



LONDON FIRE
AND EMERGENCY
PLANNING AUTHORITY

Report title

Training Contract: Babcock's Performance - First half of 2017/18

Meeting

Resources Committee

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Report by

Head of Development and Training

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Summary

This report provides the Resources Committee with an update on Babcock's performance in the delivery of the training contract. The report covers the first half of the 2017/18 training year, from 1 April to 30 September 2017.

In addition to training performance, the report also provides an update on the LFB Training Centre Croydon project, and car parking space hire in the vicinity of the dedicated training facilities at Beckton and Park Royal.

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

Introduction

1. This report provides detail of Babcock's performance in delivering the training contract over the first half of the 2017/18 training year, from 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017. The report also provides an update on the LFB Training Centre Croydon project, and car parking space hire in the vicinity of the dedicated training facilities at Beckton and Park Royal.

Training Performance Data

2. This section of the report is split into four areas, detailing Babcock's performance relating to:
 - i. Training delivery;
 - ii. Safety events;
 - iii. Quality assurance (QA); and
 - iv. Key performance indicators (KPIs) – points to note.

Training delivery

3. Babcock's performance is assessed by measuring actual training delivered against the Authority's training requirement set for the year. The training target is not the same year-on-year, and can vary depending on the Authority's annual training requirement. It is also subject to change during the year. For 2017/18, the annual training delegate requirement currently stands at 27,772. As this report focuses on Babcock's performance, and not LFB's performance, this section refers to booking rates. CMB has agreed that two targets be applied to booking rates. All training should achieve 90%, and core skills courses 95%. Attendance rates, which are more a measure of LFB performance (i.e. how many of the delegates booked to courses actually attended), are not covered.
4. Operational staff are released for training either via individual notification, known as the Planned Release of Personnel (PROP), or as crews on appliances, known as Strategic Resource (SR). Courses that are delivered via SR have no predetermined class size. Babcock use the planning assumption that an average of 4.5 delegates will attend SR training for every appliance that is booked.

Total training requirement

5. Trends show that 41% of the annual training delegate requirement is usually programmed in the first half of the training year. For the first half of 2017/18, this equates to 11,387 delegates. Over that period, Babcock booked 10,393 delegates on training courses, which equates to a booking rate of 91%. This exceeds the target of 90%, but is lower than the figure recorded for the whole of 2016/17, which was 92%. When training was delivered in-house, the booking rate was 65%.

Core skills training requirement

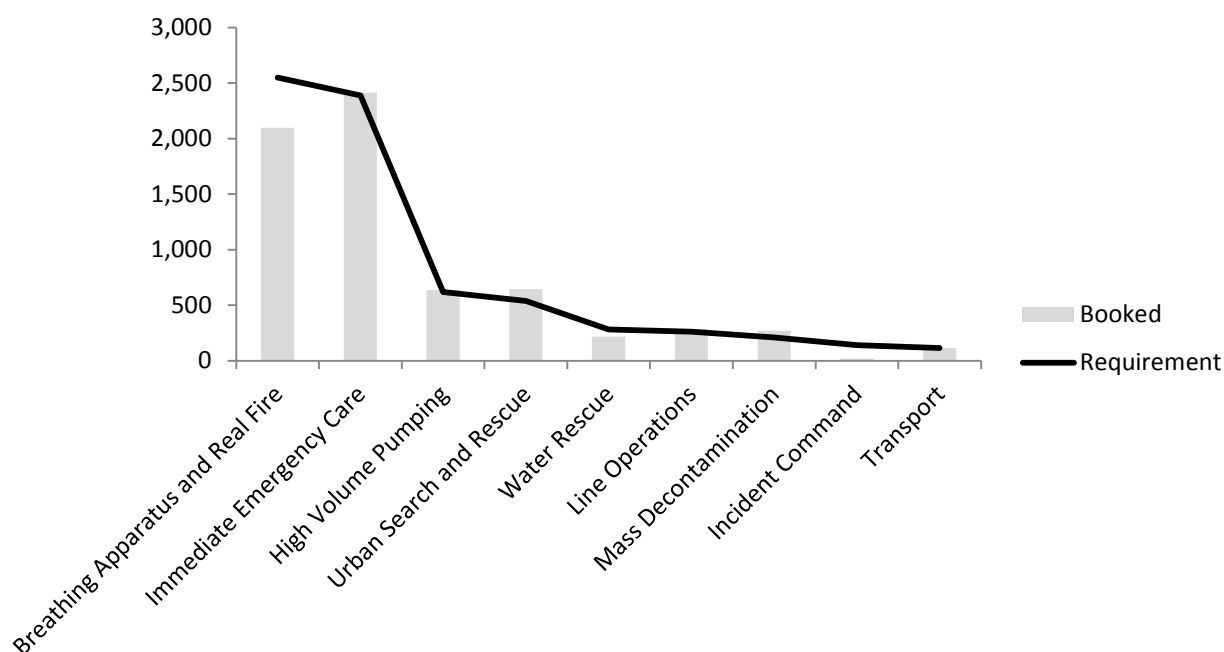
6. Officers pay particular attention to Babcock's performance against core skills training, as these courses impact on firefighter safety, firefighter performance and succession planning for skills and establishment purposes at fire stations. In the first half of 2017/18, Babcock booked 6,696 delegates on core skills training courses; the expectation was that 7,097 delegates would be trained during this period. This produces a booking rate of 94%, which is 1% below the 95% target. It is, however, higher than the 90% booking rate achieved over the whole of 2016/17.
7. Table 1 (overleaf) provides details of core skills training delivery (both PROP and SR) for the first half of 2017/18. Paragraphs 9 to 17 then provide explanations, together with details of where remedial action has been taken, of how performance levels will be improved.

Table 1: Core Skills Training – SR and PROP, first half of 2017/18

Core Skills Training Categories	Delegates Requiring training (based on trend)	Delegates Booked on training	Delegates booked as a percentage of the Requirement
Breathing Apparatus and Real Fire	2,550	2,097	82%*
Immediate Emergency Care	2,388	2,414	101%
High Volume Pumping	617	637	103%
Urban Search and Rescue	537	643	120%
Water Rescue	280	219	78%*
Line Operations	262	284	108%
Mass Decontamination	210	271	129%
Incident Command	139	18	13%*
Transport	114	113	99%

*see paragraphs 9, 13 and 16 respectively below, for more information

Figure 1: Core Skills - PROP and SR - first half of 2017/18



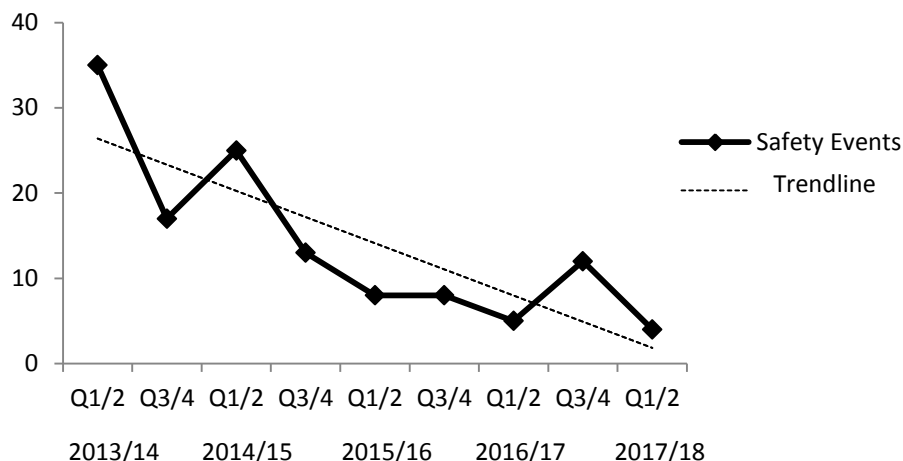
8. Figure 1, above, provides a graphical representation of core skills training performance by category. The black line represents the delegate requirement for the year, and the grey bars show the number of delegates booked on training courses. An explanation of the performance in each training category is provided below.
9. Breathing Apparatus and Real Fire – the booking performance of 82% equates to a shortfall of 453 delegates for the period. This is largely attributable to a delayed roll-out of the new 1-day BA course. It only began running in earnest in July, the fourth month of the training year. Babcock expect a reduced requirement in view of this, which would improve this statistic. This is currently being considered by officers.
10. Immediate Emergency Care – the booking requirement was met.

11. High Volume Pumping (HVP) – the booking requirement was met.
12. Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) - the booking requirement was met.
13. Water Rescue – the booking performance of 78% equates to a delegate shortfall of 61. Babcock have, however, booked sufficient classes over the second half of the training year to meet the annual requirement in respect of the two Water Rescue courses.
14. Line Operations – the booking requirement was met.
15. Mass Decontamination Training – the booking requirement was met.
16. Incident Command (IC) – the booking performance of 13% amounts to a delegate shortfall of 121 for the period. However, the new Level 2 Incident Command course is being rolled out with effect from quarter 3, which will see a significant improvement in booking performance. At the time of reporting, sufficient classes have been scheduled to meet the annual delegate requirement.
17. Transport – the booking requirement was met.
18. It should be noted that Babcock's performance is managed via a suite of contractual KPIs, and financial service failure deductions are applied when training is lost by Babcock. Please see paragraphs 23 to 25 for more information.

Safety Events

19. Babcock report on their performance in respect of a range of health and safety measures. In the first half of 2017/18, Babcock delivered 16,464 delegate training days, during which time 4 safety events (including near misses) were reported. This equates to an accident frequency of 0.02%. This continues a downward trend: the accident frequencies in 2015/16 and 2016/17 were 0.05% and 0.04% respectively.
20. Since the contract began, the total number of safety events have also been reducing. The graph in figure 2, overleaf, shows the number of safety events that occurred in each half year period from 2013/14 to present. The number of safety events has reduced from 35 in the first half of 2013/14, to just 4 in the first half of 2017/18. This is the lowest level recorded since the contract began.

Figure 2: Safety events per half year



Quality Assurance (QA)

21. Feedback provided by the QA team is supplemented by feedback provided by delegates on a voluntary basis. The response rate for classes attended in quarter two of 2017/18 was 22%, compared to 27% in quarter one. Delegates use a six point scoring system (1-2 poor, 3-4 average and 5-6 excellent) to give their opinion on trainer performance, venue suitability and course content. Information relating to the past two quarters, in respect of excellent and poor scores, is provided in the table below.

Table 3: Delegate feedback, Q1 and Q2 2017/18

Scores	Q1	Q2
Excellent (5-6)		
Trainer	89%	85%
Venue	67%	59%
Course content	80%	78%
Poor (1-2)		
Trainer	1%	2%
Venue	5%	7%
Course content	2%	4%

22. As the table shows, the majority of scores are excellent, and very few are poor. The "venue" category continues to attract the highest level of poor scores. Going forward, it is envisaged that the new training centre in Croydon, will help to further improve scores in the "venue" category.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) – points to note

23. In addition to training performance data, Babcock's performance is also monitored against contractual KPIs. Table 4, overleaf, provides a quarterly breakdown of the service failure deductions that Babcock incurred in the first half of 2017/18.

Table 4: Financial deductions - 2017/18

Quarter	Financial Deductions (£)
Q1: April – June 2017	27,160
Q2: July – September 2017	6,596
Total	33,756

24. The financial deductions all relate to 'non-provided' training classes, where Babcock suffered the penalties due to failures to meet reschedule timeframes and/or abide by agreed travel time rules. The deductions are slightly lower than the £34.8k recorded in the first half of 2016/17.
25. It should be noted that the 2017/18 training contract budget is currently expected to overspend by £150k. This has been reported to the Finance department, and is based upon the costs of delivered, planned, and not yet planned courses.

LFB Training Centre Croydon project update

26. The LFB Training Centre Croydon project continues. Currently there are two dedicated training facilities in London, one in the east at Beckton and one in the west at Park Royal. A training facility in the south will enhance LFB's training estate, as well as alleviate some of the travelling time for delegates, which is a common theme in course evaluation feedback.
27. On 16 September 2016 the Resources Committee gave their approval to build the LFB training centre on the Croydon fire station site (FEP 2646), subject to containing spend within budget and a full and robust consultation as part of the planning process. The new training centre will contain a six storey carbonaceous Real Fire Training Venue (RFTV), an incident command training suite, and a training block.
28. In July 2017 (FEP 2759), Members approved an increased budget for the project (of £15.5m, an increase from £11.1m), and a revised timetable. These decisions allowed the project to progress to RIBA Stage 2.
29. Stage 2 is now almost complete. The latest cost estimates from the external project managers, Pick Everard, suggested that the current scheme could not be delivered within the approved budget, but these concerns have been allayed. Officers carried out a value engineering exercise on 14 November, and are satisfied that as things stand the project can be delivered within budget, with no adverse impact on the training experience.
30. Stage 3 will commence with the appointment of the design and build contractor, via a Scape framework. Scape are a public sector owned, built environment specialist organisation, that provide EU Directive compliant procurement routes that support collaborative working with the building sector. Officers have invited Wates, the sole supplier to the Scape Major Works UK framework, to carry out a free and no obligation feasibility study, and to carry out a cost check on the current scheme. This is with the intention of progressing to a design and build contract with Wates.
31. The target programme was seeking to deliver the facility by October 2019. However, a review of the project's procurement strategy and early engagement of building contractors has indicated that project delivery is currently anticipated to be early 2020 and this accords with the timetable for the Integrated Equipment and Logistics Project (IELP). Officers will continue to monitor the programme and will provide updates to Members when any new dates are confirmed.

32. The pre-planning application process is going well as is public consultation with the local ward councillors and residents. The latter is being led by external communications consultants SP Broadway. Key stakeholders are being kept updated on developments, and recent events include a Community Liaison Group meeting, which was held at Croydon fire station on 14 September. Also, officers met with Croydon South MP Chris Philp on 13 October, and a public exhibition was held at Croydon fire station on 23 and 25 November.

Car Parking at Dedicated Training Facilities

33. A lack of car parking facilities has historically been one of the main areas of concern for delegates attending training at the dedicated training facilities in Beckton and Park Royal. To address those concerns, officers increased the number of car parking spaces for delegates attending training at Beckton, from 30 to 60 spaces. These additional spaces are located in Gallions Reach Shopping Centre. Early indications are that uptake of the additional spaces has been low. This calls into question the value for money of the contract that has been put in place. Officers will continue to monitor usage, and may look to reduce the number of spaces to match demand.
34. Officers have had discussions with, and have formally written to, the Asda supermarket close to the Park Royal training facility, with a view to securing car parking spaces. Despite several attempts to elicit a formal response, none has so far been forthcoming. It is considered unlikely that a response will ever be provided. There is, however, an informal arrangement in place, which enables delegates to park in the Asda car park. This is expected to continue.

Conclusion

35. Over the first half of 2017/18, Babcock achieved an overall booking rate of 91%. This is 1% above the 90% target set by CMB. Over the same period, the core skills training booking rate was 94%, which is 1% below the 95% target.
36. The rate of training course non-attendance (DNAs) continues to sit below the 6% target set by CMB. For the first half of 2017/18, the figure was 2.8%, which shows further improvement on the 4.1% achieved over the whole of 2016/17.

Head of Legal and Democratic Services comments

37. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services has no comments on the report.

Director of Finance and Contractual Services comments

38. The Financial Position report as at the end of September 2017 (FEP 2792) reports a forecast overspend on training contract budgets of £150k based on the current level of spend and expected number of training courses that will be run in 2017/18. This overspend will be partly offset by the financial deductions due to KPIs not met, set out in paragraph 24 above.

Sustainable Development implications

39. Sustainable development issues related to the training contract are addressed via the Responsible Procurement (RP) provisions in the contract. A Sustainable Development Impact Assessment has been completed for the LFB Training Centre Croydon project.

Staff Side Consultations undertaken

40. Although no staff side consultation was undertaken specifically in relation to this report, officers from Development and Training department meet with the Trades Unions on a monthly basis to discuss training-related matters. As previously reported, an update on the LFB Training Centre Croydon project is now a standing agenda item at this monthly meeting.

Equalities implications

41. As explained in the Resources Committee report, "Proposed Third Training Centre" in September 2016 (FEP 2646), the new facility will address delegates' concerns about the excessive travel distances they have to make to the Beckton and Park Royal training venues and the detrimental impact this has on their welfare, and childcare and caring responsibilities.

List of Appendices to this report:

None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985	
List of background documents	
1. FEP 2753 – Training Contract: Babcock's Performance – second half of 2016/17 (Resources Committee, 21/07/2017)	
2. FEP 2759 – Proposed LFB Training Centre, Croydon (Resources Committee, 21/07/2017)	
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