

ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE
Virtual Meeting No 84
MINUTES
Thursday 25 January 2024

Members Present:

Councillor J Cochrane	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor A Cathcart	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor T Kelly	Belfast City Council
Councillor B Smyth	Belfast City Council
Councillor A Givan (<i>Acting Chair</i>)	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Councillor P Kennedy	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Councillor A Wilson	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor K Murphy	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Members' Apologies:

Councillor M Goodman (<i>Chair</i>)	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Councillor E McLaughlin	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Alderman P Michael	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Councillor C Blaney	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor E McDonough-Brown	Belfast City Council
Alderman S Skillen	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Councillor R Quigley	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor G McKeen (<i>Deputy Chair</i>)	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor C Enright	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
Councillor T Andrews	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Officers Present:

T Walker	arc21
H Campbell (<i>Secretary</i>)	arc21
K Boal	arc21
B McKeown	arc21
J Green	arc21
M Laverty	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
C Matthews	Belfast City Council
J McConnell	Belfast City Council
R Harvey	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
J Knox	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
D Carey	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

Officers' Apologies:

D Lindsay	Ards & North Down Borough Council
P Thompson	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
A Cassells	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Mr Walker introduced Mr Stephen Mungavin to the meeting to provide a presentation to members on 'Effective Governance of arc21'.

Mr Mungavin provided some information on his background and previous experience with board members.

He advised that arc21 was responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. He also advised that arc21 has a general duty under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 to make arrangements for continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised.

In discharging this overall responsibility, arc21 is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions which includes the management of risk.

His presentation included areas such as the role of the Joint Committee, information needs and decision-making, boardroom challenges, the NI Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors, the Nolan principles, and Conflicts of interest.

He advised that should Members have any queries, they are welcome to contact either Mr Walker or himself.

Mr Walker thanked Mr Mungavin and noted that he hoped that Members found it useful and informative.

He advised that arc21 is working on its next Corporate Plan 2024-28 and that it was hoped to bring a first draft to Members shortly for discussion and to get viewpoints, following which it was hoped to issue a final draft for consultation to councils in March for consideration.

Mr Mungavin left the meeting.

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Alan Givan took the Chair for the meeting.
Proposed by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Murphy.

Item 1 - Conflicts of Interest, Gifts and Hospitality Statement

The Chair read out the Conflicts of Interest, Gifts and Hospitality Statement, and none were noted.

Item 2 - Apologies

Apologies were noted.

Action: Noted

Item 3 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 083 held on 5 December 2023

The Joint Committee approved the minutes. Proposed by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by the Chair.

Action: Agreed

Item 4 - Matters Arising

Benchmarking Report 2021-22 - Reserves - the Chair raised this issue following discussion at the last meeting and highlighted that this was an important issue going forward that arc21 should have adequate reserves to make the organisation as resilient as possible.

Mr Walker advised that arc21's revenue is provided from the councils which is an issue arc21 is acutely aware of. He noted that in terms of the ongoing provision of services, arc21 reserves and insurance cover are relied upon when we receive legal challenges to pay for this currently.

He noted that arc21 is currently experiencing low reserves which we will be looking to recharge over the next couple of years through the budgeting process.

Mr McKeown advised that there was not anything which could be done until the next revenue estimates process in September but that it was arc21's intention to consider this further with councils. He advised that this has been raised during the last revenue estimates process with some push back from councils, but that it does need to be addressed to provide assurance in relation to arc21's future finances.

There were no specific matters arising, and updates on relevant issues were provided during the meeting. **Action: Noted**

IN COMMITTEE

The Chair recommended that the meeting would now move "*in committee*" which was agreed. Proposed by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Murphy.

Matters of a confidential and commercially sensitive nature were discussed under these agenda items.

Following discussion on the commercially sensitive matters, the Chair recommended that the meeting would now return to the main agenda, which was approved, but whilst "*In Committee*" during this section of the meeting, there were four matters discussed.

Item 5 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 082 held on 26 October 2023 'in committee' (approved)

Item 6 - Matters Arising (noted)

Item 7 - Residual Waste Treatment Project (approved)

Item 8 - Commercially Sensitive Contract & Procurement Issues (approved)

OUT OF COMMITTEE

Proposed by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Murphy.

Item 9 - Contracts & Operations Briefing Report

Service Status

Ms Boal reported that all services were operational during the months of November and December 2023. In November, NWP informed arc21 about their weighbridge being down for a short period of a day and asked drivers to use their contingency weighbridge in Glenside. In December, ReGen informed arc21 of issues with their weighbridge and a contingency weighbridge was used for half a day. Advanced notice was given for both of these contingency requests.

Ms Boal advised that the planned site visits were postponed at Cottonmount due to the high winds and that some netting had been damaged and for health and safety reasons arc21 had been unable to carry out some anticipated site visits and that these would be rescheduled shortly.

Action: Ms Boal

Performance

She reported that turnaround times had been reviewed for November and December and in nearly all cases, the contractors provided adequate reasons where the contract service level had been exceeded.

She noted that the overweight vehicles for the Landfill and Organics contracts had decreased in December compared to November, more specifically for the Organics contract, and these figures are improving.

In November and December, most reports were submitted on time and there were only minor issues with ReGen (Nov) and Heatricks (Dec) reporting that required revision due to incorrect data. Service credits were issued to Bryson in November as they failed to report a H&S incident to arc21 within the required timeframe.

In terms of the bottle banks, in November, there was one Bottle Bank (LCCC) that did not have the specified capacity and the service rectification was not completed within the required 48 hours, therefore service credits were applied to ENVA.

Service rectifications for December are still being verified.

Health and Safety Incidents

Incidents

During November and December 2023, she noted that there were six Health & Safety incidents reported to arc21 by contractors.

In light of the incidents at Bryson, arc21's external Health & Safety consultant was asked to review procedures and to make any observations and recommendations about enhanced procedures that could be put forward for discussion with Bryson. The aspects identified in the report have been passed to Bryson for consideration and arc21 will consider their response once it has been received.

Ms Boal advised that arc21 is currently doing a review of the overall H&S incidences as we come towards the end of the financial year and liaising with our H&S consultant, as we have seen some worrying trends and we are looking at ways to highlight this information back to the councils. She advised that arc21 hopes to progress with a safety alert document to give to the councils for dispersal to contractors or employees.

Audits

In November, an audit was conducted at the Cookstown Textile Recyclers site in Randalstown and a Bring Bank collection was observed at Blackstaff Way Recycling centre in Belfast. There were a few minor Health & Safety issues identified during this audit and arc21 is working closely with the contractor to resolve these as quickly as possible.

Rejected Loads

Rejected Loads - one rejected load delivered into Bryson in November 2023; one rejected load delivered into Bryson in December 2023; two rejected loads into Organics delivery sites in November 2023, and two in December 2023.

Officers have again been requested to continue to review their protocols to ensure that systems are in place so that vehicles are fully emptied before collecting another material stream.

arc21 Contract Tonnages

The contract tonnages for November and December 2023 were presented as follows:

November:

- a decrease of 1% for MDR material delivered into Bryson;
- a 2.2% decrease for MDR material delivered to ReGen;
- a 2.5% increase for Type 1 organics material;
- a decrease of 7.8% for Type 2 organics material; and
- a 26.8% decrease for the Landfill Residual Waste Contract

December:

- a decrease of 6.4% for MDR material delivered into Bryson;
- a 10.4% increase for MDR material delivered to ReGen;
- a 11.8% increase for Type 1 organics material;
- a decrease of 3.8% for Type 2 organics material; and
- a 25.6% decrease for the Landfill Residual Waste Contract

No residual waste was sent direct to landfill by Belfast City Council in November or December 2023.

Supplies

Ms Boal provided a summary of the aspects pertinent to the supplies contract.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee noted the report.

Action: Noted

Item 10 - Waste Tonnage Trends

Ms Boal presented the waste tonnage trends for materials delivered into the arc21 contracts, and also an overview of statistics in relation to percentage landfill and recycling against future targets and/or aspirations.

She highlighted the following:

- combined landfill – good to see it flatlining this year with very little fluctuation over the last 3 months;
- BCC residual tonnage – good support from contractor over weekends to support the services offered by council;
- organics – the last 3 years have totally coalesced in terms of tonnage collected and arc21 think this is a good indication as to the amount of food being captured in the service when councils would have less green waste at these times of the year.

The other contracts were also presented in graph form for information.

She also presented in graph format the comparisons of looking at recycling targets and waste sent to landfill.

Ms Boal noted the reduction in the Belfast City Council (BCC) waste as input into wastedataflow and advised that this trend will continue as the outworkings of the new residual waste contract are increasingly felt.

In terms of collectively achieving the target of only 10% of residual waste going to landfill, she advised that there was still a way to go and the more residual interim contracts arc21 can award, the more residual waste gets diverted to other facilities, such as energy-from-waste plants, meaning there is less reliance on landfill.

In terms of the recycling percentages for household waste, she reported that there was little change since the April to September period over the past four years, and if councils wanted to achieve the aspirational target of 70%, a further 55k tonnes of recyclate would need to be presented for recycling. She highlighted the target of 70% was unlikely to be achievable at present, and commented that councils and DAERA are looking at delivery of this target in terms of what might be the next stages for the collection of household waste, what is the impact of EPR etc.

Mr Walker advised that following discussions with the Chair, he had posed the question to councils to enquire if there was something more that arc21 could do to assist them [the councils] to contribute to achievement of these targets. He noted that the targets individual councils should be delivering were 55% recycling by 2025, 60% by 2030 and 65% by 2035.

He noted that from the WasteDataFlow figures, councils' current performance largely looks to have plateaued in recent years so to generate further improvements will mean more work and investment into encouraging a greater degree of householder behaviour change, and that arc21 would be looking to work collectively with officers and councils to achieve this into the future.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee noted the report.

Action: Noted

Item 11 - arc21 annual seminar 20 March 2024

Mr Walker advised that this year's seminar had been sparked by a Members' query on packaging and its management and that, following approaching a range of speakers, there was now an exciting line-up of speakers from across the UK, including the Biffa commodities market manager (who sells the various materials gathered through recycling into the international market, and who could provide an overview of how the current international market is performing); a representative from CAFRE (a DAERA organisation which trains and develops students in NI specifically for materials and packaging management); an update on the shadow Scheme Administrator by NILGA, which is representing all the councils in overseeing rollout of the EPR scheme from 2025 onwards, plus several others.

He noted that it should be an interesting session specifically about one aspect of the waste streams which councils manage, and Members and Officers were encouraged to attend.

Action: Noted

Item 12 - AOB

Ms Debbie Nesbitt, WRAP - Mr Walker advised the Committee that Ms Nesbitt's house had been struck by lightning recently. He advised that the Chair write to her on behalf of the Committee to express our sympathies.

Action: Mr Walker/Chair

Policy Forum seminar on the Circular Economy, Friday 26 January - Mr Walker advised that the Chair, Deputy Chair and himself were scheduled to attend the online seminar but unfortunately the Deputy Chair had had to pull out due to health reasons. Accordingly, a space had become available should a Member wish to attend. It was agreed that Ms Campbell would email all Members to advise of this availability and, should no Members be available to take up the offer, then the officers would be offered the opportunity.

Action: Ms Campbell

Item 13 - Next Meeting Thursday 29 February 2024 using MS Teams.

Action: Noted

Date: 29 February 2024

Deputy Chair:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregg", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.