

Airline adds extra flight to Southend-Cornwall route

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AN airline is to increase flights from Southend to Cornwall next summer after the route proved popular.

Budget airline easyJet is to lay on four flights a week instead of three after almost 8,000 passengers flew from Southend to Newquay this summer.

[Southend Airport](#) will be the only London airport flying to the surfers' paradise as Flybe is dropping its flights from Gatwick in March.

Hugh Aitken, easyJet's UK commercial manager, said: "Due to the success of easyJet's new service to Newquay, we're delighted to be increasing our flights to Newquay from Southend from three flights to four each week, for August 2014 – the most popular period of the summer.

"We'll be increasing capacity by 28 per cent for August 2014."

Easy access to popular Cornish holiday highlights, including Lands End, eco-tourist attraction the Eden Project and miles of stunning beaches in Falmouth, St Ives and Penzance for £30 per person each way has proved a big draw for south Essex travellers.

Meanwhile, Southend Airport was advertised to Cornish residents as the "easy and affordable"

option for business trips and long weekends in London.

Driving from Newquay to the capital takes five hours, but the flight takes just 55 minutes – shorter than a train from Southend to London.

Steve Hawkins, 60, from Falmouth, said: “I used the route a couple of times over the summer and thought it was brilliant.

“I only hope they extend it further and make it available throughout the year and not just in the summer.

“It makes it so much easier for me and my wife to come and up see our family in Essex and London.

“It’s a lot better and far more convenient than a car journey, that’s for sure.

“I also think Southend Airport is easier to use than Gatwick. It’s a smaller airport for a start, so you spend far less time walking through corridors to get your bag.

“Then all you have to do is walk across the road and you’re on the train platform.

“Now the Gatwick route has been taken away, I can see people down here really taking advantage of this route.”

EasyJet acquired 26 UK routes into Gatwick from Flybe, which operates three daily return flights on smaller planes than used by easyJet between the airport and Newquay, in a £20million deal in August.

But easyJet has said there was “insufficient demand” to fill its bigger jets to allow it to continue with the schedule when it takes over the landing slots from Exeter-based Flybe on March 30.

[Derek Jarvis](#), Southend councillor for tourism, said: “When easyJet introduced the route, I felt it would be popular with local people in south east England because many have connections and second homes and holiday in that part of the world.

“It’s good easyJet has come to the decision to reintroduce and increase the number of flights.”

No one was available from Southend Airport for comment.