

Committee:	Date:
Keats House Consultative Committee	18 September 2012
Subject:	Public
Ten Keats Grove (KHCC 2012-07)	
Report of:	For Information
The Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	
<u>Executive Summary</u>	
<p>This report summarises progress in delivering Objective 2 of the Keats House Business Plan 2012-13. Progress is recorded in bold.</p> <p>Objective 2 - To transform the services provided by Keats House by developing the use of the Heath Library premises [now known as Ten Keats Grove] in partnership with others</p> <p>The London Borough of Camden returned full responsibility for the premises to the Keats House Charity in April. The City of London as sole trustee of the Charity has taken over its direct management and among other developments has agreed a licence with the Keats Community Library for that organisation to run a community library there.</p>	
<u>Recommendation</u>	
<p>It is recommended that this report is received.</p>	

Main Report

Background

1. The Keats House Charity, comprising Keats House and the Heath Library, was transferred to the City of London from the London Borough of Camden in 1998. The Heath Library (built in 1931) was then leased back to Camden at a peppercorn rent, on the understanding that it should be used as a public library though occasional literary or other cultural events also took place. Camden as leaseholders were responsible for rates, for their share of utilities costs, for maintenance of the library, for insurance and for a share of garden maintenance costs. In 2011 Camden reviewed its library provision in the borough and decided to close the Heath Library as of 31 March 2012.

Current position

2. In the light of Camden's decision, the City of London assumed full responsibility for the Heath Library premises, now known as Ten Keats Grove, and did so on 16 April. During the first weeks of April Camden completed their dilapidations work and the City undertook some improvements to the events space, notably the creation of the Nightingale Room which can host some 100 people, more than double the capacity of the Chester Room in the house itself.

3. As reported at the last meeting of this Committee, the potential of the site is threefold: to improve the events, educational and community programmes offered by the Keats House Charity, to develop the role of Keats House as a poetry and literary centre more widely, and to develop partnerships with local community associations and groups. All such activities must comply with the object of the Keats House Charity 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'. It is also essential that the running costs of the premises are met and these were estimated by Camden to be of the order of £30,000 for the year 2011-12.
4. As a first step, the City has entered into a license agreement with the Keats Community Library (KCL) for that organisation to run a community library there. KCL opened to the public in April and has run services for adults and children as well as special fundraising events. The license is for two years in the first instance to allow KCL time to establish itself and for the City to examine how the premises can be best used in the long term.
5. Keats House has also begun to use the Nightingale Room for a range of its own events including the launch of the Keats Festival (as well as several Festival performances and workshops), a reception for the Keats Foundation supporters and school visits. A number of external organisations have enquired about the hire of this space and some bookings have already taken place. The room was also used as a polling station in May and will be again for a Camden council by election in September.

Conclusion

6. While the management of Ten Keats Grove and the development of its use both by the Keats House Charity and external organisations, notably the Keats Community Library, is still in its early stages, progress has already been made to develop its potential to become a significant City and local resource.

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