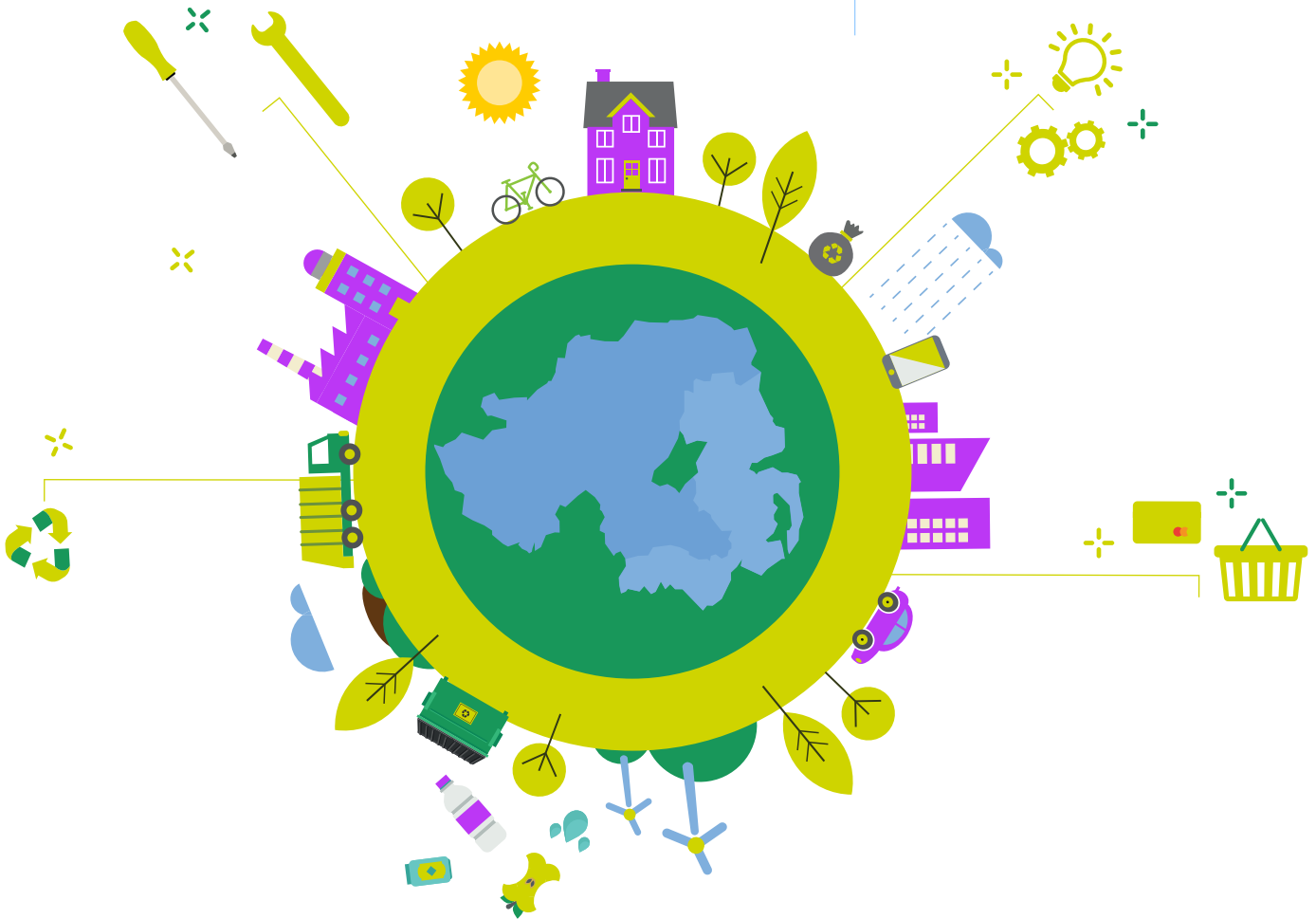


2020-2024 Corporate Plan



Steps from waste to the circular economy





Nurdles are the raw material for almost all of our plastic products. The industrial term for a 'nurdle' is a raw material plastic pellet. They are tiny disc- or lentil-shaped pellets, weighing a fraction of a gram and measuring 5mm or less. With over 300 million tonnes of plastic being created every year globally, countless trillions of pellets are produced and transported around the world, then melted down to make anything from plastic bottles to wheelie bins.

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“ The direction
of travel is
clear...

Foreword



The coronavirus pandemic has reminded us all that the resilience of our waste infrastructure is indispensable to the protection of public health and the environment, and the provision of recycled materials for essential businesses such as food packaging. We are all indebted to those key workers in the waste sector who have kept these essential services going under the most difficult of circumstances.

The pandemic has also reinforced the pressing need to get on with the job of reshaping our waste sector, something which the climate crisis had already laid bare. Radical steps must be taken if we are to keep temperature increases below 1.5C. The complex and multi-faceted challenge we face will require urgent action and collaborative leadership from a number of stakeholders. Government's ambitious target to bring greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050¹ will require immediate action. Major transformative change will be required. This will lead to a revolution in how we improve our resource efficiency, develop a circular economy, generate energy and continue to safeguard public health.

Amid increasing interest and concerns from ever-growing numbers of the public, it is inherent on us to act responsibly and manage the consequences of previous decisions. In this regard, brave decisions must be taken to build new infrastructure in both the short and long-term, to reuse and recover as many resources as possible and prevent illegal activities, such as another Mobuoy dump, happening again.

The changes must take place in tandem with major innovations in waste management. We are increasingly involved in a supply chain that seeks to realise the most value it can from the resources we consume. Change in behaviour is required across society.

It is incumbent on us to support, promote and showcase what's needed to reduce, reuse, recycle and recover as much resource as possible. The outcome is that this can and will deliver economic advantage through employment creation in new industries. Notwithstanding the challenges identified, other regions in Europe have already

demonstrated how sustainability can be delivered. With the right policies and commitment, Northern Ireland can close the gap with these regions and join them as an exemplar of what can be achieved. We must look to collaborate with bodies who share the aspiration of arc21 councils to enable meaningful reductions in green-house gas emissions, provide alternatives to fossil derived hydrocarbons and improve the efficiency in the use of energy we all rely on.

arc21 has been at the forefront of waste planning and infrastructure development in Northern Ireland. As an organisation, we will explore ways to encourage the range of materials that can be recycled, in line with our commitment to the Circular Economy Package and the need to drastically reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and will align the utilisation of any assets we create to achieve this.

As Chair of arc21, I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the dedication the previous Chief Executives, John Quinn and Ricky Burnett, gave in pursuing this agenda. I would also like to recognise the hard work and commitment from the small team of staff who have worked tirelessly to procure many new contracts and ensure they deliver for the councils in the arc21 partnership.

The climate crisis and coronavirus pandemic have moved centre-stage. For our new Acting Chief Executive – Tim Walker – there is now a greater sense of urgency and the challenges have rarely been clearer. It's time to recognise that the desire for improved resource efficiency, the circular economy and zero waste, published in so many plans, will only be realised when it is allied to action. To be successful, such approaches need to ensure that our infrastructure is resilient and that residual waste along with all other waste streams is appropriately managed to minimise public health and climate change risks - this is what a sustainable Northern Ireland needs.

Alderman Robert Gibson

Chair of the Joint Committee

¹ Last year (2019), the UK Government was the first major economy to legislate for net zero by 2050 (see www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-the-uks-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming/)

Introduction



During the term of the past Corporate Plan, arc21's portfolio of activities provided critical infrastructure and services for one million of Northern Ireland's residents. The services were provided on behalf of our six council partnership at a cost of around £30M per annum. Key successes were diverting around 380,000 tonnes of waste through recycling contracts during this time (the previous Corporate Plan 2018-2020), saving the six councils in the region of £16m compared to landfill. Fifteen major contracts were delivered with an estimated value of £110m and the long-term composting contract until 2029 was also finalised.

We also said farewell to two extremely professional Chief Executives and continued to provide reliable services to our partner councils. Echoing the Chair's remarks, I would like to start this foreword by thanking them, the wider arc21 team for their diligence during this period of change, and to set on record my personal thanks and admiration for my colleagues in the waste sector who, as key workers, have worked tirelessly to serve their communities during this pandemic.

Elaborating on the earlier comments made by the Chair, two of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals - 12 (Ensure Sustainable Consumption & Production patterns) and 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts) - map out the precarious position we face. We have now arrived, in 2020, at a situation where the consequences of previous actions are being experienced by everyone².

It is increasingly apparent that what's needed is a fundamental change in attitude from policymakers, industry and society. We must develop and implement well thought out longer-term strategies that will achieve greater resilience and improve Northern Ireland's sustainable economic prospects.

Bold actions must be taken to curb the rate of current consumption, limit temperature rise and address the real risk attached to both the climate crisis and the coronavirus pandemic. Business-as-usual is no longer an option. The risk of inaction will be considerable. Negative consequences for both our health and climate will arise with increasing

rapidity if insufficient waste treatment and disposal infrastructure is not built and uncontrolled carbon emissions are not curbed. For Government, managing the coronavirus pandemic and delivering the Paris Agreement commitments will see new facilities being needed to ensure the safe disposal of waste, and the introduction of carbon taxes. As a consequence, beyond what is desirable, new critical infrastructure must be built and, as non-renewable fuel sources will be increasingly costly, difficult choices must be taken. Relying on our existing arrangements will become not only unsustainable, but also increasingly expensive and will not meet the needs of a modern, 21st century economy.

For many years, arc21 has been recognised as being at the forefront of waste and resource management in Northern Ireland. The reputation arc21 has developed also creates a responsibility to keep delivering change. Current events are driving change at an ever-faster pace while the national and international policy and legislative landscape and infrastructural needs lag behind.

We can however use these changes as an opportunity to catalyse the replacement of inefficient technology and infrastructure; support behaviour change; develop a "green" response and scale up our efforts beyond merely disposing of waste to one which makes a valuable contribution to the local circular economy while improving public health and reducing Northern Ireland's carbon impact.

What arc21 is doing is tilting this balance by securing contracts that increasingly maximise the inherent value in the wastes we are managing, whilst, at the same time, providing budget certainty with contracts of a realistic duration, from reliable contractors. We are also acting as a market maker in developing the capacity of the waste and resources sector within Northern Ireland. The benefits of acting proactively will be long-lasting, far reaching and contrasts starkly with the risk and cost of maintaining the status quo.

I would like us to particularly focus on delivering the following outcomes to help tackle the pandemic and climate crisis that translate into:

² For a summary of these actions, see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

- **addressing unsustainable consumption;**
- **minimising the amount of waste we send to landfill;**
- **securing critical infrastructure to maximise the contribution that reuse, recycling and recovery can make in providing quality secondary materials and energy; and**
- **minimising public health, financial risk, and demonstrating improvements in our carbon footprint.**

For greatest impact, we will require new activities and new partnerships to extend our collaboration and achieve more than we can on our own. We will also need to go further to promote new awareness and attitudes beyond the tired dump and dispose mind-sets of the past.

We must look to collaborate with organisations who share arc21 councils aspirations. The infrastructure arc21 develops should be seen as a platform for the Circular Economy, and future decarbonisation initiatives by playing a role in the sustainable green hydrogen economy. We must reach out to a range of Northern Ireland bodies such as Translink and Northern Ireland Water to see what synergies could be delivered to enable meaningful reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to be achieved, providing alternatives to fossil fuels and improving efficiencies in the use of our resources while also producing new sources of energy for us.

Within our Corporate Plan we acknowledge the ongoing work with the council Waste Forum and SIB under the direction of SOLACE, as part of the policy landscape, alongside the Waste Plan.

In terms of household waste, we passed the 50% recycling mark in October 2019 so I believe it is no longer appropriate to talk about "waste" anymore, it is now a resource!

The relationship between green infrastructure, the environment and public health has never been clearer. The challenge before us is stark but recent shifts in attitude give me hope that our organisation can play a leading role in harnessing the momentum for change for the benefit of the people of Northern Ireland, UK and beyond.

The term of this Corporate Plan - the next four years - will be an exciting time.



Key successes were diverting around 380,000 tonnes of waste through recycling contracts during this time (the previous Corporate Plan 2018-2020), saving the six councils in the region of £16m compared to landfill.

Tim Walker

Acting Chief Executive

The Context for the Corporate Plan

Challenges & Opportunities

This plan has been developed to take a forward-facing and ambitious approach to assist in addressing the coronavirus pandemic and realise the opportunities to get greater value from waste which exist as we enter the next decade. In 2020, we can expect significant change in the local, regional, national and indeed international political, economic and societal spheres. Given this complexity, we recognise the importance of having a clear vision and ambitious objectives for the next four years that add value to our key stakeholders – our partner councils.

In developing the Corporate Plan, we consulted our stakeholders, listened to the challenges they face and their expectations of us in terms of the services they need us to provide. We are all too aware of the difficulties facing our partners and of the need for us to work closely with them to provide efficient, effective and value-for-money services that contribute to the ambitions they have set.

We have also considered how we can develop and refine our own services to offer them to a wider audience – and this will require some fundamental changes.



Cleanest,
greenest
(country)
on earth"

The Policy Landscape

In addition to the pandemic, major policy changes are taking place in the environmental and economic space, as outlined by the Chair and Chief Executive. The climate crisis has moved up the political agenda and there is now an appreciation of the urgency to act to curtail the impact that we all are having upon the Earth – the steps are likely to be increasingly stark when gauged against the type of steps being used to tackle the coronavirus. These steps are necessary not only to reduce our carbon emissions, but also our consumption patterns.

Referring specifically to waste and resources management, the Acting Chief Executive has already referenced the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 12 and 13. At a granular basis, there will be key challenges for Northern Ireland in terms of managing our residual waste over the next few years within the consented landfill space available here, or through energy-from-waste/incineration facilities in use elsewhere in Europe. Notwithstanding cost implications, both these options have varying levels of CO₂ emissions.

Beyond residual waste, the Prime Minister pledged to have the "cleanest, greenest (country) on earth" through several initiatives including an aim to lead the world in tackling plastic pollution and to end the export of plastic waste to non-OECD countries (Conservative Manifesto, 2019).

An Environment Bill is now being considered by Committee before being re-presented to Parliament. It will set in law new powers for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), consistency of recycling collections (England), measures to further tackle waste crime and a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS). Additional measures include legal targets on air quality and levies to increase the proportion of recyclable plastics in packaging. The revised Waste Framework Directive (rWFD, 2018) introduces the Circular Economy and a range of material specific measures, as well as new targets to boost domestic recycling to 65% by 2035.

In Northern Ireland, "New Decade New Approach" (2020) – the agreement agreed by the political parties to restore devolved government includes measures to tackle climate change. The Executive plans to introduce legislation and targets for reducing carbon emissions in line with the Paris "Climate Change" Accord. Here, using waste and resources better provides us with an opportunity to contribute positively to the priorities on climate

change and "green jobs" likely to be contained within a finalised Programme for Government.

In recent months, Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) issued a series of consultations, including "The Environment Strategy" which references the Circular Economy and highlighted that further consultations on EPR and DRS are due later this year. DAERA also produced a light touch Waste Management Plan to ensure Northern Ireland met the requirements of the rWFD. A more substantive review is anticipated shortly as is a review of NI Residual Waste Arisings.³ At the time of writing, as a Waste Forum, the eleven councils are considering how to draft a suitably compliant one-council waste management plan for the whole of Northern Ireland. arc21 is assisting in this process through organising planning events which could contribute to this development, offering its services as a contracting authority and we stand ready to provide additional support and services as and when requested.

As highlighted by the Acting Chief Executive in the Introduction, opportunities now exist for arc21 to refocus from managing the treatment and disposal of wastes and the assets it creates on behalf of its partner councils to a wider, more-resource management focused, risk-aware approach in line with meeting public health needs, the Sustainable Development Goals and rWFD. In so doing, there may be scope for arc21 to extend its services and utilisation of any assets it creates to others in the public sector and generate additional revenue streams.

The future relationship between the EU and UK, and between Northern Ireland and Ireland, means there is some uncertainty regarding the future legislative and policy landscape for waste and resources management at this time. This predicates that it is now more important than ever to adopt a flexible Corporate Plan to enable arc21 to be agile and responsive to change.

arc21 is a lean organisation with the ability to provide considerable knowledge and expertise to the partner councils. There is an economy of scale in the current, and potential, services it provides to local government.

The organisation has a positive reputation for sound financial management and governance and has quality management systems in place (ISO 9001) that provide assurances to its stakeholders in terms of probity and accountability.

³ This is likely to highlight that, notwithstanding recent recycling rate success, there will be considerable pressure upon residual waste disposal capacity in Northern Ireland within this upcoming decade. Using prospective growth rates, it is probable that a significant increase in recycling capacity will be needed to meet the CEP targets (65% household waste recycling by 2025) and that there is increasing risk around the disposal of residual waste even with the development of all current proposals.

Currently, arc21 provides five distinct services:

(i) advocacy -

developing a common agenda on behalf of the partner councils on a wide range of waste, resources, procurement and other environmental matters and presenting and promoting these to different audiences and potential external partners as appropriate.

(iii) procurement -

selecting and overseeing a variety of statutory processes to purchase goods and/or services on behalf of the partner councils. This has frequently involved litigation reflecting a very litigious market place.

(ii) planning & policy -

assisting partner councils to identify compliance issues and determine what facilities are needed, what delivery methods are available and what procurement actions to take and resources to apply to deliver these.

(iv) compliance & contract management -

managing the creation, execution and analysis of contracts to maximise operational and financial performance while reducing risk for the partner councils.

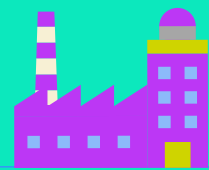
(v) outreach -

providing education, information services and resources to the partner councils to supplement their waste and environmental education programmes.

How does arc21 support its councils?

CONTRACTS AND PROCUREMENT

arc21 procures and manages contracts on behalf of its councils to the value of circa £28 million per annum



RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING

Through its contracts arc21 has helped its councils to reach a sub-regional recycling rate of 50% by handling circa 205,000 tonnes of material through its contracts for recycling and composting



Out of that tonnage over 80% remained in NI contributing to the local circular economy



SUPPORT AND POLICY

arc21 liaises with local and central government in NI, the waste management sector, NGO's and trade associations and networks with local authorities across the UK



arc21, on behalf of its councils, responded to 18 public consultations in the last two years

EDUCATION AND PROMOTION

Over the last year the arc21 education officer visited a variety of schools, youth organisations, summer schemes, and community groups, serving all areas within the arc21 region



and delivering in excess of 700 presentations and talks promoting waste minimisation, re use, recycling and composting

Strategic Overview

As part of the preparation of our Corporate Plan, we have undertaken a robust sectoral analysis of the present and future context and have identified our **strengths/opportunities/aspirations** and **results** which we have captured below.

S



1. STRENGTHS

- Expertise in procurement and contract management
- Access to performance data
- Economies of Scale
- Networks across the sector
- Strong track record in probity and good governance



O

2. OPPORTUNITIES

- To support councils in NI with waste management expertise
- To create markets in waste and revenue through acting as an intermediary for councils with contractors
- To educate for environmental change
- To provide innovative best practice in waste management solutions
- To become an advocate for the sector on policy

SOAR

A



3. ASPIRATIONS

- To raise the profile of arc21 and to partner with councils to deliver waste management fit for the 21st century
- To become the waste management partner of choice
- Best practice in waste management solutions - resource management

R



4. RESULTS

- Provide value for money services
- Deliver improvements in environmental performance
- Contributing to councils climate action through the delivery of our services
- An agile and fit for purpose organisation
- Enhanced leadership across the whole organisation

From this exercise, we have redrafted our Vision and Mission to:

Vision

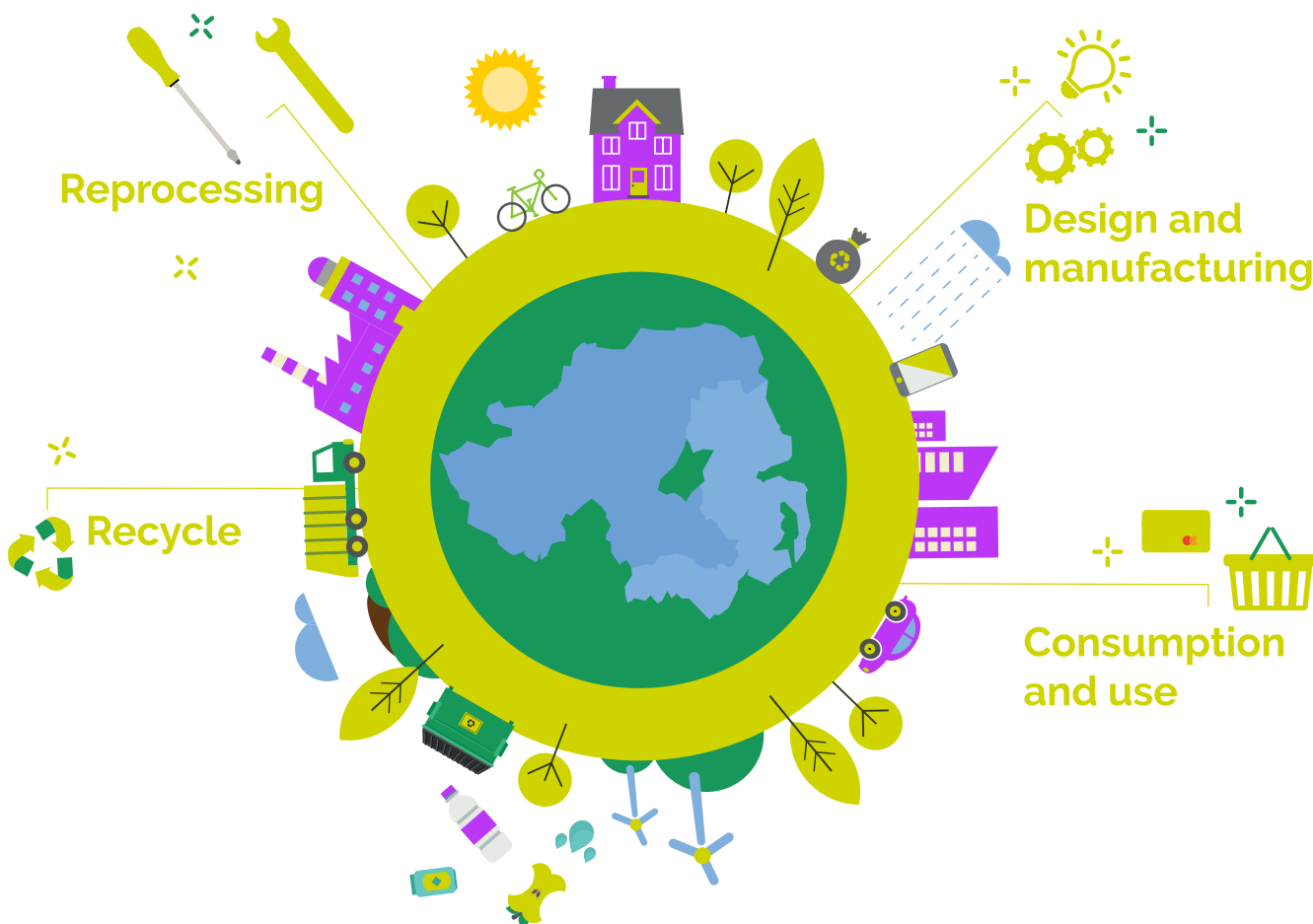


To be the partner of choice on waste and resources.



Mission

To provide a platform for councils to collaborate on waste/resources. We develop and deliver solutions that meet the partner councils' needs. We actively contribute to creating a circular economy and addressing the climate crisis in Northern Ireland.



Our Values

As part of this process, we also refreshed our values.



The Value Chain

Waste is changing profoundly and, as more than 50% of our waste is now being recycled, we are entering a new paradigm. As this new world evolves more clearly into the Circular Economy, we will increasingly be suppliers to manufacturers. For many years, the language of the value and supply chain has defined relationships and expectations.

For arc21, the diagram below provides an initial overview of how we can refocus our activities to deliver better value for money services to our partner councils and summarises our primary and support activities for the next four years.

The Support Activities of governance and audit, health and safety, legal, communications, finance, human resources and technology, will be strengthened and refocused to meet the changing needs of our stakeholders.

The Primary Activities of advocacy, planning and policy, procurement, compliance and contract management, and outreach, demonstrate how we

can enhance our services – we will add value by reframing arc21's contribution to helping councils address the climate crisis through taking a lead role in implementing the Circular Economy in Northern Ireland.

We will use our market intelligence and data to support councils in performance reporting and in demonstrating value for money in service delivery. The profile of arc21 will be enhanced through supporting capacity building and understanding of emerging legislative changes and how better resource management can be accelerated with key partners at Officer and Councillor level.

The expertise of our team will be used intelligently to support partner councils by providing professional representation, advice and guidance as well as value for money services on resource management. We will develop our policy and advocacy role and use our expertise to advocate on behalf of the sector. Our outreach role will be further developed to provide an enhanced service offer to partner councils, and others.

Stakeholder Value - We will create enhanced value through exploring new opportunities in developing markets and deliver innovative, quality, value for money services for our stakeholders.

Value Chain Analysis

Support Activities

Governance and Audit

Regulatory Framework supporting Decision Making Process Assurance

Health and Safety

Assurance on health, safety and welfare including programme of Health

Legal

Commercial and Constitutional Legal Issues

Communications

Process for effective engagement strategies – internal and external

Finance

Financial Management Systems and Controls providing financial assurance
Specialist support on procurement, compliance and Contract Management

Human Resources

Human Resources - Experienced Staff Resources, Recruitment, Training

Technology

IT Platform for information management, analytics databases, management

Advocacy

- Meeting with stakeholders
- Articulating the councils requirements
- Showcasing what the sector requires
- Acting as a point of reference
- Being a centre of expertise/excellence

Planning & Policy

- Monitoring the external environment and establishing what that means for councils
- Supporting the councils on the development and implementation of the Waste Management Plan
- Formulating and articulating responses to consultation exercises
- Influence the future direction of policy

Procurement

- Maintaining a procurement programme
- Establishing procurement routes
- Developing specifications to meet council needs
- Procuring infrastructure, services and supplies
- Contracting Authority, awarding contracts
- Market engagement
- Minimising Risk

Primary Activities

Finance and Risk Management Processes and Procedures

Health and Safety Audits of external Contractor sites for additional assurance

Insurance
Management

Training and Development to support continuous improvement in service delivery

Management systems and communications

Compliance & Contract Management

Overseeing the implementation of the service delivery plan

Monitoring performance (including on site)

Managing contract variation and extension processes

Financial management

Performance reporting

Health and Safety

Interfacing with councils

Duty of Care

Minimising Risk

Outreach

Supporting councils

Education promotion and marketing

School visits and community outreach

Communication planning

Capacity building

Stakeholder Value

Stakeholder Value

Strategic Objectives & Priorities for Action

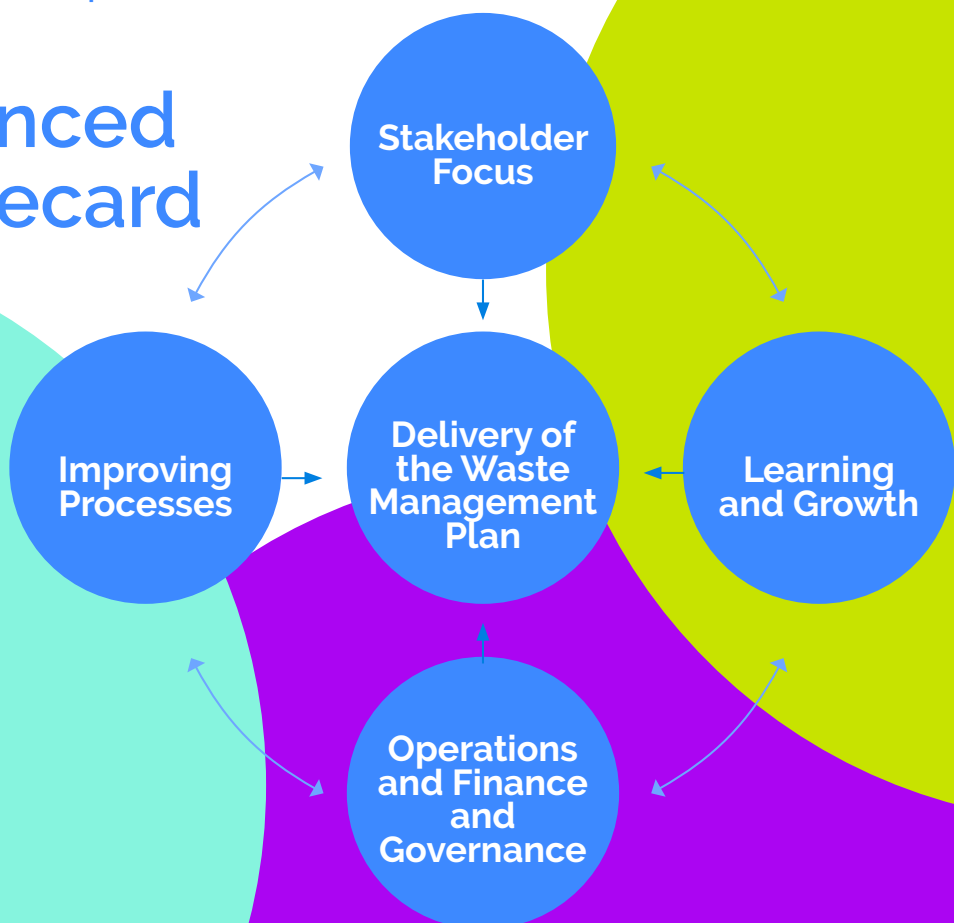
The priority for arc21 is to support councils with the development and delivery of the Waste Management Plan and the activities undertaken by us will be focused on this ambition.

For some years, arc21 has used a balanced scorecard to define its objectives within the Corporate Plan to support its partner councils. This Plan is no different; the Corporate Strategic Objectives set out below will frame our activities over the period 2020-2024.

Each year, we will review our objectives to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose against the changeable environment we are operating in.

We will also produce an Annual Report to review our achievements against each of our Strategic Objectives.

Balanced Scorecard



Strategic Objectives

Stakeholder Focus (SF)

SF.1

Monitoring, influencing and adapting to the external environment, and establishing what it will mean and how we can contribute to the future development and implementation of a Waste Management Plan in a value-added manner for our partner councils.

SF.2

Developing our role in supporting partner councils to address climate change and maximising the economic potential of waste and resource management and available assets through stakeholder working to minimise risk.

SF.3

Enhancing our advocacy role on behalf of the sector through strengthening our relations with stakeholders and building a cadre of champions who recognise arc21 as the go-to organisation for waste and resource management solutions.

SF.4

Expanding the outreach services we provide to our stakeholders in terms of education and awareness supported by a robust communications strategy.

Improving Processes (IP)

IP.1

Refocusing our role and services to stakeholders by redefining the relevance of what we do and ensuring we exceed expectations and demonstrate this through an annual performance report (Annual Report).

IP.2

Maintaining the quality requirements of ISO 9001, seek other relevant quality assurance accreditations and place these at the core of risk management and assurance in terms of quality service.

IP.3

Benchmarking and build an appropriate database to develop our improvement plan.

Strategic Objectives

Operations, Finance and Governance (OFG)

OFG.1

Procuring appropriate waste infrastructure, services and supplies to deliver the Waste Management Plan, supported by appropriate contract management.

OFG.2

Maintaining a high standard of financial assurance, governance and risk management.

OFG.3

Identifying efficiency measures, utilisation of assets, new revenue streams and reporting on financial performance.

OFG.4

Ensuring appropriate governance arrangements are in place to deliver the Corporate Plan.

Learning and Growth (LG)

LG.1

Developing and implementing a Human Resources strategy.

LG.2

Strengthening capacity building on waste and resources management, climate crisis, energy and the circular economy.

LG 3

Developing a more collective leadership approach with stakeholders.

Making it Happen



This Corporate Plan will place us in good stead to continue supporting the development and delivery of the councils strategic waste management objectives

The Corporate Plan sets out how we will organise ourselves to serve our key stakeholders, over the next four years, with the development and delivery of the Waste Management Plan.

In terms of next steps, a range of detailed activities and tasks will now be identified and actioned to ensure that operations are aligned to the Corporate Strategic Objectives in a formal structured manner, with responsibilities allocated to relevant staff members.

Taking into account the likely significant changes which will impact upon waste management, particularly within local government, the Corporate Plan is designed to be flexible and adaptable to meet these challenges as they emerge. In this event, we will present any major changes proposed to this Corporate Plan to the Joint Committee for consideration.

We will regularly monitor and review our activities and priorities to ensure we are on track to achieve what we have set out in this strategic plan over the four-year period and take corrective action, should it be required.

We will continue to present an Annual Report at the end of each year, to the Joint Committee and other key stakeholders, which will provide an update on our performance and the progress we are making towards delivering our Corporate Strategic Objectives.

As stated in the Introduction, the next four years are going to be exciting for arc21 with many challenges and opportunities, and this Corporate Plan will place us in good stead to continue supporting the development and delivery of the councils strategic waste management objectives – the Waste Management Plan now and into the future.