



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Development of an Amateur Boxing Strategy for the City</b>
<b>Date:</b>	14 March 2013
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director, Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Emer Boyle, Policy and Business Development Manager Claire Sullivan, Policy and Business Development Officer

<b>1.</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
	<p>Members will be aware that the Council has developed an amateur 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>Following approval of the draft strategy by Committee at its meeting in October 2012, a period of public consultation opened on Monday 5 November 2012. A copy of the draft strategy and a response questionnaire were available to download from the website and the closing date for responses was Friday 8 February 2013.</p> <p>In addition a meeting was organised on the 17 January in Ormeau Bowling Pavilion to which all the boxing clubs on our mailing list were invited. Officers also presented the draft strategy to a special meeting of the youth forum and sought their views on it. The Council's S75 Consultative Forum has also been kept informed of the development of the strategy and was notified of the consultation process.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
	<p><u>Consultation findings</u></p> <p>A total of 16 written responses were received to the public consultation in addition to the meetings that were held with the boxing clubs and the</p>

Council's youth forum. A copy of the detailed consultation findings is attached as appendix 1 and the following is a summary of the key findings:

- Increasing female participation
  - There is agreement that this is an issue that needs to be addressed but there is a lack of facilities in the majority of clubs for females
  - Suggestion was made that additional money needed to be put into target/develop female participation
  - Suggestion was made that there is a need to have more female coaches as females may feel intimidated going to classes with male coaches
  - Promote female boxers – e.g. use their photos on poster
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- Increasing participation among people with a disability
  - The majority of clubs do not have the facilities necessary to facilitate members with a disability
  - Suggestion was made that we should look at working with special needs schools – train coaches to work with kids with special needs
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- Sport development officers/coaches
  - There was mixed feelings from the governing bodies and boxing clubs for the appointment of 2 Sport Development Officers; unclear what their role would be and some feeling that they won't come from boxing and won't know about the sport
  - There was support for putting in additional boxing coaches or following the Dublin model
  - The possibility of the coaching training being run in Belfast rather than Dublin was raised
  - Suggestion made that if each club had a qualified coach they could train others in the club
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- Volunteers
  - Issue of getting and keeping volunteers was raised
  - Need for funding to help with volunteers expenses
  - Question was asked could Belfast City Council set up a volunteer list/bank that clubs could use
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- Financing of clubs
  - None of the proposed funding is to help clubs with running their clubs – issue of keeping clubs running and their doors open
  - Can we examine the use of council facilities for example free/reduced hire rates for boxing clubs?
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- Events

- Need for funding to host events in Belfast but also need to have a balance between the money being available for the large scale and small events
- Issue of getting funding for boxers going to events elsewhere
- Need to work with all the partners to bring large scale international competitions to Belfast
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- Schools programme
  - Support from Youth Forum for the schools programme but questioned if enough money being put into it
  - Not clear understanding from clubs as to how it would work

#### Amendments to the draft strategy

The steering group met to discuss the consultation findings and any amendments to the draft strategy that were necessary as a result of the consultation. The following amendments (in bold) have been suggested to the action plans within the strategy:

#### *Pathways (boxers, coaches and officials)*

- Explore the potential of obtaining funding and sponsorship to support a programme of competitive fixtures, **both local and international competitions**, in Belfast
- Begin discussions with the education sector in relation to the introduction of a non-contact boxing programme in schools **including special need schools**

#### *Coach education and development*

- **Work with the governing body to attract and train more females as coaches**
- **Work with the governing body to train coaches that can work with people with special needs**

#### *Club support and development*

- **Explore the introduction of one Sports Development Officer and 2 community based Coaches for Belfast, based in Belfast City Council with boxing as a priority target area**

A copy of the final strategy is attached as appendix 2 and Members are requested to consider the proposed amendments to the action plans.

#### Appointment of Sport Development Officers (SDOs) and Coaches

Within the consultation process the action that prompted the greatest level of discussion and comment was the proposal that two SDOs be appointed to deliver the strategy. The view from across the boxing fraternity was that there was a danger that the two SDOs would not have sufficient links to boxing to be effective and that we should consider the programme that has been put in place in Dublin which aims to promote boxing and

	<p>community activity and is targeted at ‘at risk’ young people in disadvantaged areas.</p> <p>Based on the feedback and discussions with our partners we are now proposing that one SDO and two community based coaches are put in place. If Members agree to this proposal there will be a shortfall in the budget that has been allocated to staff and we will have to find additional resources for the appointment of a second coach. We are currently exploring other options such as the appointment of a coach through the Active Communities Programme. If the proposal is accepted we will work with our partners to define the role of the two community based coaches and the programme of activities they will undertake. We will also ensure that the SDO works with the regional Club Development Manger (funded by SNI and line managed by IABA) to ensure there is no duplication of resources.</p> <p><u>Other issues raised through the consultation</u></p> <p>Other issues raised through the consultation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for travel by Belfast based boxers to competitions elsewhere – the Council through the Support for Sport Scheme’s Individual Grant helps pay for personal expenses, such as travelling abroad to train, and for participation in governing body approved competitions outside Northern Ireland and this is open to boxers.</li> <li>• Funding for running costs such as affiliation fees, insurance and utilities costs – whilst many clubs (across all sports) find it difficult to keep their doors open, officers believe that giving clubs funding for running costs is a short term measure and would not promote sustainability within the sport.</li> <li>• Issue of sectarianism in the support – within the action plans one of the agreed actions is for the Council to work with Co Antrim Boxing to develop and deliver a good relations programme for Belfast based clubs.</li> </ul> <p><u>Next steps</u></p> <p>Subject to Members agreeing the final strategy it is proposed that the Council should formally launch the strategy at an event with our partners. The details of the launch have yet to be worked out but it is likely that we would look at using the Ulster Hall because of its links with boxing and that it would be an evening event to facilitate the attendance of members of the boxing clubs.</p>
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<b>3.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>£200,000 per year for 3 years has been agreed for the implementation of</p>

	<p>the strategy</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Officer time on an ongoing basis</p> <p><u>Asset and other Implications</u></p> <p>None at this stage.</p>
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<b>4.</b>	<b>Equality and good relations implications</b>
	The strategy has been equality screened in line with the Council's equality process. The screening showed that there were potential adverse impacts on a number of groups including females and people with a disability and mitigating actions have been added to the strategy.

<b>5.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) agree the final strategy subject to any comments, amendments or inputs from Members;</li> <li>(ii) agree to a formal launch of the strategy with our partners; and</li> <li>(iii) subject to committee approval, agree that the Council's vetting and selection process is followed to explore the creation and recruitment of one Sports Development Officers and two community based Coaches.</li> </ul>

<b>6.</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	The Policy and Business Development Manager will implement the actions agreed by Committee.

<b>7.</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	<p>IABA – Irish Amateur Boxing Association</p> <p>SNI – Sport Northern Ireland</p> <p>UBC – Ulster Boxing Council</p> <p>SDO – Sports Development Officer</p>

<b>8.</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Consultation findings</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Final boxing strategy</p>