

ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE
Meeting No 097
MINUTES
Thursday 26 June 2025
Hybrid meeting hosted by Belfast City Council
In Belfast City Hall

Members Present:

Councillor M Goodman (*Chair*)
Councillor A Bennington
Councillor J Cochrane
Alderman O Gawith
Alderman M Morrow
Councillor K Murphy
Councillor C Enright
Councillor T Andrews

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

Members' Apologies:

Councillor H Cushinan
Councillor E Thompson
Councillor C Blaney
Councillor B Smyth
Councillor M Collins
Councillor E McDonough-Brown
Councillor A Givan
Alderman S Skillen
Councillor R Quigley
Councillor G McKeen (*Deputy Chair*)

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

Officers Present:

T Walker
H Campbell
K Boal
B McKeown
M Lavery
D Lindsay
G Bannister
J Frazer
B Murray
A McCann
G Richardson
S Morley
C Hunter
S Murphy

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

Officers' Apologies:

J Green
S Leonard

arc21
Belfast City Council

The Chair welcomed former Members, Alderman Gawith and Councillor Bennington, back to arc21, as the new representatives of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, respectively.

Item 1 - Conflicts of Interest Statement

The Chair read out the Conflicts of Interest Statement, and none were noted.

Action: Noted

Item 2 - Apologies

Apologies were noted.

Action: Noted

Item 3 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 096 held on 29 May 2025

The Joint Committee approved the minutes. Proposed by Cllr Enright, seconded by Cllr Murphy, and agreed by all.

Action: Agreed

Item 4 - Matters Arising

Any specific matters were actioned or discussed under the main agenda items.

Action: Noted

IN COMMITTEE

The Chair recommended that the meeting would now move “*in committee*” which was agreed. Proposed by Cllr Bennington and seconded by Ald Gawith.

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 seven matters discussed.

Item 5 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 095 held on 27 March 2025 ‘in committee’ (approved)

Item 6 - Matters Arising (noted)

Item 7 - Residual Waste Treatment Project (approved)

Item 8 - Commercially Sensitive Contract & Procurement Issues (approved)

Item 9 - Financial Report for the year to March 2025 (noted)

Item 10 - Draft Annual Report of the Audit Committee to the Joint Committee 2024/25 (noted)

Item 11 - Audit Committee Meeting 3 June 2025 Report (noted)

OUT OF COMMITTEE

Proposed by Cllr Bennington and seconded by Ald Gawith.

Item 12 - Contracts & Operations Briefing Report

Ms Boal presented a report to provide the Joint Committee with an update in relation to contracts and operations.

Service Status

She reported that RiverRidge continue to draw upon their contingency arrangements for the MEABC Call Off Contract B Lot 2, and all other contracts were operating as anticipated.

Performance

The contractor performance in May was presented, detailed across the main service contracts, the residual waste treatment contracts, and the bring banks contracts, and some issues were highlighted where service credits would be applied and/or were still being investigated.

She reported that the overweight vehicles continued to be monitored, and noted that there had been a significant increase in the Organics contract compared to the last few months which was anticipated at this time of the year.

She noted that site visits were currently in abeyance due to resource issues and staff had been diverted elsewhere.

Health & Safety

The Health & Safety incidents during May were presented and she reported that there were three incidents in total including breakdown of vehicles and one driver incident. Ms Boal noted that, as previously advised to the Committee, it was intended to arrange a meeting with the relevant council officers in September/October to review the incidents and trends during the year, look at the work that had been done, and learnings obtained.

Audits

She reported that during May, the Health & Safety consultant had conducted an audit at Natural World Products (NWP) at the Antrim Transfer station. She noted that there had been no issues identified or actions recommended, and the consultant had stated that the company had maintained a high level of compliance on site.

Rejected Loads

She noted that there had been no rejected loads into either the material recovery delivery sites or organics delivery sites during May.

arc21 Contract Tonnages

Details of the tonnages delivered in May for the main contracts were provided, along with a comparison against the same period last year, and noted as follows:

MRF Contract – Lot 1 - a 4% decrease;

MRF Contract – Lot 2 - a 3.2% decrease;

Organics Contract: Type 1 – a 14.2% decrease; and Type 2 – a decrease of 14.8%.

Supplies

A summary of orders and deliveries of supplies for May was presented, and Ms Boal noted that there had been no non-compliances.

She advised that council officers continue to be reminded to place orders for supplies at the earliest opportunity as delays due to transportation and increased demand for certain categories of containers etc. may occur which may affect delivery timescales.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee noted the report. Proposed by Cllr Andrews and seconded by Ald Gawith.

Action: Noted

Item 13 - Waste Tonnage Trends

Ms Boal presented a report showing the tonnage comparisons for material received through arc21 contracts over the last four years.

She highlighted the following:

- all new residual contracts now shown in graph format, however too early to identify any trends;
- total residual tonnages showing spike in Dec as new contracts come on board and has levelled over the last two months around 20k tonnes;
- Organics type 1 – slightly lower than last 2 years but higher than 2022/23 year; Type 2 similar trajectory to 2022/23 year and lower than last two years;
- MRF combined annual tonnage for Lots 1 and 2 similar trajectory as 2022/23 and 2024/25;
- Bring glass tonnages at lowest in previous four years, possibly due to councils putting in their own separate glass collections;
- Bring textiles – market has changed little since last discussed and still receiving lower income than if market back to normal. CTR have assured us that there will be no affect to our collections and we keep in regular contact with them to monitor. Tonnage sitting above last three years during April and May.

The other smaller contract tonnages were also presented for information.

She reported that the second part of the report showed an analysis of current performance against future landfill and recycling targets using information from Waste Data Flow (2024/25 unvalidated) and highlighted the following:

- percentage of household waste to landfill - % was decreasing as new contracts have come on board, BCC and NMDDC sitting virtually at 0%. Total arc21 sitting at approx. 15% in comparison to over 30% 4 years ago and this is expected to drop further going forward due to the new residual contracts in place;
- percentage of household waste recycled and composted against a target of 70%, was fairly consistent across the councils over the past four years with the exception of A&NDBC who had seen a consistent step increase getting closer to 60%;
- local authority and household waste recycled and composted as a % of Local authority collected municipal and household waste arisings was fairly consistent at 50% for the past four years.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee noted the report. Proposed by Cllr Bennington and seconded by Cllr Andrews.

Action: Noted

Item 14 - Consultation on Reform of Landfill Tax in England and Northern Ireland

Ms Boal presented Members with the arc21 draft response to the consultation on reform of the landfill tax in England and Northern Ireland, currently out to public consultation.

She reported that the intention of the consultation was to seek views on Government's proposals to transition to a more circular economy, to simplify the tax and reduce opportunities for error and non-compliance, and to crack down on crime.

She noted that the draft, presented at the last Committee meeting, had been updated to take on board comments received, and also included wording which reflected upon developments arising from the Mobuoy court case and the recently published report from the NIAO on Waste Crime.

It was recommended that Members review the responses and subject to any further final comments being received from Members before 11 July, approve that the submission may be submitted prior to the close of the consultation on 21 July 2025.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee agreed to approve the recommendation. Proposed by Cllr Enright, seconded by Ald Gawith, and agreed by all.

Action: Agreed

Item 15 - arc21 Customer Surveys 2024/25

Ms Boal presented Members with a report on the annual results from the arc21 Customer Surveys and the workshop evaluation forms for 2024/25 in relation to work carried out by the arc21 Waste Promotion Officer. These were discussed as follows.

(i) arc21 Questionnaire based Customer Survey – Officers

She noted that responses had been received from all councils and highlighted the following:

- satisfaction with information regularly provided – no respondents dissatisfied and generally very satisfied overall;
- performance across a number of aspects – around 70% in the 'excellent' category with a few general comments noted;
- engagement – around 80%-90% 'very satisfied' and no comments noted;
- overall satisfaction 57% 'very satisfied' and 43% 'satisfied';
- services provided by arc21 – all respondents expressed satisfaction rather than dissatisfaction;
- topic specific information – around 60% content with information and some other areas were identified by officers that would be beneficial including *Rethinking our Resources*, and NI legislation.

Some further questions were noted, and no responses received in relation to what aspects of arc21's work were least valued.

Overall, she noted that the feedback had been generally positive and that the next steps would be for the SMT to review and consider.

(ii) Feedback provided in person from the Chief Executives and Directors

She noted that as part of the internal audit review, it had been recommended that in addition to the customer surveys that arc21 should engage with Chief Executives and Directors as part of its regular quarterly meeting cycle to elicit further feedback. A summary of the feedback was provided in the report for information and again she advised that these would be considered by the SMT for any actions resulting.

(iii) Education and Awareness Programme Feedback

The results of the evaluation forms in terms of the education programme, were presented and she highlighted the following:

- 98% very satisfied with the visit;
- 100% agreed that the programme achieved the objective;
- 100% agreed that the programme was suitable for the age group/audience;
- 100% strongly agreed that the presenter gave clear and easy to follow instructions

Some of the comments noted in the forms were also noted which were very positive.

(iv) Questionnaire for Joint Committee Members

Ms Boal noted that a questionnaire had been circulated for Members to complete and encouraged all those who had sat on the Committee prior to June 2025 to complete the survey as it formed part of arc21's ISO accreditation process which would be subject to certification in September/October 2025.

Following discussion, the Chair encouraged the relevant Members to respond to the annual survey and to note the report. Proposed by Cllr Andrews and seconded by Ald Gawith.

Action: arc21 Members / Noted

Item 16 - AOB

Consultation on the EU Emissions Trading System and the Market Stability Reserve

Ms Boal advised that arc21 had become aware at a recent meeting that the Department had received confirmation that energy from waste facilities in NI generating electricity would fall into the EU ETS. She noted that there was still questions over where they would fit if they generated both electricity and heat, and advised that arc21 would continue to follow this up with the Department.

She noted that arc21 had also been advised of a consultation which had been out for a couple of months and due to close on 8 July in terms of the EU ETS Call for Evidence. She advised that the majority of questions would not be relevant to ourselves, but one of the questions related to municipal waste incineration and accordingly it was felt that there was merit in drafting a response. She advised that arc21's response was unlikely to differ to the one submitted to the UK ETS consultation in 2024 and was related to the fact that councils do not have control over the waste tonnages and composition.

She advised that the EU were also considering other waste activities, such as landfill particularly as one of the aspects highlighted through the UK ETS consultation was that there could be a perverse incentive to landfill as it might be cheaper.

Following discussion, it was recommended that a draft response is prepared and discussed with the Chair and/or nominee to finalise in order to meet the 8 July deadline.

Action: Mr Walker and Ms Boal

Item 17 - Next Meeting Thursday 28 August 2025, using MS Teams

The Chair thanked Belfast City Council for hosting the meeting and wished everyone a pleasant summer break. As there was no meeting scheduled in July, he noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 28 August using MS Teams.

Action: Noted

Date: 28 August 2025 **Acting Chair:** Cllr Alison Bennington