

# Penny Mordaunt MP

*Member of Parliament for Portsmouth North*

12 July 2011

## Train improvements building steam

At a meeting with Penny Mordaunt MP today, Transport minister Norman Baker MP committed to investigate the return of 444 coaches to off-peak services on the Portsmouth-London Line, and to report on other key elements of the ongoing attempts of passengers to secure a proper service from South West Trains.

Penny Mordaunt MP said

“The response to my debate on SWT’s poor performance was overwhelmingly supportive from the public, and warily restrained from the Department for Transport. Today’s long overdue meeting at least shows that the DfT has removed its fingers from its ears. By agreeing to investigate SWT’s use of its carriage stock during off-peak hours the department accepts that if there is no overcrowding there is no case for the 450 Desiro. As passenger groups will testify, this rationale can be applied equally to peak services.

We are still building steam and I fully intend to stoke the fire until we leave the station. I will continue to push on other outstanding matters: the overall use of rolling-stock; that the money SWT saves by using 450s is not passed on to passengers; the inadequacy of 450s for mainline routes; and the imperative that minimum standards of comfort are included in future Rail Franchise Agreements.

Today’s meeting gives passengers hope that they will one day travel in comfort, and has assured the DfT that I and others will not rest until they do.”

David Habershon, founder of the No450 campaign, who also attended the meeting, said:

“Having tried for four-and-a-half years to meet the minister responsible for rail franchises, I am grateful that Penny has been able to bring to bring the incumbent to the table so quickly. We took our chance and Mr Baker can be in no doubt about the strength of feeling, and soundness of argument, on this issue.”

Ends.

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
Tel: 020 7219 7129 Fax: 020 7219 3592

Email: [penny.mordaunt.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:penny.mordaunt.mp@parliament.uk) Website: [pennymordaunt.com](http://pennymordaunt.com)

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