

NO450



Campaign to ban high density suburban Class 450 trains on the Portsmouth Mainline

Mr Norman Baker MP
Permanent Under-Secretary of
State for Transport
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

18 July 2011

PORTSMOUTH TRAIN SERVICE

Thank you very much for taking the time and trouble last week to discuss the rolling stock on the Portsmouth Direct Line. Penny Mordaunt and I really appreciate your promise to investigate and resolve.

There was insufficient time to discuss one further aspect, notably your Department's proposed transfer of Class 460s to bolster SWT suburban services. These former Gatwick Express units are configured for long distance use and ideally suited to complement Class 444s on the two SWT mainline routes (Portsmouth and/or Weymouth). Class 450s could then be freed to relieve suburban congestion, the role for which they were procured. I would be most grateful if your Department would address this suggestion which should incur no additional taxpayer expense.

I am most grateful that you have agreed to investigate the loadings on the Portsmouth line. As you will see from my briefing notes, the comparatively few busy services do not appear to justify high density suburban 450 stock on 47pc of weekly Portsmouth services (100% on Saturdays).

Furthermore it is unclear why capacity information is "commercial in confidence" as it is entirely transparent to any interested observer. Anthony Smith, CEO Passenger Focus, has also requested the figures, although to date SWT have been reluctant to provide. It's not clear what there is to hide. Mr Smith has also discussed the Class 460 suggestion with SWT.

Once again, many thanks for your efforts on the passengers' behalf and we much look forward to hearing the results of your Department's work.

Yours sincerely,

David Habershon
Annual SWT Gold Card Holder
Founder No450 Campaign
info@no450
www.no450.co.uk

Copies to:

Penny Mordaunt MP
David Willetts MP
Anthony Smith, CEO Passenger Focus

NO 450 CAMPAIGN

Founder: David Habershon

To restore passenger comfort for long distance rail travellers

Railway Technical Support: Bruce Oliver

Supported by: Portsmouth City Council, Havant Borough Council, Wessex Railfuture,
Haslemere Rail Users' Group

Survey Coordination: Laurie Hopkins

Health & Safety Adviser: Alan Barlow

Website Manager: Richard Hadley