

Date/Time 29 th January 2021 13:00 – 17:00	Venue By Teams/Telephone Link
<p>In attendance: Richard Wearmouth Jeff Reid Malcolm Robinson Guy Renner-Thompson Ian Swithenbank John Woodman Chris Sayers Martin Knowles</p> <p>Present: Ken Dunbar Robin Earl Colin Dixon Pat Walker Daljit Lally Juliemma McLoughlin Kim Grant (Minutes)</p> <p>Part: Andrew Lovatt Duncan Bowman (part) John Hildreth (part)</p> <p>Apologies: Sally Agass Chris Hand</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Advance Northumberland Managing Director Advance Northumberland Chief Operating Officer Advance Northumberland Chief Finance Officer Advance Northumberland Governance & Performance Manager NCC Chief Executive NCC Executive Director of Regeneration, Commercial & Economy Advance Northumberland PA</p> <p>Advance Northumberland Director of Developments (Commercial & Infrastructure) Advance Northumberland Director of Developments, Residential Advance Northumberland Senior Business Growth & Investment Manager</p> <p>NCC Operational Director Regeneration, Commercial and Economy NCC Finance Director</p>

1.0	Notice & Quorum
1.1	The Chair welcomed the attendees and declared the meeting quorate.
2.0	Apologies for Absence
2.1	The Chair reported that there had been apologies for absence from Sally Agass and Chris Hand.
3.0	Declarations of Interest
3.1	There were no declarations of interest.
4.0	Minutes of the Previous Meetings
4.1	The minutes of the previous meetings held on the 27 th November 2020 and the 9 th December 2020 were REVIEWED and AGREED .
4.2	Actions from the 27th November 2020 Board Meeting
4.2.1	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Action: ██████████ background briefing paper to be provided to a future Board meeting. Response: On the meeting agenda.</p> <p>Action: ██████████ may require a virtual approval. Response: Virtual approval received, ratification on the meeting agenda.</p> <p>Action: Finance Update Number of remaining units at Hemingway Court to be clarified. Response: Complete</p> <p>Corporate Risk Register – Brexit is currently being incorporated into the risk register for circulation to Board when complete. Response: Complete</p> <p>Rural Design Centre – Full report will be circulated to the Board covering the risks associated with grant funded programmes. Response – Will be brought to the Board in February.</p> <p>Action: Business Plan - Board workshop at the end of February 2021 with an external facilitator. To include J McLoughlin/S Agass of NCC. Response: To be discussed under Item 12 of the meeting agenda.</p>

4.2.2	<p>Power of Attorney</p> <p>Action: [REDACTED] no value against it? Check not a formatting error then note to Board to confirm. Response: Complete.</p>
4.2.3	<p>Actions from Previous Board Minutes</p> <p>Action: As a result of a recent report regarding Ascent Homes to the Audit Committee, a report would be prepared in the New Year detailing how Red Sky helped Advance Northumberland to better manage costs. Response: Red Sky presentation given to Advance Northumberland Audit Committee on 25th January 2021</p>
4.2.4	[REDACTED]
4.2.5	[REDACTED]
4.2.6	[REDACTED]

4.2.7	<p>Procurement Procedure</p> <p>Action: Board commented that, during procurement at any level, if there was only one contender this should be flagged to the Board from a governance point of view. Response: To come back to Board with a proposal that would keep Board informed but at a manageable admin overhead.</p> <p>Action: Board requested that this be raised at the Shareholder Group meeting. Response: Complete.</p>
4.2.8	<p>[REDACTED]</p>
4.2.9	<p>[REDACTED]</p>
5.0	<p>Matters Arising</p>
5.1	<p>There were no further items for discussion under Matters Arising.</p>
6.0	<p>Ratification of Board Decisions made Electronically</p>
6.1	<p>[REDACTED]</p>
7.0	<p>Performance Updates</p>
7.1	<p>HR Update</p>
7.1.1	<p>The Chief Operating Officer presented the report the purpose of which was to provide an update on current HR activities.</p>
7.1.2	<p>The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that the current headcount within Advance Northumberland at 31.12.2020 was 132.</p> <p>There were 2 live vacancies within the Economic Growth and Investments team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERDF Coordinator • Project Support Officer
7.1.3	<p>The Chief Operating Officer stated that labour turnover for the year commencing 1st April was 5.03%. For the 12-month rolling period ending 31st December 2020 the labour turnover was 4.58%. There were no notable trends in this information that would be a cause for concern.</p>

<p>7.1.4</p>	<p>The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that the sickness absence rate for the year commencing April 2020 was 1.93%.</p> <p>We had seen an increase in absence rates due to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 accidents at work, with both individuals continuing to be absent • 2 long term absences <p>We had had 4 people absent due to Covid19 - 1 long term (now returned).</p> <p>There were no patterns or demographics to link the absence causes.</p> <p>Two people had been told to shield as part of Lockdown 3.</p> <p>There had been 5 incidents of compassionate leave since April.</p>
<p>7.1.5</p>	<p>The Chief Operating Officer informed the Board that we had successfully achieved the Continuing excellence award. The HR Advisor spoke at a Sharing Best Practice event because of work undertaken on our mental health during the pandemic.</p> <p>We had a range of activities arranged for the new year, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Big Fat Quiz of the year • Dry January • Coach to 5k • Brew Monday • Keeping Motivated When Working from home • Veganuary • Energy Saving Week • Cervical Cancer Prevention week • House Plant week
<p>7.1.6</p>	<p>The Chief Operating Officer stated that Health Surveillance review appointments had been arranged. Other than those where HAVS were identified in the first round of reviews, Occupational Health had advised that these would be restricted to audio tests due to the low level of HAVs recorded.</p> <p>One review is outstanding due to long term sickness.</p> <p>The HSE had confirmed that they do not require any further information into the HAVs RIDDOR reports that were submitted.</p> <p>We continue to monitor exposure using the appropriate equipment. All exposure was significantly below the recommended levels.</p>

7.1.7	<p>The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that we had continued with the random drug and alcohol testing. Since the introduction of this, 79 people had been tested.</p> <p>The programme was reinstated from the 1st July 2020, with our provider now using fingerprint testing rather than saliva for drugs testing. One person had failed the Alcohol test and two (1 contractor) had failed the drugs test since this was introduced.</p>
7.1.8	<p>Following a question from M Robinson on what happened following a failed drug/alcohol test, the Chief Operating Officer stated that the preliminary results from the testing company were sent to a laboratory for more detailed analysis. Immediately we are notified of a failed test it is set out within the policy what would happen next, usually the member of staff would be suspended immediately, an investigation launched which would then flow into the disciplinary process whereby a formal hearing would be convened.</p> <p>The Chief Operating Officer stated that if the failed test was concerning a sub-contractor the individual would be removed from site and reported to their employer.</p>
7.1.9	<p>The Chief Operating Officer stated that our new learning and development portal was live with mandatory training units. There were significantly more programmes to be completed now and these were tailored more to individual roles / responsibilities rather than a blanket approach.</p>
7.1.10	<p>C Sayers raised a concern around the mandatory training figures. The Chief Operating Officer stated that staff now had access to a significantly enhanced library which meant there were a lot more training modules to complete.</p>
7.1.11	<p>The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that the customer care training had now commenced, with the first sessions on Coaching for Managers taking place in January. This programme was being delivered remotely over 6 sessions, rather than full day face to face sessions as we had originally planned.</p>
7.1.12	<p>The Chief Operating Officer stated that there were 11 people currently undertaking career pathways. We were supporting these candidates through their college courses, or professional progression remotely (such as interview practice) and had also encouraged attendance at mentor sessions.</p>
7.1.13	<p>The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that there were currently 4 apprentices within the group studying AAT, Team Leading, IT Practitioner and Maintenance. College courses and support were currently being held remotely and we were in contact with all colleagues to ensure they were getting the most from their training.</p>
7.1.14	<p>The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that of the original 48 individuals who</p>

	<p>were initially furloughed, only 2 remained prior to Lockdown 3. Both of these individuals were also on long term sick. Their absences were being managed through the sickness absence process.</p> <p>We had furloughed 3 additional people in January 2021 and a further 3 had flexible furlough arrangements.</p>
7.1.15	The Chief Operating Officer stated that consultation on the proposal to change expenses rates had been completed. All those affected accepted the change and this was implemented from the 1 st December 2020.
7.1.16	The Chief Operating Officer stated that the performance management cycle was April to March. The decision had been taken to postpone mid-year reviews until January 2021. We were currently working to ensure that all objectives were up to date.
7.1.17	The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that the employee forum would meet on the 28 th January 2021. At this meeting we would review the suggestions for the new company values together with some plans on reward & recognition.
7.1.18	<p>The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that we had achieved the IIP standard and had received the report with suggested work to progress to the silver standard.</p> <p>A briefing session for managers on the Management Charter had been produced and would be delivered to team meetings, followed by comms via the employee forum for all staff.</p>
7.1.19	<p>Following a question from the Chair concerning individual risk assessments, the Chief Operating Officer confirmed that a full survey around Covid19 was completed in May 2020. As a result of the recent Shareholder Group meeting Advance Northumberland understood that NCC had updated its risk assessment, we are therefore putting in place a similar step forward whereby we would be asking all staff to update their information that we currently hold.</p> <p>The Chief Operating Officer stated that all staff were given the opportunity to raise any particular concerns and signposted them to the employee systems that were available.</p>
	The Board:
7.1.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTED the contents of the report.
7.2	FOI/Data Protection
7.2.1	The Chief Operating Officer introduced the report, the purpose of which was to inform the Board on FOI and data protection issues dealt with by the company over the preceding month.
7.2.2	The Chief Operating Officer informed the Board that the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provided public access to information held by public

	<p>authorities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obliging public authorities to publish certain information about their activities and • Enabling members of the public to request information from public authorities.
7.2.3	<p>The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that we normally had 20 working days to respond to a request. However, there were certain circumstances that we could refuse a request which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would cost too much or take too much staff time to deal with the request • The request was vexations • The request repeated a previous request from the same person. <p>Other exemptions related to particular types of information, for example information relating to government policy, where harm would arise from disclosure or where disclosure would be likely to prejudice a criminal investigation or prejudice someone's commercial interest.</p> <p>The grounds for refusing a request were tightly regulated and before a refusal could be agreed, consideration must be given to the public interest test and the prejudice test.</p>
7.2.4	<p>The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that Advance Northumberland received one FOI in January 2021.</p> <p>On 19th January we received the following FOI request:</p> <p><i>"Hi, I have made a freedom of information request to Northumberland County council, about an asbestos survey report for Mannor walks shopping centre in Cramlington. The council, have advised me to contact yourselves at advance Northumberland saying you would know some or all of this information. Please would it be possible to see the asbestos survey report?"</i></p> <p>The FOI had been logged as ref A32. An acknowledgement was sent to the requestor on 19th January. We had received a copy of the Re Inspection of known ACM's at Manor Walks carried out by Asbestos Consultancy Training and Surveying (ACTS) in November 2020. The information contained within the report would be reviewed before releasing it, or not, to the requestor with the final response. We had until the 16th February to respond to the request.</p> <p>A copy of the final response would be reported to Board at the February meeting.</p>
7.2.5	<p>The Chief Operating Officer informed the Board that the Data Protection Act 2018 provided a comprehensive and modern framework for data protection in the UK and set new standards for protecting general data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).</p> <p>The right of access, commonly referred to as subject access, gave individuals</p>

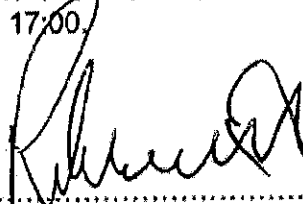
	<p>the right to obtain a copy of their personal data as well as other supplementary information.</p> <p>Individuals had the right to obtain the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation that you are processing their personal data • A copy of their personal data • Other supplementary information – this largely corresponded to the information that you should provide in a privacy notice. <p>We were required to comply with a request without undue delay and at the latest within one month of receipt of the request or (if later) within one month of receipt of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any information requested to confirm the requestor's identity • A fee (in certain circumstances).
7.2.6	<p>The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that Advance Northumberland had not received any subject access requests since December 2019 which was reported to the Board.</p>
7.2.7	<p>The Chief Operating Officer informed the Board that the GDPR introduced a duty on all organisations to report certain types of personal data breach to the relevant supervisory authority. This must be done within 72 hours of becoming aware of the breach where feasible.</p>
7.2.8	<p>The Chief Operating Officer informed the Board that Advance Northumberland had one data breach incident reported in January 2021 and one near miss identified in December 2020.</p> <p>Data Breach;</p> <p>On the 19th January, a Business Northumberland customer informed us that, when logging onto the webpage used by Business Northumberland, it became apparent that all users email addresses were visible. The website was provided to Business Northumberland by a third party. The Business Northumberland Programme Manager notified the third party of the issue by email on January 19th. The Operations Director from the third party responded on the 20th January stating the following:</p> <p><i>We have investigated the incident below and found there was a data breach. We have taken the following actions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Closed the data breach. The relevant pages has been removed from both live and staging. We have requested removal from Google cache.</i> 2. <i>Reviewed the impact. We have concluded that the likelihood of harm to any individual is extremely low.</i> 3. <i>Determined how to restore functionality. As part of the website relaunch we were already creating a new registration page (based on a different plug-in), I propose once tested we use this new process for registrations. We can work together to propose the best timescale for this.</i> <p>The third-party organisation informed Advance Northumberland that the issue</p>

	<p>was due to a design error.</p> <p>Advance Northumberland carried out an ICO self-assessment on the 21st January which recommended we keep an internal record of the breach including what happened, the effects of the breach and remedial actions taken. The Business Northumberland Team would also test the new site to ensure the issue did not arise again. The ICO concluded that there was no requirement to notify the ICO but that we should keep a note of why we came to this decision. If new information which affected the circumstances of this breach came to light, it was recommended that we reassess the risk and determine whether it would become reportable at that point. The customer had been notified that Advance Northumberland were investigating the breach and a full response with the ICO recommendations would be sent. All businesses would be sent an apology with details of the breach.</p> <p>Near Miss:</p> <p>In early December 2020, Commercial invoices were sent out electronically to approximately 500 commercial tenants. We were notified by a number of tenants that the invoices attached were incorrect invoices - i.e invoices for a specific business were received. The invoices did not contain personal data. An ICO self-assessment was carried out which concluded that the incident was a near miss and not reportable. Emails were sent to all commercial tenants in receipt of the incorrect invoice apologising for the error and asking them to disregard the email:</p> <p><i>Dear Tenant, As you may be aware we are making some changes to your systems and processes, which will allow us to communicate with you more frequently via email. As a result of a processing error, we have been made aware of a potential issue where an incorrect email and attachment has been sent to the wrong email address. If you have received an email from us in last 24 hours, please disregard this and accept our sincere apologise.</i></p> <p>We have since amended the automation process to ensure the issue does not reoccur and tested the process before it went live.</p>
12.2.9	<p>M Robinson asked whether, with regards to the digitisation of invoices, both parties i.e. Advance Northumberland and the Tenant, had to agree to accept them in that manner.</p> <p>The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that this would be checked.</p>
	<p>The Board:</p>
7.2.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTED the contents of the report.
8.0	Policies
8.1	There were no policies brought to the Board.
9.0	Approvals
9.1	There were no approvals presented to the Board under this section.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS





13.0	Any Other Business
13.1	There were no matters brought to the Board under Any Other Business.
13.2	<p>The Chairman thanked the Board for their attendance and closed the meeting at 17:00.</p>  <p>.....CHAIRMAN</p>

Summary of Actions	
Ratification of Virtual Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● APPROVED the ratification the original decision and to continue to progress as agreed ● Confirmation by letter required from the company that they will continue to trade as they are for the benefit of the local community.
FOI/Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Digitisation of Invoices – Board commented that this had to be agreed by both the Company and the Tenant, RE to check.

