



Subject:	IABA Request to Realign Funding
Date:	9 October 2019
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Gerry Copeland, City Events Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, when will the report become unrestricted	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	<p>On the 12th September 2018, Members agreed to support the staging of the Elite All Ireland Boxing Championship in the 2019/2020 financial year, along with endorsing that Council Officers would facilitate and assist the Irish Athletic Boxing Association (IABA) in the staging of the event. After a lengthy period of engagement between Council officials and the IABA, it is now clear that this event cannot be staged within the timeframe. Therefore, the IABA is asking Members to agree to the re-alignment of the Council's support, and financial contribution, circa £70,000, to the staging of the 2020 European Schoolboys and School Girls Championship, which has been offered to the IABA by the European Boxing Confederation (EUBC). The total cost of staging this event would be circa £200,000 - £250,000.</p>

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>It is recommended that the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agrees to support the staging of the EUBC schools competition and the transfer of circa £70,000 in this regard, which is part of the 2019/2020 budgets. • Noes that the above would be subject to the IABA securing additional support from the Belfast Boxing Strategy, Tourism NI and Sport NI, plus other partners, in order to make up the finance to stage the 2020 European Schoolboys and Schoolgirls Championship. • Agrees to a further report to be brought back to Committee in order to update Members on this matter.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>In March 2018, via a Notice of Motion, the Council agreed that its Officers would engage with the IABA to explore the possibility of bringing the All Ireland Boxing Championships to Belfast. A further report, in September 2018, was presented to Members in which they agreed to that Officers would continue to work with IABA in the staging of the Elite All Ireland Championship in 2019/2020. Despite the best efforts of IABA and Council officials it has not been possible to deliver on this.</p>
3.2	<p>The key issue being the scheduling of the Elite All Ireland competition vis a vis programming dates set by the Amateur International Boxing Association (AIBA) and the International Olympic Committee connected to the qualifying schedule for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics – an issue flagged in September 2018’s Committee report.</p>
3.3	<p>Due to this diary programming issue, the IABA have requested that Council support the staging of the 2020 European Schoolboys and Schoolgirls Championship instead. This event is estimated to cost circa £350,000 and if staged would take place over the first two weeks in July or the last two weeks in August of next year.</p>
3.4	<p>This event would attract fighters from 30 nations, with female and male competitors aged 13-14 years old, fighting over 20 weight categories. The IABA estimate the total number of boxers, coaches, support staff and officials to be circa 600, with an need for four hundred bedrooms across a 10 day period. Given the nature of the event, it would be deemed that this event would elevate Belfast’s status within the international boxing fraternity and provide a platform for any possible future bids for European or World boxing competitions.</p>
3.5	<p>There are no current existing economic statistics attached to this competition. However, it is estimated, by the IABA, that the EUBC finals would attract a daily audiences of approximately 2,000 people, alongside the competitors/official numbers mentioned above. Given these figures IABA estimate the visitor spend to be around £1.7m. The IABA have also stated that EUBC may welcome a bid from Belfast for the staging of a future European Youth Championship, subject to the schools competition being staged successfully in the city.</p>

Members are reminded that Belfast has previously hosted the AIBA's World Championships in 2001.

3.6 Operational Requirements for the European Schoolboys and Schoolgirls Championships

Key elements required to stage this event are as follows:

- **Venue:** Any venue must be able to seat 2,000 plus, be able to operate two competition rings in the same area, with adequate space for judges, officials and coaches around the ring's aprons. The venue should also have adequate meeting rooms, changing & shower facilities, rooms for medical & doping and areas for officials to meet.
- **Warm-up Areas:** The venue will need to accommodate dedicated spaces where boxers can prepare for their bouts. Such areas will need to be within the competition venue.
- **Training Venue(s):** In addition, there needs to be a training venue(s) which can host up two rings so boxers can prepare while in the host city. These could be facilitated within Belfast clubs.

Belfast City Council Boxing Strategy

3.7 In 2012, Belfast City Council created a strategy to assist in the sports development. This strategic vision recognises the important role which amateur boxing plays in the life of Belfast and its working class communities in particular. The document highlighted four key strategic challenges: Pathways to the sport (boxers, coaches and officials); Coach education and development; Club support and development and Governance. A Steering Group was established to develop and oversee the implementation of the Strategy – this included representatives from IABA, Ulster Council, Co Antrim Boxing and Sport NI. This steering group (with the exception of Sport NI) continues to meet to oversee the delivery of the strategy and its related action plans. A contribution of £200,000 per year over 3 years from April 2013 was agreed by the Council to enable the implementation of the strategy's action plans. Due to a delay in recruiting staff the funding was spread over a longer period and this funding ceased on 31st March 2017. The Council agreed to directly fund the Irish Athletic Boxing Association (IABA) to deliver elements of the strategy during the financial year 2017/18. The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee agreed further funding on January 5th 2018 of £200,000 for the implementation of the Belfast Boxing Strategy through the IABA and this amount is now included within the City and Neighbourhood Services revenue budgets for the strategy.

Finance and Resource Implications

3.8 The financial request from IABA is to seek Council's approval to re-align its commitment from Elite All Ireland Championship, £70,000, to the 2020 European Schoolboys and Schoolgirls Championship. The total costs associated with hosting the event in Belfast would be between £200,000 and £250,000. At this stage, no other funders have committed to supporting this project, although Tourism NI and Sport NI have been approached in this regard. In addition, IABA would intend to approach the Belfast Boxing Strategy Steering Group to seek support.

3.9	<u>Equality & Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> The IABA event would be open to all and as such has the potential to promote good relations & equality by bringing together people from a wide range of backgrounds. There are no perceived Rural Needs implications connected to this project.
4.0	Appendices
	None