



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Update on development of a boxing strategy for the city
Date:	11 October 2012
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1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>Members will be aware that we are currently developing a boxing strategy for the city in partnership with Co Antrim Boxing, Ulster Boxing Council (UBC), Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) and the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA).</p> <p>The Committee agreed the proposed approach at its meeting in March 2012 and since then the steering group has been established and has met on four occasions.</p> <p>The first stage of the process was the undertaking of a baseline assessment and the key findings from this was brought to the Committee meeting in June 2012.</p>

2.	Key Issues
	<p>The steering committee have now produced a draft Boxing Strategy for Belfast 2012-22 and a copy is attached at appendix 1. The strategy includes an examination of the strategic context and an analysis of several pieces of work that have been undertaken to assess the need within boxing. This includes a survey of clubs undertaken by UBC around facilities and the baseline assessment undertaken as part of this process. This provided us with information on a range of issues including membership, coaches and volunteers, governance structures, funding, facilities and equipment.</p> <p>We have used this information to identify need across the city and</p>

common issues that are facing boxing clubs. These include:

- Many clubs have facilities that are not fit for purpose and are not large enough for them to expand their membership.
- Although there is a growing interest in female boxing the majority of clubs do not have female changing facilities and therefore cannot expand female membership.
- Although the majority of coaches do have formal coaching qualifications a programme of coach development is required. This will create a high standard of coaching in the future which is necessary if boxing is to continue to enjoy success at international competition level.
- Boxing clubs do not have paid staff and depend on volunteers. The standard of training for volunteers varies greatly across clubs and some clubs have difficulty recruiting new volunteers.
- Governance and management varies across clubs and work is needed to ensure a high level of governance and management across all clubs.
- Not all clubs have a club development plan. There is interest among clubs in working towards Clubmark which will require them to have a current and active plan.
- The majority of clubs are based in areas of social deprivation and operate on very small annual budgets. They would benefit with help to source funding.

Action Plans

Based on the assessment of need and the issues identified, actions plans were developed around four strands:

- Pathways (boxers, coaches and officials)
- Coach education and development
- Club support and development
- Governance

These vary from the strands that were originally stated within the proposed approach to the development of this strategy, which were (management/governance, sports development and capital investment). However these are the strategic challenges that are used in the IABA's strategic plan and are used by both UBC and Co Antrim Boxing in their plans and for this reason we are suggesting using them to ensure alignment.

The action plans are included as section 7 of the strategy and include actions around:

- increasing participation;
- coach, volunteers and officials training and development;
- supporting club development; and
- improving governance.

Although a lack of adequate facilities and equipment were seen as a major challenge to boxing clubs the steering group took into account the Sport Northern Ireland Boxing Investment Programme. This programme

will aim to invest approx £3m into boxing clubs throughout Northern Ireland. Sport NI is currently developing the process for allocating the funding but it is anticipated that £232,000 will be allocated in 2012-13 for equipment with the remainder being allocated for capital projects in 2013-14 and 2014-15. Funds for capital projects will be awarded as a result of an application process with applications being assessed against criteria. Boxing clubs within Belfast will be encouraged to apply for support from this programme. It is likely that Sport NI will fund 75% of capital projects.

Delivery and Finance

It is proposed therefore that the implementation of this strategy in its first phase, 2013-16, will concentrate on issues around increasing participation, coach and volunteer development, club development and improving governance.

To facilitate delivery of the actions it is proposed that two additional sports development officers will be created on a fixed term basis for three years. It is proposed that their primary focus will be boxing but that they will be required to provide support in other areas as capacity allows. These will be based in the Leisure Development Unit and be managed by the Leisure Development Manager. The full job description and scale of post is to be determined but based on current scales it is likely to be in the region of SO2.

On appointment the Sport Development Officers will be responsible for developing a programme of activities under the four streams of the action plan.

We estimate that the budget required for the implementation of the strategy to be in the region of £200,000 per year. The following table breaks this down but it should be noted that these are estimated figures and that they may be change when the detailed programme of activities are developed.

Strategic challenges action plans	Estimated budget per year
Pathways (boxers, coaches and officials) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Belfast based events • Activities to promote participation • Training for ring officials • Support for a schools programme 	£15,000 £10,000 £2,000 £10,000
Coach Education and development	£20,000
Club support and development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Development Officers (2) • Provide start up funding support for development of new clubs (via an increase to the kick start funding element of Support for Sport) • Development of a volunteer toolkit • Deliver of a good relations training 	£75,000 £20,000 £10,000 £10,000

programme	
Governance	£20,000
Total for delivery of action plans	£192,000

It is also suggested that in Year 1 a piece of work be undertaken to explore the potential to use the Council's assets to give clubs security of tenure and to deliver programme of activities. It is anticipated that this will cost in the region of £10-15,000.

Sport NI has recently provided the funding for the IABA to appoint a Club Development Manager on a fixed term post to March 2015. The Club Development Manager's role will be to work with key partners to improve boxing by developing quality, child friendly sports clubs in Northern Ireland. Their responsibilities will include supporting boxing clubs to source additional funding and developing a club development plan and a range of templates and resources to support clubs. The Belfast based officers will work with this person to ensure there is no duplication in work and to maximise resources.

Monitoring and review

To monitor progress against the actions plans indicators have been developed and where possible will be reported on an annual basis. We would also propose that a comprehensive strategic review be undertaken in 2016 to consider how successful the approach taken has been and to agree the next phase of actions. This strategic review would include a repeat of the baseline assessment that was undertaken to inform this strategy. The purpose of the baseline will be to measure the impact of the delivery of the action plan and to provide evidence around the need and priorities for the next phase.

We are currently undertaking some further analysis of the baseline information and consulting with the steering group members to enable us to develop realistic targets for the performance indicators outlined in section 9 for the next 3 years.

Next steps

Following committee approval of the draft strategy a 12 week period of public consultation will take place on it. It is anticipated that the public consultation will commence on Monday 5th November 2012 and close on Friday 25th January 2013. As part of the public consultation a meeting will be held to which all the boxing clubs in Belfast will be invited to obtain their views. A consultation questionnaire will be developed and will be downloadable from the Council's website.

Following the period of consultation the responses will be collated and the draft strategy amended. A summary of the consultation responses and the final strategy will be brought to the committee meeting in March 2013 and following Council approval it will be launched.

3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> At this stage no financial resources attached to the development of the strategy and resources to cover meetings etc are included within the department's development budget.</p> <p>The cost of the implementation of the strategy is estimated to be £200,000 per year for three years and at this stage requires to be agreed in principle subject to being considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as part of the estimate and rate setting process over the next 3 years.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Officer time on an ongoing basis.</p> <p><u>Asset and other Implications</u> None at this stage.</p>

4.	Equality and good relations implications
	The development of the strategy will be subject to ongoing equality screening.

5.	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. agree the draft strategy subject to any comments, amendments or inputs from Members; 2. agree in principle that £200,000 per year be allocated to the implementation of the strategy over the period 2013-16 subject to consideration by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as part of the estimating and rate setting process over the next 3 years. 3. subject to committee approval, note that a 12 week period of public consultation will take place on the draft strategy; 4. subject to committee approval, agree that the Council's vetting and selection process is followed to explore the creation and recruitment of two Sports Development Officers; and

6.	Decision Tracking
	The findings of the consultation and the final strategy will be brought to Committee in March 2013 – Policy and Business Development Officer.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	IABA – Irish Amateur Boxing Association SNI – Sport Northern Ireland UBC – Ulster Boxing Council

8.	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Draft boxing strategy