

Committee(s): Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee	Date(s): 22/05/2023
Subject: Update Report for Keats House Charity, 2022/23	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 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: Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director, Environment Department	For information
Report author: Rob Shakespeare, Principal Curator (Keats House), Environment Department	

Summary

Since 2019, Members have received the Trustees Annual Report on activities at Keats House as the basis for updating your Committee on achievements and progress at the House.

Presented at Appendix 1 for information and discussion is the draft report on activities at Keats House between April 2022 and March 2023.

An update on progress against Keats House Divisional Plan projects is presented at Appendix 2.

Members are asked to note the achievements at Keats House in rebuilding its services and programmes following the pandemic and the extent to which it delivers the objectives of the charity and contributes to Corporate, Departmental and wider outcomes.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Members note Keats House's achievements in 2022/23 (as outlined below and described in more detail at Appendix 1) and how the Divisional Plan projects (Appendix 2) support the priorities, aims and objectives outlined within the Corporate Plan 2018/23 and other key Corporate strategies, the Environment Department's primary and supporting aims and objectives, 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 update included at Appendix 1 forms the basis of the draft report for 2022/23, including activities from April 2022 to March 2023. Unusually, this update has not yet been presented to Members of Keats House Consultative Committee but will be presented and discussed at their meeting scheduled for 23 June 2023.
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 other key strategies, along with the Environment Department's aims and objectives determine the strategic outcomes and objectives for Keats House. The Divisional Plan outlines how these are delivered at Keats House through priority projects over a three-year period. The Keats House Divisional Plan, updated for May 2023, is presented at Appendix 2.
4. In addition to rebuilding its core services (opening to the public, delivering formal learning sessions, live events and special projects), Keats House is currently prioritising longer-term projects to enhance physical access to its premises and virtual access to its collections as identified in its Divisional Plan. 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. Proposals for the new boundary wall are ready to be submitted to London Borough of Camden for planning consent. The new Collections Management System has been procured, and its implementation, development and launch are ongoing priorities for the current year. We are working to progress these major projects in 2023/24.
5. Despite some of the continued difficulties faced in the aftermath of the pandemic, Keats House is rebuilding its core services, growing its income and contributing to a range of Corporate and sector outcomes. It continues to work with internal and external partners to deliver creative and engaging programmes which contribute to Corporate and sector priorities, including access to culture, creative learning, wellbeing and community cohesion.
6. Over the next three years, Keats House has the opportunity to demonstrate how it can realise the potential of the City Corporation's Target Operating Model and any recommendations arising from the Charities and Governance Reviews to fully recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, rebuild and grow its

services and audiences and retain its full Museum Accreditation status. This award would validate the work it does to care for and make accessible Keats House and its collections, for the benefit of London and the nation.

Current Position

7. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Keats House was open to the public for 30 hours / week, Wednesday to Sunday, 11am – 5pm.
8. During 2022/23 and pending the outcome of TOM Phase 2 in the Environment Department and eventual recruitment to the proposed structure, Keats House has operated a seasonal model as follows: November to March open to the public for 12 hours / week on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays, 11am – 1pm and 2 – 4pm; and April to October open 20 hours / week with the addition of Wednesdays and extension of the afternoon session until 5pm.
9. School visits, live events and private hires all continued to grow in 2022/23, supporting the rebuilding of our audiences and income streams in the first full year of recovery following the pandemic.
10. In May 2022, we launched our 'Keats Inspired' exhibition and associated live events programme, accompanied and promoted by a newly designed visitor guide, themed social media campaign and special displays featuring rarely seen items from our collections. From February 2023, our 'Young Romantics in the City' exhibition opened. This partnership project has been funded by Cardiff University with the exhibition, changing displays and events programme being co-curated with Dr Anna Mercer.
11. The overarching themes of our public programming and social media campaigns in 2022/23 were therefore #KeatsInspired and #YoungRomantics, with the two exhibitions driving our changing displays, events programme and digital outputs.
12. During 2022/23, 36 different events were delivered including poetry readings, talks, book launches, family and literary workshops, and two major conferences for the Keats Foundation and Shelley200. A total of 1,192 people participated in our live events programme.
13. Our formal learning programme has recovered strongly following the pandemic, with the number of school sessions returning to two-thirds of pre-pandemic levels and our annual summer school again being delivered as an in-person programme at the house. We have also actively engaged with a number of wider initiatives, including Young City Poets, Poetry versus Colonialism and Culture Mile Learning's 'Culturally Speaking' oracy project, with the aim of widening and diversifying our learning offer. We were pleased to achieve the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, recognising the safety and quality of our learning provision.
14. Keats House were awarded funding to work in partnership with Keats Community Library and Hampstead School of Art to engage children aged 7 – 11 with The Wild Escape initiative in the spring of 2023. We are also preparing the content for

the launch of our online collections database, planned for autumn 2023, and continuing to review and revise our policies and processes to ensure we are ready for our Museum Accreditation submission, now expected in 2024.

15. The number of private hires has increased but has yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels, with 18 hires realising 40% of the annual income target for hire of facilities.
16. We continue to work with the City Surveyors to schedule works to maintain, preserve and enhance the Grade 1 listed house and garden and the Grade II listed Ten Keats Grove (library building). Works completed in 2022/23 included the repainting of external metalwork at Ten Keats Grove, the redecoration of the Keats House conservatory, and replacement of the east boundary and garden path fences. Works were also completed to resolve a mains water leak at the property.
17. The Principal Curator and City Surveyors also continue to work with Paul Vick Architects and London Borough of Camden's Planning Department to improve physical access and enhance the appearance of the entire site, which is situated within the Hampstead Conservation Area. The already approved designs for the new pathways, with access lighting are being costed to inform a reapplication to LB Camden's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) programme. The related proposal to replace the current dilapidated, wooden boundary fence on Keats Grove with a dual-height brick wall with metal fencing over as previously seen by this Committee, are being prepared for submission to London Borough of Camden for the required approvals to proceed.
18. As well as providing public access and engagement at Keats House, officers are currently working to deliver the priority projects outlined in the Keats House Divisional plan (see Appendix 2).

Proposals

19. 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

20. The activities, 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.
21. The activities of Keats House are also designed to contribute to the aims and outcomes of the City Corporation's Education, Creative Learning and Skills Strategies.

22. Keats House continues to 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.

Conclusion

23. Keats House is again open to the public and providing its core offer of self-led and guided visits, with formal learning sessions and opportunities for life-long learning and engagement with arts and culture. Though yet to return to pre-pandemic levels, the number of visitors, school sessions, events and private hires delivered are all increasing, supporting the achievement of our intended outcomes, including the achievement of a balanced budget for the charity.

24. The 'Young Romantics in the City' exhibition and events programme for 2023/24 has been launched with supporting events exploring current research themes planned for the spring and summer programme. Our involvement in the Art Fund's The Wild Escape project and other wider initiatives, will also increase our profile, strengthen partnerships and help diversify our audiences in the year to come.

25. A number of projects designed to increase physical and virtual access to Keats House and its collections which were delayed by the pandemic are now progressing and being prioritised for delivery in 2023/24. The achievement of these will support our application for Museum Accreditation in 2024 and, in the longer-term, deliver a sustainable future for the Keats House Charity, particularly in the lead up to the 100th anniversary of the house opening to the public, which we will celebrate in May 2025.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – [Draft] Annual Report for Keats House Charity 2022/23
- Appendix 2 – Keats House Divisional Plan 2023-26, May 2023 update

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