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| Committee(s) | Dated: |
| Culture, Heritage and Libraries | 04092017 |
| Subject: Keats House Premises Licence Application | Public |
| Report of: Director of Open Spaces | For Decision |
| Report author: Vicky Carroll, Principal Curator of Keats House | |

Summary

Keats House wishes to submit an application to the London Borough of Camden for a Premises Licence covering Keats House, the Library building and the Keats House garden. The primary purpose is to enable the sale of alcohol during public and private events, thereby supporting income generation for Keats House.

In particular, obtaining a Premises Licence will enable Keats House to tender for an events management company to promote, coordinate and provide catering for private hire clients. This will improve the service and it is estimated that it could increase earned income by £10,000 to £12,000 per year, with the potential for further growth in future. The cost of the application is £190 and there will be an additional one-off cost in the region of £500 for placing a notification of the application in a local newspaper.

It is proposed to request a Licence to sell alcohol Monday to Sunday between 10am and 11pm. In practice, alcohol would be sold at specific events which would be restricted to take place within these times. It is proposed to include the screening of films on the Licence application so that relevant films could occasionally be shown as part of the public events programme. The playing of live or recorded music would not be included on the application as this is now deregulated if it takes place before 11pm.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the submission of an application to the London Borough of Camden for a Premises Licence for Keats House.

Main Report

Background

1. Keats House already has a lively programme of over 100 public events per year. For some events, such as poetry readings and book launches, wine is currently provided free of charge. This is because authors and audiences expect alcoholic drinks to be served at such events and without a Premises Licence Keats House is unable to charge for them. For larger events, such as the popular 'Late Night Keats' series, Temporary Event Notices are obtained and alcoholic drinks are sold at a pop-up bar.
2. Since 2015 Keats House has been expanding its private hire business in order to increase earned income. Currently, clients can hire rooms and are able to bring and serve their own alcoholic drinks at private events such as birthday parties (subject to strict rules to ensure the care and conservation of the buildings and collection). Private hire is coordinated by the Keats House team and is reaching capacity due to staffing constraints. Keats House does not currently have a commercial arrangement with an events management company or caterer as this would require a Premises Licence.

Current Position

3. Keats House is required to continue to increase its earned income to offset future funding reductions, to maintain a high-quality visitor experience, and to develop the public offer and education programme.
4. In 2016-17 Keats House earned £17,994 from private hire.
5. There is an opportunity to expand the private hire business through engaging an events management company (through a competitive tender process) to help promote, coordinate and deliver events. Room hire fees would continue to be paid directly to Keats House, and the events company would be expected to pay a percentage of their sales to Keats House.
6. In addition, the ability to sell alcoholic drinks at public events would help to cover the costs of delivering the public programme.
7. A Premises Licence is required to achieve the above.

Options

8. The application fee for a Premises Licence is £190. There would be a one-off cost of around £500 for placing a notification of the application in a local newspaper.
9. It is difficult to estimate the impact on private hire income of engaging an events company before a competitive tender process has been completed. However, increasing private hire by 50% would generate around £9,000 in additional income from room hire. On top of this, Keats House would expect to receive a percentage of sales for catering, furniture hire and other services provided to the client by the events company. The full benefit could be in the region of £10,000 to £12,000 per year with the potential to increase further in the future.

10. In addition, the sale of alcoholic drinks at public events would enable Keats House to make a modest profit on wine sold at poetry readings and book launches, rather than incurring the costs associated with providing refreshments for free. This benefit would be in the region of £1,000 - £2,000 per year.
11. Proposals to obtain a Premises Licence have been discussed with the Keats House Consultative Committee, who are supportive.
12. Informal discussions seeking advice on the application have been held with the City of London Corporation's Licensing team and event caterers. The London Borough of Camden have been approached to request a pre-application discussion; a response is yet to be received.

Proposals

13. It is proposed to submit an application to the London Borough of Camden for Premises Licence to allow the sale of alcohol Monday to Sunday from 10am until 11pm. In practice, alcohol would be sold on an occasional basis for specific events, which would be restricted to take place within these times.
14. It is proposed to include the screening of films on the licence application so that relevant films can occasionally be shown as part of the public events programme without the need for a separate licence.
15. The playing of live or recorded music will not be included on the application as this is now deregulated if it takes place before 11pm.
16. The need to minimise the impact on local residents has been considered in the preparation of the operating schedule – in particular by specifying an 11pm finish time for licensable activity, by ensuring that outdoor events finish by 10pm, and by ensuring that windows and doors are kept closed after 10pm if amplified music is being played.
17. The licence application will be subject to a statutory consultation process. In advance of this, it is proposed to send a letter to residents in neighbouring properties informing them of the plans and advising how they can participate in the statutory consultation.
18. Current restrictions on appropriate use of Keats House and the Library building for private events – including restrictions on numbers of guests, event location and the types of food and drink which can be served – would be maintained in order to ensure the care and conservation of the listed buildings and the collection.
19. The Principal Curator of Keats House, who is a Personal Licence Holder, would be the Designated Premises Supervisor.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

20. An application for a Premises Licence will support the objective of Keats House to increase earned income.
21. It is anticipated that there may be objections from some local residents to the application. These will be managed through the statutory consultation process.

Conclusion

22. Obtaining a Premises Licence for Keats House is key to diversifying income streams and ensuring the ongoing financial sustainability of Keats House, enabling it to continue to provide a high-quality visitor experience and excellent public and education programmes.

Appendices

- None

Vicky Carroll

Principal Curator, Keats House

T: 020 7332 1818

E: vicky.carroll@cityoflondon.gov.uk