

STANSTED AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

SECRETARIAT

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USER EXPERIENCE GROUP

MEETING OF THE USER EXPERIENCE GROUP OF THE STANSTED AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, HELD AT THE AIRPORT ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2017

Membership

*	Rufus Barnes (representing surface transport interests) - Chairman
	Keith Brown (representing tourism interests)
	Haydon Yates (representing commerce and business interests)
	Gary Jones (representing local authorities)
	Danny Purton (representing local authorities)
	Angela Alder (representing local authorities)
*	Graham McAndrew (representing local authorities)
*	Mary Sartin (representing local authorities)
*	Peter Lainson (representing PRM interests)
	Chris Hughes (representing passenger airline companies)
	David Leigh (representing cargo interests)
*	Peter Odrich (representing business passengers)
*	Julie Jones (representing non business passengers)
*	Shena Winning (Chairman of STACC)

(* present at meeting)

Also present

STAL

Neil Banks
Amandeep Sogi
Lea Claxton
Anna Perkins

Frank Evans - Secretary and Technical Adviser

Pre Meeting Visit

Prior to the meeting, Members of the Group had visited the Terminal to gain an appreciation of the Arrivals experience and onward travel. The Group made a number of observations:-

Signage

There appeared to be some confusion as to the Pick Up signs. It was not clear whether these were aimed at directing passengers to the Meet & Greet reception or Express Set Down. It was stressed that it was important that passengers understood the terminology of the product they had purchased. STAL advised that wayfinding and signage were being addressed as part of the transformation project.

PRM assistance in Mid Stay and Long Stay Car parks

It was not clear how a PRM passenger should communicate with staff if they needed assistance in getting out of their vehicle to get to the bus pick up point. STAL offered to clarify the position.

Coach station

It was noted that there were currently no electronic signs/display boards to assist coach and bus passengers. STAL said that action was in hand to install new signage, but the Group was disappointed to note that this would take two months before installation. In the interim temporary signage without any real time information would be used. The Group further noted that the new signage would only be located at the centre tunnel exit. It was suggested that STAL might wish to consider also installing signage at the tunnel leading from the Arrivals area.

Members also suggested that STAL might wish to consider extending the existing canopies to provide shelter for passengers in inclement weather. Facilities should be appropriate for the capacity of the airport. STAL advised that that there were no current plans to extend the canopies.

MAIN MEETING

Before the meeting began, STAL advised all present of fire and safety procedures on the event of an emergency which required evacuation of the building.

1. Apologies for non attendance

Apologies had been received from Gary Jones, Hayden Yates, Angela Alder and Danny Purton

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The Group **AGREED** the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2017

3. Border Force

The Chairman advised that Members of the Group had met Border Force in advance of the meeting. The increase in passengers over the summer season had been handled well although there had been the occasional blip. It was noted that there had, of necessity, been times when Border Force had to move staff from the desks to handle more pressing security issues. It was also noted that as the airport grew, there would be fewer peaks and troughs with Border Force having to adjust staffing to meet these new challenges. STAL reported that they had a positive working relationship with Border Force. It was noted that Members of the Group would be meeting BF's Regional Director on 27 September

4. Retail

Lea Claxton (STAL) gave the Group the attached informative presentation on retail activities at the airport including pricing policy. In particular the Group was advised as to how the UK Travel Retail Forum (UKTRF)'s VAT Code of Practice was implemented at Stansted. It was noted the Code was voluntary. However at Stansted, retailers had three options.

Non participant

This meant that they did not operate the VAT relief concession and charged customers VAT (in the same way as any other store in the UK did). Under this option retailers did not ask for boarding cards.

Direct Benefit

This meant that these retailers sold at a VAT inclusive price to customers travelling inside the EU and at a VAT exclusive price for customers travelling outside the EU. Only customers showing a boarding card for a non-EU destination were entitled to the lower price and hence directly benefit from the VAT relief.

Retailers could ask to see the boarding card

Shared Benefit

Under this option, retailers offered a single price for EU and non EU passengers (excluding some liquor and tobacco products and recycled the VAT benefit into lower prices all. These retailers could ask to see boarding cards.

It was suggested that about 50% of retailers had signed up to the Code.

Members raised a number of points including the level of prices. It was suggested that in some cases prices were more expensive than in the high street especially in the food outlets. It was further suggested that retailers at busier airports such as Stansted should be able to buy in bulk and so offer lower prices.

STAL advised ASQ results indicated that passengers considered they received value for money.

Members also stressed the need for accessibility in particular the need to ensure that the retailers had adequate facilities to provide assisted hearing.

In response to specific questions, STAL subsequently advised the following;-

1. Why you need to show your boarding card in Duty Free even if you are travelling to the EU:Do you have to show a boarding pass?

STAL subsequently advised

"If you are buying cigarettes or alcohol - or anything else - in a duty free shop, you are legally obliged to show your boarding pass, to prove whether you are travelling inside or outside the EU. World Duty Free says you do have to show one in its outlets - regardless of what you are buying. Because it is designated by HMRC as an "export shop", it buys in all its goods VAT and duty free. It needs to see your boarding pass so it knows how much VAT and duty to pass back to HMRC and how much to charge you."

2. Is the Windmill breakfast more expensive than the high street?

The answer to this is yes but to note:

- *London Stansted Windmill breakfast price is price benchmarked and is in line with other similar sized airports*
- *Some items on the menu will be more expensive than the high street as we discussed to help offset higher operating costs that are involved with operating at an airport (e.g. all food has to be scanned through our consolidation centre to be compliant with security restrictions, longer operating hours etc)*
- *Also London Stansted Windmill does not sell cocktails or shooters (responsible approach to alcohol retailing within airports) yet these items would traditionally be high margin/volume products available in pubs on the high street"*

5. Customer Services Strategy

The Group were advised that the Strategy was being reviewed following the changes in the operating model and board management. It was agreed that it would be helpful if the Chairmen of the Committee and of the Group could meet Daniel Gallo to discuss the latest position

6. Customer Services Quarterly Report

STAL presented their quarterly report. The Group thanked STAL for providing benchmarking information about other UK and European airport comparators. It was noted that the airport had dropped in the table of comparators. It was suggested that the transformation work had impacted on the results.

- i. As regards car parking, the Group noted that there had been problems in early August especially with the Meet & Greet product. STAL advised that car parking had been taken in-house earlier in the year and there had been a number of teething issues. The car parking model had now been reviewed and compared with the Manchester model. As a result changes would be made to ensure that satisfactory service was provided to customers.
- ii. The Group were advised that there was currently no date for the introduction of the external passenger lift outside the terminal. In the interim, there was signage to direct passengers to the temporary shuttle-bus service to the hotel. There had been a change in contractor to build the lift and the project had to be reassessed in the light of cladding issues following the Grenfell Tower fire.
- iii. The Group were further advised that the cutback in Ryanair service had so far had no effect on the operation of the airport.

7. PRM issues

- i. The Group noted that the airport had been placed in the "good" category in the CAA's recent Airport Accessibility report. The CAA had suggested that the airport should seek to survey users of the assistance services. There was a need to obtain greater feedback on the services provided. STAL were considering how best to act on this. The establishment of a Disability Forum might be an option. Alternatively UEG could play an important role. It had been intended that the Group should assist in the preparation of STAL's review this year, but organisational changes had prevented this.
- ii. Members considered whether the Group should respond to the Department for Transport's new consultation on a draft transport accessibility action plan and decided not to respond at this stage. The DfT's consultation on a new aviation strategy would provide an opportunity to comment on the need for PRM issues to be part of the strategy

iii. The Group received a report from a Member as to his experience of PRM services in Singapore.

8. Annual Work Programme

Members reviewed key objectives for the Group. In particular it was noted

- A visit to Manchester Airport Consultative Committee was being arranged;
- One future meeting would focus on cargo operations;
- A meeting would be arranged with Daniel Gallo to discuss the Customer Service Strategy (CSS);
- The Group repeated its wish to be involved in the design of the Arrivals Hall at an early stage. STAL advised that this was likely to be in the New Year.
- On Fire Safety and Risk Assessment, it would be helpful if the Group could receive a presentation;
- As regards Surface Access, there would be value in having a joint meeting with EIG as the issues involved covered the work of both Groups. It would also be helpful to invite the Chairman of the Stansted Airport Transport Forum Steering Group to such a meeting – the Chairman of the Group agreed to raise this at the forthcoming Steering Group meeting. It was further noted that STAL had offered to update the Group at its December meeting on proposed improvements to the Public Transport Interchange

10. Future meetings and date of next meeting

The next meeting will be on 6 December 2017. The dates for meetings in 2018 are as follows:-

7 February

28 March

4 July

19 September

5 December