

ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE

Meeting No 095

MINUTES

Thursday 27 March 2025

Hybrid meeting in Arts Civic Centre, Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn

Hosted by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Members Present:

Councillor M Goodman (*Chair*)
Councillor H Cushman
Councillor E Thompson
Councillor A Givan
Councillor G McKeen (*Deputy Chair*)
Alderman M Morrow
Councillor K Murphy
Councillor C Enright

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

Members' Apologies:

Councillor R Lynch
Councillor J Cochrane
Councillor C Blaney
Councillor B Smyth
Councillor M Collins
Councillor E McDonough-Brown
Councillor P Kennedy
Alderman S Skillen
Councillor R Quigley
Councillor T Andrews

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

Officers Present:

T Walker
H Campbell
J Green
M Lavery
D Lindsay
J McConnell
R Harvey, W Muldrew, G Richardson
C Hunter
E Reilly

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Antrim & 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

Officers' Apologies:

S Leonard
S Morley
S Murphy
K Boal

Belfast City Council
Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
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Item 1 - Conflicts of Interest Statement

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

Action: Noted

Item 2 - Apologies

Apologies were noted.

Action: Noted

Item 3 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 094 held on 27 February 2025

The Joint Committee approved the minutes. Proposed by Ald Morrow, seconded by Cllr Enright, and agreed by all.

Action: Agreed

Item 4 - Matters Arising

Ald Morrow advised that there had been some complaints about the bring banks at Sainsburys at Braidwater Retail Park, with material being left beside them of an unsanitary nature. Ms Boal advised that she was unsure if those banks fell within the remit of the arc21 contract but that she would check and arrange an inspection and raise a request. If they are not, she would seek to identify which operator is providing the collection service and she would raise a complaint on the Members behalf – Mr Walker advised that Ms Boal would provide feedback directly to Ald Morrow due to her absence at the meeting.

Action: Ms Boal

Any specific matters were actioned or discussed under the main agenda items.

Action: Noted

IN COMMITTEE

The Chair recommended that the meeting would now move “*in committee*” which was agreed. Proposed by Ald Morrow and seconded by Cllr Givan.

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 094 held on 27 February 2025 ‘in committee’ (<i>approved</i>)
Item 6	Matters Arising (<i>noted</i>)
Item 7	Residual Waste Treatment Project (<i>noted</i>)
Item 8	Commercially Sensitive Contract & Procurement Issues (<i>approved</i>)
Item 9	Audit Committee Meeting 11 March 2025 Report (<i>noted</i>)

OUT OF COMMITTEE

Proposed by Cllr Givan and seconded by Ald Morrow.

Item 10 - Contracts & Operations Briefing Report

Service Status

Mr Walker reported that contingency arrangements continued to be in place throughout February for RiverRidge due to the damage caused by a fire at their Craigmore facility.

He also advised that NWP had asked to use their contingency weighbridge at their Glenside site for one day.

Performance

The performance tables for February were presented for the contracts and he noted that in most cases the contractors provided sufficient reasons, and no service credits were applied, however some information was still awaited

For the bring banks, he advised that there were eight requests for bring site rectifications (they did not have the specified capacity) across all contracts and the majority of these were serviced within the required 48 hours.

Health & Safety

Mr Walker reported that during February there were no Health & Safety incidents reported to arc21 by contractors.

Audits

In terms of audits, he advised that the external Health & Safety consultant had started to undertake this year's health and safety audits and at the end of February, an audit was conducted of Heatricks which included the transfer stations at Newtownards, Ballymena and Sullatober. This H&S report is currently being drafted and once completed will be shared with Heatricks and the councils. arc21 will work with all stakeholders to ensure that any proposed actions are completed as soon as possible.

Rejected Loads

He reported that there had been no rejected loads into both the Material Recovery delivery sites and Organics delivery sites in February 2025.

arc21 Contract Tonnages

The contract tonnages for February were presented and the percentage differences to the February 2024 were noted as follows:

MRF Contract – Lot 1 - a 4.4% decrease;

MRF Contract – Lot 2 - a 7.1% decrease;

Organics Contract: Type 1 – a 3.3% increase; and Type 2 – a decrease of 8.8%.

Supplies

Mr Walker noted that council officers are requested, on a monthly basis, to place orders for supplies at the earliest opportunity as delays due to transportation and increased demand for certain categories of containers etc. may occur which may affect delivery timescales.

The Chair noted that a number of councils in the past had reported issues in particular with supplies of the corn starch bags and inquired if there was still a supply issue in the market?

Mr Walker advised that it was probably more of a timing issue with the market responding to the requests from Simpler Recycling that every householder across England was to have a food waste collection starting later this year, so there had been a drive across the English councils to provide this which meant, for the arc21 councils, it was more about timing.

Following discussion the Joint Committee noted the report. Proposed by Cllr Givan and seconded by Cllr Cushinan.

Action: Noted

Item 11 - Waste Tonnage Trends

Mr Walker presented a report showing the tonnage comparisons for material processed through the arc21 contracts since 2021/22.

He advised that the operations for the new residual contracts was working well and tonnages flowing as expected and any teething issues, in terms of access to sites, was being monitored closely.

In terms of the organics, he noted that it was expected that the tonnages would increase as in past years with the better weather expected.

He also noted that MRF tonnages were following a similar trajectory to previous years.

The other smaller contract tonnages were also presented for information.

Following discussion the Joint Committee noted the report. Proposed by Cllr Thompson and seconded by Cllr Givan.

Action: Noted

Item 12 - DAERA Call for Evidence – Review of Environmental Governance in Northern Ireland

Mr Walker reported that the Department for Agriculture, the Environment & Rural Affairs had published a Call for Evidence on 31 January, 2025 on behalf of an Independent Panel, seeking views on the current environmental governance arrangements in Northern Ireland and options for improvement.

He noted that there had been a previous consultation in 2015 the responses of which had been firmly in favour of the creation of an independent environment agency but, at that time, Minister Poots had felt it was not necessary to have such a degree of separation between the agency and the Department.

He advised that an arc21 response had been drafted and submitted to meet the deadline, and for completeness, a copy of the earlier (2016) response had been appended to the submission. He noted that the present response had been agreed with the Deputy Chair in advance before submitting.

It was recommended that the Members retrospectively ratify the submission for the Call for Evidence on the Review of Environmental Governance for NI.

Following an endorsement from a Member for the thoroughness of the response, the Members agreed to approve the recommendation. Proposed by Cllr Enright, seconded by Cllr Givan, and agreed by all.

Action: Agreed

Item 13 - AOB

Request for letter of support from QUB

Mr Walker advised that he had received correspondence in regard to an ESPRC funding application seeking arc21 support to endorse a project called *Fiber reinforced polymer waste upcycling for zero emission syngas and high-quality new composite production* (FINE-COMPOSITE).

Specifically, the project by Queen's University, Belfast is at outline proposal stage and focuses upon addressing the upcycling of hard to recycle waste plastics to transportation fuels and high-value carbon materials.

He highlighted that, although this was not an area within arc21's particular remit, we have previously endorsed similar projects as part of our contribution to the wider circular economy piece.

He recommended that the Joint Committee provide a letter of support, in principle, and that he would provide further detail at the next meeting.

The Chair noted that any support arc21 could give for new technologies to help with recycling etc would be worthwhile.

Following discussion, it was agreed to support the drafting of a letter. Proposed by Cllr Cushinan, seconded by Cllr Thompson, and agreed by all.

Action: Agreed

UK Internal Markets Act Consultation

Mr Walker advised of a consultation on the UK Internal Markets Act which had been issued by the Department for Trade and Enterprise in England and noted that in reviewing the document, he considered it was more a trade policy position paper and that arc21 and councils in general did not have enough experience to comment on trading issues. It was therefore noted that it was not the intention to submit a response.

Action: Noted

Item 14 - Next Meeting Thursday 24 April 2025, using MS Teams

Action: Noted

Date: 29 May 2025

Chairman:

