

Stadler takes on 120 staff from Nexus and assumes responsibility for looking after the Tyne and Wear Metro fleet

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Stadler has become the employer of 120 Nexus employees and is now responsible for servicing and maintaining the old Tyne and Wear Metro fleet in Newcastle upon Tyne.

This follows Nexus' announcement in January 2020 that the Swiss rail-builder had been awarded the contract to build 42 new trains for the Metro, scheduled to enter commercial operation from 2023.

On 4 October 2020, 120 Nexus staff based at Gosforth depot in Newcastle upon Tyne transferred to Stadler. At the same time, Stadler assumed responsibility for servicing and maintaining trains for the Tyne and Wear Metro run by public body, Nexus.

Initially, this will be the current fleet, and within a few years, it will be the new trains, set to be introduced into passenger service from 2023. The service and maintenance contract spans 35 years, underscoring Stadler's commitment to the regional economy.

Work to look after the legacy fleet will be undertaken at the existing depot in Gosforth, dating back to the era of steam locomotives. It will be replaced by a brand new one for the new trains, with construction work starting later in the year.

The new purpose-built depot represents an investment of £70 million as part of the £362m fleet replacement programme led by Nexus.

Jürg Gygax, chief executive of Stadler's service division, commented: "Stadler has undergone considerable growth over the last four years in the UK, winning five tenders to build and supply new trains. Three of these include long-term service and maintenance contracts, which illustrate our commitment to the UK market.

"With partnerships with Greater Anglia and the Liverpool City Region now well established, we look forward to consolidating the relationship with our client, Nexus, and to engaging constructively with a wide range of local suppliers and stakeholders, including colleges and universities."

Rob Baxter, UK managing director for Stadler Rail Service UK, added: "The transfer of 120 staff and service and maintenance of the Tyne and Wear Metro legacy fleet is a highly significant event in Stadler's UK expansion, and I am delighted to welcome the new employees to our business.

"I am well aware of the critical role each and every one of them will play in our future success, and offer them a warm welcome to our organisation."

Chief operating officer at Nexus, Martin Kearney, concluded: "Stadler is one of the best train-builders in the world and we are looking forward to them delivering a new and modern fleet of trains for the Tyne and Wear Metro.

"This is biggest project in the 40-year history of the Metro and we're all very excited to see the new trains in service by 2023, and work starting on our new depot at Gosforth in the coming months. A key part of the £300m deal that we signed with Stadler involved our fleet maintenance team transferring over to them via a TUPE agreement.

"We're extremely proud of the job that our depot workforce carries out right around the clock to keep the Metro trains running. They will now continue this excellent work for Stadler, looking after the current trains, helping us to introduce the new ones, and transitioning us to the new £70m depot.

"It's a new beginning but we will continue to work hand in glove with our depot teams to ensure that our ongoing success and high standards are maintained."

The new trains for the Tyne and Wear Metro will feature bright, open carriages and multi-functional areas for wheelchairs, prams, luggage and bicycles. They will be air-conditioned throughout and newly developed air-sprung bogies will reduce noise.

Eight large double doors will allow passengers to get on and off quickly. Trains will feel more secure, featuring CCTV for door operation and clear warning displays. Power will be supplied via an overhead line

with 1,500 V DC. Maximum speed will be 80 kilometres per hour.

The lightweight vehicle design, the recovery of braking energy and the use of highly efficient traction converter technology will all lower energy consumption, demonstrating Stadler's commitment to green technology.

Vehicles will have installed an energy storage system, which will enable operation on an extended network in future, without using overhead lines. The trains are METROs, one of Stadler's leading products, designed for metropolitan networks, with short distances and frequent stops.

To date, Stadler has sold more than 360 METRO trains in five countries. The new depot will ensure maximum availability and reliability of the fleet for decades to come. It will vastly improve the working environment and become home to a wide range of activities, including preventative and corrective maintenance, overhauls and train presentation. There will be storage for spare parts and material supplies and office space for training and support functions.

Photo credit: Stadler

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