

GMB demands answers over Appledore closure



Why did the Government's offer to Babcock come in so late – was it just to cover Ministers' own backs?

GMB, the shipbuilding union, is demanding answers over the decision to close Appledore shipyard.

The union ensured the matter was raised in the House of Commons within hours of the announcement – and has now written to Babcock seeking clarification.

Yesterday, Shadow Minister (Defence) Procurement Wayne David MP raised a Point of Order in the House yesterday, requesting that the Government make a statement to the House on Monday about this very serious situation.



Today Ross Murdoch, GMB's National Officer and National CSEU Chair for Shipbuilding, has written to Babcock seeking immediate clarification on statements made in a letter dated 31 October 2018, from Secretary of State for Defence Gavin Williamson to Geoffrey Cox MP for Torridge and West Devon, the constituency for the Appledore Shipyard.

In the letter the Secretary of State highlighted options discussed with Babcock included an offer to bring forward £60 million package of work for Babcock at Devonport . The result of this would be to provide more work for Appledore workers.

However, the Sec of State goes on to say that he received no assurances from Babcock that it would keep the yard open if help were offered by the MoD and that ultimately the decision on the future of Appledore was a commercial one for Babcock.

“ Any warm words from the Government about investing in shipbuilding are hollow, when we hear about the potential closure of the 163 year old Appledore Shipyard. Ministers cannot stand idly by while a proud industry and skilled jobs are lost – GMB certainly won't.

Why did the Government's offer to Babcock come in so late? Was it just to cover Ministers' own backs?

This latest closure comes on the back of job losses at Cammell Laird in the North West. There is a crisis in our shipbuilding industry and action needs to be taken now.

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