

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE
15 SEPTEMBER 2009**

USE OF BEDFORD SQUARE

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members on revised guidelines for the use of Bedford Square

2.0 INFORMATION – BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Guidelines for the use of Bedford Square post the opening of Princesshay were approved by Executive on 18 March 2008.
- 2.2 A further report was considered by Executive at its meeting on 16 June 2009, seeking guidance on the use of Bedford Square by political organisations.
- 2.3 At its meeting on 16 June, Members agreed on the profound importance of freedom of speech as one of the overriding principles of democracy. However distasteful the views of certain political parties may be considered, Members felt that it was important for society to hear, rather than suppress, such views. Members acknowledged that many charities now have lobbying roles, with the term 'political organisations' increasingly difficult to define.
- 2.4 As its meeting on 16 June, Executive resolved that:
- (a) Political organisations be permitted to use Bedford Square
 - (b) The advice of the police be sought on bookings where there was considered to be any threat to public order, the final decision to be made by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council;
 - (c) The Bedford Square usage guidelines be amended to clarify that proposed changes to the guidelines would be approved by the City Centre Management Partnership Board.
- 2.5 The Bedford Square guidelines have now been revised and are attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.6 The revised guidelines were approved by the City Centre Management Partnership Board at its meeting on 3 September 2009.

3 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 Members are asked to approve the revised Bedford Square guidelines.

**JOHN RIGBY
DIRECTOR ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT**

**JOHN HARVEY
CITY CENTRE MANAGER**

ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None