

The Infra Journal On Line

Transport

UK's Porterbrook rolling stock company sold

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Abbey National is selling UK-based rolling stock company Porterbrook Leasing to a consortium of three European banks. The banks will acquire 100 per cent of company with completion expected by the end of this year.

Deutsche Bank is leading the purchase - which is subject to regulatory approval - in a consortium with Lloyds TSB and BNP Paribas through its infrastructure fund Antin Infrastructure Partners.

The financing package consists of £1.5 billion senior secured debt facilities, which are expected to be rated BBB by Standard & Poor's and have been committed by a syndicate of leading infrastructure finance banks including MLAs that are also acting as bookrunners:

- Abbey UK Corporate Banking
- Barclays Capital (the investment banking division of Barclays Bank)
- BNP Paribas
- Calyon
- Dexia
- Lloyds TSB
- Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia (only acting as MLA)

Abbey paid roughly the same amount when it acquired the company from Stagecoach Group in April 2000.

It will be one of the largest deals done since the start of the current banking crisis. General syndication is expected to be launched in early 2009.

A spokesperson for Porterbrook said: 'I am very pleased to have concluded this transaction in the current difficult circumstances. The new equity consortium will provide Porterbrook with a sound base to develop the business further and to continue to invest in UK rail.'

Porterbrook was established in 1994 as part of the privatisation of British Rail, it was then sold to a management and staff buyout in January 1996.

In August of the same year it was bought by Stagecoach, that sold it on to Abbey in April 2000.

Porterbrook had been on the market since Banco Santander acquired Abbey in 2004. Its sale follows that of [Angel Trains](#) in June this year to a consortium of investors in a transaction which valued Angel at £3.6 billion.

HSBC has also recently appointed advisers to supplement an internal review of the future of HSBC [Rail](#), the third rolling stock leasing company formed from BR.

As with Angel Trains, it seems likely that the new owners of Porterbrook will be focusing on the continental European traction and rolling stock market.