

Release date: 23 April 2019

Porterbrook Innovation Hub open for business

In a UK first, Porterbrook has launched its pioneering Innovation Hub, a static train testbed to fast-track the development of new ideas and accelerate improvements to passenger services.

The Innovation Hub is intended to be used by a large number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which play an integral role in the UK rail industry's supply chain, but face barriers to entry to demonstrate new ideas and innovations in a 'real' train environment.

In response, Porterbrook created the Innovation Hub by re-purposing a four-car Class 319 train to serve as a working environment for a wide range of new technologies and passenger-facing improvements to be tested and showcased.

The Hub will focus on the following areas:

- Environmentally friendly manufacturing processes
- Improved passenger facilities
- New uses of data and connectivity
- System monitoring

At the Innovation Hub's first public exhibition at Rail Live 2019 in Long Marston, over 25 companies have been selected to demonstrate more than 30 new products and innovations on the Innovation Hub.

This will be the first time that many UK-based companies, particularly SMEs, will have the opportunity to showcase innovative and exciting passenger-focused solutions in a real train environment for free.

Porterbrook developed a unique livery for the Innovation Hub and consulted with relevant government departments and industry bodies to ensure that the train is an attractive venue for potential customers from the UK and overseas.

Porterbrook aims to make the Innovation Hub a sustainable annual showcase for the latest innovations, growing in scale year on year. The Innovation Hub will be used by suppliers all-year-round, as a facility for customer visits and demonstrations.

Mary Grant, CEO of Porterbrook, said: “We’re proud to launch the Innovation Hub; a project we hope will pave the way for brilliant new ideas and technologies to be implemented on the railways. Innovation is the life-blood of the rail industry, but while there is no shortage of new ideas, we are very aware of the challenges our suppliers face in demonstrating and testing new products. As an industry steeped in heritage, it’s essential that we keep our fingers on the pulse of new technology and customer needs, and this is something that we at Porterbrook put at the core of what we do.”

- ENDS -

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Innovation Hub will formally open at RailLive, Long Marston in June 2019.

Media Contacts

Porterbrook Leasing

Rupert Brennan Brown, Head of Communications and Engagement
Rupert@porterbrook.co.uk or +44 (0)7973 950 923

Financial or corporate PR enquiries can also be directed to:

Maitland

James Isola, Partner
jisola@maitland.co.uk
James McFarlane, Partner
jmcfarlane@maitland.co.uk or +44 (0)20 7379 5151

About Porterbrook

- Porterbrook Leasing Company Limited ("Porterbrook") is a leading participant in the rail leasing market and has a rolling stock fleet of around 5,000 vehicles on lease or on order, which includes c.4,500 passenger vehicles.
- Since privatisation, Porterbrook has invested over £3bn in the UK rail market. The company is looking to invest a further £1bn in Britain’s railway over the next five years.
- Porterbrook has successfully introduced over 2,300 new vehicles into passenger service. The company continues to invest across its existing fleets to ensure they remain attractive to operators and passengers. Porterbrook also provides ongoing train maintenance services.
- In October 2014, the Porterbrook Group of companies was acquired by a consortium of investors including Alberta Investment Management Corporation (“AIMCo”), Allianz Capital Partners (“ACP”) on behalf of certain insurance companies of the Allianz Group, EDF Invest and a consortium of Utilities Trust of Australia (“UTA”), The Infrastructure Fund (“TIF”) and Royal Bank of Scotland Group Pension Fund (“RBS”).