

ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE
Virtual Meeting No 85
MINUTES
Thursday 29 February 2024

Members Present:

Councillor C Blaney	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor T Kelly	Belfast City Council
Councillor A Givan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Councillor P Kennedy	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Councillor G McKeen (<i>Deputy Chair</i>)	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor T Andrews	Newry, Mourne & Down District 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 J Cochrane	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor A Cathcart	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor E McDonough-Brown	Belfast City Council
Councillor B Smyth	Belfast City Council
Alderman S Skillen	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Councillor R Quigley	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor A Wilson	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor C Enright	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Officers Present:

T Walker	arc21
H Campbell (<i>Secretary</i>)	arc21
K Boal	arc21
B McKeown	arc21
M Laverty	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
D Lindsay, N Martin	Ards & North Down Borough Council
B Murray	Belfast City Council
J Knox	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
D Carey	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

Officers' Apologies:

C Matthews, John McConnell	Belfast City Council
R Harvey	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
P Thompson	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
S Murphy	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
J Green	arc21

Apologies were noted from the Chair and the Deputy Chair took the Chair for the meeting.

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. **Action: Noted**

Item 2 - Apologies

Apologies were noted.

Action: Noted

Item 3 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 084 held on 25 January 2024

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

Action: Agreed

Item 4 - Matters Arising

Any 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 Murphy, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

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 five matters discussed.

Item 5 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 084 held on 25 January 2024 'in committee' (approved)

Item 6 - Matters Arising (noted)

Item 7 - Residual Waste Treatment Project (noted)

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

Item 9 - Provision of Services for the Receipt, Storage and Transfer of Municipal Waste - Contract Award (approved)

OUT OF COMMITTEE

Proposed by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Murphy.

Item 10 - Contracts & Operations Briefing Report

Service Status

Ms Boal reported that all services were operational during the month of January 2024 and no contractors required to put in place any of their contingency measures.

Performance

Ms Boal reported that turnaround times had been reviewed for January, and in most cases the contractors provided adequate reasons for these except for Bryson for which service credits were applied due to some vehicles exceeding the service levels.

She advised that overweight vehicles on all contracts continue to be monitored by arc21 at contractor meetings and from December, there was a minor increase in the Landfill contract and a decrease in the Organics contract tonnages.

In January, she reported that most reports were submitted on time and there were only minor issues with Heatricks reporting that required revision due to incorrect data.

She noted that there were ten rectification notices in relation to Bottle Banks in January, three for Paper Banks and one for Banks containing cans. All rectification notices were responded to within the specified timeframes meaning that no service credits were issued.

She advised that arc21 has been asked by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to consider bringing the paper banks into the contract and that we will start conversations with the contractor which was awarded the contract.

Health & Safety

Incidents

During January, Ms Boal reported that there had been three Health & Safety incidents reported to arc21 by contractors, and they were presented for information.

She advised that arc21 is starting to see trends which could ultimately indicate changes in management practice leading to injury or potential loss of life and that arc21 is doing as much as it can to bring these incidents to the attention of councils' officers.

As such, she noted that a review of the reported incidents and near misses across the arc21 contracts had been undertaken and in conjunction with our external health and safety advisor, two Safety Alert notices had been drawn up and issued to the councils and their contractors to seek to highlight good practice. It is intended that more of these alerts will be issued over the course of the year to continue to raise awareness of the importance of Health & Safety at the sites.

Audits

She reported that the external health and safety consultants continue to undertake audits, and the new schedule of audits for 2024 was now underway.

In January, an audit was conducted at Bryson's MRF site in Mallusk when only one minor health and safety issue was identified, and arc21 was working closely with the contractor to resolve these as quickly as possible.

Rejected Loads

In terms of rejected loads, Ms Boal reported there had been one rejected load delivered into Organics delivery sites in January and this was due to residual waste being left in the vehicle.

Accordingly, officers have 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 January 2024 were presented as follows:

November:

- an increase of 3.3% for MDR material delivered into Bryson;
- a 0.4% decrease for MDR material delivered to ReGen;
- a 21.5% increase for Type 1 organics material;
- an increase of 2.8% for Type 2 organics material; and
- a 17.1% decrease for the Landfill Residual Waste Contract.

And she reported that no residual waste was sent direct to landfill by Belfast City Council (BCC), and Mid & East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC) bulky waste was sent direct to landfill in January 2024.

Supplies

The summary of the aspects pertinent to the supplies contract were presented and Ms Boal reported that the contractor had advised that there had not been any significant impact on supplies in relation to the Red Sea issues as expected.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee noted the report.

Action: Noted

Item 11 - Waste Tonnage Trends

Ms Boal presented the waste tonnage trends for materials delivered into the arc21 contracts.

She highlighted the following:

- landfill - following similar trend to the previous year although at a lower level with the BCC residual now taken out, but hadn't dropped significantly;
- BCC residual tonnage - shows same upward trend Dec to Jan as landfill;
- Organics type 1 - following same line as 2021/22 from October and close to same trend as the 2022/23 year;
- Organics Type 2 - coalesced in Jan with previous years and following similar trend to the 2022/23 year but quite weather dependent; and
- MRF combined tonnage - coalesced in Jan for past 4 years.

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

Following discussion, the Joint Committee noted the report.

Action: Noted

Item 12 - Call for Evidence on Reforming The Producer Responsibility System for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

Ms Boal presented the proposed arc21 response to the Call for Evidence, which was launched on 28 December 2023 with the closing date for submissions of 7 March 2024.

She advised that a first draft had been discussed with the Steering Group Officers and their views had been considered and reflected as appropriate.

She noted that a large part of the Call for Evidence centred around the allocation and targets for the Producer Compliance Scheme or is asking for specific evidence that arc21 does not hold.

In these instances, arc21 is recommending that no response is provided. The main focus of the arc21 response is in relation to considerations around increasing and capturing data in relation to increasing re-use.

The Joint Committee was asked to consider and approve the proposed response for submission by the deadline of 7 March 2024.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee agreed to submit the proposed response. Proposed by Councillor Givan and seconded by Councillor Murphy.

Action: Agreed

Members thanked Ms Boal for the work taken in producing this response.

Item 13 - Consultation on Reforming The Producer Responsibility System for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

Ms Boal presented the proposed arc21 response to the consultation, which was launched on 28 December 2023 with the closing date for submissions of 7 March 2024

She advised that a first draft had also been discussed with the Steering Group Officers and their views had been considered and reflected as appropriate.

She reported that the policy proposals centre around the introduction of a UK-wide collection system for small and bulky items that would be financed largely by importers and manufacturers of the equipment.

The key areas covered in the consultation are increasing collections of Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment (WEEE) from households, increasing distributor collections infrastructure, new producer obligations for online marketplaces and fulfilment houses, dealing with environmental impacts of vaping products and system governance, the creation of a WEEE Scheme Administrator and performance indicators.

The Joint Committee was asked to consider and approve the proposed response for submission by the deadline of 7 March 2024.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee agreed to submit the proposed response. Proposed by Councillor Kennedy and seconded by Councillor Murphy.

Action: Agreed

Item 14 - Waste Management Plan Addendum

Mr Walker reported on the work underway in terms of the review of the existing arc21 Waste Management Plan (WMP). He advised that the most recent arc21 WMP was developed in 2015 and had been broadly considered as lasting until 2020. However, since this date there have been the outworkings of the Brexit referendum, and the subsequent diversion of resources within DAERA which has culminated in revisions to the DAERA Waste Strategy being delayed by several years. This has resulted in the councils similarly deferring the commencement of a new WMP until such a time as the new DAERA Strategy was finalised as to do otherwise risked failing to incorporate adequately some of the changes which may be introduced [in the Strategy] reflecting the multiple environmental policies now being introduced in Great Britain.

Given the length of time that the WMP had been standing on, discussions were held between the eleven councils, and it had been agreed that the WMP should be updated through the development of three addendums which could provide a light touch update. This approach would permit the WMPs to remain current until DAERA had published a new Waste Strategy and the councils had considered how to update their own WMPs.

Consultants had been appointed and first drafts have been presented and considered amongst the councils. arc21 has responded and a further draft has now been received and is in the process of being reviewed, and the comments will be presented to Steering Group officers shortly to sense check its content. It is anticipated that when the final draft is completed, the addendum will be presented to the councils in order to be considered appropriately.

In terms of updating the Waste Strategy, he speculated that a consultation document was likely to be released imminently, once Ministerial sign off has been agreed.

Given any consultation document is going to need to include delivery of extended producer responsibility (EPR), deposit return scheme (DRS), waste electrical and electronic equipment, waste tracking, emission trading for waste facilities and landfill availability (amongst other items), it is expected that the consultation term will last for several months. In response, in due course a new WMP will need to consider the councils' response regarding the resourcing and delivery of these new policies.

Members will be kept updated on developments accordingly.

Action: Mr Walker

Item 15 - arc21 Corporate Plan 2024-2028

Mr Walker advised that arc21's current Corporate Plan runs to March 2024 and a new Corporate Plan is currently being drafted. He advised that arc21 has been working with consultants to develop a new Plan and it is expected that this will be finalised within the next month. In order to complete the Plan, he reported that a meeting was to be held with the Steering Group officers to ensure that this Plan appropriately prioritises actions for the next four years.

It is planned to present a draft of the Plan to the Joint Committee in March for consideration by Members, after which it will be issued to the councils and CEXs for their consideration to ensure it aligns with their corporate agendas.

He reiterated that the four-year term of the plan accords with the period as a sitting council, offset by one year. This offset would allow for new Members to familiarise themselves with arc21's activities prior to the development and approval of a new Plan.

Action: Mr Walker

Item 16 - arc21 annual seminar

Mr Walker reported that the arc21 annual seminar is online and is scheduled for 20 March 2024 from 10-12.30. This year, the seminar will focus specifically on packaging and packaging waste which should help inform Members and officers of developments which may have an increasing bearing with the introduction of EPR next year.

He advised that a variety of speakers had agreed to present, including from NILGA, BIFFA, CAFRE, CIWM, UK Research and Innovation, WRAP etc.

He noted that invitations to register would be sent out to Members and Officers imminently and that arc21 is extending the invitation to a wider audience, including other NI councils, Department officials etc.

Members and Officers were encouraged to attend, and Mr Walker advised that should other Members or officers be interested from within the councils they would be welcome.

Mr Walker and Ms Campbell are progressing with arrangements.

Action: Mr Walker/Ms Campbell

Item 17 - AOB

DfI Minister meeting – Mr Walker referred to the proposal discussed in the ‘in committee’ section of the meeting in regard to writing to the Minister for Infrastructure to request a meeting with the Chair, Deputy Chair and arc21 Chief Executive. This was again proposed by Councillor Givan and seconded by Councillor Kennedy, and agreed unanimously.

Action: Mr Walker

Mr Walker also referred to a recent flurry of activity in the media regarding the illegal Mobuoy dump on the outskirts of Londonderry and the issue of the magnitude of spend which complicated DAERA achieving finances closure on its accounts.

He advised that in relation to residual waste, the arc21 councils continue to produce waste and without appropriate facilities for the treatment and disposal of this material, other outlets have to be secured elsewhere. The ongoing need for facilities remains a real grounding issue for councils and one which will not go away.

Action: Noted

Item 18 - Next Meeting Thursday 28 March 2024 using MS Teams.

Mr Walker advised that the current legislation concerning the use of online platforms for Committee meetings expires on 24 March 2024 and arc21 are keeping a watching brief to see if this will be extended. Members will be kept informed of developments and if this is not extended, then meetings will return to in person and suitable arrangements will be confirmed.

Action: Mr Walker/Ms Campbell

The Chair thanked Mr Walker and Ms Boal for their extensive reports and continued effort.

Date: 25 April 2024

Chairman:

