

Committee:	Date:	Item no.
Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee	28 May 2012	
Subject: Keats House Business Plan 2011-2012: quarter 4 report (CHL 2012-03)		Public
Report of: The Director, Culture, Heritage and Libraries Department		For Decision
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Executive Summary</u></p> <p>This report summarises progress during the fourth quarter of 2011-12 in delivering the Keats House Business Plan. It also updates members on the present position concerning Ten Keats Grove (paragraph 10) in relation to which the City has begun to develop its own programme of events and activities there to support the Keats House charity and has also granted a licence to the Keats Community Library for it to run a community library service on the premises.</p> <p>As far as the business plan objectives are concerned, the following progress can be noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Objective 1 - To promote usage of Keats House by carrying out the 2011/2012 events, education and community programmes to the Local Performance Indicator targets. The programme for the final quarter has been completed with increased numbers across all the indicators.</i> • <i>Objective 2 - To improve the long term sustainability of Keats House and its services by supporting the Keats Foundation, specifically its organisational structure and formal charitable status, fundraising and promotional events The formal winding up of the Friends and the creation of a single support network for Keats House though the Foundation is almost complete. A programme of events for 2012 has now been agreed with the Foundation.</i> <p><i>Objective 3 - To promote usage of the house and engagement with the collections through the Keats Letter project. The educational projects associated with the purchase of the letter and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund have been completed to target. The project will end formally at the Keats Festival in June.</i></p> <p>Performance as against indicators is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>KHLPI01: The number of usages of the museum (target 18,000) actual = 25,797</i> • <i>KHLPI02: The number of those usages that were visits in person (target 17,000) actual = 22,775</i> 		

- *KHLPI03: Overall visitor satisfaction (adults) (95%) **96%** - this is based on returns to the annual visitor survey carried out during August and September.*
- *KHLPI04: The number of pupils visiting the museum in organised school groups (target 650) **actual = 750***

Recommendations

It is recommended that the report be noted

Main report

Current position: objectives

Objective 1 - To promote usage of Keats House by carrying out the 2011/2012 events, education and community programmes to the Local Performance Indicator targets

1. As well as the now regular programmes for Twelfth Night and Valentine's Day, the house has hosted a range of events including Regency craft sessions, an evening of readings to celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of Edward Lear and a two day symposium on Bram Stoker, the centenary of whose death fell in 2012. The symposium was organised by the University of Hertfordshire as part of its MA in English Literature: Modern Literary Cultures and included papers by academics, writers and film historians, including a keynote address by Sir Christopher Frayling.
2. The programme for the annual Keats Festival (1-10 June) has been finalised during this quarter with over 40 events taking place during the 10 day period. Activities include readings, music, talks, family workshops, art, craft and creative writing. For the first time it has been possible to use Ten Keats Grove and this has allowed for a greater number and range of events than could previously been organised.

Objective 2 - To improve the long term sustainability of Keats House and its services by supporting the Keats Foundation, specifically its organisational structure and formal charitable status, fundraising and promotional events

3. As has been reported previously, the Friends of Keats House have agreed to wind up their own organisation and transfer their assets to the Foundation. This process is nearing its conclusion and a celebration event was held in early May for both the Friends and Foundation supporters. The

actor Roger Lloyd Pack, assisted impromptu on the night by Dame Janet Suzman, gave an outstanding reading from Keats' odes and letters and there was a special display of printed and manuscript material from the collection.

4. The Foundation now has a programme arranged for the year which includes a garden party on 11 July, an autumn event with the 2012 poet in residence John Hegley, an annual meeting and event on 31 October (to mark the date of Keats' birth) and the Chairman's lecture in December. There will also be three newsletters issued during the year.

Objective 3 - To promote usage of the house and engagement with the collections through the Keats Letter project

5. The project is based around the letter which was written in 1820 at the house by John Keats to Fanny Brawne and which was purchased at auction in 2011 with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), the Friends of the National Libraries, the V&A Purchase Fund and the Friends of Keats House. As part of the HLF's grant, we also obtained £10,000 to develop interpretation work around the return of the letter to the house.
6. As part of the main programme, *Love Letters to London*, there have been two further sessions with the Mencap group in Brent which focused on graphic art, writing and model-making and the writer Anjan Saha, together with the Keats House volunteers, held a well attended creative writing drop-in session at the house. There were also four creative writing sessions for the young poets forum led by Anjan and the poet Aiofe Mannix. The programme will formally conclude and be celebrated at the Keats Festival when there will be several workshops run by Anjan, the artist Cos Ahmet and the poet Rommi Smith.
7. The schools aspect of this project, 'The Art and Craft of the Letter: Literacy & Language', has involved sessions for visiting primary groups. These have been well received by the children who have taken part and more sessions have been booked during the summer term. It is likely that this will become part of the permanent schools programme at the house.
8. The project has also been highlighted by papers at two recent events, the *Manuscripts Still Matter* conference at the British Library organised by the UK Literary Heritage Working Group and a seminar at Strawberry Hill House arranged by the personality museum group Old Houses, New Visions.

Current position: performance indicators

9. The figures for each type of usage are well up on target. The increase in the number of visitors has been spread across the year and has not impacted on the quality of the experience that the house offers.

Current position: Ten Keats Grove

10. The London Borough of Camden formally surrendered its lease of the Heath Library (now known as Ten Keats Grove) premises as of 16 April 2012. It closed its public library on 31 March and in the following two weeks undertook a large number of dilapidation works agreed with the City. It also allowed City staff on site to carry out key work during that period, particularly the re-creation as a single space of the area, now known as the Nightingale Room, that had been divided between Camden's children's library and the Keats Memorial Library. This room has a capacity twice as large as the Chester Room in the house and will be a significant resource in the future.
11. The City has also granted a licence to the Keats Community Library (KCL) to run a community library within the site. KCL operates a six day a week adult service and uses the Nightingale Room three days a week for a children's library service. On the other three days Keats House uses the room for its events, educational and community programmes.

Strategic implications

12. The role and work of Keats House meets the requirement of the Vibrant and Culturally Rich theme of The City Together's Community Strategy and the corporate objective *'To support and promote the City as a cultural asset and to encourage greater vibrancy and diversity in cultural and leisure activities'*

Conclusion

13. Delivery on all three improvement objectives has been significant during 2011-12. The future use and development of Ten Keats Grove will continue to be the largest factor governing the work of the Keats House charity during the coming year.

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