

PRM and Hidden Disabilities Forum, 14th June

1. Introduction

Michael Bailey, LCY Terminal Operations Support Manager
Alexandra Varlyakova, LCY Public Affairs and Policy Manager
Frank Jenkins, Bechtel Construction Manager
Gordon Cordner, Bechtel Engineering Manager
Raymond Chung, Pascall & Watson
Christiane Link, Ortegalink
Daniel Cadey, National Autistic Society

Apologies: Melanie Burnley (LCY Director Customer Experience), Val Fone (Action and Rights of Disabled People in Newham), Charles Clement (Business Disability Forum), Dean Eales (Disabled Go)

2. Overview of City Airport Development Programme – update provided by LCY’s Delivery Partner Bechtel

FJ provided an overview of what the City Airport Development Programme (CADP) incorporates.

LCY is investing over £480 million to expand and improve the airport’s infrastructure to respond to the increased passenger demand. The development will be transformational for LCY, providing additional capacity and world class facilities that maintain LCY’s reputation for fast, efficient and friendly service. The construction works started in 2018 and are projected to continue until 2022. The development programme consists of:

- West and East Terminal extension
- New taxiway
- 8 new aircraft stands

FJ provided an update on the works currently underway (forecourt works), Digital Air Traffic Control Tower, UXO clearance as well as the future works over summer 2018.

CL enquired whether the paving at the entrance will be tactile. **Action point:** FJ to check for the next meeting.

Pick up and drop off areas

Following the discussion on drop off and pick up areas at the March meeting, an update on these was provided. The current drop off and pick up arrangements will remain as they are for another month following which there will be revised pick-up and drop-off areas which will be in place for another 2 years (the change will come into effect from mid-August). There will be a covered walkway covering the journey from the Terminal to the new drop-off and pickup areas.

CL asked about allocated disabled parking spaces for the next 2 years with the CADP changes. FJ emphasised that the Forum should continue feeding this information into Bechtel for them to ensure that these parking spaces can be taken into account as part of the design.

DC raised the importance of having a covered walkway to ensure that noise is minimised especially for passengers on the autistic spectrum. Additionally, information should be made available on the website so that passengers travelling through the airport are aware of the changes underway. CL also said that passengers should be informed of the new distances in meters to drop-off and pick-up.

Action point: The LCY team to check whether there will be contact points for asking for assistance (phones) in the passenger walkway. A point was raised about benches and resting points.

CL – In the current temporary pick up area passengers in wheelchairs would find it easier to enter a car if on both sides of the vehicle there was no curb (not just the driver side) as this reduces the head clearance space.

MB - Currently the interim pick-up area meets this requirement and is from ground only, there is no curb on either side of the vehicle when parked.

FJ offered to give frequent updates on CADP as part of the Forum and reiterated the importance of receiving regular feedback to build a more accessible airport.

3. Interior design and PRM provision update provided by Pascall and Watson

RC showed the PRM assistance points and the new resting seats as part of the forecourt works. The new terminal building will have three main entrances: from the DLR platform, from the taxi drop off areas and the main entrance.

As you enter the building, the PRM Landside Special Assistance area will be opposite the entrance. The PRM area will have around 10 seats at the entrance of the building and a wheelchair store next to it. All toilet facilities will have disabled toilet and baby changing facilities. The PRM area is very centrally located. The PRM team will manage the area so will ensure that only PRM passengers will have access to the area. LCY ensured the forum that passengers will be free to leave that area if they wanted to.

CL made a comment about seating arrangements in the PRM area, asking LCY to ensure that the seating arrangements will be comfortable and nice, and the area won't be walled off.

Past security there will be another PRM Airside Special Assistance area. The Airside PRM area will be located opposite you as you approach from Security.

There will be a separate route which will be staffed for wheelchair users when scanning your boarding pass – that will be for staff and PRMs only. There will be dedicated route with suitable width provision within the security area.

CL enquired whether there is a reason why there are no accessible Egates. They exist in Brussels. That is something to check and consider.

A question was raised if a passenger has not requested assistance, whether they still use the special route. MB explained that there is no reason why that should not be accommodated for.

There was a discussion about passengers who have not pre-booked assistance and may be in possession of a hidden disability lanyard, the forum was reassured that those passengers will be able to use the fast track route if required.

CL said we should have a look at the width of the lifts. **Action point:** P& W can provide the dimensions of the lift. CL said that placing a mirror at the lift makes a big difference for wheelchair users navigating the space.

DC asked whether there will be an alternative route to avoid Duty Free area, i.e. quiet route. That is not planned at the moment and will be considered.

Conceptual images of what the future Departure Lounge will look like were shown to the Forum. The images are conceptual ideas which may or may not be realised.

CL said that shiny floors are really bad for people who have hidden disabilities, as they don't support orientation for people. She also raised the point about tables where wheelchair users can relax their bodies. Don't put wheelchair space at the end of the row but also close to tables.

It was explained that the chairs will not be fixed, only the tables will be fixed. The round tables are much more comfortable as they also have just one leg in the middle. We can do some adaptation in this departure lounge to ensure that the tables we have are comfortable. Square tables are fine as well as long as there is enough space for a wheelchair to comfortably fit under.

Between July and the end of the year, we will spend more time on the interior design and that is why now is the time for these conversations.

4. Audit with Action and Rights of Disabled People in Newham

AV updated the forum that the airport is currently working with Action and Rights of Disabled People in Newham to audit our facilities. Action and Rights have sent us their comments and at the next forum MB and AV will present a short report on the key findings.

5. Autism Friendly Award with the National Autistic Society

AV said that LCY is currently working with the National Autistic Society to gain their Autism Friendly Award. DC has done an airport tour and assessment of the airport's facilities and processes. A report will be produced by the NAS outlining the next steps. LCY will keep the forum updated.

6. CAA report on Hidden disabilities at airports

CAA report – quiet room and quiet route are the only missing areas which LCY needs to look into.

7. Equipment

MB went to Austria to look at possible equipment (company called Bulmar), over the next few months LCY will look to get that equipment at the airport for a trial. We would like to have CL trial it. LCY will keep the forum updated at the next meeting of when the trial will start.

8. AOB

It was agreed that at the next Forum, Bechtel will provide another update on CADP and the airport's Head of Transport Planning Gavin Wicks will provide an update on the airport's surface access and travel plans.

MB asked Christiane to feed any feedback directly to him when travelling through LCY.

Next meeting: proposed date and time is 13th September, in the afternoon (14.00-16.00) at City Aviation House, London City Airport.