

Committee(s)	Dated:
Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For decision	24/10/2016
Subject: Approval of Arts Council of England Accreditation documentation for Keats House	Public
Report of: David Pearson, Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	For Decision
Report author: Frankie Kubicki, Senior Curator of Keats House	

Summary

As an Accredited Museum, Keats House is required to submit an Accreditation Return every three years to the Arts Council of England. Maintaining Accredited status demonstrates that the House is run professionally and sustainably; many funding bodies only accept applications from Accredited Museums.

This paper presents five reports which require approval by the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee as the House's governing body ahead of submission to the Arts Council as part of the Accreditation Return. They are:

- A Forward Plan, which sets out the House's strategic aims and objectives for the period up until March 2020, and describes how they will be resourced and achieved;
- A Collections Development Policy, which sets out the House's approach to acquiring and (where appropriate) deaccessioning collection items;
- A Collections Care and Conservation Policy, which explains how the Keats House team ensures that collection items are preserved for future generations;
- A Documentation Policy, which explains how information about collection items is gathered, recorded and stored; and
- An Access Policy, which explains how the House makes its building and collection available to the public for the enjoyment and education of its audiences.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve Keats House's Forward Plan
- Approve Keats House's Collections Development Policy
- Approve Keats House's Collections Care and Conservation Policy

- Approve Keats House's Documentation Policy
- Approve Keats House's Access Policy

Main Report

Background

1. The Museums Accreditation scheme is managed by Arts Council England (ACE). ACE set out the purpose of the scheme as follows:

“We want all museums to be sustainable, focused and trusted organisations, which offer their visitors a great experience. The Accreditation Scheme sets out nationally-agreed standards, which inspire the confidence of the public and funding and governing bodies. It enables museums to assess their current performance, as well as supporting them to plan and develop their services.”

2. Keats House first achieved full accreditation in 2010.

Current Position

3. In order to maintain its Accredited status, Keats House must submit an Accreditation Return to Arts Council England. This includes five documents which must be approved by the governing body, namely the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee.

Options

4. The five documents are provided in full as appendices to this report. Summaries and key points for each are provided below.

Proposals

5. Forward Plan

This is a new requirement for Accreditation.

The Forward Plan has been developed by the Principal Curator (Keats House) and Senior Curator in consultation with the staff team and the Head of Cultural and Visitor Development.

In line with ACE requirements it provides details of the following, for the period up until March 2020:

- Strategic aims and objectives;
- An action plan, explaining how and when these aims and objectives will be achieved;
- A resource plan, providing details of human and financial resources which will be needed to deliver the forward plan;

- Details of how Keats House will continue to improve access; and
- Details of the House's commitments to environmental sustainability.

6. Collections Development Policy

ACE have produced a new Collections Development Policy template and require that this is used by all Accredited Museums going forward.

The areas covered by this policy are:

- Relationship to other policies/plans;
- History of the collections;
- Overview of the current collections;
- Themes and priorities for future collecting;
- Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal;
- Collecting policies of other museums;
- Acquisition;
- Human remains;
- Biological and geological material;
- Archaeological material;
- Exceptions;
- Spoilation;
- Repatriation and restitution of objects and human remains; and
- Disposal procedures

The majority of the policy statements (those in bold) are standard clauses required by ACE.

The areas which are specific to Keats House are the history and overview of the collection, and the themes and priorities for future collecting.

7. Collections Care and Conservation Policy

This document sets out the House's policy on the care and conservation of its collection and defines an overall framework which the House adopts to ensure that the Collection is cared for to the highest appropriate professional standards, while at the same time balancing the needs of access and long-term preservation.

8. Documentation Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that documentation meets industry standards (SPECTRUM), and for each object in its collection Keats House has:

- Documentary proof of legal and ethical ownership;
- Accurate records in the collections management system;
- A unique accession number, which is marked on the object; and
- Accurate location records.

It is a new requirement by ACE that the Documentation Policy is approved by the governing body.

9. Access Policy

This document sets out Keats House's policy for providing physical and intellectual access to its collection and information resources.

It is a new requirement by ACE that the Access Policy is approved by the governing body.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. Maintaining Accredited status is vital for Keats House as many of its activities, including obtaining external funding and securing loans from other institutions, are dependent on this.

11. Keats House is highly-regarded, award-winning visitor attraction and contributes significantly to the City Corporation's good reputation as a responsible steward of heritage assets, a provider of world-class education programmes and a valued investor in London's cultural and visitor landscape. It has attracted significant funding from ACE and from the Heritage Lottery Fund in recent years as well as other bodies.

Implications

12. All resources required for delivering the plans and processes outlined in the appended documentation are identified under the relevant sections. The majority are achievable through existing local risk budget allocations and staffing. Any activity requiring additional funding is clearly marked and will be subject to that funding being secured.

Conclusion

13. Keats House strives to maintain the highest standards in the planning of its activities, and in managing, caring for and providing public access to its heritage building and collection. The documents appended to this report state how the House will achieve this, with reference to best practice in the museums and galleries sector, and in the formats required by Arts Council England for Accreditation.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Forward Plan
- Appendix 2 - Collections Development Policy
- Appendix 3 - Collections Care and Conservation Policy
- Appendix 4 - Documentation Policy
- Appendix 5 - Access Policy

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