

TESLA'S MAN IN FINGLAS FIRES UP THE JETSONS

Michael McAleer
Business This Week



It was the deep crevice between my eyebrows that drove me into the arms of Dr K and her syringe of muscle paralysers. These crevices are known as 'elevens' in the facial aesthetics biz

Emer McLysaght
Life



SCORING 42 POINTS AT TWICKENHAM HAS SILENCED THE NEGATIVITY

Conor Murray
Sport

Transdev to lose €1.75bn Luas deal after 22-year service

French-British joint venture believed to have been selected as preferred bidder

'We will carefully consider the outcome and assess our position,' says Transdev

HUGH DOOLEY

Luas operator Transdev has lost out on the €1.75 billion contract after 22 years of running the service, branding it "very disappointing news" to staff.

Sources have told The Irish Times that a British-French joint venture between Amey and Keolis has been selected as the preferred bidder and is set to take over the operation of the contract later this year.

The pair have run the Docklands Light Railway in London since 2014 as part of a separate joint venture led by the French company.

They were recently awarded a new eight-year contract for the service. They also run Manchester's Metrolink light rail network.

State agency Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) be-

Siptu said it would engage with the new operators in the coming months before the transfer of operations on September 1st

gan to seek a new operator for the contract in 2023 to operate and maintain the Luas service.

The deal will run from the end of 2026 for an initial seven years with an option to renew for five to seven more years. The work will involve operating the system, on which locals and visitors completed 54 million journeys in 2024 on the green and red lines.

Its €1.75 billion price tag covers the cost of all those elements, including rolling stock overhauls, expensive work that must be done every four years.

Transdev declined to comment when contacted.

However, the French company notified staff that it had not been selected as the preferred bidder for the contract in an email yesterday.

"This is clearly very disappointing news for our company," Transdev told staff.

"We are proud of the service

we provide every day and of the role our teams have played in operating and developing Luas over more than two decades, maintaining a strong safety record and supporting the growth of the Luas light rail network across Dublin."

Staff were told that the process now enters a 14-day mandatory standstill period in line with public procurement rules, during which bidders can review the decision.

"We will carefully consider the outcome and assess our position over the coming days," Transdev said. "For now, nothing changes in our day-to-day operation. Our priority remains delivering a safe, reliable and high-quality service for passengers and communities across Dublin."

"We will communicate again once the standstill period has concluded and we are in a position to outline next steps and what this means for the company and for employees," staff were told.

Employees

It is understood employees will transfer to the new operator.

Trade union Siptu was notified that Transdev had not retained the contract yesterday, it said.

Siptu transport sector organiser John Murphy said there was a "level of uncertainty" for staff, but that the union expected the incoming contractors to honour staff's existing terms and contracts.

The union said it would engage with the new operators in the coming months before the transfer of operations on September 1st.

Staff at the company are said to be surprised at the news, with a level of expectation that Transdev would retain the contract.

Among the other bidders was a joint venture between two infrastructure giants, Italy's Azienda Trasporti Milanesi and French-listed Alstom.

TII and Amey declined to comment. Keolis said it would not comment while the procurement process was ongoing. The National Transport Authority did not respond to a request for comment.



'I do not recall ever encountering Mr Epstein'

Hillary Clinton at closed-door deposition

Former US secretary of state Hillary Clinton speaks to the press after her deposition with a House committee which is investigating links to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, in Chappaqua, New York. Bill Clinton is to testify today.

Report: page 7
Photograph: David Dee Delgado/Getty

University of Galway proposes cut to arts courses

Report says students are more attracted to courses with 'direct routes to employment'

JACK WHITE

The University of Galway is proposing to discontinue and replace its general arts course due to an international downward trend in popularity as students are increasingly attracted to "direct routes to employment".

An internal report seen by The Irish Times notes that reform of the university's undergraduate provision within its College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies has become "urgent".

A review of arts courses was initiated by the college executive committee in 2024 in response to a "sustained decline" in student numbers.

This decline, described in the report as "not cyclical but structural", is seen across the college's Bachelor of Arts degree (GY101), which has 23 subject options, and a number of its direct-entry denominated programmes, such as computer science and mathematical studies.

Its GY101 degree, in particular, which has seen a continuing decline in student numbers since 2011, dropped by 35 per cent from 749 registrations in 2019 to 491 in 2024.

The report describes projections for arts degrees at the university over the coming years as "concerning", with a forecast predicting a continued year-on-year decline, falling from 1,768 first preferences in 2023 to 1,184 by 2030.

While all arts courses had an entry threshold above 350 points in 2025, points required would have been lower if not for a "strategic reduction in domes-

tic intake", the report notes.

The limit on intake was not due to increased demand, but to ensure students who are accepted are "ready for education".

First-preference applications

It outlines a number of processes driving the current downward trend in first-preference applications and student registrations, including the "drift away" from arts courses both nationally and internationally. The report suggests this drift

reflects the "perceived lower occupational return" from such degrees, noting that students are increasingly attracted to programmes perceived to offer "direct routes to employment".

A spokesman for the University of Galway said it is "conscious" of changing demographics and students' interests and is exploring options for a range of "new and exciting courses in arts".

He added that "no changes are being introduced at this time".

'Nato-proof' secure room for calls with world leaders to cost €1m

ELLEN COYNE and CONOR GALLAGHER

Almost €1 million will be spent on a new secure meeting room in Government Buildings to guard against surveillance of conversations with other world leaders.

Taoiseach Micheál Martin confirmed that a €958,000 increase in "premises expenses" at his department this year will go towards a new secure room "because surveillance is everywhere".

Martin was speaking to the select committee on finance on revised estimates for 2026 for his department. In 2026, the premises expenses for the Department of the Taoiseach have increased 184 per cent to €1.48 million, up from €522,000 last year.

Questioning Martin, Labour TD Ged Nash noted that the €958,000 increase was described in the revised estimates

as additional expenditure "to fulfil mandatory requirements for secure meeting facilities to allow continued engagement with international partners".

Martin explained that secure facilities were sometimes required when he was talking to other international leaders, including meetings of the "coalition of the willing". The coalition, which is made up of over 30 countries, brings world leaders together to advance the case for peace in Ukraine.

"Some of those meetings, not all, would have sensitive things said, and you need secure, what's called 'Nato-proof' secure facilities. That's a standard that you need," he said.

"We have one in the country, okay? We need one in Government Buildings, for ease and so on. It's required, because surveillance is everywhere."

"Nato-proof" is an informal term used to describe the security requirements against passive

and active "eavesdropping" for rooms where Nato classified information is discussed.

The possession of such a facility is a prerequisite for countries receiving Nato intelligence. Other intelligence agencies also require partners to possess such rooms, and other secure communication technology, before sharing information.

Secure communications facilities, often known by their US designation "sensitive compartmented information facilities", are widely used by governments to prevent surveillance.

They can be permanent rooms within a building or tent-like structures which can be rapidly deployed in the field if needed. They are made of material designed to block out all incoming and outgoing electronic and radio frequencies, preventing the use of remote surveillance, including sophisticated listening devices employed by foreign intelligence services.

Weather

Rain and drizzle will soon clear followed by sunny spells and a few showers. Highs of 8-11 degrees.

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Home News

Landlords in Dáil: Five TDs stopped renting out properties last year, according to the latest Dáil Register figures, published this week. Page 2

Ireland-Israel: The Garda is working on a major policing plan for the soccer match in Dublin. Page 3

World News



Geneva: The US and Iran have made 'significant progress' in talks over Tehran's nuclear programme and are to meet again. Page 6

Business This Week

Which? survey: Ryanair finished last in an annual satisfaction survey of short-haul airlines while Aer Lingus came last on the long-haul list.

Wealth: The richest 10 per cent of Irish households now hold almost 50 per cent of total household wealth.

Sports Friday

Soccer: Brentford manager Keith Andrews has signed a new contract with the club to keep him at the Gtech Community Stadium until 2032. Page 12

Boxing: Former Ireland high-performance head coach Zaur Antia is to reunite with Billy Walsh in Colorado. Page 14

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