



Standing Orders

May 2021

These Standing Orders are made for the regulation of the business of arc21.

1. Meetings

The Joint Committee shall meet as often as it is deemed necessary. The time and place of the first meeting shall be as decided by arc21 and thereafter at such places as shall be decided by the Joint Committee.

2. Time and Hosting of Meetings

Meetings of the Joint Committee shall be held monthly and shall commence at 10.30 a.m. usually on the last Thursday of the month, unless otherwise decided by the Joint Committee. Meetings shall be hosted by each Council in alphabetical order. Special meetings may be held in order to deal with specific matters should they arise and arrangements for such meetings will be decided as and when the circumstances arise.

3. Chair

Each meeting shall be chaired by the Chair or, in the absence of the Chair, by the Deputy Chair.

In the absence of the Chair and Deputy Chair at a Joint Committee meeting, the Members present must elect a Chair to conduct the business of the meeting.

In the event of the resignation of the Chair or Deputy Chair the Joint Committee must conduct an election for their replacement.

4. Election of Chair and Deputy Chair

The Chair and Deputy Chair will normally be elected on an annual basis at the Annual General Meeting, which will be held in April. The current Chair shall take the Chair for the purposes of announcing that the first item on the agenda will be the election of the Chair and Deputy Chair to serve for the next twelve months.

The Chair may address the meeting before stepping down to allow the election to take place.

The procedures for the election of the Chair and Deputy Chair are shown in Appendix 1.

5. Proceedings of the Joint Committee

The Joint Committee is established to receive and consider reports in accordance with the provisions of the Terms of Agreement.

6. Attendances

The Chief Executive shall record the names of all Members present at meetings of the Joint Committee.

7. Order of Business

At each meeting of the Joint Committee, the order of business shall be as follows:

- a) Confirmation of the main minutes of the last meeting and matters arising therefrom
- b) Consideration of reports presented
- c) Confirmation of the in-committee minutes of the last meeting and matters arising therefrom
- d) Any special resolutions submitted by Elected Members
- e) Any other Business

8. Declarations of Interest

The Chair will remind Members of their obligation to declare any interest they may have in respect of matters under consideration at the meeting. Such declarations will be recorded by the Chief Executive.

9. Quorum

The quorum for meetings shall be **six** elected Members nominated to the Joint Committee provided that at least **four** Participant Councils are represented.

10. Decision Making - Delegated Authority, Membership and Voting Rights and Voting Procedure

Delegated Authority

The Principle of Consensus in the Terms of Agreement state that all policy decisions and decisions with significant financial implications for the Joint Committee shall be taken on the basis of the consensus of all the Participant Councils.

For the avoidance of doubt, significant financial implications shall relate to the amount shown in Clause 4.2 of the Terms of Agreement, £250,000.

Again for the avoidance of doubt, in terms of the awarding of a contract by Participant Councils, as recommended by the Joint Committee, only the consensus of those Participant Councils actually participating in such contracts is required.

Membership and Voting Rights

The Joint Committee shall comprise of three elected Members nominated from each of the Participant Councils with each Member being eligible to one vote.

Voting Procedure

Voting in the Joint Committee is governed by Section 39 (simple majority) and Section 40 (qualified majority) of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014.

Section 39 states that every decision must be taken by a simple majority.

Section 40 states that Standing Orders must specify decisions which are to be taken by a qualified majority – 80% of the Members present and voting on the issue.

In relation to Section 40, Standing Orders are required to specify decisions which are to be taken by a qualified majority and, in this regard, the Joint Committee has decided that :

Any decision in relation to the suspension or amendment of Standing Orders shall be taken by a qualified majority where not less than 80% of the Members present and voting shall be required for the decision to be carried.

Members may vote in favour or against decisions presented at the Joint Committee meeting. Members may also abstain from voting and, in that event, the Chair of the Joint Committee will decide on the basis of the Members who voted whether or not a specific issue is approved.

In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a second and casting vote.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Principle of Consensus does not apply to decisions of the Joint Committee as this would be contrary to Sections 39 and 40 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014.

11. Order of Address

The Chair shall determine the order of speaking by the Members.

12. Admission Rights

All meetings of the Joint Committee shall be closed to the public, unless otherwise decided for any particular occasion by the Joint Committee. Should members of the public be allowed to attend a meeting, they shall be excluded during an item of business which is deemed to be of a commercially sensitive nature or confidential.

13. Conduct of Meetings

While it is intended that free and open discussion will be permitted, nevertheless the ruling of the Chair at each meeting of the Joint Committee in relation to all questions of order, and all matters arising in debate, shall be final and shall be not be open to discussion.

In the event of any dispute in relation to the conduct of debate, the Chair shall have the right to refer to the legal advisor to the Joint Committee, the City Solicitor, Belfast City Council.

14. Code of Conduct

Members must have due regard to the provisions of the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors in relation to their conduct during the whole of the proceedings of a meeting of the Joint Committee.

15. Ruling of the Chair

The ruling of the Chair upon all questions of order, and matters arising in debate, shall be final, and shall not be open to discussion.

16. Suspension of Standing Orders

For the purpose of affording greater freedom of debate any of the Standing Orders may be suspended at any meeting of the Joint Committee so far as regards any business at such meeting, upon a motion duly made, seconded, and carried. Previous notice of any such motion shall not be necessary.

17. Remote Meetings

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 makes references to “members present and voting on the decision”. In the case of the Joint Committee, and any Sub Committee established by the Joint Committee, this includes a member being present through remote attendance. Any decisions made at a remote meeting are only recommendations to the Acting Chief Executive to make the decisions.

ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE

PROCEDURES FOR THE ELECTION OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR

The positions of Chair and Deputy Chair of the Joint Committee will be elected on an annual basis at the Annual General Meeting, which will be held in September. In the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair will conduct the business at the Joint Committee meetings.

In the event of the resignation of the Chair or Deputy Chair the Joint Committee must conduct an election for their replacement.

The following procedures for conducting the election of the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair will apply.

- 1. The outgoing Chair takes the Chair and announces that the first item on the agenda will be the election of the Chair and Deputy Chair to serve for the next twelve months.**
- 2. Before stepping down the Chair may address the meeting.**
- 3. The Deputy Chair will take the Chair for the purposes of conducting the election of Chair. (In the absence of a Deputy Chair, a Member, who is not seeking election, will be elected as Temporary Chair, from the Members present (proposed and seconded), for the purposes of conducting the election.)**
- 4. The Deputy Chair or Temporary Chair will ask for nominations for the position of Chair.**
- 5. Nominations for the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair must be proposed and seconded by Members present.**
- 6. A Member seeking election can be nominated in absentia.**
- 7. The names of the Member(s) nominated, together with the proposer and seconder will be formally recorded.**
- 8. All Members will have one vote.**
- 9. Only the Members present are entitled to vote.**
- 10. A Member may abstain from voting.**
- 11. A Member cannot vote in absentia.**
- 12. The Chair will also have one vote.**

- 13. In accordance with normal practice the Chair will have a casting vote.**
- 14. Members nominated can also vote for themselves.**
- 15. Voting will be by way of a show of hands.**
- 16. Voting will be formally recorded.**
- 17. If there are two candidates nominated the candidate with the highest vote will be elected.**
- 18. If there are more than two candidates nominated, the candidate who receives an overall majority of the votes from Members, present and voting, will be elected.**
- 19. If there are more than two candidates nominated and no-one receives an overall majority of the votes, the candidate with the least votes will be eliminated and a further vote will take place.**
- 20. This process will continue until two candidates remain and, at that stage, the candidate with the most votes will be elected.**
- 21. Once elected, the Chair will take up the position and may address the meeting before announcing that the next item of business will be the election of the Deputy Chair.**
- 22. The election procedures applicable to the position of Deputy Chair will be the same as those which apply to the position of Chair.**