

ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE

Meeting No 059

MINUTES

Thursday 26 August 2021

Members Present:

Councillor A Bennington
Councillor R Kinnear
Alderman R Gibson (*Chair*)
Councillor A McDowell
Alderman D Drysdale
Councillor S Lee
Councillor M Gregg
Councillor D Reid
Councillor H McKee

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

Members' Apologies:

Councillor M Goodman
Alderman A Carson
Councillor F Ferguson
Councillor P McReynolds
Councillor JJ Magee
Alderman R Cherry
Councillor I Friary
Councillor W Clarke (*Deputy Chair*)
Councillor W Walker

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

Officers Present:

T Walker
G Craig (*Secretary*)
J Green
K Boal
L Daly
D Lindsay
C Mathews
J McConnell
H Moore
P Thompson

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Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Ards & North Down Borough Council
Belfast City Council
Belfast City Council
Lisburn & Castlereagh Borough Council
Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

Officers' Apologies:

G Girvan
M Lavery
J McBride
H Campbell

Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
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The Chair informed Members that Councillor Kathryn Owen from Newry, Mourne & Down District Council had been replaced by Councillor William Walker.

The Chair also welcomed Cathy Mathews from Belfast City Council to her first Joint Committee meeting since being appointed as Director in the Council.

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 058 held on 24 June 2021

Following discussion, the Joint Committee recommended the approval of the minutes of Joint Committee meeting 058 held on 24 June 2021 and Mr Walker approved the recommendation.

Action: Agreed

Item 4 - Matters Arising

Mr Craig discussed the Declaration of Members Interests forms to be completed by Members and advised that to date he had only received seven forms back from the 18 Members.

He stated that the Statutory Audit was drawing to a close and he was concerned that this matter would be noted again by the Local Government Auditor in his report. He asked Members who had not submitted their completed forms do so as quickly as possible.

Members asked that Mr Craig send out the forms again to those Members who had not returned them. He said he would reissue forms and again encouraged all to complete the form and return it as quickly as possible to either himself or Heather george.craig@arc21.org.uk or heather.campbell@arc21.org.uk

Action: Mr Craig & Members

Members discussed the current legislative issues with holding virtual meetings and therefore the potential to hold hybrid physical meetings with video conferencing facilities for those who could not attend. Mr Craig advised that councils had been approached in relation to providing suitable facilities and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

Action: Mr Craig

Item 5 - Contracts & Operations Briefing Report

Ms Boal provided Members with an overview to the Joint Committee of issues pertaining to Contracts and Operations, including issues with COVID-19 preventative measures in place, issues related to rejected loads delivered to two contractor sites and an overview of contract tonnages and supplies orders.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee recommended that the report be noted and Mr Walker approved the recommendation.

Action: Noted

Item 6 - Waste Tonnage Trends

Ms Boal provided a report on the waste tonnage trends relevant to arc21 contracts for the period April to July 2021 for comparison against trends in previous years.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee recommended that the report be noted and Mr Walker approved the recommendation.

Action: Noted

Item 7 - Annual Review of Waste Statistics 2020/21

Ms Boal provided a report on the indicative position in respect of key waste statistics covering the 2020/21 year.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee recommended that the report be noted and Mr Walker approved the recommendation.

Action: Noted

IN COMMITTEE

The Chair recommended that the meeting would now move “in committee” for items 8 to 12 of the Agenda and Mr Walker approved the recommendation.

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 Mr Walker approved, but whilst “*in committee*” there were four matters discussed as follows:

Item 8	Minutes of Meeting 058 held on 24 June 2021 ‘in committee’	Action:	Agreed
Item 9	Matters Arising	Action:	Noted
Item 10	Residual Waste Treatment Project	Action:	Noted
Item 11	Commercially Sensitive Contract & Procurement Issues	Action:	Agreed
Item 12	Council Covid-19 Waste Management Financial Losses	Action:	Noted

OUT OF COMMITTEE

Members agreed to return to the main Agenda.

Item 13 - Consultation on Policy Options for the new Energy Strategy for NI

Mr Green provided the Joint Committee with a copy of the arc21 response to the consultation on the proposed options for a new energy strategy for Northern Ireland.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee recommended that the Acting Chief Executive retrospectively approves the consultation response, which was submitted by the deadline and Mr Walker approved the recommendation.

Action: Agreed

Item 14 - Consultation on Proposed Changes to the Carrier Bag Levy

Mr Walker provided the Joint Committee with a copy of the arc21 response to the consultation on the proposed changes to the Carrier Bag Levy.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee recommended that the Acting Chief Executive retrospectively approves the consultation response, which was submitted by the deadline and Mr Walker approved the recommendation.

Action: Agreed

Item 15 - Circular Economy Strategic Framework Call for Evidence

Mr Walker provided the Joint Committee with a copy of the response prepared in a personal capacity as a member of the Department for the Economy, Circular Economy Coalition, to the call for evidence on the Circular Economy Strategic Framework.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee recommended that the report be noted and Mr Walker approved the recommendation.

Action: Noted

Item 16 - Waste Management Plan

Mr Walker provided a verbal report on the review of the Waste Management Plan, including the role arc21 plays in regard to the development of the current plan which is based on an 11-council model.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee recommended that the report be noted and Mr Walker approved the recommendation.

Action: Noted

Item 17 - Benchmarking Report 2019-20

Mr Craig provided an update to the Joint Committee on the outcome from this year's recent benchmarking exercise. He informed Members that this was the second Benchmarking Report following the approval of the new Corporate Plan, the first presented last year covered the 2018/19 year and this one, undertaken recently, covers the 2019/20 year.

Mr Craig explained that the Corporate Plan made provision for arc21 to undertake reviews of costs and performances with other similar bodies so that the services provided can be compared with (benchmarked against) these other bodies.

The second review has just recently been completed and once again shows that arc21 has improved its performance both year-on-year and in comparison, with the other similar organisations.

Attempts to create a benchmark club in 2020 were thwarted due to the Covid-19 emergency but this issue will be revisited to establish if there is an appetite from the other similar organisations to engage in a more formal comparative arrangement.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee recommended that the report be noted and Mr Walker approved the recommendation.

Action: Noted

Item 18 - EPSRC Application Support

Mr Walker gave Members a verbal update regarding the relevant research undertaken by EPSRC and the potential for arc21 to input into that research and also benefit from its findings.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee recommended that the report be noted and Mr Walker approved the recommendation.

Action: Noted

Item 19 - AOB

At the request of Mr Walker, officers and arc21 staff left the meeting for this item.

Members in Attendance Cllr D Reid (MEABC), Cllr A Bennington (ANBC), Ald R Gibson (ANDBC), Cllr H McKee (NMDDC), Cllr A McDowell (ANDBC)

Mr Walker provided a verbal update on personnel matters following the completion of a draft report on the situation within arc21. Following earlier meetings, Members were reminded that Mr Walker had committed to keeping the Joint Committee apprised regarding developments earlier in the year.

Mr Walker had highlighted that there were a number of factors which have contributed to the situation in arc21. Following these earlier meetings, the Chair had written to the arc21 constituent councils' chief executives.

He also highlighted that paperwork was in train to extend his secondment for a further year.

Mr Walker highlighted that the Committee had previously granted approval to proceed with the procurement for HR services which would include the development of a HR Strategy to support the Corporate Plan. In advance of this process, Mr Walker approval had been granted to commission a HR piece of work, a draft of which had now been produced. Given the involved nature of this work, it has cost around £15,000 legal fees and £6,000 HR costs.

Following receipt of the draft report, and a meeting with the chief executives in late August, the Members considered next steps during which the Chair commended the staff for their ongoing performance, highlighted that the governance arrangements were not widely appreciated and that, since these arrangements had been put in place, there had been a considerable recruitment of new Members in this political term.

Other Members also commented upon the level of disruption during the year and how, through hard work, the staff had continued to progress both the Steering Group and Joint Committee agendas.

In terms of addressing matters, the Members recommended that a sub-group of the Committee should be formed with appropriate resourcing. They approved the expenditure as outlined above, and instructed Mr Walker to instigate the creation of this sub-group to expedite matters in as timely a manner as possible.

Item 20 - Next Meeting

The Chair advised that the next virtual Joint Committee meeting would be held as scheduled on Thursday 30th September.

Action: Noted

Robert Gibson

Date: 30 September 2021

Chairman: