# ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE
# Meeting No 098
# MINUTES
# Thursday 28 August 2025
# Using MS Teams

**Members Present:**

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| Councillor A Bennington | Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council |
| Councillor A Groogan | Belfast City Council |
| Alderman M Morrow | Mid & East Antrim Borough Council |
| Councillor K Murphy | Newry, Mourne & Down District Council |
| Councillor C Enright | Newry, Mourne & Down District Council |
| Councillor T Andrews | Newry, Mourne & Down District Council |

**Members' Apologies:**

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|---|---|
| Councillor M Goodman (C*hair)* | Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council |
| Councillor H Cushinan | Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council |
| Councillor J Cochrane | Ards & North Down Borough Council |
| Councillor E Thompson | Ards & North Down Borough Council |
| Councillor C Blaney | Ards & North Down Borough Council |
| Councillor M Collins | Belfast City Council |
| Councillor E McDonough-Brown | Belfast City Council |
| Alderman O Gawith | Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council |
| Councillor A Givan | Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council |
| Alderman S Skillen | Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council |
| Councillor R Quigley | Mid & East Antrim Borough Council |
| Councillor G McKeen *(Deputy Chair)* | Mid & East Antrim Borough Council |

**Officers Present:**

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|---|---|
| H Campbell *(Secretary)* | arc21 |
| K Boal | arc21 |
| J Green | arc21 |
| D Lindsay | Ards and North Down Borough Council |
| G Bannister | Ards and North Down Borough Council |
| N Martin | Ards and North Down Borough Council |
| J Frazer | Ards and North Down Borough Council |
| B Murray | Belfast City Council |
| G Richardson | Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council |
| W Muldrew | Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council |
| S Morley | Mid & East Antrim Borough Council |
| S Murphy | Newry, Mourne & Down District Council |

**Officers' Apologies:**

| | |
|---|---|
| T Walker | arc21 |
| M Laverty | Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council |
| S Leonard | Belfast City Council |
| A McCann | Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council |

In the absence of the Chair and Deputy Chair, Cllr Bennington was nominated to take the Chair, which was agreed by all.

The Chair welcomed Cllr Groogan, who replaced Cllr Smyth from Belfast City Council, to her first meeting of the Joint Committee.

**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 097 held on 26 June 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**

*Consultation on the EU Emissions Trading System and the Market Stability Reserve* - Ms Boal advised that a response had been agreed with the Chair and submitted by the deadline.

**Action: Noted**

**IN COMMITTEE**

The Chair recommended that the meeting would now move "*in committee*" which was agreed. Proposed by Cllr Enright and seconded by Ald Morrow.

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 four matters discussed.

**Item 5 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 097 held on 26 June 2025 'in committee' *(approved)***

**Item 6 - Matters Arising *(noted)***

**Item 7 - Residual Waste Treatment Project *(noted)***

**Item 8 - Commercially Sensitive Contract & Procurement Issues *(noted)***

**OUT OF COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Cllr Enright and seconded by Ald Morrow.

**Item 9 - 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 all services were operational during the months of June and July 2025, with contingency arrangements used by Natural World Products (NWP) for a short period of time.

She reported on two Enforcement Notices issued by NIEA in relation to a composting facility, at Nutts Corner and to a MRF facility operated by ReGen Waste Limited located at Derryboy Road, Newry.

Performance

She provided an update on performance across all the contracts for June and July and highlighted where service credits had been applied for turnaround times, the numbers of overweight vehicles, reporting issues by contractors, and the bring contracts rectification requests issued and serviced.

Health & Safety

The Health & Safety incidents during June and July were presented and she reported that there were four, three of which were fire related. She advised that there was increasing concerns by all operators of the risk of fire and the need for councils to encourage appropriate disposal of vapes or batteries.

Audits

Ms Boal reported that during June and July audits were conducted at Natural World Products at their Keady and Drumanakelly sites. 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.

Vapes Collections Update

She informed the meeting that Ecogenesys were the new service provider for vapes collection.

She noted that this service will be in place for 6 months starting from 8$^{t}$ July 2025.

Rejected Loads

She reported that there were no rejected loads into Material Recovery delivery sites in June or July 2025, one rejected load delivered into Organics delivery sites in June 2025, and none in July 2025.

arc21 Contract Tonnages

Details of the tonnages delivered in June and July for the main contracts were provided, along with a comparison against the same period last year.

Supplies

A summary of orders and deliveries of supplies for June and July was presented, and Ms Boal noted that there had been one non-compliance were an incorrect pallet of goods had been delivered by the haulier and then rectified by the supplier.

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 Murphy and seconded by Ald Morrow.

**Action: Noted**

**Item 10 - Waste Tonnage Trends**

Ms Boal presented a report showing the tonnage comparisons for material received through the arc21 contracts over the last four years and discussed the increases and decreases in the tonnage trends.

She noted that she would be bringing an update on the situation on textiles to the next meeting. She advised that there were still significant issues with selling this waste stream.

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

**Action: Noted**

**Item 11 - Update on Various Waste Policies and Direction of Travel**

Ms Boal presented a report with an overview on some of the recent updates in relation to waste policy and direction of travel.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)

She informed the meeting of two changes which had taken effect from August 2025 to close existing loopholes and ensure fairer cost treatment for end-of-life management of electronic products including:

- Dedicated Category for Vapes - now given a new classification within the regulations which will require vape producers to pay specifically for the end-of-life management of their products; and

- Online Marketplaces - now classified as producers and must register with producer compliance schemes by 15 November 2025, with quarterly data reporting requirements beginning from the date of the regulation's implementation.

Update on extended producer responsibility for packaging (pEPR)

An update was provided on the pEPR Scheme related to the establishment of three advisory groups, along with recent reports regarding the impact of the scheme on food price inflation.

In terms of the Efficiency and Effectiveness Technical Advisory (EETA) Committee, she noted that Mr Andrew Cassells (SIB) and Ms Katy Fulton (Bryson Recycling) had been appointed to this group which will serve as an independent technical committee offering suggestions and insights on local authority and waste management best practices across the UK. Its members will provide recommendations to support local authorities operating in varied circumstances and assist in ensuring the pEPR scheme is delivered efficiently and effectively.

She noted that having these two people and knowing them well within the arc21 group will be beneficial in getting feedback on what is happening within that committee. She advised that it is intended to have a movement of people within the committees, and arc21 will be getting feedback through various meetings in order to be kept apprised of what is happening.

Discussion ensued and Cllr Enright enquired if there was any flavour of a change in the way in which it is paid for to encourage producers to produce less waste? Ms Boal advised it was too early in terms of reported data but that she would seek to compile any data available and bring to the next meeting.

**Action: Ms Boal**

A question was raised by the Chair on whether arc21 will be able to feed into the EETA Committee. Ms Boal advised that Mr Cassells attended a number of meetings with officers to provide feedback on his work activities and also to enable feedback to be provided to him. She stated that there may be an opportunity for him to attend a future Joint Committee meeting.

**Action: Ms Boal**

<u>Bank of England Monetary Report August 2025</u>

She advised that when considering food price inflation, the Bank of England cited the impact of Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging and packaging waste (pEPR) on increased prices as a factor in their determinations.

This was picked up in the press and links to some articles were included in the report.

<u>Deposit Return Scheme</u>

Ms Boal reported on the latest development in terms of the Deposit Return Scheme with details provided, in the form of slides, in relation to the establishment of the Board and next steps.

In terms of the roll out, she noted that arc21 is expecting it to have a significant impact in terms of the materials collected by councils, particularly through their dry recycling collection services, and the impact it may have on future contracts in terms of pricing.

arc21 expect more information to be published on this topic over the next few months and will keep Members updated accordingly.

<u>Digital Waste Tracking</u>

Ms Boal provided slides from a Defra seminar in July with some high level points and timelines in relation to Digital Waste Tracking which is scheduled to begin to be implemented in 2026.

She noted that there are still queries around exactly when councils will be required to participate in the scheme and there is still some confusion over what sites will be classified as receiving sites for the October 2026 implementation date.

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

**Action: Noted**

**Cllr Groogan left the meeting which then became inquorate. The last few items were presented but deferred for noting/approval to the next meeting.**

**Item 12 - Update on Customer Survey**

Ms Boal provided an update on the customer survey, the results of which had been presented at the last meeting.

She advised that the actions coming out of the survey had been discussed with the Steering Group officers and one of the things that we will be implementing is a knowledge hub / general library for both Members and Officers to access.

**Item 13 - Consultations**

Ms Boal reported on three consultations out for consultation and the actions that were being considered:

- Public Procurement Consultation: Growing British industry, jobs and skills – deadline 8 September – decided not to respond as a number of things in it will not affect us;
- Public Consultation on the Plastic Pollution Plan for Northern Ireland - PPP NI - deadline 24 September – a response is being considered and, if responding, Mr Walker will liaise with the Chair to meet the deadline and bring to the Committee at the September meeting for ratification;
- Northern Ireland's draft Climate Action Plan 2023-2027 – deadline 8 October – a response is still under consideration.

**Item 14 - Annual Report 2024/25**

Ms Boal presented the Annual Report for the year to March 2025 reflecting the progress made in the first year of our Corporate Plan 2024-2028.

It was suggested that should Members wish to forward any queries or comments to Mr Walker, they should do so by 12 September.

**Item 15 - AOB**

The Chair inquired if social value was built into our contracts and Ms Boal advised that elements of social value had been included in a number of recent contracts.

**Item 16 -** Next Meeting and AGM Thursday 25 September 2025, hosted by Ards and North Down Borough Council in the Executive Business Lounge at Signal Centre, Bangor. The Chair asked Members to confirm their attendance with Ms Campbell at their earliest opportunity to ensure there is a quorum at the meeting, and to advise of their intention to attend online or in person in order that the catering can be confirmed with the venue.

**Action: ALL**

**Date: __25 September 2025__________ Chair: __Cllr Alison Bennington________**