

ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE

Meeting No 100

MINUTES

Thursday 30th October 2025

Using MS Teams

Members Present:

Councillor A Bennington (<i>Chair</i>)	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Councillor E Thompson	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor J Cochrane	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor A Givan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Alderman O Gawith	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Councillor G McKeen (<i>Deputy Chair</i>)	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

Members' Apologies:

Councillor M Goodman	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Councillor H Cushinan	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Councillor C Blaney	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor M Collins	Belfast City Council
Councillor A Groogan	Belfast City Council
Councillor E McDonough-Brown	Belfast City Council
Alderman O Gawith	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Alderman S Skillen	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Alderman M Morrow	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor R Quigley	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor T Andrews	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
Councillor D Lee-Surginor	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
Councillor K Murphy	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Officers Present:

T Walker	arc21
H Campbell (<i>Secretary</i>)	arc21
K Boal	arc21
J Green	arc21
B McKeown	arc21
M Lavery	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
G Bannister	Ards and North Down Borough Council
S Leonard	Belfast City Council
W Muldrew	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
D Carey	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

Officers' Apologies:

A McCann	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
S Morely	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
S Murphy	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

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 099 held on 25 September 2025

The Joint Committee approved the minutes. Proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Thompson, and agreed by all.

Action: Agreed

Item 4 - Matters Arising

Any matters arising were dealt with under the main agenda.

Action: Noted

IN COMMITTEE

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

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 5 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 099 held on 25 September 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 - Audit Committee Meeting 23 September 2025 Report - noted

OUT OF COMMITTEE

Proposed by Cllr Givan and seconded by Cllr Thompson.

Item 10 - Governance Paper

Mr Walker presented a paper suggesting consideration be given to Members’ training on their roles and responsibilities within arc21, along with a brief summary of the recent Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) report on *Waste Crime in NI* which highlights a series of recommendations which have been raised with the NIEA and DAERA.

Discussion ensued and it was agreed that it would be beneficial to have some refresher training as well as providing an opportunity to stress the importance of attendance at meetings. The Chair proposed that NILGA should be contacted to ascertain what training they could provide in addition to that already provided to Members in councils.

Mr Walker is to progress.

Action: Mr Walker

The Chair advised of her recent visit to Belgium and a proposal that had arisen to arrange a visit to Indaver facilities and inquired if this would be of interest to the Committee for knowledge building.

Members agreed that such a visit would be of interest but closer to home in the first instance, and a visit to the Indaver plant in Duleek was agreed.

Mr Walker advised that a similar visit had been arranged for Members previously and that he was content to progress this proposal with Indaver.

Action: Mr Walker

Following discussion, the Joint Committee agreed that members' training be arranged as well as a site visit to the Indaver plant at Duleek, and noted the NIAO report.. Proposed by Cllr Givan, seconded by Ald Gawith, and agreed by all.

Action: Agreed

Item 11 - 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 and running well during the month of September 2025.

She noted that there had been an incident at the Bryson Recycling facility on 14 October with a smouldering battery and had fortunately been noticed by one of the operatives and extinguished. She highlighted that arc21 has seen increasing evidence of these fires and one within councils' own facilities.

She advised that Bryson had issued a communique reminding residents about the importance of disposing of batteries in the correct manner, and that arc21 had also highlighted this with council officers to ensure it remained in the public eye regarding how best to handle battery disposal. She noted that this is being monitored on an ongoing basis.

Cllr Givan inquired about the type of batteries causing the issues. Ms Boal advised that they are domestic batteries which it is not always possible to detect within the waste.

Cllr Givan noted that it was not particularly easy for householders to dispose of only one or two batteries at a time other than going to a recycling centre and suggested that more education on disposal options was required for the householder.

The Chair agreed with this and noted that batteries could also be disposed of at supermarkets, chemists and other locations now, but this was worthy of more consideration.

Performance

Ms Boal provided an update on contractor performance across all the contracts in September and highlighted where service credits had been applied for turnaround times, the number of overweight vehicles, reporting issues by contractors, and the bring contracts rectification requests issued and serviced.

Health & Safety

There were no reported health and safety incidents or near misses in September.

She reported that an external health and safety audit had been carried out at ReGen's facility in Newry, where minor issues were identified and actions arising from the visit had been completed.

Rejected Loads

She reported that there had been two rejected loads delivered to the organics delivery sites in September which were due to vehicles not being fully emptied before going out to collect other materials and that arc21 continues to highlight this with council officers at the monthly Steering Group meetings.

arc21 Contract Tonnages

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

Supplies

A summary of the orders and deliveries of supplies for September 2025 was included in Ms Boal's report and she noted that there was one non-compliance where a delivery intended for two locations was only delivered to one location.

She advised that arc21 continues to remind officers to ensure they check their stock orders so that sufficient time is permitted for them to be fulfilled – given the increase in demand arising from the introduction of *Simpler Recycling* in England.

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

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 she discussed the increases and decreases in the tonnage trends.

The following was highlighted:

- organics - coming towards the end of the contract year and the rebate for tonnages received over 100,000 tonnes will be reported on around February when all the information is received;
- mixed dry recyclables combined tonnages for September 2025 were greater than over the last three years, a positive result;
- street sweepings - an upturn, but expected at this time of the year due to the season and the weather;

- glass - a reduction in the amount of glass collected through the bring site network; this is not unexpected, given that councils have been introducing kerbside collections;
- textiles - a significant increase and the highest in the last three years. She noted that CTR is still experiencing market difficulties and a more detailed report, including reporting on the amount of material handled and future plans in terms of market engagement and development, will be brought to the next meeting following a site visit to the facility.

She advised that within the next month, the annual statistics for the 2024/25 year would be published, as the NIEA are completing their validation process, after which arc21 will incorporate them into a report. This will provide Members with up to date figures and the trends for each council.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee noted the report. Proposed by Cllr Thompson and seconded by Cllr Givan.

Action: Noted

Item 13 - Consultation on the setting of Northern Ireland's Fourth Carbon Budget (2038-2042)

Mr Walker presented Members with the proposed arc21 response to the consultation on the setting of *Northern Ireland's Fourth Carbon Budget (2038-2042)*.

He noted that the consultation had been well written but noted the lack of reference to either the *Circularity Gap* report completed by the Department for Economy in 2022, or the follow-on consultation, the draft *Circular Economy Strategy 2023*. The latter report identified the need to reduce consumption from 16 tonnes per person per year to 8 tonnes per person per year by 2050, and the impact that would deliver in terms of carbon. He reported this was not reflected in the present consultation document in any way.

He also noted that there was little cross referencing in a number of strategies produced under the Executive, each seemingly being issued as a stand-alone document, and not being integrated one with another.

In terms of this, he advised that the present consultation appeared underwhelming and did not address, from a waste management perspective what needed to be done to deliver against this agenda. He noted his concerns regarding the amount of work and time put into responding to these consultations which in turn were not being internalised by the Department.

It was recommended that the Joint Committee approve the arc21 response to the consultation on the setting of *Northern Ireland's Fourth Carbon Budget (2038-2042)*, further to any final comments either at the meeting or in advance of the deadline of 17 November.

Cllr Givan thanked Mr Walker for all his work in responding to the consultation.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee approved the recommendation. Proposed by Cllr Givan and seconded by Ald Gawith.

Action: Noted

Item 14 - Update on Policy and Engagement

Ms Boal presented some updates in relation to waste policy and engagement.

1) NI Waste Strategy

She reported that at the recent NCAP meeting, a Departmental official had indicated that the consultation on the *NI Waste Strategy* was still scheduled to commence later this year, and stated that the consultation period would be twelve weeks rather than eight as originally intended.

2) WEEE Compliance Fee Methodology 2026

She advised that DEFRA had launched a four-week consultation, running from 13 October 2025 until 10 November 2025 on the Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Compliance Fee Methodology for 2026.

She reported that the scheme did not really apply to arc21 but rather to the compliance scheme administrators themselves as well as the producers. She advised therefore that arc21 did not intend to respond to this consultation on this occasion due its nature, and the short timescale given.

3) Update On Circular Economy Roadmap

A diagram was presented in the report providing an update on the preparation of the *Circular Economy Roadmap* for England which she noted Defra periodically provides as part of the engagement session.

She reported that the session highlights the different areas of work underway within Government including PEPR, DRS, *Simpler Recycling*, digital waste tracking and the Circular Economy, and that updates are provided on these interventions in terms of progress reports and timescales. She noted that not all aspects covered in these engagement sessions apply to all jurisdictions (e.g. *Simpler Recycling* only applies to England and aspects of the *Circular Economy Roadmap* are unlikely to apply here).

She advised that a concern had been expressed recently in a number of forums about digital waste tracking and how it was going to operate, what resources were likely to be needed by councils and at what particular time. She reported that she was seeking to gather further information on this matter, on behalf of the 11 councils, and see whether arc21 can ascertain what the plan is given that implementation of this programme is due to commence next year.

4) NI RECYCLING TRACKER – SPRING 2025

An overview of the results from the *WRAP Recycling Tracker Survey - Spring 2025* was presented for Members' information.

This included a series of graphs with a breakdown of responses on the following:

- perceived worthwhileness of one's own recycling effort;
- citizen knowledge of what can and cannot be recycled,
- barriers to recycling,
- levels of potential missed capture and contamination as a result of knowledge gaps
- food waste recycling in NI and overtime,
- last disposal of food in the home
- efficiency of using the food waste recycling collection
- and service satisfaction.

She reported that some of the results will be of interest to councils' communication teams in terms of preparing campaigns and that WRAP would be working on literature which councils could use to bolster their messaging.

A link to the full report was noted in the report.

Cllr Givan inquired if the caddy liners had been changed as he had personally found recent ones to be of poorer quality than previously. Ms Boal advised that the specification had not changed and that there had not been any other complaints raised recently. She noted that the bags are biodegradable and may deteriorate if not used relatively promptly but this would depend on the turnover rate at which the bags were issued within each of the councils, but she said she would raise this matter internally with staff.

Action: Ms Boal

Ald Gawith inquired if cognisance had been taken in these figures around the material that supermarkets are now taking.

Ms Boal advised that the recycling tracker report was more about people's perceptions as opposed to whether the facilities are actually physically available to them and, as such, it was seeking to identify the gap between perception and reality and focusing upon that.

She advised that she had attended a recent *FlexCollect* presentation about collecting flexible plastics. She noted that it was likely to become mandatory in the next few years, and the issue at the moment was around the markets and what happens to this material once it is collected. She highlighted that considerable effort is being put into developing markets.

She noted that Defra were looking at the flexible plastics capacity and locally efforts were being made to contribute to this. She advised it was likely that within the next few years it will feature in councils' collection systems. She noted that there had been discussion at the meeting about the best way to deliver this – through technology, or by presenting householders with additional bags.

She noted that both this and textiles were two things in the next couple of years that will see more of a focus on in terms of councils' own collection arrangements.

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

Action: Noted

Item 15 - ISO 9001:2015 Update

Ms Boal reported that this year the external audit had carried out a surveillance certification process, and she was happy to report that there had been no observations or non-conformances, and that arc21 had received a clean bill of health.

She advised that next year there will be a full certification process.

The Chair congratulated the team and all involved on this achievement.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee noted the report. Proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Thompson.

Action: Noted

Item 16 - AOB

Item 17 - Next Meeting Tuesday 2 December 2025

The Chair advised that the next meeting was scheduled to be held on Tuesday 2 December and was a **hybrid meeting, hosted by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council in the Council Chamber, the Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street BT43 5EJ**. Members were asked to confirm their attendance with Ms Campbell in advance of the meeting.

All members were encouraged to attend.

Action: ALL

Date: 2 December 2025

Chair: *A Bennington*