

Report to: Policy and Resources Committee, 21st March 2023

Report of: Managing Director

Subject: BOXING EVENTS ON COUNCIL PREMISES

1. Recommendation

That the Committee:

- 1.1 Approves the continued suspension of boxing events on Council premises, other than those affiliated to England Boxing, until such time that the outcome of the Coroner's Inquest referred to within this report and the Worcestershire Regulatory Services investigation, can be reviewed, enabling a further report to be presented to Committee.**

2. Background

- 2.1 In April 2022, following participation in a boxing event at Tramps nightclub, a man was taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham in a serious condition and later died. It was reported that the 26-year-old suffered serious injuries after boxing at an event organised by Ultra White-Collar Boxing (UWCB).
- 2.2 At the time, police confirmed that following their initial enquiries into the incident they would not be investigating the death. Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) confirmed that the event had been conducted in line with the premises license, but the Corporate Leadership Team requested WRS to undertake a health & safety investigation.
- 2.3 The health & safety investigation remains live, as is common practice for complex health & safety incidents and details are not able to be shared at this stage.
- 2.4 Alongside the WRS investigation, a Coroners Inquiry is in process with a final hearing scheduled for 2nd May 2023. WRS are supporting the inquiry via the information they have gathered as part of their health & safety investigation and have been requested to provide a formal report to the Coroner's Office.
- 2.5 Initial investigations into these types of event confirmed they are not affiliated to England Boxing. England Boxing is the National Governing Body for the sport of Boxing in England, overseeing more than 980 affiliated clubs and more than 23,000 members spread across the country.
- 2.6 The organisation carries out a number of functions including overseeing the safety and welfare of members, child protection and compliance, coaching courses, DBS checking and promotion of boxing to potential new members, enforcing rules and regulations and providing a talent pathway for boxers who excel.

- 2.7 England Boxing also organises and administrates a number of national and regional competitions for Elite, Youth, Junior, Schools and Development Boxers, as well as an annual Three Nations tournament and a female-only Box Cup.
- 2.8 For the purpose of clarity, the British Boxing Board of Control is the governing body for professional boxing in the UK and therefore has no jurisdiction or connection to semi-professional or amateur events, which are the subject of this report.

3. Decision

- 3.1 Over recent years, Worcester City Council has approved several requests to host boxing events on its premises (predominantly at Perdiswell Leisure Centre).
- 3.2 However, following the tragic event referred to within this report and a subsequent officer briefing to Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) white collar boxing events, CLT was of the unanimous opinion that the City Council should temporarily suspend the acceptance of any further bookings for boxing events on Council premises that were not operated by organisations affiliated to England Boxing.
- 3.3 This decision was communicated to all Political Group Leaders, who were each fully supportive of the decision.
- 3.4 It is now almost twelve months since it was agreed that the acceptance of bookings would be temporarily suspended, and the Council has very recently received a request from an organisation that is not affiliated to England Boxing to hold an event at Perdiswell Leisure Centre.
- 3.5 In short, the requesting organisation operates a semi-professional boxing league that seeks to hold events across England. It offers opportunities for 'novices', 'interims' and 'elites' across a range of weights for both males and females, children and adults. The organisation has developed its own rules and regulations with no reference to England Boxing.
- 3.6 Therefore, officers wish to make Committee aware of the previous CLT decision, the application for an event that has recently been made, and seek approval to maintain the temporary suspension on non-England Boxing affiliated events that has been put in place.

4. Preferred Option

- 4.1 The Council still awaits the publication of the coroner's report and the outcome of the WRS investigation and therefore the recommendation is that Members approve the continued suspension of non-England Boxing affiliated events on Council premises until such time that the coroner's report into the death in Worcester is made public and a further report is presented to committee.
- 4.2 Once the findings have been made public, a further report will be presented to Members.

5. Alternative Options Considered

- 5.1 The option of recommending that the suspension be lifted is not considered appropriate pending the active WRS health & safety investigation and Coroner's Inquest.
- 5.2 The option of recommending the suspension be made permanent is not considered appropriate, without having reviewed the findings and outcomes of both the WRS investigation and the Coroners Inquiry.

6. Implications

6.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Legal and Governance Implications

The Council has an overall responsibility for ensuring the events run from its premises are safe and lawful. In practice, most of this responsibility will fall to the premises operator and the events organisers. However there could be a residual risk falling on the Council if the actions of the Council were found by a court to have somehow contributed to failings in the way health and safety systems were operated or an incident was managed.

The Council's recommended approach is to await the findings of the Coroner's Inquest, as this is a competent court process which should be informative for those who operate similar events to the one which is the subject of the Inquest.

6.2 Risk Implications

There are no risk implications associated with this report.

6.3 Corporate/Policy Implications

There are no corporate or policy implications associated with this report.

6.4 Equalities Implications

There are no equality implications associated with this report.

6.5 Human Resources Implications

There are no human resource implications associated with this report.

6.6 Health and Safety Implications

There are no health & safety implications associated with this report.

6.7 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications

There are no social, environmental or economic implications associated with this report.

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Background Papers:	N/A