



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	IMEX American 2012
<b>Date:</b>	21 August 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development ext 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jennifer Patterson, Revenue and Business Generation Manager, Belfast Waterfront/Ulster Hall ext 1335

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The purpose of this report is to make members aware of Belfast Waterfront's opportunity to partner Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB) and exhibit on the Belfast stand at the Imex America tradeshow in Las Vegas from 9-11 October 2012.
1.2	Imex America is America's worldwide exhibition for meetings, incentive, conferences, exhibitions and events. The show is organised by the Imex Group which also delivers the well known and established Imex exhibition in Frankfurt.
1.3	Over 2,000 qualified hosted meetings, incentive, conference and exhibition (MICE) buyers will be in attendance from across the US and the rest of the world.
1.4	BVCB attended Imex America in 2011; the show was regarded as a huge success with 311 new contacts made and 15 dedicated meet the buyer appointments secured. The show generated an enquiry from the World Council of Credit Unions to host their 2,000 delegate international conference in 2016. Belfast is now at the advanced bidding stage.
1.5	At this time BVCB, The Hastings Hotel Group and Titanic Belfast have registered to attend and will be exhibiting on the Belfast stand.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	Competition in the conference/ business tourism market is increasing as new destinations enter the marketplace and existing destinations invest in their product offering and become more accessible to clients.
2.2	As Belfast's purpose built conference centre, it is important that the Waterfront is represented at the show and, is a proactive member of Belfast's conference sales task force going out to compete in the International marketplace.
2.3	We need to increase Belfast's profile as an attractive conference destination and, communicate to International association buyers that Belfast is investing in its facilities and increasing its capability to host large-scale conferences and exhibitions of 2,000 plus delegates through the development of the Waterfront.
2.4	<u>Market Opportunity</u> Participation at the show offers a valuable sales platform - the opportunity to access American and international event planners. Tradeshow attendance will deliver sales lead generation and valuable conference sales opportunities which in the long term will support business tourism growth and socio-economic development. This initiative also supports Waterfront Business Plan achievement.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	Costs associated with this tradeshow will include the participation fee of £2,500 plus travel and accommodation costs estimated at £1,600 plus subsistence.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
	There are no equality and good relations considerations attached to this report

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	It is recommended that Committee approves the attendance at the event of the Waterfront Hall's Revenue and Business Generation Manager, who, in conjunction with the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, Titanic Belfast and the Hastings Hotel Group, will host the Belfast stand at the IMEX America Tradeshow in Las Vegas from 9-11 October 2012.

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	There is no decision tracking attached to this report

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	MICE – meetings, incentive, conference and exhibitions BVCB – Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau

