

Education & Inclusion – Babcock LDP In-housing Update – Briefing note

Report from the Head of Education and Learning

Recommendation: DEF to note

1. Background

- 1.1 Following last year's full consultation, engagement with scrutiny and approval by Cabinet, on 1st August 2022, 204 FTE staff currently employed by Babcock LDP to deliver Education services will transfer back into Children's Services in Devon County Council through a TUPE process.

In preparation for this, officers from all departments affected by the move (Children's Services, ICT, Premises, HR, Finance, Communications etc), have been working as part of a project steering group to put in place the necessary arrangements to ensure a smooth transfer of staff and also that the delivery of services to schools, and therefore children, will not be impacted.

Schools' representatives sit as part of the Project Steering Group and all Headteachers have been updated on progress to-date. The same update has also been shared with Governors.

2. KEY UPDATES to 28 February 2022

2.1 Integrated Team Structure and TUPE for over 250 staff (204 FTE)

- 2.1.1 In order to deliver the benefits outlined in the Cabinet paper on 10 March 2021 for bringing the services delivered by Babcock LDP in-house, we have taken the time to map out how the insourcing of the existing services, in line with the feedback from the consultation work we did at the start of the process, can best be achieved. Over the past 9 months senior staff have also been involved in workshops looking at how all our services currently work together and how this could be improved.

The Integrated Team Structure consultation papers were sent to the Trade Unions before half term and a briefing meeting took place on 28 February. The consultation process formally started on 1 March and will close on 15 March.

At the same time as starting the consultation, a letter was sent to all staff not directly affected within the Babcock and Children's Services teams to let them know this process had started and that their role is not directly affected.

The results of the integration consultation will be shared with staff shortly after the consultation closes.

- 2.1.2 TUPE consultations – The plan is to start the formal TUPE consultation in April.

2.2 Estates

- 2.2.1 Interim accommodation arrangements – The lease on Milford House, Babcock LDP’s current offices in Exeter, expires on 31 March 2022. This is before the end of the formal contract with DCC which was extended due to Covid. Arrangements have therefore been put in place to provide Babcock LDP with a room in Great Moor House where they can hot desk during the interim period. In addition, accessible storage for their resources, a room so they continue to deliver training, and a room for data analysis have been provided.
- 2.2.2 Longer term accommodation arrangements – In the longer term, the aim is for the new integrated team to be co-located with current DCC staff, which will help support the new integrated ways of working.
- 2.2.3 Accommodation in North and South Devon – Staff from Babcock LDP who are normally based in North and South Devon have viewed DCC premises in the area and plans are in place for them to have their resources moved across at the time of the transition.
- 2.2.4 Willand – The decision has been taken for DCC to take over the lease of the large storage facility Babcock LDP currently lease at Willand; as we don’t already have anywhere suitable to store the Schools Library and Music Hub resources that are kept there. Work is underway to negotiate a new lease with the landlord.
- 2.2.5 Outdoor Learning Centres – These centres provide outdoor education and residential breaks for school children. They are widely used by schools who pay for the provision they book. The Outdoor Learning Centre sites are leased by DCC from the Duchy of Cornwall, and then sub-leased to Babcock LDP. Our Legal team are in the process of completing a further supplemental lease with Babcock LDP to cover the extension of their service contract until end July 2022.

Babcock LDP currently lease a number of vehicles for the Outdoor Learning Centres which are used to take the children out onto the Moors etc. As these agreements cannot be novated, new vehicles have been ordered and contingency arrangements put in place to ensure there will be no interruption in service during their busiest months.

2.3 ICT

- 2.3.1 IT equipment purchase - A capital budget allocation has been agreed and the purchase of equipment has begun to mitigate the risks around the laptop supply chain at present. The IT equipment will be held in a bonded warehouse until required to avoid activating the warranty until needed.
- 2.3.2 IT rollout plan – As around half of Babcock LDP’s staff are on term time only contracts and will be on leave at the time of the transition, the IT rollout will commence in late June/early July to ensure they all have their new IT and can test it to make sure they can access resources and applications needed before they break

for summer. The rollout to the rest of the staff will follow to ensure they have working IT from day one.

- 2.3.3 Service Desk support arrangements – An additional resource has been identified to support the IT rollout process and provide capacity to the Service Desk during the transition period, This will ensure any IT issues can be dealt with quickly minimising any impact of the service.

2.4 Traded Services

- 2.4.1 Traded Services umbrella – All the traded services currently delivered by Babcock will move over to DCC in line with the agreement made by Cabinet on 12 July 2021.

The in-housing of the traded services currently delivered by Babcock LDP has given us the opportunity to look at what other education focused traded offers currently exist within DCC. Following a number of discussions, it has been agreed that services offered by DCC Early Years, HR One, Devon Audit Partnership, Legal, Media and PR and Trade Waste will all sit under the same traded services umbrella from 1 August 2022.

While these services will continue to be delivered by the existing DCC teams the Service Level Agreements with schools will be managed by the Traded Services team. They will all appear on the traded services website with links through to their existing website, if they wish to retain it, providing a one stop shop for schools and settings. Where appropriate, they will also appear in the Schools Directory.

- 2.5.2 Branding – As the Babcock LDP branding cannot be used after August 1st an interim brand for the traded services has been agreed to be used during the first academic year. During that period, a full rebranding exercise will be conducted to create a new brand that encompasses all of the traded offers that will be marketed under it.
- 2.5.3 Websites – Babcock LDP currently have a website and a separate shop, which also includes their training platform. The plan is to retain the shop as the Traded Services website and transfer any content related to the marketing of traded services or the promotion of free training to the front end of the shop to make it more of a website.

The rest of the content and resources currently sitting on the Babcock LDP website will be transferred across to the DCC website and be linked into the Education and Family pages, the Support for Schools area and the SEND Local Offer, as appropriate.

This will also give us the opportunity to revamp the existing schools' support webpages to create a better user experience.

- 2.5.5 Novation of contracts – All customer contracts will be automatically novated on 1 August 2022.

2.6 Induction and training

- 2.6.1 Welcome event and induction – An event is being planned to welcome Babcock LDP staff to Childrens' Services and Devon County Council, and to give everyone the opportunity to come together as a whole for the first time. Corporate leaders and Children's Cabinet/ Key Scrutiny members will also be invited to the first part of the morning.

Other key staff from across DCC, for example Public Health, Communities, Economy Enterprise and Place, Adult Services, leads of support groups (e.g. LGBTQ+ and ethnic minority groups) will also be invited. Through a marketplace type event this will give staff the opportunity to find out more about what each other does, and to share some key messaging. Workshops on key priorities will then follow.

The event is planned for Friday 22 July to enable term time only staff to attend and give them some reassurance before they head off for the summer.

3. Conclusion

There has been excellent engagement across the Council and Babcock to support the transition of the teams into DCC and all the workstreams are currently on track to deliver the necessary steps on time.

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