

# Southend Airport set to take strain from Channel Tunnel as migrant crisis continues



Alternative – a Flybe jet at Southend Airport, from where the airline flies to northern France

A TRAVEL agent feels [Southend Airport](#) could benefit if the migrant crisis in Calais continues to disrupt the plans of thousands trying to get the ferry to France.

Flybe operates flights from Southend to northern France, which would bypass the troubled port and the disruption being caused to roads in Kent.

Lisa Howard, of [Westcliff](#) travel agents Hermes Travel, said the air industry could benefit.

She said: “The popularity of flights will probably increase if the situation remains for the rest of the summer.

“We haven’t seen a real trend as yet, but we are really into the school holidays now, so if people face last-minute changes of plans then they will think about flying.

“It will depend on the availability though. We book a lot of flights to France and a lot are already very busy ,so it will depend on price and availability.

“Obviously, prices go up the closer to travel date so some people could get hit in the pocket if they face last-minute changes in their travel plans.”

Jon Horne, interim managing director of Southend Airport, said: “We’d like to remind people that we offer an alternative this summer if they want to beat the queues heading to the Continent – Flybe, operated by Stobartair, offers regular flights to Caen Normandie and Rennes, in northern France.

“With stress-free passage through the airport, and just 15- minutes from exiting the plane to being on the train, when you arrive with hand luggage, we are certainly a much quicker option.”

Prime Minister David Cameron has warned the migrant crisis is likely to last all summer.

Migrants in Calais have been trying to get on board UK-bound lorries.

The M20, in Kent, has been turned into a giant lorry park as freight traffic is unable to cross the Channel.

The Road Haulage Association has called the Kent Police operation on the M20 a “sticking plaster”.

Mr Cameron has vowed to work with the French to tackle the crisis.

He said: “The situation is not acceptable and it is absolutely this Government’s priority to deal with it in every way we can.

“We have got people trying to illegally enter our country and here in Britain we have got lorry drivers and holidaymakers facing potential delays.

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“We are going to take action right across the board, starting with helping the French on their side of the border.

“We are going to put in more fencing, more resources, more sniffer dog teams, more assistance in any way we can in terms of resources.”