

Committee	Dated:
Culture Heritage and Libraries Committee	11 December 2018
Subject: Keats House Pricing Review 2019/20 – (Registered Charity No 1053381)	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
Report author: Rob Shakespeare, Principal Curator	

Summary

This report sets out the proposed changes to admission prices to Keats House, and private hire rates for Keats House and Ten Keats Grove, for the financial year 2019/20.

The proposed charges are informed through benchmarking with local and regional peer organisations.

The proposals support the Keats200 programme to grow and diversify audiences and revenue.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- Members approve the proposed admission prices and private hire rates outlined in this report as detailed in Appendix 2.

Main Report

Background

1. Keats House is Registered Charity 1053381, the purpose of which is ‘to preserve and maintain and restore for the education and benefit of the public the land with the buildings known as Keats House as a museum and live memorial to John Keats and as a literary meeting place and centre’.
2. Income generated from admissions to the house, educational taught sessions and private hire of the Chester Room and Nightingale Room in Ten Keats Grove, contribute towards the cost of running the service.
3. The Keats200 programme (2018 – 2021) aims to increase visitor numbers and diversify audiences. Adjusting entry prices is one way of facilitating this, while acknowledging the need to maintain the proportion of the budget derived from income.

Current Position

4. The current admission fees at Keats House have been in place since April 2016 and, historically, have tended to be lower than our peer organisations (see Appendix 1). They are:

Ticket price / organisation	Keats House
Full price	£6.50
Senior	£5.50 (over 65s)
Concession	£4.50 (students, unemployed and people with a disability)
Child	FREE (aged 17 and under)
National Trust Member	£3.25 (tied at 50% of full price ticket)
Art Fund Member	FREE
Educational Taught Sessions	£3 per student

5. An income target of £35,000 is set against admissions which includes educational taught sessions.
6. In 2017/18, an outturn of £40,905 was achieved against admissions, including educational taught sessions.
7. The full price ticket is up to £3 or 30% cheaper than similar peer organisations. This could be seen to undervalue the visitor offer at Keats House, a view expressed by Visit England in their recent Assessment Visit. The 2017 Visitor Survey showed that 88% of visitors surveyed felt the price to be 'good' or 'excellent' value for money.
8. The 'Senior' ticket price for people aged over 65, is priced between the Full Price ticket and the Concession rate. This is not a commonly adopted approach amongst our peer organisations or within the North London Open Spaces Division and causes confusion when communicating with customers.
9. It would also be desirable to have a consistent approach to 'Concessions' across the Division, which offers a 40% reduction on the full price ticket price for its concessionary rate.
10. Free entry for children is currently defined as '17 and under'. This is arbitrary and causes administration problems, particularly when admitting self-led college and sixth form groups, as it results in some students being potentially eligible for charges.
11. Two sector wide ticket categories are included: National Trust Members are eligible for a 50% reduction on the full price ticket and National Art Fund Members receive free entry. The historic reasons behind these agreements are being investigated but the position is not expected to change for the financial year commencing April 2019.

12. Our 2017 Visitor Survey showed that about a third of our visitors come from outside the UK, whereas only 13% defined themselves as local. The same survey also showed that 77% were visiting Keats House for the first time, while only 9% had visited previously in the last 12 months. There is clearly the opportunity to encourage more local people to visit Keats House on a regular basis, which would increase our audiences and, potentially, lead to increased revenue through shop sales and ticketed events. Actions to engage more with our local community would also contribute to Corporate Plan aims, specifically 'Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need'.
13. The current charge for educational taught sessions is £3 per student. Schools continue to face challenging financial positions and Keats200 is an opportunity to encourage more educational visits. A £2 (or two hundred pence) fee would also have marketing opportunities during Keats200, as well as helping deliver strategic objectives for increasing access and maximising the learning potential of our sites.
14. Keats House currently advertises Private Hire rates for the Chester Room, whole House and the Nightingale Room, see Appendix 1.
15. In practice, hires of the Chester Room and whole House are problematic because it impacts on the visitor experience if within business hours, or incurs additional expense in terms of staff costs and lost staff capacity if out of hours.
16. The Nightingale Room can be opened independently of the House and is a larger, less historically sensitive space, suitable for a range of hires at different times. A 20% discounted rate is currently offered to 'not-for-profit' organisations running literary events or events which benefit the local community. This is ambiguous and causes difficulties for staff to administer fairly and consistently.
17. An income target of £17,000 is set against hire of facilities. In 2017-18, an outturn total of £16,925 was achieved from over 100 hires. Officer time in administering and supporting private hires, along with additional staffing and contract security costs to support the hire itself, are significant and impact on the core functions of the heritage attraction, especially when hires include the Chester Room or whole House.

Proposals

18. Taking account of a recent benchmarking exercise and the launch of the Keats200 programme it is proposed that:
 - I. The cost of a Full Price ticket to Keats House be increased by £1 to £7.50, an above inflationary (15%) increase which brings it in line with peer organisations.
 - II. Merge the Senior category into the Concession rate and freeze the Concession rate at £4.50, i.e. a 40% discount on the full price ticket.

- III. Following the successful introduction at Tower Bridge, trial during 2019/20 a local Community ticket priced £2, for residents of the London Borough of Camden and the City of London, to encourage more local and repeat visits.
- IV. Increase the age limit for free entry to the House to 18 years to include all those in compulsory education or training.
- V. Reduce the fee charged for educational taught sessions to £2 per head for the duration of the Keats200 programme (until March 2021), to provide affordability and encourage greater take-up from schools.
- VI. Limit the private hire of the Chester Room to those which support the purpose and aims of the House. Fees will be determined on application subject to the nature and impact of the event, rather than being advertised.
- VII. Increase fees for the Nightingale Room by 2.7% in line with the Consumer Price Index and remove the advertised reduction for 'not for profit organisations'. It is proposed that regular bookings or those that support the purpose and programming of the House will be assessed to determine an appropriate reduction or waiver of charges at the time of booking.

Consultation

- 19. The proposed changes to admission prices as set out in Appendix 1 of this report, were discussed at the Keats House Consultative Committee held on 3 October 2018, which broadly endorsed the changes proposed in this paper. There has been one change to the proposal since that consultation which is to freeze the Concession rate at £4.50, rather than £5 as proposed to the Consultative Committee. That proposal was changed in order to ensure a consistent approach to Concessions across the Division.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

- 20. Through offering competitive pricing, including appropriate discounts, Keats House particularly helps to achieve the 2018-2023 Corporate Plan's aims to: Contribute to a flourishing society (3-4), Support a thriving economy (5) and Shape outstanding environments (12).
- 21. The proposals position Keats House to contribute directly to the values and objectives of the City of London's Cultural Strategy 2018-22, specifically by being an 'open, distinct, welcoming and culturally vibrant destination', as well as able to 'cultivate the creativity, skills and knowledge of the next generation' and 'promote our world class culture and heritage offer and use our wealth of outdoor spaces to widen its appeal to a more diverse audience, enabling communities in the City and beyond'.
- 22. The proposals also support the three objectives set out in the Open Spaces Business Plan 2018-19: a) Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and

accessible, b) Spaces enrich people's lives and c) Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

23. Officers have been asked to remind Members of the City's obligation, as the sole trustee of the Keats House Charity, to make decisions in relation to Keats House in the best interest of the charity.

Financial Implications

24. A simple and conservative modelling exercise has been conducted to calculate projected income from the proposed new charging structure. The number of tickets sold in 2017-18 in each category was reduced by 13% to allow for local residents. The total number of locals was then re-introduced at the proposed £2 ticket price.
25. This model resulted in projected income of £39,501 with no audience growth and £40,686 with the current target 3% audience growth added. This would meet income targets set for the year 2019/20.

Conclusion

26. Keats House continues to meet its income targets, principally through admission charges, private hires and sales of merchandise.
27. The Keats200 programme from December 2018 to February 2021 and beyond is an opportunity to grow and diversify audiences and income, ensuring that Keats House has a sustainable future in terms of audiences and income.
28. The changes to admission prices proposed, support the aims of the Keats House charity as well as those of the Corporation, while providing a range of affordable ways for the public to visit and enjoy the cultural offer at Keats House.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Fees comparison and current Private hire rates.
- Appendix 2 – Proposed charges 2019/20.

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Appendix 1. Fees comparison to local & regional peer organisations, Autumn 2018.

Ticket price / organisation	Keats House	2 Willow Road / Fenton House	The Freud Museum	Charles Dickens House	Dr Johnson's House	The Monument	Keats House Proposed from April 2019.
Full price	£6.50	£7 / £8	£9	£9.50	£7	£5	£7.50
Senior	£5.50 (over 65s)	N/A	Same as concession below	Same as concession below	Same as concession below	Same as concession below	Same as concession below
Concession	£4.50 (students, unemployed persons and disabled persons)	N/A	£7 (senior citizens, children aged 12 – 16 years old, unemployed persons and disabled persons)	£7.50	£6 (over 60, student or registered unemployed)	£3.30	£4.50
Child	FREE (aged 17 and under)	£3.50 / £4	FREE (under 12)	£4.50 (aged 6 – 16 years old)	£3.50 (aged 5 – 17 years old)	£2.50 (5 – 15 years old)	FREE (aged 18 and under)
National Trust Member	£3.25 (tied at 50% of full price ticket)	FREE	£4.50 (tied at 50% of full price ticket)	N/A	N/A	N/A	£3.75 (tied at 50% of full price ticket)

Art Fund Member	FREE	N/A	£4.50 (tied at 50% of full price ticket)	FREE	N/A	N/A	FREE
Notes	Fees as from April 2016 to date.	A joint ticket for both properties costs £13 for adults and £6.50 for children.			Family ticket for two adults and two children: £15		£2 community ticket rate to be trialled

Publicly advertised Private hire rates 2018/19:

	Private 9am-5pm	Private 5pm-9pm	Charity* 9am-5pm	Charity* 5pm-9pm
Chester Room (per hr)	£100	£125 (min 2 hrs)	£80	£100 (min 2 hrs)
All Keats House (per hr)	£140	£185 (min 2 hrs)	£120	£148 (min 2 hrs)
Nightingale (per hr)	£70	£125 (min 2 hrs)	£56	£100 (min 2 hrs)

* A discounted rate is offered to not-for-profit organisations running literary events or events which benefit the local community.

A 10% discount is available for block bookings of 10 or more sessions paid in advance.

Appendix 2. Proposed charges 2019/20.

Ticket type	Current Charges	Proposed 2019/20 Charges
Full price	£6.50	£7.50
Senior	£5.50 (over 65s)	Included in Concession (below)
Concession	£4.50 (students, unemployed and people with a disability)	£4.50 (60 and over, students, unemployed and people with a disability)
Community rate ticket	N/A	£2 (for residents of LB Camden and the City of London)
Child	FREE (aged 17 and under)	FREE (aged 18 and under)
National Trust Member	£3.25 (tied at 50% of full price ticket)	£3.75 (tied at 50% of full price ticket)
Art Fund Member	FREE	FREE
Educational Taught Sessions	£3 per student	£2 per student

Publicly advertised Private hire rates 2019/20:

	9am-5pm	5pm-9pm
Nightingale (per hr)	£72	£128 (min 2 hrs)
Chester Room / Keats House	Price to be determined on application against criteria to be developed by Principal Curator.	