

TravelWatch- **ISLE OF MAN**

Representing and promoting the interests of Isle of Man Passengers

Media Release from TravelWatch - Isle of Man - London Gatwick services

Issued 23 May 2013

Travelwatch Isle of Man, the Island's Passenger Watchdog, view with great concern, but with little surprise, the news of Flybe's decision to withdraw from their four times daily service from the Island to Gatwick from the end of March 2014, to concentrate their efforts on building up routes from what they describe as 'core defensible bases'.

- 1) Foremost amongst these is Manchester, which is set to become the island's main transfer point to connecting domestic and international services. **We believe that it is vital for the IOM Government to take immediate action to limit the possibility of any further move by off-island airlines, unable or unwilling to provide a reasonable frequency of service on this essential link, to move in and fatally damage our existing carriers.** Integrity of connecting services demand an aircraft based overnight on the island, and this should be a basic requirement demanded of any airline operating this important link.
- 2) The IOM Government should enter into early discussions with easyJet to obtain a commitment to at least a double daily service on weekdays from Gatwick, preferably with timings allowing a limited day return facility in each direction, which would give the best possible connections to onward services, and enable us to at least compete with what will then be the frequency of services from Gatwick to Guernsey and Jersey.
- 3) Early discussions should be commenced with BA City Flyer with a view to the introduction of one of their larger jet aircraft onto their London City service to provide more passengers with opportunities not only to reach Central London, but to connect with the increasing numbers of European destinations served from London City.
- 4) The IOM Government should now continue discussions with Flybe to do everything possible to persuade them to retain their Isle of Man base, and to retain and strengthen their high frequency service to Manchester, with its strategic importance to the onward travel market, and to Liverpool with its role in the transfer of NHS patients, and to review frequency of operations to destinations such as Luton, Southampton, and others.

Notes for Editors:

- TravelWatch-Isle of Man air travel spokesman Terry Liddiard may be contacted for interview or further information
T Liddiard <headlands@iom.com> or 01624 834200
- Issued on behalf of TravelWatch ISLE OF MAN by Dick Clague j.r.clague@gmail.com