

Committee(s): Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee	Date(s): 14/11/2022
Subject: Keats House Collections Development Policy	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	4, 5, 7, & 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 Decision
Report author: Rob Shakespeare, Principal Curator (Keats House), Environment Department	

Summary

As an Accredited Museum, Keats House is required to submit an Accreditation return to Arts Council England every five years. Keats House was awarded Full Accreditation status on 21/09/2017 and in 2020 this was extended by 12 months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are therefore preparing our next submission, of which a Collections Development Policy which has been approved by the museum's governing body is a key requirement.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- Members approve the Keats House Collections Development Policy, 2022 (see Appendix 1).

Main Report

Background

1. Keats House is a registered charity (number 1053381) with the City Corporation acting as sole trustee. It is also a fully Accredited Museum (award number 097).
2. Keats House was first awarded Full Accreditation status by Arts Council England in February 2014 and this was renewed in 2017 on the, then, three-year re-application cycle. The new (2018) Accreditation Standard guidance states that the award lasts for five years, but this was extended by 12 months with effect from April 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The reapplication deadline for Keats House is now expected to be in 2024.

3. The Museum Accreditation Scheme is managed by Arts Council England and acts as the industry standard for UK museums and galleries, demonstrating that Accredited Museums are governed appropriately, manage their collections properly, and engage with their visitors. Although it does not come with funding attached, Accredited status can help museums access sources of funding, support, training and advice which are not available to non-accredited museums.
4. A Collections Development Policy, which is approved by the museum's governing body, is a key requirement of Museum Accreditation, as it identifies what collections a museum holds, how it seeks to manage and add to these and, where appropriate, dispose of items from its collections according to an approved, legal and ethical process.

Current Position

5. Keats House's Collections Development Policy was last approved by your Committee at its meeting on 24 October 2016. This formed part of the most recent and successful application for Museum Accreditation, which was awarded in September 2017.
6. The Collections Development Policy is based on a template provided by Arts Council England, with the majority of policy statements adopted as provided. The template itself has not changed since it was last seen by your Committee and is the nationally agreed model for all UK museums.
7. In preparation for our next Accreditation application, now expected in 2024, the policy has been reviewed and revised by Keats House staff, to reflect changes in our knowledge of the collections and how we describe, organise and manage them, including noting any significant new acquisitions. These changes are mostly contained in Sections 2, 3 and 8 of the Collections Development Policy attached at Appendix 1.
8. Arts Council England have yet to formally invite Keats House to re-apply for Museum Accreditation, but we have identified the review and revision of the policies and procedures which underpin a successful reapplication as a priority for 2022/23, so that we are in a position to finalise our application by the revised due date, now expected to be in 2024. In addition, it is expected that a Collections Development Policy is reviewed and submitted for approval every 5 years, which is now due.

Proposal

9. Members approve the Collections Development Policy included at Appendix 1, to support Keats House's application for Museum Accreditation, which is expected to be in 2024.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. Keats House's status as a fully accredited museum contributes 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.

11. Keats House's fully accredited status also supports 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 emerging strategic framework.

Conclusion

12. The Museum Accreditation Scheme is managed by Arts Council England 'to build people's confidence in how museums manage collections in trust for society, and how they manage public resources'. It also helps 'reinforce a shared, ethical way of doing things for everyone involved in running a museum'.
13. As a leading museum and visitor attraction within the City Corporation's cultural portfolio, Keats House aspires to the highest standards of governance, collections care, and visitor engagement and access. One way in which we can demonstrate this to our stakeholders, visitors and actual and potential funders is by retaining full Museum Accreditation status.
14. Reviewing, revising and implementing our key policies and processes as part of our reapplication for Museum Accreditation will help Keats House recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and develop a sustainable future operating and business model for the next five years.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Keats House Collections Development Policy, 2022.

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