



CORPORATE PLAN 2018-2020

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Foreword

Our sixth Corporate Plan comes at a time of much change within the sector. We have come through both Central and Local Government Reform, National and Local Elections, and changes to both the membership of the Joint Committee and the makeup of the councils.

During this Corporate Plan term the next Local Government elections are scheduled to take place, in May 2019, which may result in further changes in membership of the Joint Committee.

The new council structures are bedding in and as the corporate strategies and plans evolve it is gratifying to see that Waste and Resources and the Circular Economy are emerging as important issues for the Chief Executives and Central Government in terms of governance, delivery mechanisms, compliance, and best value. In this respect a review of the structures required to deliver the refreshed objectives for the public sector is currently taking place.

There is the potential for these considerations to have an impact on future regional / sub-regional waste management arrangements. Accordingly, this Plan has been prepared for a transitional two-year period focusing on key operational issues which need to be addressed in the period up to March 2020. This is intended to facilitate scope for a longer-term strategy to emerge in the future.

The Political landscape continues to present issues for us at Global, National, and Regional levels. Currently these include global recycle markets, European relations and governance in the Region. The Joint Committee continues to monitor events as they arise and as they impact on the operations of the organisation.

During this plan period it is anticipated that the outcome of the UK's withdrawal from the EU will become clearer for the devolved administrations, particularly in terms of the compliance with European Environmental Directives, including the Circular Economy Package. The date for the UK to leave the EU has been set at 29 March 2019. A key issue for the Joint Committee is to ensure that strategies are developed and implemented to prepare the organisation for Day One readiness with the minimum of interruption to services. A two-year Plan is also deemed appropriate for this.

Notwithstanding these considerations our new Plan maintains, at its heart, the core principles of partnership working, engagement, and consensus building, to deliver the components necessary for a successful public sector collaboration and scope for continuous improvement.

The Plan constitutes a blueprint for progress to maintain our drive for efficiency in managing our waste in a more sustainable way, in line with the Circular Economy, and I would commend it to all our councils, stakeholders, partners and other interested parties.



Councillor Declan O'Loan
Chair of the Joint Committee

Introduction

As explained in the Chairman's foreword this Corporate Plan covers a transitional period of two years up to March 2020. Its focus is to build on our previous corporate plans in terms of the direction of travel and our ethos of partnership working. In this way we seek to contribute to the delivery of best value waste management services for member councils and to strive for continuous improvement.

During the Plan Period there are a number of emerging issues globally and locally which will potentially impact on our work. These include, amongst others, Global Markets for Secondary Materials, Marine Plastics and developing Plastics Strategies, Brexit, the Circular Economy Package, a possible new Environmental Compliance structure for the United Kingdom, future Devolved Government in Northern Ireland, NI Energy Policy and network resilience, emerging new Strategies in other Devolved Administrations and the forthcoming review of the Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy. Such issues emphasise the need for the organisation to continuously monitor issues with a view to mitigating risks, at all levels, to delivery of our Waste Management Plan. Accordingly we will strive to maintain policy relevance and progress towards delivering the required network of infrastructure to move waste up the hierarchy, minimise landfill, and take a circular approach to the waste we deal with. Principal elements of this will include the residual waste project, organics including food waste, potential changes to waste collection systems, and delivery mechanisms.

In addition, focus on repeat procurements and operational management of contracts will continue to be critical.

The Circular Economy, where waste and resources remain in circulation for as long as possible before their sustainable treatment and disposal, remains key. This is important not only in terms of resource efficiency, energy security, and climate change but also for job creation and the local economic sustainability.

In addition, it will be necessary during this period to monitor the outcome and implications for the sector and the region arising from Brexit, particularly in terms of compliance. Issues such as higher landfill diversion and increased recycling targets are significant and it will be important that we maintain our momentum in this regard. As mentioned by the Chairman in his foreword an express additional requirement will be to work with our constituent councils to ensure through collaborative planning, not only business continuity in the transition to a post Brexit UK, but also to ensure seamless "Day One Readiness".

During this time we will continue to work closely in partnership with our stakeholders and in particular our member councils whose support and input is critical to our success.

We will also include policy makers with whom we will continue to engage at both a local and national level. Our message to them is that the strategy process should facilitate consolidation of the current direction of travel. Such an approach would allow us to build on the foundations we have constructed through our planning and implementation processes which were initiated over a decade ago.

Conversely it is important that our corporate and business planning processes incorporate the capability to be flexible to accommodate some of the uncertainty that is unavoidable in a period of significant change. I am content that this Plan meets these objectives and wish to put on record my thanks to all who have been involved in its preparation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Quinn', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Quinn
Chief Executive

About the Corporate Plan 2018-2020

The Corporate Plan sets out what we at arc21 must do - within the means available to us - in order to meet the expectations of our stakeholders. In developing the plan we have consulted widely as we move into a new planning period. Engaging with key stakeholders was central to the development of this plan.

Based on what we have learnt (and there was a good deal of common ground) the plan commits the organisation to 12 specific objectives and a series of initiatives and performance targets within a timetable that covers the period from April 2018 to March 2020.

There is some flexibility to allow for unforeseen events; however we will direct the use of our resources in pursuit of the strategic objectives and priorities for action, which are set out in this document.

Strategy at a Glance

The strategy is illustrated in graphical form below:



Mission, Values and Vision

We are quite clear that our mission is about sustainable waste management with a focus on what needs to be done to make this happen and leading to measurable public benefit and value derived from recovery, reuse and recycling. In serving our Councils, we serve also the wider community that makes up the arc21 region. We have attempted to capture this in the following statement of mission.

Our mission is:

“Working with our partners to prevent, recover and dispose of waste.”

In pursuing our mission arc21 has adopted four fundamental **core values** (see Table 1 below) that will be evident in everything Members, staff and stakeholders do on behalf of arc21. These are guiding principles that permeate every decision we make and everything we do.

Table 1: arc21 Core Values

| Values | Our Commitment |
|-----------------|--|
| Integrity | We will be accountable and trustworthy in how we exercise our responsibilities. We will treat our staff and stakeholders with respect and we will act in a fair and equitable way. |
| Sustainability | We will take into account the social, economic and environmental consequences of what we do and how we do it. |
| Public Interest | We will seek to make decisions with value for money and the best interests of the general public in mind. |
| Excellence | We will provide the highest quality of services possible within the resources available to us and we will continuously strive to improve. |

Vision for arc21

We are committed to working in partnership with others to ensure that the community we serve has access to exemplar waste management processes. In an ideal world we would hope to transform to a waste disposal authority model of governance for arc21 in line with our policy position and we will continue to argue the case for this because we believe that it is in the public interest and will offer the most effective, sustainable and efficient way of managing our waste. In this regard we await the outcome of a strategic review being undertaken by Councils and Central Government.

In pursuing our plan we will work to realise our vision for:

- A shift in mind-set towards considering the circular economy and waste as a resource;
- Continuous progress towards minimising waste to landfill and momentum towards a zero target;
- A modern, sustainable infrastructure enabling the community to recover waste, taking into account social, environmental and economic impacts;
- A community actively engaged in waste recovery activities;
- Harmonisation of waste policies and practices;
- Excellent services, offering value for money to satisfied customers; and
- A waste disposal authority model for arc21.

Strategic Context: Issues and Challenges Going Forward

Our corporate plan, if it is to be taken as credible and real, must take account of the circular economy, the social, economic and environmental change that is happening out there in the marketplace and in our communities. In particular we must continue to monitor the emerging developments in waste management policy arising as a result of Brexit.

The following section highlights some of the main issues and challenges that we believe arc21 will face over the next two years to March 2020.

Economic Recovery

The focus of the Programme for Government on the economy and the uncertainties and implications arising from the UK's decision to exit from the European Union present significant challenges for the waste management sector.

At the same time there will continue to be pressure on Councils and Central Government to keep rates and charges as low as possible and therefore any plans that require additional expenditure will need to be carefully justified.

There will be financial pressures on both businesses and individuals. This will add to the pressure to keep costs low and potentially limit the scope for development of services.

There has been a well established link between the state of the economy and waste arisings. It is interesting to note that Council municipal waste arisings are increasing in line with the strengthening economy and this will also impact on the future waste infrastructure requirements for the arc21 region.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Modernisation and Reform | <p>The Review of Public Administration has brought about the most significant change in the Local Government sector in Northern Ireland since 1972. Numerically, the former 26 Councils became 11 with 6 of these new Councils being the Constituent Councils of arc21.</p> <p>The new 11 Council structure model continues to develop and transform. In particular, in terms of waste management, a strategic review is underway involving both Councils and Central Government and we await the outcome in order that the implications for the future delivery of our services can be determined.</p> |
| Resource Efficiency | <p>To realise the inherent value in the materials we currently throw away it is important to have the right infrastructure network in place to maximise the benefits that come with being a highly resource efficient ‘recycling society’ providing a strong support mechanism for the vision set out in the circular economy package.</p> |
| Waste and Energy Sectors | <p>Over the coming years there is likely be an increased recognition of the contribution to energy security and renewable fuels that the waste sector can contribute. In Northern Ireland there are some policy integration challenges to overcome and arc21 will have to provide a strong voice, and an evidence base, to allow adequate policy formulation and alignment so that the benefits available elsewhere can be realised.</p> |
| Alternative Funding Sources | <p>It is envisaged that the pressures on the public sector for capital and resource funding will remain significant for the next few years. It will be important for arc21 to be informed and agile in seeking and configuring itself (e.g. working with partners) to make itself eligible for viable sources of funding from NI, UK and, pending the formal exit, EU institutions.</p> <p>The potential exists for arc21 to realise funding and other support from Central Government to assist Councils with the significant cost of developing waste infrastructure and engagement with key Central Government stakeholders will continue in order that financial, and other support opportunities, can be made available.</p> |
| Maintaining Quality of Service | <p>Despite problems in the wider economy, arc21 will do everything within its means to maintain service quality. Citizens will still expect excellent services from their Councils and, on their behalf, from arc21.</p> |
| Sustainability | <p>Government is committed to sustainability and will expect, and in some cases demand, the social, economic and environmental impacts to be a factor in public decision-making. arc21 will be required to make its contribution to the achievement of the circular economy and sustainable development in Northern Ireland.</p> |

Waste Management The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is primarily responsible for the implementation of the Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy and arc21 will continue to contribute to this strategy.

There will be no let up in the drive to deal with residual waste and achieve incrementally challenging recycling and landfill diversion targets for municipal waste. This is necessary to meet the statutory targets set out in the Waste Management Strategy.

Brexit In the referendum, held in June 2016, the UK decided to leave the European Union and the implications for waste management remain unclear. The date for leaving has now been set as 29 March 2019 which will be followed by a transitional period. However, clearly the Waste Management Strategy, and the principles behind this strategy, is likely to be maintained. Indeed, given the current developments in waste policy in the EU, for example the circular economy package, it is our view that the direction of travel for waste management will be for the continuation of increasing recycling targets and the continuation of reductions in the amount of waste that can be sent to landfill. It is important, therefore, that arc21 continues to carefully monitor the emerging developments associated with Brexit, be in a position to influence the policymakers and adopt the necessary flexibility to continue providing the high quality services expected by our Councils.

Strategy Overview

We have developed a corporate strategy that we believe will deal with some of the issues highlighted above and get the best value possible from the resources allocated to arc21. The overall thrust of the plan lies in a strategy that starts out to do more for our partners and to do it better. This will centre on the core areas of:

- Delivering a strong partnership-based organisation that can make a positive contribution to the waste strategy and the vision outlined in the circular economy package;
- Procuring infrastructure and services for arc21 Constituent Councils;
- Managing contracts for waste recovery and disposal; and
- Influencing policies and resource allocation with a firm conviction that the best future arrangement lies in having a waste disposal authority model subject to continuing consensus within our Councils.

Strategic Objectives and Priorities for Action

In order to be true to our mission, and maintain a focus on the areas that are most important, we have adopted a set of strategic objectives to frame our work over the next planning period 2018-2020. If we can achieve these objectives, we will make great progress towards achieving the arc21 vision.

The first set of objectives is aimed at **servicing our community and stakeholders** and responding to their needs and expectations. We recognise that these can only be achieved in an efficient and effective way by **improving our processes** and **managing our resources** well. Of course none of this will be possible if we do not develop and motivate our people by ensuring through **learning and growth** that they have the capacity to lead, manage and deliver in their area of work.

This overall approach will ensure we have a “balanced strategy” with sufficient flexibility to support any new initiatives which arise from the strategic review currently being undertaken, the circular economy package or from Brexit.

In summary, we have grouped our 12 objectives into four main sets as follows:

Servicing Community and Stakeholders (SCS)

SCS.1 Maintain and contribute to the implementation of the Waste Management Plan in compliance with legislative requirements and wider policy objectives.

SCS.2 Ensure the provision of infrastructure and continuity of services and supplies.

SCS.3 Promote, educate and influence others on waste minimisation and recovery, both directly and in partnership with others.

Improving Processes (IP)

IP.1 Strengthen arrangements with all stakeholders to aid delivery of effective and efficient waste management solutions.

IP.2 Review and modernise arc21 structures and governance processes following the operational commencement of the new 6 constituent councils in April 2015.

IP.3 Improve the quality and stability of all systems and maintain external quality assurance where appropriate.

Learning and Growth (LG)

LG.1 Ensure all staff are fully engaged and motivated.

LG.2 Review organisational design to keep it fresh and fit for purpose.

LG.3 Provide relevant support for the development of elected Members and Council Officers in their new roles.

Managing Resources (MR)

MR.1 Achieve financial and performance targets.

MR.2 Demonstrate high standards of financial assurance and risk management.

MR.3 Ensure that governance arrangements are in place.

Making it Happen

The Corporate Plan is a strategic document that shows how arc21 plans to organise itself to serve its members and the arc21 community over the next two years.

arc21 will regularly review its financial, accommodation and human resources to maintain a sustainable balance between service expectation and the mix of resources available to deliver.

Our commitment to regular review of progress against the plan is based on the schedule indicated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: arc21 Planning and Review Cycle

| Planning Level | Involvement and Expectation |
|-----------------------|---|
| Members | Ongoing progress reports presented to the Joint Committee, Audit Committee and Participant Councils as necessary. |
| Steering Group | Ongoing progress reports presented to the Steering Group and other Officer Groups in Participant Councils as necessary. |
| Managers | Quarterly review of performance against Corporate and Business Plans. |
| Staff | Annual review of Corporate Plan and involvement in developing specific activities in support of the Business and Service Plans. |

Appendix I

Profile of arc21

Following the formal decision by the new 6 Councils to reconstitute arc21 in line with the new Council structures becoming operational in April 2015, engagement took place with the Department of the Environment to ensure that the necessary changes to the vires were made that would enable arc21 to continue operations uninterrupted.

The 6 Constituent Councils approved the Terms of Agreement, under which the arrangements with arc21 and between each Council would be operated and these Terms of Agreement formed the basis upon which the Department was able to issue a new Statutory Instrument- the Local Government (Constituting a Joint Committee a Body Corporate) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

This Order became effective on 1 April 2015.

The Constituent Councils of arc21, following the reform of local government, are as shown below.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Belfast City Council
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council



Statistics

The population of Northern Ireland is 1.9m and in the arc21 administrative area is 1.1m which is the equivalent of 59% of the population in Northern Ireland.

The arc21 Constituent Councils managed 590,702 tonnes of municipal waste in 2016-2017 which accounts for 60% of the waste managed by all the Councils in Northern Ireland. The collective household recycling rate for the arc21 administrative area is 43.3% for the year 2016-2017.

Organisational Chart



Joint Committee

The Joint Committee is made up of 18 Elected Members with 3 Members nominated from each of the Constituent Councils and is the formal decision making body.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is a key component of the corporate governance arrangements within arc21 and is made up of Elected Members from the Joint Committee supported by a range of Officers with relevant financial, technical, management and operational skills to facilitate their requirements.

arc21 Establishment

The staff at arc21 are responsible for the day to day functional activities of the organisation, led by the Chief Executive.

Chief Executive's Group

The Chief Executive's Group comprises the Chief Executives and Directors from each of the Constituent Councils and is the forum at which issues of a strategic and Political nature are discussed.

Steering Group

The Steering Group comprises the Directors and Senior Officers from each of the Constituent Councils and is the key vehicle for discussion and recommendations being prepared for the Joint Committee.

Working Groups

A number of working groups have been established to provide important support in relation to the implementation of the Waste Management Plan. There are three main working groups established, the Operational Working Group, the Finance Officers Working Group and the Recycling Officers Working Group.

The Operational Working Group has been established to provide an appropriate level of technical and operational expertise in support of the specific waste policies being implemented.

The Finance Officers Working Group has been established to ensure that Council Corporate Finance Staff are kept informed of contractual and other obligations being entered into by the Joint Committee so that the specific financial implications to each Council can be assessed and accounted for.

The Recycling Officers Working Group provides a useful network forum for field Officers and for the implications of implementing the waste management plan to be observed at ground level.