

<b>Committee(s):</b> Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee	<b>Date(s):</b> 23/11/2020
<b>Subject:</b> Mid-Year Update Report for Keats House Charity, 2020/21	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Rob Shakespeare, Principal Curator (Keats House), Open Spaces Department	

### Summary

At the meeting of the Keats House Consultative Committee held on 18 February 2019, Members approved the proposal to use the Trustees Annual Report on activities at Keats House, as the basis for updating Members on achievements and progress at the House.

Presented at Appendix 1 for information and discussion is the draft annual report on activities at Keats House, including activities undertaken in the period 1 April – 30 September 2020.

Members are asked to note the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the services and programmes being delivered and discuss the extent to which Keats House continues to deliver the objectives of the charity and contribute to Corporate and Departmental outcomes.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. note the report and its contents; and,
2. note that the report and its appendices were presented to the Keats House Consultative Committee at its meeting on 12 October 2020. At this meeting, Members shared their thoughts on achievements at Keats House and how the service continued to meet the priorities, aims and objectives outlined within the Corporate Plan 2018-23, the City Corporation's Cultural Strategy, the Open Spaces Department Business Plan and the objectives of the Keats House charity.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. Keats House is a registered charity (number 1053381) with the City Corporation acting as sole trustee.
2. As a registered charity it is required to submit an annual report and financial statement, detailing its activities and to ensure compliance with the Charities Act 2011. The draft report included at Appendix 1, forms the basis of the report for 2020/21, covering the period April to September 2020.

### **Current Position**

3. Due to UK Government restrictions imposed to control transmission of the COVID-19 virus, Keats House and Ten Keats Grove, including Keats Community Library, closed to the public with effect from Wednesday 18 March 2020. During this period City Corporation Officers and the 'New Museum School' trainee worked from home and casual staff and volunteers were stood down, with casuals being paid a weekly average rate based on hours worked from January to March 2020.
4. Following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions for the heritage sector, Keats House reopened to the public on Sunday 26 July 2020. To ensure a COVID-19 Secure environment for the workforce, including volunteers, and visitors, the museum and garden reopened on specific days only, to a limited number of people visiting in pre-booked sessions lasting 60 minutes. Enhanced cleaning is undertaken between each visitor session and social distancing measures are reinforced through pre-visit information and booking confirmation, signage and ground markers at the site, as well as the visitor welcome / introduction on arrival. Keats Community Library reopened on Saturday 18 July, operating on Tuesdays and Saturdays with no access to the garden or external toilets, in order to maintain segregation of customers and facilitate COVID-19 Secure cleaning regimes.
5. Keats House continues to work with partner organisations and stakeholders to deliver online engagement, particularly relating to the Keats200 bicentenary programme, with a number of key anniversaries falling in 2020/21.
6. The Principal Curator and City Surveyor's Department are working to progress the access improvement project funded through the London Borough of Camden's Community Infrastructure Levy, along with associated works to preserve and enhance the Grade 1 listed house and garden.
7. The response to, and initial recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the activities of the Keats House Charity. In particular, income targets for admissions, shop sales, events and private hires will not be met in 2020/21, resulting in a projected loss of income from these sources alone of £73,216. Despite some reductions in 2020/21 operating costs, following previous years' arrangements any year-end budget deficit would be drawn down from the Charitable Reserves at the expense of planned projects and priorities.

Members of the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee are considering a report from the Chamberlain on in year budget adjustments at their November meeting.

## Proposals

8. The Principal Curator recommends that the following revised priorities for April 2021 onwards are included in the Plans for Future Periods section of the Annual Report once submitted in spring / summer 2021:

The overarching priorities which will guide all of our objectives and activities from April 2021 are:

- Deliver access improvement projects at Keats House
- Implement Keats House Activities Plan for 2021/22
- Develop a three year Management Plan for Keats House, to ensure the future sustainability of the Keats House Charity and its operating model.

## Corporate & Strategic Implications

9. The projects and activities outlined in this update contribute to the outcomes of the City of London's Corporate Plan:

### **Contribute to a flourishing society**

(3) People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.

(4) Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.

### **Support a thriving economy**

(7) We are a global hub for innovation in finance and professional services, commerce and culture.

(8) We have access to the skills and talent we need.

### **Shape outstanding environments**

(9) we are digitally and physically well-connected and responsive.

(10) we inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration.

(12) our spaces are secure, resilient and well-connected.

10. The activities contribute to the outcomes of the Open Spaces Department Business Plan as detailed in Appendix 1 under three top line objectives: A. Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible; B. Spaces enrich people's lives; and C. Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

## Conclusion

11. While activities have continued, and been specifically developed for, online engagement and the museum has now reopened, the operation and programming of Keats House has been profoundly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, its operating model, medium-term plan, and desired outcomes need to be reviewed to ensure the future sustainability of the museum and its continued Accredited status.
12. The Keats200 bicentenary programme will culminate in February 2021 on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Keats. Working with our partners, tentative

arrangements have been made to mark this significant anniversary at Corporate level, but the successful delivery of these is contingent on many factors, not least the national situation with regard to COVID-19 response and recovery.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Draft Annual Report for Keats House Charity 2020/21, April – September 2020 update
- Appendix 2 – Keats House Activities Plan, 2020/21

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