

<b>Committee(s):</b> Keats House Consultative Committee (for Information) Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee (for Decision)	<b>Dated:</b> 02/05/2025 09/05/2025
<b>Subject:</b> Achievements at Keats House 2024/25, including Risk Management Update	<b>Public report:</b> For Information and Decision
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> <li>• <b>provides business enabling functions</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse Engaged Communities</li> <li>• Vibrant Thriving Destination</li> <li>• Flourishing Public Spaces</li> <li>• Providing Excellent Services</li> <li>• Leading Sustainable Environment</li> </ul>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b>	Katie Stewart, Executive Director of Environment
<b>Report author:</b>	Rob Shakespeare, Head of Heritage & Museums, Natural Environment.

## Summary

This report updates Members of Keats House Consultative Committee and Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee on achievements at Keats House for the period April 2024 – March 2025.

During 2024/25, Keats House has been delivering the objectives identified in its annual Activities Plan (appendix 1), which in turn contribute to the achievement of Departmental, Corporate and wider cultural sector outcomes and initiatives.

This report also provides the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee with assurance that risk management procedures in place for Keats House are satisfactory and meet the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011. The risks held by the Keats House charity are summarised in this report and the detailed risk register is provided at Appendix 4.

## **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to:

a. **For Information: Achievements at Keats House**

Members are asked to note the achievements at Keats House outlined within this report.

b. **For Decision: Risk Management**

Members of the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee are asked to confirm, on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee, that the register appended to this report satisfactorily sets out the key risks to the Keats House charity and that appropriate systems are in place to identify and mitigate risks.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. Keats House is a registered charity (number 1053381), which is supported by the City of London Corporation who act as its sole trustee and resource it through the City's Estate fund.
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. This is compiled by Chamberlain's for approval by CHL in autumn 2025 prior to submitting to the Charity Commission by 31 January.
3. This report includes a draft of the Achievements and Performance section (Appendix 2) for information and discussion at Keats House Consultative Committee, and by Members of Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee.
4. This report also presents an update on the risks held by the Keats House charity, providing Members of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee with assurance that risk management procedures in place for Keats House are satisfactory and meet the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.
5. Keats House continues to focus on delivering its core services of opening to the public, delivering school sessions, and devising and promoting a year-round exhibition and events programme. The four staff permanently based at the house (currently 2.4fte), supported by the Natural Environment Heritage Team, are also prioritising a number of key initiatives and longer-term projects to preserve and enhance the premises and improve access to its collections, as identified in its Activities Plan 2024/25 (Appendix 1) and outlined below and in more detail in Appendix 2.
6. Through these activities it aims to rebuild its core services by increasing audience numbers and engagement, supporting a growth in income and increased

contribution to a range of Corporate, Departmental and sector outcomes. It continues to work with internal and external partners to deliver creative and engaging programmes which contribute to a range of priorities, including access to culture, creative learning, wellbeing and community cohesion.

7. Keats House continues to position itself to better support the objectives of the Environment Department, the City Corporation and wider cultural sector. The development of the emerging Cultural Strategy and a longer-term Business Plan for Keats House are seen as key to the retention of full Museum Accreditation, and underlining the role Keats House plays in the cultural life of London, the nation and beyond, particularly as it celebrates its 100th anniversary of being open to the public from May 2025.

## **Current Position**

8. During 2024/25, Keats House was generally open to the public on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays, 11am–1pm and 2–5pm. During that period there were scheduled closures from 5 – 7 June 2024 and 8 – 20 January 2025 for essential maintenance works and 22 – 30 December for the festive break. There were also five occasions when the house closed due to unexpected staff shortages or planned training needs.
9. The Hidden Histories of Keats House exhibition opened on 15 May 2024, telling the stories of the people who lived at the house after Keats's departure and before it became a museum. The exhibition bridges the period and themes of our programming during Keats200 with those for the upcoming Keats House 100 celebrations in 2025. The exhibition, which was originally intended to run to 30 March, was extended until Sunday 20 April 2025, to include the Easter holidays in its programming.
10. 7,664 people visited the house and Hidden Histories of Keats House exhibition during 2024/25. This is similar to the 7,338 visitors in 2023/24 and remains below pre-pandemic levels.
11. A total of 42 different public events were delivered during the year, including poetry readings, talks, live interpretation, and literary and creative family workshops. Over one thousand people attended our events programme, some of whom were also visiting the house, with the usual high levels of audience satisfaction shown in feedback forms.
12. The annual Keats Foundation conference was hosted in May and the Shelley Conference 2024 in June, attended by delegates from academic institutions around the world and informing collections development research.
13. Keats House continues to offer a broad range of learning sessions to teachers and students of all ages (particularly KS4 & 5) visiting in formal education, home-schooled and community groups. The annual Keats House Summer School and our involvement in delivering four special projects, funded by the City Corporation's Education Strategy Unit (ESU) through their Cultural & Creative

Learning Fund, has helped broaden our learning offer, partnership working and learning outcomes. In 2024/25, a total of 60 taught sessions were delivered to 1,112 students from 52 different schools. In addition, Summer School resulted in 133 instances of engagement with the arts. Keats House also hosted a Natural Environment student work experience placement on two days in July '24.

14. Collections research projects are ongoing to inform temporary displays and the exhibition programme, as well as improving our catalogue records for Museum Accreditation and future online access. Updating policies and processes to ensure we are ready for our Museum Accreditation submission, now expected in 2025/26, is also a key focus of our non-public work throughout the year.
15. Volunteers help deliver the outcomes of the team through a variety of roles, including visitor tours, poetry readings and collections care. Nine themed Afternoon Poems events were delivered by our Poetry Ambassadors and six volunteers provided tours of the house on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays throughout the year. In summer 2024 an under-graduate supported our front of house offer.
16. Keats House was again able to support local community partner events for Hampstead Summer Festival, which benefits two local charities: Keats Community Library and Hampstead School of Art. The annual Art Fair and Family Garden Party in particular see hundreds of people enjoying their local cultural and community offer, with a knock-on impact on the number of people visiting the house seen on those days. Keats House again took part in Open House Festival 2024, with 387 people visiting the house for free on Sunday 15 September.
17. The garden continues to be maintained by a dedicated group of Heath Hands volunteers, with whom a new agreement has been reached for the ongoing care of this much-admired, small green space. Our involvement in 'Green Changemakers' – an ESU funded project to create a more climate resilient garden – will also help make this much-loved, tranquil space, more sustainable, ensuring it can be enjoyed by our visitors and the local community long into the future.
18. Throughout the year we have worked closely with City Surveyors to schedule reactive, cyclical and planned preventative maintenance projects for both the Grade I listed house and garden and the Grade II listed Ten Keats Grove (library building). Works to improve the security of Keats House and Ten Keats Grove were completed in June 2024 and, more substantially in, January 2025, with the house closing to the public for a total of eleven days and Keats Community Library closing for six days to accommodate these essential works.
19. A new, five-year agreement for Keats Community Library (KCL) to continue to operate their local library service from Ten Keats Grove until 31 March 2029 was approved by Members of the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee on 29 January 2024 and signed by all parties on 12 November 2024.
20. As a condition of the premises licence for 10 Keats Grove, Keats House Consultative Committee receive a twice-yearly report of licensable events held at

the House, to ensure that the operating schedule and conditions are being upheld. To report that no activities involving the sale of alcohol have taken place to date in 2024/25 under the terms of Keats House's premises licence. Hampstead Summer Festival events which involved the sale of alcohol and other licensable activities were covered by TENs obtained by the organisers. Complimentary alcoholic drinks were served at three of the Keats House events referred to above and, at no cost to Keats House charity, at the Keats Foundation and Shelley Conferences, which also made use of the garden in the early evening. Three Keats House events which included live music took place within the conditions of the licence. Although these did not involve the sale of alcohol they are reported here for completeness. The Premises Licence for 10 Keats Grove was renewed until September 2025 at a cost of £180.00.

## **Risk Management**

21. The Charity Commission requires Trustees to confirm in a charity's annual report that any major risks to which the charity is exposed have been identified and reviewed and that systems are established to mitigate those risks. Your Committee is presented with the Keats House Risk Register every six months. This reporting frequency aligns with the City of London's Risk Management Strategy and the requirements of the Charity Commission.
22. The Executive Director assures your Committee that all risks held by the Keats House charity, which is part of the Natural Environment Division of the Environment Department, continue to be managed in compliance with the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.
23. All risks are regularly reviewed by the Head of Heritage and Museums, with the updates recorded in the corporate risk management information system. Risks are assessed on a likelihood-impact basis, and the resultant score is associated with a traffic light colour. For reference, the City of London's Risk Matrix is provided at Appendix 3.
24. The Keats House Risk Register contains no RED risks, two AMBER risks, and four GREEN risks which are owned and managed by the Head of Heritage and Museums. For each risk, appropriate mitigating actions are being undertaken, as shown in the detailed register at Appendix 4.
25. Since the date of the last report to your Committee, the score of the '**Health and Safety**' risk has reduced from Amber 8 (unlikely / major) to the target score of Green 4 (rare / major). This is a result of the installation of an integrated fire alarm system and CCTV and intruder alarms at Keats House and Ten Keats Grove. We accept that we cannot eliminate this risk entirely, but we will work to maintain the lower risk score and will keep the situation under continual review.

## **Proposals**

26. Members of Keats House Consultative Committee, and Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee are asked to note the achievements of Keats House between April 2024 and March 2025.

27. Members of Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee are asked to approve the risk register at Appendix 4.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

**Strategic implications** – The activities, projects and works outlined in this report contribute towards the achievement of Corporate Plan 2024–29 outcomes as shown in Keats House Activities Plan, 2024/25 (Appendix 1).

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 Natural Environment Division's strategic framework.

The activities of Keats House are also designed to contribute to the aims and outcomes of the City Corporation's Education Strategy 2024-29 and emerging Cultural Strategy, which is currently in development.

**Financial implications** – None

**Resource implications** – None

**Legal implications** – None

**Risk implications** - Effective management of risk is at the heart of the City Corporation's approach to delivering cost effective and valued services to the public as well as being an important element within the corporate governance of the organisation.

The risk management processes in place in the Environment Department support the delivery of the Corporate Plan, our Departmental and Divisional Business Plans and relevant Corporate Strategies, such as the Climate Action; Cultural; Sport and Physical Activity; and Volunteering Strategies. Risks are also being considered as part of the Natural Environment Divisions' strategies.

Risks which could have a serious impact on the achievement of business and strategic objectives are proactively identified, assessed and managed in order to minimise their likelihood and/or impact.

**Equalities implications** – None

**Equality Impact Assessment** – None

**Climate implications** – None

**Security implications – None**

## **Conclusion**

Keats House is open to the public and continues to devise, develop and deliver a programme of exhibitions, public events, formal learning sessions, special projects, and volunteer opportunities which provide for life-long learning and engagement with heritage and culture.

Once developed and approved, the longer-term Business Plan and other policies required for Museum Accreditation will allow for a sustainable future for the charity. The 100th anniversary of the house opening to the public, which we will celebrate from May 2025, is a major opportunity to engage with our current and potential audiences and refocus the purpose and activities of the charity for the to support City Corporation and cultural sector outcomes.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Keats House Activities Plan, 2024/25
- Appendix 2 – [Draft] Keats House Achievements and Performance 2024/25
- Appendix 3 – City of London Corporation Risk Matrix
- Appendix 4 – Keats House Risk Register, updated April 2025

## **Rob Shakespeare**

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