

Bristol Beacon project History 2000-2018

- 1) In the late 1990s a proposal was put forward for a new concert venue to be located on the harbour side. This initially attracted enthusiasm from the Arts Council England (ACE) and it was hoped that major lottery funding would enable an exciting new building to be commissioned. The project collapsed on cost grounds. In 2001, a new options study was commissioned by BCC concluding that the restoration and expansion of Colston Hall/Bristol Beacon was the best option for Bristol.
- 2) A Cabinet paper in 2003 agreed the redevelopment of Bristol Beacon, including the demolition of Colston House and the appointment of a lead design team led by architects Levitt Bernstein.
- 3) The £20.3m Phase One of Bristol Beacon redevelopment was completed in September 2009, with BCC committing £13m to Phase One. ACE contributed £7m and agreed with BCC that the first priority was to improve access and public facilities in the building. ACE imposed further conditions in return for its support for Phase One, including:
 - a) Plans for completion of all the other phases
 - b) Artistic leadership arrangement
 - c) Consideration of governance options
- 4) Although there was no claw back stipulated in the ACE funding agreement, a covenant states that grant funding was issued on the proviso that it was to put towards a foyer that would lead to the development of an arts building. If for whatever reason the hall changed its use to one other than that of an arts building, the £7m funding would need to be repaid.
- 5) To satisfy the conditions b) and c) an options appraisal on future governance of Bristol Beacon was requested in June 2009 by the then BCC administration. After consideration of various options it was agreed that the Bristol Music Trust would be set up and began operation in 2011.
- 6) For five years, between 2011 and 2016, there was little progress on plans for the next phase of redevelopment of Bristol Beacon.
- 7) In June 2016, at its first cabinet meeting after coming to power, the current administration authorised a £1.6m investment in Colston Hall Phase II to enable the preparation and submission of a detailed planning application.
- 8) A further Cabinet paper was table in May 2017 to endorse the application by BMT for ACE funding of £10m towards a refurbishment programme of £48.8m. The report noted

that BCC, as the accountable Body and freeholder of the building (and in accordance with ACE requirements) would underwrite the project, albeit BMT would be contractually committed to continue fundraising until all necessary funds have been obtained. The report also noted that a £24.9m contingency should be applied for optimism bias.

- 9) A further paper was taken to Cabinet in May 2018, which delegated authority to officers to appoint the contractor(s) for the redevelopment work, subject to development of the RIBA work packages ensuring that renovation works remain within the total maximum project envelope of £48.8m. This figure was subsequently revised upwards to £52.4m due to cost inflation, with the additional amount being met by an increased contribution from WECA.