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To the Competition Commission Inquiry on BAA

Sirs,

BAA monopoly inquiry

In the pursuit of export business for this country, I fly regularly from UK airports. Last week I had the experience (I certainly cannot call it the pleasure) of using all three BAA airports. I left from Gatwick South, returned to Heathrow and again left from Gatwick South and returned to Stanstead.

The whole experience was unedifying and I would like the commission to consider the following monopolistic actions taken by BAA.

Gatwick

At Gatwick South the announcer screens are operated and controlled by BAA (or so I am informed by the airlines). There are three screens showing departing flights. BAA knows the gates from which flights will leave in advance, as these are allocated by them to the airlines. However they do not announce the departure gate (the third screen) until the very last moment, (in my experience this is usually 20mins before departure). Some gates are 15 mins away and I have watched in dismay elderly persons struggling to get to the gate in time. The reason for this action is, obviously, to maximise passenger contact time with the retail outlets.

Yet another example of the inconvenience this causes, is that the toilets are always full and unpleasantly dirty and smelly due the high volume of traffic through them. There are perfectly good toilets along the piers, where the departure gates are, but these ar hardly ever used as the passengers get no time to use them. .

The overcrowded retail area is unpleasant at most times and there is usually little room to sit down. If the passengers were allowed to use the departure lounges they would enjoy a little peace and tranquillity.

The latest action by BAA at Gatwick South is outrageous. From June 20th it will not be possible to pick up arriving passengers by car or taxi (except for the BAA official franchisee, Checker Cabs) without paying a £1 parking fee that grants you 15 minutes parking in one of the short stay car parks (Nr 3). There is no alternative. This is pure monopolistic action and should be disallowed.

Heathrow

I only landed at Heathrow last week , since I avoid it like the plague. However on landing at Terminal 1 last Wednesday, I exhausted my vocabulary of disparaging adjectives. Ineffective, unkempt, unattractive, frustrating, inefficient, unfriendly and so on. A real welcome to all our visitors, Ugh!

The handrails leading from the airplane to the jetty were all scuffed and the paint was peeling on all the bends. The walkway was out of bounds, probably because it was raining and the ceiling was leaking. We were therefore directed by a surly youth to the travelator. There was no alternative and some people have an aversion to travel on travelators.

On arriving at the passport control, we waited for 30 minutes to clear passports. It appears that, that other 'Unfit for Purpose Department' the Home office, have not worked out that there

are now 28 countries in the EU plus Switzerland to go through what used to be UK passport only. They still have only four check points for this lot. The non- EU + Swiss passports area has some 12 desks that are almost fully deserted. This is not surprising since Terminal 1 is mainly used by BA's European originating flights. Of course it maybe that BAA have not allowed them to reallocate the space (though I doubt it).

Stanstead

Which clown in BAA ordered carpet for the piers to the jetways? Not only have they ordered carpet (not a hard wearing surface when 20 million people are supposed to walk on it every year, as can be seen at Heathrow) but it is the same quality and design of carpet as exists in the current Terminal 3 at Heathrow, complete with its black plastic repair tape, where tears have appeared.

The only thing that BAA appears to be good at is making profits for its shareholders and for that I am not complaining. However there is no incentive to improve things from the passenger's point of view and this monopoly should be dismantled for that reason alone.

Thank you in advance for taking my views into account

Charles L Daly