would include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Potential closure of the pitches before the end of the local football season; also pitches may require attention prior to the regular season and may not be available until after the start of the season b. Potential restricted access to each of the sites for members of the public; c. Realignment of the pitches to meet the pitch size requirements; d. Possible hire of equipment such as marquees for refreshments pre and post training sessions; 4. Further discussions are required in relation to point 3 a-d above and it is intended that a further report be submitted to Committee at a later date to inform it of the success or otherwise of the bid; 5. The cost implications of the above have not yet been quantified; however, it is suggested that the council agree to meet the cost of providing the marquees for hospitality purposes and to agree to the free use of the facilities by the squads. 6. Members are asked to note that the City Events Team based in the Development Department have been made aware of the bid and a further meeting will be held to explore other ways in which the council might link in with the preparation of the bid and any subsequent arrangements should the bid be successful

3.	Resource Implications
	<u>Financial Implications</u>

	<p>At this time the financial implications are not known, but the cost is likely to be in the region of £50,000 which would cover the cost of the marquee hire and the loss of income from the use of the pitches over a 17 day period. A further report will be brought to Committee when the plan and costs are defined.</p> <p><u>Human Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no additional human resource implications</p>
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4.	Equality Implications
	There are no equality implications.

5.	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked to consider the report and to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree that the Director of Parks and Leisure sign, on behalf of the Council, the reservation forms submitted by the IFA in relation to the 5 sites identified in the report; 2. Agree that the council will provide the agreed venues free of charge for training purposes.

6.	Decision Tracking
	A further report will be brought to the Committee at a later date.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	IFA – Irish Football Association

8.	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix A- Extract of UEFA Requirements re Training Venues</p> <p>Appendix B – Sample reservation form received from IFA.</p>