

Committee(s): Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee	Date(s): 25/09/2026
Subject: Keats House Policies for Museum Accreditation	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 3, 6
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: Katie Stewart, Executive Director of Environment	For Decision
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Summary

As an Accredited Museum, Keats House is required to submit an Accreditation Return to Arts Council England (ACE) every five years. Keats House was awarded Full Accreditation status on 21 September 2017. Its Accreditation period was subsequently extended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and ACE continues to work through the resulting backlog. We expect to be invited to submit our next Accreditation Return shortly and are therefore preparing accordingly. As part of the submission, the museum is required to have a set of plans and policies approved by its governing body. Three of these are presented here for approval: Collections Care and Conservation Policy; Documentation Policy; and Access Policy.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- Members are asked, acting collectively for the City of London Corporation as Trustee of Keats House and being satisfied that it is in the best interests of the charity and its beneficiaries to approve the suite of Keats House Policies for Museum Accreditation (see Appendices 1 - 3).

Main Report

Background

1. Keats House is a registered charity (number 1053381) with the City Corporation acting as sole trustee (CHL Committee acting under delegated authority from the

Court of Common Council as the body responsible for exercising the powers of the City Corporation as 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 with effect from April 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Keats House expects to be called for reapplication shortly.
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 sustainable, focused and trusted, inspiring the confidence of the public and funding and governing bodies. Although it does not come with funding attached, Accredited status is a nationally agreed standard which can help museums access sources of funding, support, training and advice which are not available to non-accredited museums.
4. A key requirement of Museum Accreditation is a suite of documents approved by the museum's governing body, namely a Collections Development Policy, Collections Care and Conservation Policy, Documentation Policy, and Access Policy, supported by a Forward Plan showing how they are delivered. Together, these documents establish the museum's strategic direction and provide a framework for the responsible development, documentation, care and public accessibility of its collections.
5. The full suite of policy documents 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.

Current Position

6. The Collections Development Policy was revised and re-approved by your Committee at its meeting on 14 November 2022 and is next due for review in business year 2027/28. The Keats House Forward Plan is currently being developed and will be brought to Keats House Consultative Committee and then to your Committee for approval in autumn / winter 2026/27.
7. To maintain best practice as an organisation and prepare for our next Accreditation application, Keats House staff have recently reviewed and revised three of the museum's five core documents. These have been updated to reflect current templates, priorities and practices. The revised Collections Care and Conservation Policy, Documentation Policy and Access Policy are attached at Appendices 1 - 3.
8. Arts Council England have yet to formally invite Keats House to re-apply for Museum Accreditation. However, we have identified the review and revision of

the policies and procedures which underpin successful reapplication as a priority in the Keats House Activities Plan 2026/27, so that we are in a position to finalise our application when called to resubmit. In addition, it is expected that each of these policies is reviewed and submitted for approval every 5 years.

Proposal

9. Members approve the three policy documents: Collections Care and Conservation Policy, Documentation Policy and Access Policy, included at Appendices 1-3, to support Keats House's application for Museum Accreditation and its continued adherence to sector best practice.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. Strategic implications – the policies presented for approval with this report contribute towards the achievement of Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes and priorities identified in the Education Strategy 2024-29 and the forthcoming Cultural Strategy.

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 contributes to the outcomes identified in the Natural Environment Division's strategic framework.

11. Financial implications – the implementation of these policies will be designed to be delivered within approved budgets, as outlined in the Keats House Forward Plan and Annual Activities Plans.
12. Resource implications – the implementation of these policies will be designed to be delivered within the existing resource base, as outlined in the Keats House Forward Plan and Annual Activities Plans.
13. Legal implications – None identified.
14. Risk implications – the regular review, approval and adoption of the Keats House policy framework helps mitigate against a range of risks as outlined in the Keats House Risk Register, particularly ENV-NE-KH-004 – Loss of staff expertise.
15. Equalities implications – the proposed policies support Keats House's commitment to providing inclusive and equitable access to its collections, services and activities. Their approval is not expected to result in any impact on people with protected characteristics.
16. Climate Implications – None
17. Security Implications – None

Conclusion

18. The Museum Accreditation Scheme is managed by Arts Council England and is the 'nationally agreed standards to ensure all museums are sustainable, focused and trusted, inspiring the confidence of the public and funding and governing bodies'.

19. 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, documentation 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.
20. Reviewing, revising and implementing our key policies and processes as part of our reapplication for Museum Accreditation will help Keats House develop a sustainable future operating and business model for the next three to five years.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – KH Collections Care and Conservation Policy 2026-2031.
- Appendix 2 – KH Documentation Policy 2026-2031.
- Appendix 3 – KH Access Policy 2026-2031.

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