

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee	23 January 2023
<b>Subject:</b> Keats House Admission Fees and Private Hire Charges 2023/24	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>2, 3, 4, 5 &amp; 12</b>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director Environment	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Rob Shakespeare, Principal Curator (Keats House)	

### Summary

This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for 2023/24 for Keats House, including admission to the house, taught learning sessions and the private hire rates.

It is proposed that fees and charges are increased by 5%. This is to reflect increased costs while maintaining Keats House's position in relation to comparable venues and services.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Members agree the proposed fees and charges for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. On 31 January 2022, your Committee approved the recommendation to increase admission prices to Keats House for 2022/23 by 4.9%, in line with the RPI figure for October 2021.
2. The income generated from fees and charges contributes towards the cost of operating Keats House as a museum and visitor attraction.

3. Fees and charges at Keats House are not based on full cost recovery and are significantly subsidised by the City Corporation through the Keats House Charity as part of its cultural contribution to London and the nation.

### **Current Position**

4. The fees and charges at Keats House, including admission fees and private hire rates, were last approved by your Committee in January 2022, for the period April 2022 – March 2023.
5. At that time, as previously, benchmarking was conducted against a small number of comparable venues in the local area and London region. This has been refreshed in autumn 2022 as context for the recommendations included in this paper (Appendix 2).
6. As well as a range of concessions, Keats House has a number of sector-specific agreements which offer set rates for certain membership / ticketing schemes. These include reduced rates for London Pass holders, National Trust Members and Art Fund Members as well as offering reduced or free entrance to various 'friends of' groups, sector bodies, City of London Members, staff and volunteers.
7. In December 2022, the Principal Curator agreed a new 2023/24 return rate with 'Go City' – the providers of the London Pass Scheme – of £5 per visiting adult, an increase of £0.50 (c.11%) on the previous agreement. Admission for a visitor with a London Pass is free at the point of entry, with fees owing claimed by invoicing for the agreed number of visitors admitted under the scheme.
8. For 2023/24, an indicative income target of £32,000 has been set against admissions, with an additional £1,000 for taught school sessions and £19,000 for income from private hires. These are within an overall income target of £107K for Keats House.
9. Keats House income has been significantly reduced since March 2020 and will continue to be so until there is a full recovery from the COVID-19 global pandemic, including the return of UK and international visitor numbers and confidence. In addition, Keats House is experiencing increases in its fixed costs, including staff costs, utilities and goods and services.
10. In-person visits, private hires and school sessions to Keats House are recovering but are yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. Despite the prospect of a stronger summer tourist season in 2023, income is expected to remain below target in 2023/24, although any shortfall is anticipated to be smaller than recent years and will be managed within the Environment Department's local risk budgets.

## **Proposed Fees and Charges 2023/24**

11. It is proposed that admission fees for 2023/24 are generally increased by 5%. This recommended increase contributes to offsetting the impact of inflation on our costs, is consistent with the recommended increases in fees and charges at North London Open Spaces sites and maintains Keats House's position as a value for money visitor attraction.
12. The proposed admission fees include a concessionary rate, offering a c.40% discount on the standard adult charge. Again, this is in line with the concessionary rate at North London Open Spaces sites and is intended to enable a diverse range of people to visit Keats House.
13. It is proposed to continue to offer parity with the Concession rate for National Trust members, thus providing them with a 40% reduction on full-price admission. This is to encourage visits by NT members generally and particularly those visiting Willow Road and Fenton House nearby.
14. The 'community ticket', for residents of the London Borough of Camden and the City of London, is a useful way of marketing the house to local residents and encouraging repeat visits. It is therefore recommended that this should be retained, though also subject to the 5% inflationary increase, resulting in a new rate of £2.35.
15. Encouraging young people to visit Keats House and schools to book a taught session when visiting Keats House remains a strategic and operational priority. It is therefore recommended that Keats House retains free entry for those aged 18 and under and its own pricing model for taught sessions, based on a cost / student, subject to a minimum session cost. The new proposed rates are again increased by 5%, resulting in £2.35 / student or a £52.50 minimum session cost.
16. It is proposed that the hourly rates charged for private hires at Keats House are also increased by 5% as a contribution to increased costs, with separate rates for hires which occur within and outside Keats House operational / staffed hours.
17. While a relatively popular request, private children's and family parties place additional and often time-consuming demands on Keats House staff and often conflict with other services at the site. It is therefore recommended that the higher, 'out of hours' hourly rate, is charged for all private parties regardless of whether they occur within or outside our operating hours.
18. While historically the Chester Room within Keats House has had its own hourly rate, it is recommended that discretion is granted to the Principal Curator (Keats House) to determine the best location for private hire requests, according to

operational and other considerations at the time of the booking request.

19. Members are reminded that an individual rate for Keats Community Library's use of Ten Keats Grove was approved at the meeting of your Committee on 14 November 2022, due to their partner status in operating from the site.
20. It is requested that these proposals are approved for the whole of 2023/24, during which time options for the future operation of Keats House, including Ten Keats Grove, will be considered in light of the longer-term impact of the global pandemic and recovery, the Corporate Charities Review, the implementation of Phase 2 of the City Corporation's Target Operating Model in the Environment Department and ongoing negotiations for the future use of Ten Keats Grove by Keats Community Library, as recently considered by Members.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

### Strategic Implications

21. The setting of fees and charges at Keats House contributes towards the achievement of the three aims set out in the City of London Corporate Plan 2018 – 23. Contribute to a flourishing society (2 – 4), Support a thriving economy (5) and Shape outstanding environments (12).
22. 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 and contribute to the outcomes identified in the new Natural Environment Division's emerging strategic framework.

### Financial Implications

23. The City's Financial Regulations require all Departments to recover full costs when setting fees and charges to persons or external organisations or submit reasons to the appropriate service Committee when that objective is not met. It is therefore at the discretion of individual spending Committees to determine the actual level of fees and charges relative to the services they provide, after taking account of local considerations and priorities.
24. Officers and Members are committed to working to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on budgets and to ensure our finances are on a sustainable footing for the medium to long term.

### Legal Implications

25. Officers have been asked to remind Members of the City Corporation's obligation, as the sole Trustee of the Keats House Charity (Charity No. 1053381), to make all decisions in relation to Keats House in the best interests of the charity.

### Risk Implications

26. Income for 2023-24 will continue to be impacted by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing recovery, as recorded in the Departmental Risk Register.

### Equality Implications

27. A Test of Relevance has been completed in relation to the proposed fees and charges. A full Equality Analysis is not recommended.

### **Consultees**

28. The Chamberlain's Financial Services team have been consulted in the production of this report.

### **Conclusion**

29. Keats House continues to provide good value as a visitor attraction, both regionally (Appendix 2) and also for UK and international tourists. The income generated through admission fees and private hire charges contributes towards the cost of providing Keats House as a museum and visitor attraction.
30. Maximising income from all sources will continue to be a priority during the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, as the Charity looks to rebuild its operating and business models.
31. It is proposed that admission fees and private hire rates are increased by 5%, to part offset increasing costs, while retaining a good value, competitive offer for our visitors and customers. Some discretion is granted to the Principal Curator to vary fees and charges to reflect market conditions and achieve best value for the Keats House Charity.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Proposed Fees and Charges for 2023/24.
- Appendix 2 – Benchmarking exercise, refreshed autumn 2022.

### **Contact**

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