

He reported that arc21 had a lower cost base than the benchmarked collaborations and noted:

- *total cost per head of population is £30.35, compared to an average of £59.10 for the other partnerships; and*
- *there is also a lower contract cost per tonne of £89.09, compared to £122.89 for the other partnerships.*

He advised that this performance had been consistent throughout each of the four survey years.

He reported that this was the last of the planned annual benchmarking reviews as arc21 was approaching the end of the current Corporate Plan. Once the new Corporate Plan was finalised, arc21 would consider if further benchmarking exercises would be relevant, appropriate and economical.

Councillor Enright inquired if arc21 had considered other partnerships which may be more comparable and outside the London area (e.g. Scotland), however Mr Walker advised that there were few that served more than one council area and neither Scotland or Wales formed similar partnerships. As there were few similar council groupings in GB, this is why Somerset and Merseyside had also been included which would also permit greater consideration of the issues between rural and urban settings. He offered to provide further details for any Member who might be interested.

He added that there was an issue with regard to the reserves position which had been highlighted in the report, where it shows that arc21's reserves as 4.1% of turnover, was much lower compared to 17.55% for the other partnerships. He added that as a consequence of this situation arc21 was operating in a high-risk litigious market to support activities on behalf of its constituent councils, but with lower level of reserves. The Chair suggested that this could be discussed in more depth at the next meeting.

Following discussion the Joint Committee noted the report, proposed by Councillor Givan and seconded by the Chair.

Action: Noted

Item 17 - AOB

There was no further business discussed.

Item 18 - Next Meeting Thursday 25 January 2024 (hybrid) to be hosted by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council in the Antrim Civic Centre.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending, the officers for their reports and cooperation in completing the agenda and wished everyone a Happy Christmas. He concluded saying that he looked forward to seeing everyone again in the New Year.

Date: 25 January 2024

Acting Chair: Councillor Alan Givan