



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	World Title Boxing Fight in Belfast
<b>Date:</b>	17th June 2014
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, Ext 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Gerry Copeland, City Events Manager, Ext 3412

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	The Committee will recall that, at its meeting on 15th April, Councillor Spence referred to the recent successes of the local super-bantamweight boxer, Mr. Carl Frampton and pointed out that negotiation was ongoing to secure a world title fight for him in Belfast. Councillor Spence had suggested that, if such a bout were to take place in the City, the Council should seek to avail of the opportunity which would be afforded to promote Belfast to a worldwide sporting audience. In addition, the Council might consider supporting the event by providing the use of the Ulster Hall for the purposes of a weigh-in, or that the City Hall might be considered appropriate for the hosting of a press conference. The Committee and the Council endorsed the comments of Councillor Spence.
1.2	The Committee will be aware that Carl Frampton has secured a bout with the existing IBF world champion Kiko Martinez for 6th September at a venue to be confirmed in the City, with the Balmoral Showground being the suggested venue and in front of a record attendance of 20,000.
1.3	The title bout will arguably be one of the most high-profile sporting events ever to take place in the City. Carl has built up a large and vociferous following and his rise to prominence in sporting terms has placed Belfast again on to the world sporting map. It is anticipated that the fight will be carried live by the BBC, Box Nation and televised worldwide on a number of major European, Asian and American networks.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	Given the Council's commitment to promote the sport of boxing through its three-year Boxing Strategy, the hosting of the title fight in Belfast will provide an opportunity to endorse this strategy and celebrate Belfast's rich and shared history in the sport.
2.2	The Committee will be aware that the Council-owned Ulster Hall is considered to be the 'spiritual' home of boxing in Belfast. In previous years, the Ulster Hall stage has hosted public weigh-ins for title fights involving Rinty Monaghan, Freddie Gilroy and John Caldwell. The Hall also became synonymous with Barry McGuigan's career in the 1980s. In 2013, an exhibition on the history of boxing in the City was commissioned by the Council and is displayed in the south corridor of the building. It might be therefore appropriate that the Council would endeavour to showcase the Ulster Hall, if available, for the purposes of a public weigh-in or a press conference.

2.3	Given that the Council would wish to portray the City in the most positive light, the Committee might find it fitting also to seek to make the City Hall available for a press conference or interviews prior to the fight. If deemed appropriate, a request would need to be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for its consideration.
2.4	In the week running up to the fight, the Committee might consider also the hosting of a series of events to celebrate the history of boxing in Belfast. Such events could include guided tours for local clubs of the Ulster Hall and its boxing exhibition; together with an 'evening of legends' in the Group Space which would be attended by former champions such as Dave 'Boy' McAuley, Hugh Russell, Wayne McCullough and other legendary names. In August, 2013, as part of the celebrations for the World Police and Fire Games, the Ulster Hall hosted a number of talks on the history of boxing in Belfast. A similar event might be appropriate in the run-up to the fight.

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	Whilst there has been no specific resources identified for the hosting of events connected with the world title fight, an under spend of approximately £7,500 has been identified within the original amount which had been allocated by the Council to host events associated with the Giro d'Italia and UK National Piping Championships.

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Equality Implications</b>
4.1	As with all major civic events, public events like the above have the potential to bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds and therefore promote good relations in the city.

<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	The Committee is requested to agree that officers formulate a series of events to coincide with the hosting by the City of the world title fight and to agree that a sum of £7,500 be allocated for that purpose.

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
<p>If approved, officers will monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the project and provide post-project details as part of the Department's annual review. These outcomes will be presented to Members as part of the City Events Unit key performance indicators.</p> <p>Timeline: March 2015 <span style="float: right;">Reporting Officer: Gerry Copeland</span></p>	

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
None	

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
None	