

London Southend Airport (LSA)

Meeting Notes from PRM Committee Meeting

23rd October 2024 at 14:30

at the London Southend Passenger Terminal & Rail Station

Invited

LSA		
Interim Security Manager	Sophie Larby	Attended
Airport Duty Manager	Richard Hodgson	Attended
CSR Manager	Jo Marchetti	Attended
Airport Duty Manager	Leanne Dubovie	Attended
Surface Access	Andrew Owens	Attended
PRM representatives		
Blind/Impaired sight	Jill Allen-King OBE	
Qualified Teacher for Vision Impairment (QTVI)	Beatrice Iordachi Lisa Curwood	Attended Attended
Hearing Loss	Aaron Coles	Apologies
BSL Sign Language	Daniel Dominey Emma	Apologies
Age Concern	Mike Nicolson	Attended
Older People's Community Mental Health, Dementia & Frailty	Spencer Dinnage Nancy Smith	Attended Attended
Dementia (early onset)	Clare Kelly – Peaceful Place	Attended
Autism/ADHD (children)	Mikaela Clements – Little Heroes ASD Support	Attended
Autism (adult)	Dawn Avery – parent/author Keith Avery - parent Aston Avery – adult with autism	Apologies
Anxiety	Anxiety Society	
Mental Health	Lorna Gill – SECE Mind Sophie Cooper – SECE Mind	Attended Apologies
Guide Dogs	Clive Wood	Apologies
Sunflower – Hidden Disabilities	Ruth Rabet	Apologies
Passenger – wheelchair user	Zec Richardson Donna Richardson	Attended Apologies
Essex Therapy Dogs	Tina Jullings Silvie	Apologies Apologies
Garon Park Wellbeing	Caroline Reynolds	Apologies
Airport Consultative Committee	Les Sawyer	Attended
Andrews Taxi	Tommy Watson	Apologies
Sophia Untersteggaber	CAA – requested new contact	Declined
Emily Kilby	CAA	

Welcome and introductions.

Members met at the Ticket Desk to be issued temp airside passes. Jo Marchetti welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited members to introduce themselves and explain who they were representing.

Car parks/Rail Station tour



Members were shown the locations and layouts of the Lond Stay and Short Stay car parks.

The Long Stay car park offers up to 15 mins free drop-off/pick up and is 2-4 minutes' walk from the terminal. The Short Stay car park designated disabled bays closest to the terminal and is under a minute's walk, with a charge of £5.

<https://londonsouthendairport.com/getting-to-and-from/parking/#bluebadge>

PAID pick up & drop off			
0-10mins	10-30 mins	30-45 mins	45-60 mins
£5	£8.50	£12	£15

Assistance from the car parks can be pre-booked if required.

PRM members then visited the rail station which is staffed and managed by the airport. Head of Surface Access, Andrew Owens was available to answer questions and show members the facilities.

Feedback:

- LG noted that signage would be better at eye-level. Colours blue, red and yellow are easier to follow.
- LS – asked when the X30 will return. LSA is talking to First, but it would require passenger numbers to increase.
- BI suggested tactile paving from crossing to station. Recommend tramline. Platform 1 sign needs to be bigger.
- CK suggested yellow footprints (floor signage) to show direction for dementia passengers.
- Red framing on the doorways would help passengers with poor vision/sensory challenges.

- ZR said the station disabled toilet was excellent – clean and spacious. AO explained the processes for boarding and alighting trains for passengers requiring special assistance/wheelchair users. Level boarding needs to be notified in advance.
- Could signage for assistance be as large as the trespass poster with QR code?
- Request for barrier in front of door to platform to prevent passengers with dementia, sight impairment or sensory challenges continuing onto tracks. Physical barriers may be difficult but potential for yellow floor signage. CK suggested using Makaton symbol for STOP. AO to check rail legislation.
- Colour of floor and seating all grey – needs to be different for visually impaired.
- AO asked for opinions on having all wide barriers/gates. Members agreed that passengers with cases and disabilities would benefit from wider ticket gates.
- Is it possible to clearly mark the raised platform under the ticket gates?

Terminal tour

Members were escorted through security to the departures area.

Feedback:

- STOP sign at top of escalator in departures to prevent passengers going down the up escalator
- Stair steps too thin – less than foot wide

Airport Update provided by Jo Marchetti

Passenger numbers for May to July total 98,401 with load factors at 88%. Comparing to the same period last year passengers have increased by 94%.

The airport is now experiencing a fantastic period of growth and is working to exceed easyJet's expectations to further anchor our partnership and grow the number of based aircraft beyond 2025's planned three A320neo's in the coming years. This year LSA will have approx. 280K passengers, with over 800K from easyJet alone in 2025.

New majority owners Carlyle have given clear objectives to recover back to 2million passengers in the next two to three years, to make the airport cash generative.

At the end of August, we were pleased to announce three new easyJet routes to Almeria and Reus in Spain and to Malta for the 2025 summer schedule. This brings the total number of destinations to 19. With current easyJet load factors of 88%, this puts us in a strong position for other airline negotiations.

We currently have 4 routes on sale for our winter schedule, plus a package holiday to Lapland. Given the resourcing challenges for days when flights are spread out over the day, we are working with our teams to retain as many of our operational staff as possible and reset a process driven organisation that focuses on passenger flow.

LSA has significantly invested in Next Generation security equipment, and now have two lanes, two Body Scanners and are totally compliant with DfT. There is still a DfT temporary 100ml restriction on liquids but due to the new equipment they can still stay in passenger bags.

The Pub in Departures reopened in May 2024 for some flights. Alcohol consumption is limited, and signage is displayed. Any passengers displaying drunk or unwanted behavior are prevented from boarding their flights.

Current LSA colleague headcount (including rail) is 256, over 300 including the Hotel. 87.8% of our employees are currently from SS postcodes. We have welcomed 44 new joiners since 1st April.

Current vacancies:

- Air Traffic Control Assistant – Traineeship
- Air Traffic Control Officer
- Airport IT Manager

Community Relations

- Total fundraising for SECE Mind for the FYE 24 was £12,322.70 – the airport has renewed its partnership with SECE Mind for 2025 and will continue to fundraise/raise awareness for mental health. A member of the LSA Fire team will be running the London Marathon 2025 to raise money for SECE Mind.
- Total volunteering hours donated by LSA colleagues so far this year = 189 hours
- LSA supported the World Cup on Sea football event helping to raise funds for Gt Ormond Street.
- LSA colleagues played Run Free in a charity football match at SUFC raising funds for SECE Mind.
- The airport also sponsored several local events including Essex & Herts Air Ambulance ‘Strictly Air Ambulance’, Southend Rugby Club ‘ladies match for breast cancer’, Havens Hospice Southend Half Marathon, and Leigh Regatta.
- Jo Marchetti visited Little Havens Hospice to have a tour of the facilities and explore ways that LSA could support in the future.
- LSA donated unclaimed confiscated items to SECE Mind for their housing facility in Nelsons Road, Southend. Any unwanted items were sent to a local homeless charity.
- In September, 39 Air Scouts and Leaders from Night Hawk Explorer Scout Unit, Canvey Island were treated to a tour of the Control Tower, ATE and Fire Section.

Update on actions from previous meeting 3 April 2024

1	Walk through video – Zec offered to assist. 03/04/24 Spencer Dinnage offered to assist with 360 camera and editing.	Outstanding To be actioned when resources available
2	Siobhan Walters to make a complaint to the Taxi provider for refusing to transport the PRM.	SW currently out of the business
3	Jo Marchetti to invite the taxi provider to future PRM meetings.	Actioned – not available for this meeting
4	Tina asked if the Therapy Dogs team could have blue bands to hand out to nervous passengers. Siobhan to provide.	Actioned
5	Mike Nicolson from Age Concern asked for support from PRM Committee members in regard of securing funding to purchase the Havens building in Hamlet Court Road that houses its community hub. Jo Marchetti to share link to members post meeting.	Actioned

CAA Passenger Survey: Mar – Oct 2024

Departing PRM passengers:

Q Please rate the quality of the assistance that was provided to you to help you get through the airport (i.e. from the point you arrived at the airport to the point where you were about to board the aircraft).

- Excellent 91%

- Good 7%
- Acceptable 1%
- Poor 0%
- N/A 1%

Q Please rate the quality of the assistance that was provided to you to help you board the aircraft, move to your seat and, if required, store your cabin baggage.

- Excellent 80%
- Good 14%
- Acceptable 0%
- Poor 0%
- N/A 6%

Q Please rate the general helpfulness and courtesy of the airport staff meeting your assistance needs.

- Excellent 94%
- Good 3%
- Acceptable 2%
- Poor 0%
- N/A 1%

Positive passenger feedback comments:

“Helpful Friendly nothing was any trouble also the firemen pushed me up the ramp without them it would have been difficult”.

“It is the first time we have used assistance, and we were really please how easy it was and the kindness of the people involved. Thank you so much”.

“There were a large number of people who had booked assistance, and the staff were heavily outnumbered. They organised themselves into a relay team and it was truly impressive how swiftly we were transported from plane to exit. All staff were polite and apologetic for any waiting we had. There was hardly any delay and we’re just very grateful for the service and how considerate and kind they were”.

“The assistance personnel for both me and my wife were extremely kind and considerate explaining what was going to happen and ensuring we both felt safe and secure at all times”.

“Staff were amazing we were outside waiting for lift it was cold and they put their jacket around me”.

“The Southend staff were above and beyond the course of duty. They could not do enough for you. Excellent. Thank you. Best in UK! Having been to 7 UK airports this year!”

Room for improvement:

“Drop off point was too far away it was a difficult walk for both of us, there should have been dedicated disabled drop off closer. The same distance as the walk from the railway station would be fine”.

“Nobody at the assistance area, we had to find an airport worker and they told us to look for someone in a high viz?”

“Despite the very best efforts of the staff present who were very kind thoughtful and dedicated. There was insufficient staff to meet our collective full needs”.

Arriving PRM passengers:

Q Please rate the quality of the assistance that was provided to you to help you move from your seat, retrieve your cabin baggage (if required) and disembark the aircraft.

- Excellent 78%
- Good 14%
- Acceptable 1%
- Poor 2%
- N/A 3%

Q Please rate the quality of the assistance that was provided to you to help you move from the arrival gate, through immigration (if an international flight) and baggage collection, and out of the airport building.

- Excellent 84%
- Good 9%
- Acceptable 4%
- Poor 1%
- N/A 2%

Q Please rate the general helpfulness and courtesy of the airport staff in meeting your assistance needs

- Excellent 90%
- Good 7%
- Acceptable 3%
- Poor 0%
- N/A 0%

Positive passenger feedback comments:

“Very good service”

“Service was very good helpful staff”

“I was met by the same staff as outbound. They remembered me which was amazing! Extremely helpful and kind”.

“First class couldn't wish for better!”

“Really excellent assistance at Southend airport. Very happy”.

“All the staff were very helpful and very friendly, it made a difficult journey much easier and much less stressful”.

“Every member of staff was lovely and helpful”

“S was helping me. Took me through passport control. Got my case and wheeled me to the car park”.

“The lady looking after me was very kind and friendly excellent care”.

“Lady was very helpful at every stage between the aircraft and the car park and this did exceed expectations”.

“My wife had the same assistant as our outward journey, she remembered us and assisted with our luggage staying with us until our son collected us, both of our assistants were thoughtful, considerate and polite”.

Room for improvement:

“No customs officer at the passport desk. He eventually sauntered across”.

“The staff watched me walk down the aircraft steps and then from the BOTTOM of aircraft steps towards them asking for a wheelchair. They then asked if I needed a wheelchair”.

“No Lift available, slowly used the sloping Ramp, in pouring Rain”

Passenger PRM feedback since last meeting (Summer 2024)

No PRM passenger complaints received.

From Michael at Essex Therapy Dogs

One of the airport colleagues alerted me to a nervous flyer for the Malaga flight this morning. After checking that he likes dogs, Skye stayed with him until it was time for boarding, and then the colleague ensured that he had an aisle seat away from the window. He was a Scotsman, and his name was Tony. He said that having Skye around calmed his nerves, he wanted her to get on the plane with him!

Guide Dog Familiarisation Training sessions

Puppies and handlers were invited to tour the airport and its facilities on 5th August and 23rd September. They were exposed to numerous new sights and sounds including check-in, security screening, departures lounge (including toilet hand dryers), arrivals baggage hall and taken out on the apron to see two fire tenders, with lights and sirens going!

Jo Thorne said “It’s so important that our puppies are given new experiences, seeing Southend Airport and Airport Fire Service is invaluable for them. During their life as a Guide Dog, the pups will find themselves in all sorts of new situations and being able to experience a wide variety when they’re young means that they’ll have the tools they need to adapt quickly and stay inquisitive when they are working dogs. The pups ranged from 4 months to 12 months.

Autism Awareness Event

Thanks to Dawn Avery (Astons Way), LSA has booked an Autism Reality Experience training day for 24x airport colleagues on Tuesday 11th March 2025.

The Autism Reality Experience (ARE) gives delegates an experience of what autism might be like by using specialist equipment and creating a simulated environment.

Delegates will be expected to carry out simple tasks during the training and will be able to empathise with challenges that people living with autism may experience.

Discussion points

- LG asked about a ‘quiet room’. JM explained airport is generally a calm environment. Therapy dogs are on site to assist anxious passengers and airport colleagues trained to help. Other members

agreed that LSA is a preferred airport for many disability users due to its quiet and calm departures area. "Even when busy there is always a quiet corner available".

- LSA is developing 'Care Packages' for anxious and sensory challenged passengers. The free packages will consist of knitted fidget items (donated by LG), mental health and calming advice from SECE Mind and a stress toy (funding to be sought from LSA). Hoping to have packages ready for Spring 25, when easyJet return to base. Review Harry Potter website for details of their sensory packs.
- Suggestion to add information to website regarding ear defenders. **Action JM** to check advice on Blue Band leaflets
- Update website once Autism Reality Experience training is completed.
- **LD Action:** Little Heroes requested a familiarisation visit for their families with autistic children. LD offered to visit Little Heros to talk to them.
- **JM Action:** CK Peaceful Place) asked to be put in touch with Essex Therapy Dogs.
- **JM Action:** Coordinate training event for BSL/Visual impairment/dementia in Spring 25.

AOB

- JM has invited SCC learning disabilities Project 49 to join the PRM Committee.
- JM and LD completed BSL intro course earlier in the year and have invited Daniel Dominey join the PRM Committee.
- LD completed a level 2 autism course

Meeting ended at **.**