

Committee	Dated:
Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee	18 March 2024
Subject: Keats House Fees and Charges 2024/25	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 3, 4, 5 & 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	
Report of: Bob Roberts, Interim Executive Director Environment	For Decision
Report author: Rob Shakespeare, Head of Heritage & Museums, Environment Department	

Summary

This report sets out the proposed fees and charges at Keats House in 2024/25, including admission to the house, taught learning sessions and private hire rates.

It is proposed that fees and charges are generally increased by approximately 6%, with some rounding where appropriate. This is to reflect increased costs while maintaining Keats House's position in relation to comparable venues and services.

Also contained in this report is a recommendation to harmonise charges for learning sessions at Keats House, with those of the Natural Environment Learning team, to maximise joint-working and cross-promotion of the learning offer.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Members agree the proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

Main Report

Background

1. On 23 January 2023, your Committee approved the recommendation to increase admission prices to Keats House for 5% generally for 2023/24.

2. The income generated from fees and charges contributes towards the cost of operating Keats House as a museum and visitor attraction, and fees and charges are therefore reviewed annually to maintain the financial sustainability of the Keats House Charity (Charity No. 1053381).
3. Fees and charges at Keats House are not based on full cost recovery and are significantly subsidised by the City Corporation through the Keats House Charity as part of its cultural contribution to London and the nation.

Current Position

4. The fees and charges at Keats House, including admission fees and private hire rates, were last approved by your Committee in January 2023, for the period April 2023 – March 2024.
5. At that time, as previously, benchmarking was conducted against a small number of comparable venues in the local area and London region. This has been refreshed in winter 2023/24 to inform the recommendations included in this paper (Appendix 2).
6. As well as a range of concessions, Keats House has a number of sector-specific agreements which offer set rates for certain membership / ticketing schemes, including reduced rates for National Trust Members, London Pass holders and Art Fund Members. In addition, a number of historic agreements exist offering reduced or free entrance to various ‘friends of’ groups, sector bodies, City of London Members, staff and volunteers (see Appendix 1).
7. In February 2024, a new agreement was reached with ‘Go City’ – the providers of the London Pass Scheme – offering a 40% concession on the Full Price ticket rate from April 2024 until March 2026. Admission for a visitor with a London Pass is free at the point of entry, with fees owing claimed by invoicing for the agreed number of visitors admitted under the scheme.
8. For 2024/25, an indicative income target of £32,000 has been set against admissions, with an additional £1,000 for taught school sessions and £19,000 for income from private hires. However, these principal sources of income are within an overall income target of £114K for Keats House, and the composition of our income streams needs to be reviewed and potentially rebalanced to ensure the future sustainability of the charity.
9. Keats House income has been reduced since March 2020 and will continue to be so until there is a full recovery from the COVID-19 global pandemic, including the

full return of UK and, especially, international visitor numbers. At the same time, Keats House is experiencing increases in its fixed costs, including staff costs, utilities and goods and services.

10. In-person visits, private hires and school sessions to Keats House are recovering, with a c.70% recovery predicted for 2023/24 and c.90% for 2024/25. Despite this, income from admissions and sales is now expected to return to pre-pandemic levels in 2024/25, due to an increase in spend per head. If any shortfall is experienced, this will need to be absorbed within the local risk budget for Keats House, the Charity's Reserve or additional deficit funding for the Keats House Charity from City's Estates.

Proposed Fees and Charges 2024/25

11. It is proposed that admission fees for 2024/25 are generally increased by 6.1%. This recommended increase contributes to offsetting the impact of inflation on our costs and has been informed by the recommended increases in fees and charges within the Natural Environment Division and other visitor attractions in the City, therefore maintaining Keats House's position as a value for money visitor attraction within the London tourist economy.
12. However, applying a 6.1% increase to the 2023/24 full price ticket of £8.40 results in £8.90 and it is recommended that, by exception, the full price ticket is rounded to £9 (equivalent to 7%) for ease of communication.
13. Previously admission fees included a concessionary rate offering a c.40% discount on the standard adult charge. Again, this was in line with the concessionary rate within the Natural Environment Division and intended to enable a diverse range of people to visit Keats House. The proposed ticket price for concessions is £5.30.
14. It is proposed to continue to offer parity with the Concession rate for National Trust members. This is to encourage visits by NT members generally and particularly those visiting Willow Road and Fenton House nearby.
15. The 'community ticket', for residents of the London Borough of Camden and the City of London, is a useful way of marketing the house to local residents and encouraging repeat visits. It is therefore recommended that this should be retained, though also subject to the 6.1% inflationary increase, resulting in a new rate of £2.50.
16. Facilitating cultural engagement for young people and encouraging families with children to visit Keats House remains a strategic and operational priority, especially as children and young people are under-represented in the visitor profile. It is therefore recommended that Keats House retains free entry for those

aged 18 and under to encourage cultural participation at this formative stage.

17. Since May 2023, Keats House is managed within the Culture & Projects Section of the Natural Environment Division, alongside the Learning Team. To facilitate the potential of future joint projects and promotion, it is recommended that Keats House now adopts the pricing structure of the Learning Team. If adopted, this would result in a flat rate of £99 per session for state supported schools and £129 per session for independent schools.
18. To offset any negative impact of this above inflationary increase – which comes after five years of heavily subsidised rates during Keats 200 and the pandemic – Keats House will again be actively supporting schools with a pupil premium rate of 35% or more to access funding from the City Corporation’s School Visits Fund and Cultural & Creative Learning Fund.
19. It is proposed that the hourly rates charged for private hires at Keats House are also increased by 6.1% as a contribution to increased costs, with separate rates for hires which occur within and outside Keats House operational / staffed hours, other than for private parties, which are charged the higher rate at any time. This would result in new hourly charges ranging from £85.50 - £154.00 in 2024/25.
20. A number of local stakeholders (e.g. City Corporation departmental teams, the Heath & Hampstead Society and Royal Free Hospital) use Keats House for small hires, typically meetings of c. 20 people during the daytime or evenings. It is recommended that these hires can be offered at the lower rate regardless of what time they take place, while still maintaining a higher ‘out of hours’ rate for hires which require additional officer support.
21. Similarly, it is recommended that officers continue to be granted discretion to determine the best location for private hire requests, according to operational and other considerations at the time of the booking request, without setting specific rates for the Nightingale Room and Chester Room.
22. Members are reminded that a lower, beneficial rate for Keats Community Library’s use of Ten Keats Grove was approved at the meeting of your Committee on 29 January 2024, due to their partner status in operating from the site.
23. It is requested that the above proposals are approved for the whole of 2024/25, with an annual review and approval each spring as in recent years, to provide certainty of pricing over the course of a business year while allowing for Keats House to respond to medium to longer term changes in the economy.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic Implications

24. The setting of fees and charges at Keats House contributes towards the achievement of the three aims set out in the City of London Corporate Plan.
25. The projects and works outlined in this report also support the Environment Department to Shape Sustainable Future Environments through its Primary and Supporting Aims and Objectives and contribute to the outcomes identified in the new Natural Environment Division's five key strategies, specifically the Visitor and Destination and Charity Income Strategies.

Financial Implications

26. The City's Financial Regulations require all departments to recover full costs when setting fees and charges to persons or external organisations or submit reasons to the appropriate Service Committee when that objective is not met. The Duty to recover costs must be subject to any other overriding statutory provision. It is therefore at the discretion of individual Spending Committees to determine the actual level of fees and charges relative to the services they provide, after taking account of local considerations and priorities.
27. Officers and Members are committed to working to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on budgets and to ensure our finances are on a sustainable footing for the medium to long term.

Legal Implications

28. Officers have been asked to remind Members of the City Corporation's obligation, as the sole Trustee of the Keats House Charity (Charity No. 1053381), to make all decisions in relation to Keats House in the best interests of the charity.

Risk Implications

29. Income for 2024-25 may continue to be impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing recovery, although this is expected to be negligible compared to previous years. This reduced risk will be reflected in the Risk Register once updated.

Equality Implications

30. A Test of Relevance has been completed in relation to the proposed fees and charges. A full Equality Analysis is not recommended.

Consultees

31. The Chamberlain's Financial Services team have been consulted in the production of this report.

Conclusion

32. Keats House continues to provide good value as a visitor attraction, both regionally (Appendix 2) and also for UK and international tourists. The income generated through admission fees and private hire charges contributes towards the cost of providing Keats House as a museum and visitor attraction for the benefit of London and the nation.
33. Maximising income from all sources will continue to be a priority as the Charity looks to ensure a sustainable future for its operating and business models.
34. It is proposed that admission fees and private hire rates are increased to offset increasing costs, while retaining a good value, competitive offer for our visitors and customers.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Proposed Fees and Charges at Keats House, 2024/25.
- Appendix 2 – Fees benchmarking exercise, refreshed February 2024.

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