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Stagecoach to bid for Docklands railway franchise

Thursday 18 April 2013



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PERTH-based transport operator Stagecoach has been shortlisted to bid for the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) franchise by Transport for London.

Stagecoach now finds itself up against incumbent DLR operator Serco, a joint venture between Keolis (UK) and Amey Rail, and an alliance of UK transport group Go-Ahead and Colas Rail in the competition to run the DLR, a driverless network operated through a computerised system.

Keolis is majority-owned by French transport operator SNCF. Colas Rail is part of French group Bouygues.

The new DLR franchise is due to commence on September 14, 2014.

A spokesman for Transport for London (TfL) said the new franchise would run until 2021, and include an option to extend beyond this date.

TfL, announcing the shortlisted bidders yesterday, said it would issue an "invitation to tender" to these companies within the next few weeks.

It expects that a decision on the successful bidder will be made around the middle of 2014.

The current franchise, operated by services company Serco, was originally due to expire in March 2013. TfL noted it had been extended until September 14, 2014 to "allow exclusive focus on delivering services for the London 2012 Olympics".

Hampshire-based Serco began operating Northlink Ferries on the Orkney and Shetland routes in July last year.

A spokesman for bus and rail company Stagecoach said: "We are pleased to have been successful in being shortlisted for the Docklands Light Railway franchise.

"We look forward to receiving the detailed invitation to tender documentation in due course, which will confirm TfL's key requirements for the franchise."

The DLR carried a record-breaking 100 million passengers during the 2012/13 year. It was opened by the Queen in 1987, with 11 trains serving 15 stations, and in its first year of operation carried 6.7 million people. Today, the DLR has 45 stations, 38 kilometres of track, and 149 carriages.

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