

ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE
Virtual Meeting No 71
MINUTES
Thursday 30 June 2022

Members Present:

Councillor R Kinnear
Alderman R Gibson
Alderman A Carson
Alderman A McDowell
Councillor F Ferguson
Alderman D Drysdale (*Chair*)
Councillor M Gregg
Alderman R Cherry
Councillor I Friary
Councillor D Reid
Councillor K Owen
Councillor R Burgess

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

Members' Apologies:

Councillor M Goodman (*Deputy Chair*)
Councillor A Bennington
Councillor JJ Magee
Councillor S Lee
Councillor D Murphy

Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Belfast City Council
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Officers Present:

T Walker
K Boal
H Campbell
J Green
M Lavery
N Martin
C Matthews
B Murray
H Moore
M Smith
S Holgate
S Murphy

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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
Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Officers' Apologies:

G Craig
G Girvan
D Lindsay

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Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Ards & North Down Borough Council

Item 1 - Conflicts of Interest Statement

The Chair read out the Conflicts of Interest Statement.

Action: Noted

Item 2 - Apologies

Apologies were noted.

Action: Noted

Item 3 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 070 held on 26 May 2022

Following discussion, the Joint Committee approved the minutes of the Joint Committee meeting 070 held on 26 May 2022.

Action: Agreed

Item 4 - Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Action: Noted

Item 5 - Contracts & Operations Briefing Report

Service Status

Ms Boal advised that all contractors are continuing to work within their COVID-19 protocols and, in particular, arc21 officers are seeking to work with contractors to put back in place systems that enable drivers to sign for the loads that they deliver to the contractor facilities. She noted that one of the benefits during Covid was that councils were able to receive electronic copies of weighbridge tickets and arc21 officers hope to maintain this system from an administrative point of view as it worked well.

Performance

In terms of performance, Ms Boal advised that we are starting to see the number of deliveries significantly rise in terms of the organics as the weather improves and as a result the number of vehicles presenting as overweight is increasing, which arc21 officers are continuing to manage alongside the relevant contractors.

She noted that there were some performance failures mainly on the haulage contract in regard to providing accurate data to arc21, but these issues have now been resolved.

There were also some issues with capacity at bottle bank sites, and a couple of sites which did not have the 20% capacity available at all times. The contractors were notified of these incidences and sites were serviced accordingly.

Health & Safety

Ms Boal advised that there had been several Health & Safety incidents reported to arc21 by contractors and councils, including a number of raised hoppers which was prohibited. These incidents have been reported to council officers who were requested to liaise with their Health & Safety officers and operational managers, including those of external contractors on these critical matters to ensure that all drivers are appropriately trained and understand their obligations in relation to operating within site rules.

In terms of the incident at Bryson, she reported that arc21 had reviewed the CCTV footage and met with them to discuss the incident which could have had serious implications. arc21 officers raised concerns about the handling of the incident and understand that a full investigation was initiated. Bryson have reviewed internal processes and have made changes in relation to the reporting and investigation of near misses.

Rejected Loads - Organic Waste Contract

In terms of rejected loads she advised that there had been two into the organics' delivery sites and two into Bryson. Council officers have once again been requested to continue to review their protocols to ensure that systems are in place to monitor the complete emptying of vehicles before collecting another material stream.

arc21 Contract Tonnages

The contract tonnages were discussed in more detail in the market trend report.

Mullaghglass Landfill

Ms Boal reported on the future plans for restoration of the landfill site and noted that the details were now available on the Alpha website.

She noted that there had been two applications for Judicial Reviews in relation to the Mullaghglass Landfill site in regard to odour, and the outcomes were available on the Court website.

Supplies

A summary of the supplies contracts orders was presented and, as previously advised, she noted that councils were reminded to ensure that stock levels are monitored and order requests made well in advance of requirements.

Following discussion the Joint Committee noted the report.

Action: Noted

Item 6 - Waste Tonnage Trends

Ms Boal presented a report showing the tonnage comparisons for material processed through arc21 contracts over the last three financial years and noted that the trends are now starting to show some alignment to pre-Covid tonnage levels.

She noted that the landfill trend was similar to a couple of years ago with the impact of the combined MRF tonnages.

Further, she reported that the organics type 1, which is the material coming from the civic amenity sites, was still down which was probably more weather dependent, and the organics type 2 was similar to 2019/20 levels with some signs that it was returning to usual trends.

In terms of the street sweepings, Ms Boal noted that this service had suffered during Covid due to operational issues but tonnages collected through the contract are quite low and therefore any shift has a disproportionate impact upon trends.

Looking across the board at all of the contracts, at this stage in the financial year it does not look like there is a lot more similarity with previous trends as we come out of covid.

She reported that the second part of the report analyses of the current performance, using information from Waste Data Flow (unvalidated), against future landfill and recycling targets of the 10% landfill target and 70% recycling target which is in the Climate Act was now being undertaken.

In terms of the landfill target and as it stands at the moment, NM&DDC is the only council achieving this target as they are sending the majority of their residual material through a treatment process, but once we move into the DPS contract Ms Boal anticipates seeing all the figures go down. That would be a significant contribution to delivering the action needed by councils to achieve the 10% landfill target.

In terms of recycling, all councils have a significant way to go to reach 70% but this target is likely to apply to the whole of Northern Ireland and, at this stage, it is unclear whether it will directly translate to councils. As previously discussed at the June committee on the “*Future of Recycling*” paper for NI, officers were sceptical of the prospects of councils reaching the 70% target with the current level of priority, resources and support from DAERA.

Following discussion the Joint Committee noted the report.

Action: Noted

Item 7 - Market Prices

Ms Boal presented a report to provide the Joint Committee with an overview of market prices and trends for recyclates in the 2021/22 year.

She noted that the data has been taken from LetsRecycle to provide an overview of market prices in general for the key material streams collected through our contracts and presented to the market for processing into product.

In terms of revenue, she noted that this year past, arc21 had received a considerable uplift in terms of the value of the income generated. From the indicative trend (presented in the charts), she noted that there appeared to be momentum in this upward trajectory.

She advised that generally, the markets in which the arc21 material was sold were buoyant and a summary of the income share achieved through the mixed dry recyclable contract was included in the commercially sensitive report discussed later in the meeting.

Following discussion the Joint Committee noted the report.

Action: Noted

IN COMMITTEE

The Chair recommended that the meeting would now move “in committee” which was agreed.

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 8 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 070 held on 26 May 2022 ‘in committee’

Action: Agreed

Item 9 - Matters Arising

Action: Noted

Item 10 - Residual Waste Treatment Project

Action: Agreed

Item 11 - Commercially Sensitive Contract and Procurement Issues

Action: Agreed

Item 12 - HR Support Issues

Action: Agreed

OUT OF COMMITTEE

Item 13 - Consultation on Developing the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS)

Mr Walker presented a report to advise the Joint Committee of a recent consultation on developing the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS) which, for the first time, included waste to energy.

He noted that arc21 was cautiously welcoming of the requirements to deliver a serious transition to meet the net zero targets and address the climate breakdown issues, however, arc21 considered that the way it was drafted would impact badly on councils, particularly in relation to how they plan their financial arrangements as local authorities do not have a mechanism for passing on charges to householders, and budgets are set well in advance. Consequently, the proposals seemed to be weighted heavily to how businesses could work.

The commentary was that local authorities cannot pass on any new emissions trading scheme costs in a variable manner. Tonnages around waste from a local authority background are much more variable yet the budget lines are much more fixed.

The recommendation for the collective of local government across the UK was that as we have no ability to pass on the costs per se, the Department were requested to engage more fully with Defra, the Department of Housing and Department of Business to reflect on our comments and how it could work in practice from a local government perspective.

He advised that a response had been submitted by the deadline of 17 June endorsing the response which had been submitted by the Waste Network Chairs Group, of which he was a member, and recommended that the Joint Committee endorse this approach.

Following discussion the Joint Committee agreed to provide retrospective approval to the recommendation.

Action: Agreed

Item 14 - Audit Committee Meeting 20 June 2022 Report

Mr Walker presented a report to update the Committee on the issues presented to the Audit Committee at its meeting held on 20 June 2022.

This included a copy of the Executive summary of the meeting which provided an overview of the items that were discussed as well as the Audit Committee Annual Report which provide a summary to the Joint Committee of the key issues that have been considered and discussed by the Audit Committee during the 2021/22 financial year, the assurances received and the areas requiring attention.

Following discussion the Joint Committee noted the report.

Action: Noted

Item 15 - Financial Report for the year to March 2022

Mr Walker presented the Joint Committee with a summary of the financial results of the Joint Committee for the year to March 2022, for their information.

He noted that the final accounts, following certification by the Local Government Auditor, will be presented to the Joint Committee and this is expected to be around September / October 2022.

An extract from the Draft Statement of Accounts was appended to the report.

Following discussion the Joint Committee noted the report.

Action: Noted

Item 16 - Customer Survey

Ms Boal presented the results of the annual arc21 customer survey.

She advised that the participation in the survey this year was 20% compared with 16% in the previous year, with the breakdown between members and officers being at a similar level to last year. She noted that as the overall response was relatively low, the percentage change can look significant whilst reflecting one- or two-people's opinions. This potential to skew results should be noted and will be borne in mind when the internal review is being carried out.

She noted that the arc21 Senior Management Team will be considering the responses, review against last year survey responses and, in particular, consider the approach to the provision of additional information, and anything that will be implemented as a result of it will be reported at a future meeting.

Following discussion the Joint Committee noted the report.

Action: Noted

Item 17 - AOB

Mr Walker discussed the Joint Committee meetings and advised that the legislation for holding virtual ones expired in September and accordingly, as previously discussed, councils had been approached to see if they would be able to host a hybrid type meeting from September onwards and an update would be provided at the August meeting.

Action: Mr Walker

The Chair advised that an invite had been received from Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council for the Chair, Mr Walker and Mr Green to attend a council meeting on 25 July, and that he would report back at the August meeting.

He also noted that the Chair was interested in attending meetings at each of the other five councils to provide an outline of arc21 and its services and to take any questions, clarify issues etc. as arose.

Action: Noted

The Chair also advised that at the recent Audit Committee meeting there had been an issue with the number of members present and he welcomed any new members who may wish to volunteer to join the Committee and to advise either Mr Walker or himself accordingly.

Similarly, he welcomed any new recruits to the Sub Group.

Action: ALL

Item 18 - Next Virtual Meeting Thursday 25 August 2022

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and advised that the next Joint Committee meeting would be held as scheduled on Thursday 25 August 2022 commencing at 10.30am.

Action: Noted



Date: 25 August 2022

Chairman: