

## **Children's Services Education & Inclusion – Babcock LDP In-housing Update**

Report of the Head of Education and Learning

### **1. SUMMARY**

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.

This report is to provide Members with an update on the progress being made to transition all of the services, and the staff who deliver them.

### **2. KEY UPDATES**

#### **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 have now been sent to the Trade Unions and a meeting arranged for 28 February, this meeting will kickstart consultations with directly affected staff. The consultation process will last for two weeks.

At the same time as starting the consultation, a letter will be sent to all staff not directly affected within the Babcock and Children's Services teams to let them know this process has 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, we would like 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 can't 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.

2.2.6 Furniture – DCC will be repurposing the majority of Babcock LDP's furniture and the meeting and conferencing assets. The process of moving the furniture has already started.

## 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 on 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.

## 2.4 **Finance**

2.4.1 Budget planning – The Education Finance team have worked with Babcock LDP to make sure their budgets and revenue streams have been captured in the budget book for the next financial year.

## 2.5 **Traded Services**

2.5.1 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 July 12<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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, where appropriate.

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

2.5.4 Trading set up – A working group has been put in place to ensure everything needed to manage the traded services effectively has been considered and has a working solution. This includes consideration of how it will work using the DCC finance system, the set-up of suppliers and customers, and VAT implications.

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 Children's 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/ 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 (eg 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.

2.6.2 Staff information website – A project website is currently under development to provide a range of information to both Babcock LDP and Children’s Services Education staff in the run up to the transition. We aim to have this website live around mid to late March.

The website will also be used to provide incoming Babcock LDP staff with links to key information they will want to know as part of the induction process.

2.6.3 Training development – As well as the Children’s Services and DCC induction, we are also considering a range of other training and induction requirements that will be needed in these circumstances, such as developing some finance training.

## **Conclusion**

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

Dawn Stabb  
Children’s Services Head of Education and Learning

[Electoral Divisions: All]  
Cabinet Member for Children: Councillor Andrew Leadbetter  
Chief Officer for Children’s Services: Melissa Caslake