

ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE

Meeting No 056

MINUTES

Thursday 29 April 2021

Members Present:

Councillor M Goodman	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Councillor A Bennington	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Alderman R Gibson (<i>Chair</i>)	Ards and North Down Borough Council
Councillor G Walker	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor F Ferguson	Belfast City Council
Councillor M Gregg	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Alderman D Drysdale	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Councillor S Lee	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Councillor D Reid	Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor H McKee	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
Councillor K Owen	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Members' Apologies:

Councillor R Kinnear	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Alderman A Carson	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor P McReynolds	Belfast City Council
Councillor JJ Magee	Belfast City Council
Alderman R Cherry	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor I Friary	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor W Clarke (<i>Deputy Chair</i>)	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Officers Present:

T Walker	arc21
G Craig (<i>Secretary</i>)	arc21
H Campbell	arc21
J Green	arc21
K Boal	arc21
M Lavery	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
D Lindsay	Ards & North Down Borough Council
N Martin	Ards and North Down Borough Council
B Murray	Belfast City Council
J McConnell	Belfast City Council
H Moore	Lisburn & Castlereagh Borough Council
P Thompson	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
J McBride	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Officers' Apologies:

G Girvan	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
S Toland	Belfast City Council

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Item 1 - Conflicts of Interest Statement

The Chair read out the Conflicts of Interest Statement. There were no conflicts noted.

Action: Noted

Item 2 - Apologies

Apologies were noted.

Action: Noted

Item 3 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 055 held on 25 March 2021

The minutes of the Joint Committee meeting 054 held on 25 March 2021 were agreed.

Action: Agreed

Item 4 - Matters Arising

Page 9 - Mr Craig reported that the end of year accounts were currently being prepared and one thing highlighted each year by the Local Government Auditor was the Declaration of Members Interests forms. He reported that these forms had been circulated to Members and requested that they are completed and returned as quickly as possible, either electronically to george.craig@arc21.org.uk or heather.campbell@arc21.org.uk, or by post to arc21 at Belfast Castle, whichever is most convenient.

Action: Members

Page 9 - Mr Craig advised that a report on the recent Audit Committee meeting would be presented later in the meeting.

Action: Noted

Page 10 - Mr Walker advised that a letter had been drafted to the Chief Executives outlining some of the issues raised at the last meeting on the state of the NI waste management landscape etc. and would work with the Chair on finalising this.

Action: Mr Walker / Chair

Item 5 - Contracts and Operations Briefing Report

Ms Boal presented an overview of the arc21 contracts and supplies orders.

She reported that service across all contracts was being maintained with contractors who were continuing to have COVID-19 preventative measures in place.

She noted that there were four rejected loads delivered to the Organics facility which seemed to be mainly due to collection vehicles not being properly emptied from the previous collection round and therefore it was not the fault of the householder. Concerns were noted by Members and she advised that when such incidents occur officers are reminded to review their protocols in relation to this.

Ms Boal reported that the first impact of COVID-19 on waste tonnages began in March 2020 and direct comparisons against the tonnages received in March 2021 are not therefore always directly comparable. On an annual comparative basis, however, most contracts saw increased tonnages.

She reported that in relation to the residual Landfill Waste Contracts, there had been an increase of 27.4% in March 2021 when compared to March 2020. Overall, when comparing the year 2020/21 to 2019/20 there had been an additional 16,654 tonnes delivered through the contracts leading to a rise of 10.5%. Members raised their concerns regarding this increase, and Ms Boal advised that it was potentially due to the pandemic but that it was an issue which would be monitored closely.

She also reported on issues relating to the increasing cost of compostable caddy liners due to worldwide issues associated with the availability of raw materials. This is also likely to affect some suppliers of bins in the event they do not have a stockpile of raw materials.

Due to a shortage of raw materials, she reported that there had been issues in securing the fixed prices for compostable caddy liners under the framework arrangement that is being utilised. arc21 is therefore currently using the option under the framework arrangement to undertake mini competitions. This will continue until the requests for price changes have been reviewed and agreed by the ESPO framework

In addition, several suppliers of bins and caddies have also notified arc21 of issues caused by a global shortage of raw materials. The main suppliers of bins to arc21 councils, Craemer and MGB Straight (IPL Global) currently have supplies available so there is no immediate effect on prices. Councils, however, have been encouraged to place orders for bins they require as soon as possible to mitigate against any future delays or price increases.

In the event that the ESPO prices for these items cannot be maintained, mini competitions may also be required for these products.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee noted the report.

Action: Noted

Item 6 - Audit Committee Meeting 26 March 2021 Report

Mr Craig provided an update on the business conducted by the Audit Committee at the meeting held on 26 March 2021 and presented a copy of the executive summary providing the detail of the items discussed.

He noted that the local government auditor had made the formal presentation of the Annual Audit Letter at the meeting and reported that the accounts had been certified, once again, without qualification. Mr Craig also took the opportunity to express his personal thanks to the Principal Financial Accountant, Mr Brian McKeown, for delivering this outcome and providing such a high quality of financial management to the organisation which provides the Joint Committee with an independent level of assurance.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee noted the report.

Action: Noted

The Chair advised members that the meeting would now go “In Committee”, which was proposed and seconded accordingly.

IN COMMITTEE

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

Following discussion on the commercially sensitive matters, the Chair advised members that the meeting would now return to the main agenda but whilst “*in committee*” there were five matters discussed as follows:

Item 7 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 054 held on 25 February 2021 ‘in committee’ **Action: Agreed**

Item 8 - Matters Arising **Action: Noted**

Item 9 - DAERA Covid-19 Waste Management Funding Support	Action: Noted
Item 10 - Crown Commercial Services Framework for Insurance	Action: Agreed
Item 11 - Residual Waste Treatment Project Update	Action: Partly Agreed

The Chair advised Members that the meeting would now come out of the “in committee” process and return to the main agenda, which was agreed. **Action: Agreed**

OUT OF COMMITTEE

Item 12 - Investment Strategy Northern Ireland (ISNI) 2021-2031 - Call for Evidence

Mr Walker presented members with the proposed arc21 response to the Investment Strategy Northern Ireland (ISNI) 2021-2031 - Call for Evidence and members were asked to provide any comments so that the submission could be finalised and released in accordance with the end of April deadline.

He reported that the development and maintenance of a long term ISNI is one of SIB’s core statutory responsibilities as set out in the Strategic Investment & Regeneration of Sites (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. The principal objective is to set out a clear framework for future investment in major capital projects across the region in order to assist in their planning, financing, procurement and delivery.

The ISNI is drafted by SIB on behalf of Ministers, working closely with The Executive Office (TEO) and Department of Finance, and with officials from the spending departments. It is one of the Executive’s three high level policy documents, published alongside and consistent with the Executive’s Programme for Government (PfG) and Budget. It sets out the Executive’s plan for capital investment by all departments and arms-length bodies for the 10-years ahead, including transport infrastructure, schools, colleges, health facilities, social housing, water infrastructure and public sector office accommodation.

He reported that the current ISNI programme is coming to an end, and an updated ISNI, covering the period 2021-31, is now being developed by SIB alongside work by TEO to update the Executive’s PfG.

As in the past, ISNI is underpinned by extensive research and evidence as well as stakeholder engagement with citizens, statutory, private, and voluntary/third sectors, and with other relevant organisations.

Mr Walker advised that SIB are welcoming views on the development of the next ISNI by asking stakeholders etc. to respond to the Call for Evidence by end of April 2021.

The Joint Committee was asked to consider the proposed arc21 draft response and provide any comments so that they can be taken into account in the final submission.

While Members supported the commentary stressing the existence of an infrastructural deficit, notwithstanding the role of the councils’ Waste Management Plans in informing the procurement programme undertaken by arc21, several raised concern regarding the priority given to the Hightown Quarry proposals for Mechanical-Biological Treatment (MBT) and Energy-from-Waste (EfW) facilities as they considered that EfW may not be the only viable solution for residual waste. As the MBT/EfW infrastructure proposals are not universally accepted, Members asked that this is reflected in the response.

It was also suggested that it would be useful to more clearly include arc21 councils' tonnage figures.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Mr Walker is given delegated authority to review the response reflecting the concerns raised by members and work alongside the Chair to finalise the response for submission prior to the deadline.

Action: Mr Walker / Chair

Item 13 - Outreach Report

Mr Walker presented members with a report on recent developments with the Advisory Committee on Packaging (ACP) and the Department for Economy, Circular Economy Coalition.

He reported that the DEFRA ACP had been looking for local government representation on the Committee and an interest had been registered by him on behalf of NI Plc. He reported that as there had been no other volunteers, he had been shortlisted and interviewed and had recently been informed that he had been successful in gaining a seat on the ACP.

Mr Walker also reported on an invitation received from the Minister for the Economy to contribute to a newly formed Circular Economy Coalition (CEC) to get involved with her Department to develop a Circular Economy Strategic Framework (CESF) which will inform upcoming economic, environmental, and social policy development, raise awareness within the private and public sectors as well as the third sector, and identify opportunities to deliver greater circularity in Northern Ireland.

The Coalition is a crucial element in developing a CESF as the Minister considers it will bring insight, knowledge and experience from practitioners and key stakeholders involved in the transition towards a CE and draft Terms of Reference have been developed to reflect this.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee noted Mr Walker's involvement in both the ACP and CEC as outlined.

Action: Noted

Item 13 - AOB

CIWM and IEMA webinars - Mr Walker advised members on a series of webinars being held in May which they may find of interest. These include:

1. a series of events hosted by the Environmental Policy Forum to facilitate how the future governance arrangements set out in the Environment Bill can be implemented to best effect in Northern Ireland; and
2. a series of CIWM webinars regarding the EPR and DRS consultations which Members may find of interest as the consultations will have considerable impact for Councils going forward.

Mr Walker advised that he would circulate the details to the Joint Committee Members accordingly as they may wish to register for the events.

Action: Mr Walker

A Member suggested that as concerns continued to be expressed at the Joint Committee, arc21 consider either adding an agenda item at a future Joint Committee meeting or holding a dedicated session regarding the residual waste project which could address the decision-making and site-selection issues, and also address other potential options. Given the procurement process, it was recognised that this would require legal input.

As this discussion was focused on the suitability and performance of the MBT/EfW infrastructure proposals for the Hightown Quarry site, Members were asked to consider the appropriateness of holding a number of site visits for informative purposes.

Action: arc21

Item 14 - Next Meeting

The Chair advised that the next scheduled meeting of the Joint Committee is due to be held, once again in a virtual format, on Thursday 27 May 2021 at 10 30am.

Action: Noted

Date: _____ **Chairman:** _____