

Flybe scraps flights to Cologne from Southend Airport after Ryanair starts route from Stansted

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Flybe cancels flights

from Southend Airport

FLYBE has cancelled flights from [Southend Airport](#) to Cologne after only a week as rival Ryanair announced flights from Stansted.

The airline scrapped flights from Southend to the German city as it feared losing passengers to Ryanair, one of Europe's largest carriers.

Stobart Air, whose fleet Flybe uses in Southend, is trying to find a replacement or increase capacity on existing routes after claiming it would double the number of passengers using Southend Airport to more than two million in two years.

Cologne, Germany's fourth largest city, was the best-known of six new routes Flybe announced from Southend on Thursday, April 3, and flights were due to start on June 5.

But the regional carrier jettisoned the route on Thursday after Ryanair revealed it would start 28 flights a week between Cologne and north Essex from October 28.

Refunds will be offered to passengers who bought tickets, which were on sale from £29.99.

The Echo understands Ryanair was planning Cologne flights well before Flybe announced the route, but Flybe's decision to shelve the new destination was purely down to fears over competition from its rival.

Flybe's other new flights, to Rennes and Caen in northern France, Munster in Germany, Antwerp in Belgium and Groningen in the Netherlands, are still available.

Stobart Air hoped the new routes would carry 200,000 passengers in their first year, rising to 700,000 in three years and the Echo understands it is considering the possibility of replacing the Cologne route, but no announcement is expected immediately.

The cancellation came as easyJet reduced its number of planes at Southend Airport from four to three, scrapped flights to Krakow, Poland, and stopped winter flights to Jersey and Palma, in Majorca.

A Stobart Air spokesman said: "This decision has been taken for commercial reasons.

"All passengers who have made bookings on this route will be fully refunded.

"We regret any inconvenience this decision may cause."

A Ryanair spokesman said: "Southend customers can book the lowest fares to Cologne, thanks to Ryanair's new route from Stansted."

[Derek Jarvis](#), Southend councillor for culture and tourism, added: "Southend Airport is a continuing success story with more routes than ever.

"Of course it's disappointing the Cologne route has been cancelled so soon after it was announced, but we have to be positive and consider there will still be five new destinations that residents can fly to.

"It is always a shame when routes are withdrawn such as Krakow, but we understand the airline industry is hugely competitive and must respond to passenger demand.

"The airport is still booming, with easyJet serving 12 destinations and recently announcing more winter flights to Tenerife."