

Committee(s): Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee	Date(s): 16/5/2022
Subject: End of Year Update Report for Keats House Charity, 2021/22	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Executive Director, Environment	For Information
Report author: Rob Shakespeare, Principal Curator (Keats House), Environment Department	

Summary

At the meeting of the Keats House Consultative Committee held on 18 February 2019, members agreed to 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.

Members last received a mid-year update, covering the period April to September 2021, at their meeting held on 13 December 2021. Presented at Appendix 1 for information and discussion is the draft full-year report on activities at Keats House in 2021/22, updated with activities from April 2021 – March 2022.

An update on Keats House Divisional Plan projects for 2022/23 is presented at Appendix 2 and the draft Keats House Activities Plan 2022/23 is included for the information of Members at Appendix 3.

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

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Members note the achievements at Keats House as described below, and in more detail at Appendix 1, and how the service continues to meet the priorities, aims and objectives outlined within the Corporate Plan 2018/23, the City

Corporation's Cultural Strategy, the Environment Department Business Plan 2022/23 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 update included at Appendix 1 forms the basis of the report for 2021/22.
3. As a matter of best practice and as an Accredited Museum, Keats House is required to have a Forward Plan which demonstrates how it plans to meet its stated aims and objectives within the wider strategies and desired outcomes of its governance arrangements. The Corporate Plan and Departmental Business Plan determine the strategic outcomes and objectives, while the Divisional Plan outlines how these are delivered through priority projects over a three-year period. The Keats House Divisional Plan updated for 2022/23 is presented at Appendix 2.
4. Following the culmination of Keats200 in 2021 and the ending of Covid-19 restrictions, Keats House aims to prioritise longer-term projects to enhance physical access to its premises and virtual access to its collections as identified in its Divisional Plan for 2022-25. While we have received planning and listed building consent for access improvements to the grounds and the new visitor entrance, these have yet to be delivered and we are still seeking feedback on the proposals for the replacement of the front boundary fence. Similarly, while preparatory work has been conducted, the new Collections Management System has yet to be procured and implemented. We hope to be able to progress these projects in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Current Position

5. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Keats House was open to the public Wednesday to Sunday, 11am – 5pm and Keats Community Library (KCL) opened for a total of 42 hours per week, Tuesdays to Sundays. At the beginning of April 2021 however, the entire site remained closed to the public due to the third National Lockdown, which had been in place since January 2021.
6. With the phased lifting of restrictions under the UK Government's COVID-19 Response – Spring 2021 (Roadmap), Keats Community Library reopened initially for 10 hours per week on Tuesdays and Saturdays from Tuesday 13 April 2021. Keats House and garden reopened from Thursday 3 June 2021, initially on two days per week rising to three days per week from mid-July, when KCL also added an additional day of operation.

7. From 1 July 2021, the five officers from the Keats House team who had been furloughed in proportion to how their roles were impacted by the closure of the House to the public, were brought back to their full contract hours. At the same time, 'furlough' payments to Keats House casuals were stopped to coincide with the reopening of the house resulting in opportunities for casual work.
8. Throughout most of 2021/22, both Keats House and Keats Community Library continued to open with restrictions on opening times and specific measures in place to ensure that the site remained COVID-19 Secure for our workforces and visitors. The safety measures were removed in phases with the lifting of legal requirements, with regard to Government and sector guidance, visitor sentiment, as well as the safety requirements of our workforce and visitors.
9. By March 2022, Keats House was open to the public on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays, 11am – 1pm and 2 – 4pm, and school visits, live events and private hires had all resumed, albeit at lower levels than pre-pandemic. Keats Community Library's opening hours had already returned to their pre-pandemic level and their live events programme was also being re-established.
10. During 2021/22, Keats House continued to work with partner organisations, individuals and stakeholder groups to deliver public engagement, particularly relating to the Keats200 bicentenary programme. From summer 2021, the live events programme at Keats House and Keats Community Library resumed, with some notable events to support Hampstead Summer Festival, Highgate Festival 2021, the Heath150 and Keats200 anniversary programmes, and Open House London Festival 2021. These events contributed to the local cultural and community offer, as well as wider initiatives and campaigns to encourage visitor confidence and the reopening of the economy.
11. A small number of private hires resumed at Ten Keats Grove, although these tended to be small, one-off hires, rather than larger scale or regular hires, which have still not returned to their former levels.
12. The Principal Curator and City Surveyor's Department are working to deliver the access improvement project, to be funded through the London Borough of Camden's Community Infrastructure Levy, along with associated works to maintain, preserve and enhance the Grade 1 listed house and garden. Cyclical and reactive maintenance works to Keats House and Ten Keats Grove (library building) are also ongoing, with projects to improve the safety and security of both buildings scheduled to take place in 2021/22 now deferred to 2022/23.
13. The Principal Curator continues to work with Paul Vick Architects and London Borough of Camden's Planning Department to develop a proposal to replace the current dilapidated, wooden boundary fence on Keats Grove. The proposals are for a dual-height brick wall with metal fencing over, which would be more durable and in keeping with this Grade 1 listed site situated within the Hampstead Conservation Area. This proposal has yet to be formally shared with local stakeholder groups for consultation, prior to submitting to Members and London Borough of Camden for the required approvals.

14. The licence for Keats Community Library (KCL) to operate from Ten Keats Grove, which expired on 19 April 2020, has not yet been renegotiated. It is in the hands of the City Surveyor to make arrangements for the new licence agreement. In the meantime, KCL are paying a fee based on actual usage. As previously reported, the designation of KCL as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), as nominated by Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum, was renewed by London Borough of Camden for five years with effect from 14 April 2021. The Principal Curator recommends that any new licence agreement is for the same period as the ACV nomination.
15. The response to, and ongoing recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a profound impact on the activities of the Keats House Charity. In particular, income targets for admissions, shop sales, events and private hires were again not met in 2021/22. Some reductions in operating costs, including furloughing of Keats House officers, were achieved, protecting the Charitable Reserves for spending against future priority projects, such as the Collections Management System software and enhancements to the visitor entrance.
16. Over the next three years, Keats House will need to determine and demonstrate how it can best respond to the challenges of recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of the City Corporation's Target Operating Model, and any recommendations arising from the Charities and Governance Reviews.
17. Following the deletion of a vacant post, resignation of one part-time officer and maternity leave of another part-time officer from January 2022, the Keats House team currently comprises 2.77 fte staff, made up of four individuals in three main roles. These officers are prioritising opening the house to the public and rebuilding the public offer, including live events and school sessions both online as well as at the house and elsewhere. Divisional Plan projects, some of which are reliant on other parties as described above, are being progressed where capacity allows.

Proposals

18. Members indicate their continued support for the activities and priorities of Keats House in delivering the Charitable Objectives, as well as contributing to Corporate, Departmental and wider strategic and community outcomes.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

19. The projects and works outlined in this report contribute towards the achievement of the three aims set out in the City of London Corporate Plan 2018-23: Contribute to a flourishing society; Support a thriving economy; and Shape outstanding environments.
20. 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.

Conclusion

21. While activities continued online throughout lockdowns and the site and museum are again open to the public, 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, its continued Accredited status, and alignment with the structures and principles of the Target Operating Model.
22. The Keats200 bicentenary programme culminated in autumn 2021, with an outdoor, touring exhibition and associated programming as part of the City Corporation's Outdoor Arts Programme theme for 2021: 'A Thing of Beauty'.
23. A number of delayed projects designed to increase physical and virtual access to Keats House and its collections, will need to be prioritised for delivery in 2022/23 and 2023/24. These will contribute to the legacy outcomes of the Keats200 bicentenary programme, supporting the post-pandemic recovery and a sustainable future for the Keats House Charity.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – [Draft] Annual Report for Keats House Charity 2021/22
- Appendix 2 – Keats House Divisional Plan 2022-25, April 2022 update
- Appendix 3 – Draft Keats House Activities Plan 2022/23.

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