

Minutes London Luton Airport Accessibility Forum (LLAAF)

Date	Thursday 10th of June 2021 12:00
Location	The meeting was conducted online via Microsoft Teams due to the Covid crisis

Attendees	
Name	Company
Andy Wright	Committee Chair
Denise Hobbs	Accessibility Manager - London Luton Airport & LLAAF Joint Chair
Daniel Churchman	Disability Resource Centre
Amy Gavin-Birch	Autism Bedfordshire
Milton Rae	Royal National Institute for Deaf People
Libby Herbert	Colostomy UK
Peta Barratt	Spinal Injuries Association
Siobhan Meade	Guide Dogs for the Blind
Helen Fleet	Guide Dogs for the Blind
Apologies	
Annlouise Taylor	Alzheimer's Society
Carol Barraclough	Spinal Injuries Association
Dr Rita Egan	Luton Passenger Services Committee
Abigail Burrell-Rann	JDRF

Welcome, Introductions and update on recent activities at the airport

Andy welcomed attendees to the **London Luton Airport Accessibility Forum (LLAAF)**, which was held online due to the ongoing Covid crisis.

Denise started by saying that the meeting would be less formal this time, as it was intended to be more of a catch-up to update members of the progress on a number of projects that were outlined at the previous meeting. Denise then proceeded with a PowerPoint presentation.

Denise started by showing the Year-on-Year PRM figures, confirming the number of PRMs who had travelled through the airport during March, April and May 2021. The results were understandably disappointing - due to the pandemic - being a mere 5.81% of the same 3-month period in 2019. Denise hoped that June would be the first month in 2021 where the airport would reach over 1,000 PRMs and demonstrate a slow but positive upturn in passenger numbers. The committee members then discussed the impact of the crisis on international travel, especially in light of the Government's recent decision to remove Portugal from the Green list at very short notice, and the impact this had had on passenger confidence.

Denise then went on to explain how the new PRM Service Provider, Wilson James (WJ), had been performing. She explained that the airport had still not been able to assess accurately how WJ will work under pressure, which will probably not be possible until PRM numbers significantly increase. But she felt that the operation had been running well so far. Denise then provided a number of performance statistics, details of which can be found in the accompanying presentation pack.

Denise continued by providing an update on ongoing projects the airport was engaged with, which included her attendance at an ACI (Airport Council International) course in order to obtain a certificate in Airport Accessibility. Denise felt that it was an ideal opportunity to better understand the effectiveness of the airport's - and its suppliers - staff training and to determine if there was any additional content or subject matter that could be included in order to make London Luton Airport an even more disability friendly airport.

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Denise then discussed the 360° - Mapping project, which **Annlouise** had raised after the last forum. **Denise** explained the concept was to allow passengers to view their route in and around the airport online, in advance of their journey. The project had already commenced, and it was hoped that that necessary website links could also be added to the mapping tool in order to provide further appropriate passenger information.

Daniel asked if a link could be included for the journey between Luton Parkway, via the shuttle bus, to the airport. **Siobhan** asked whether an audio description could be added, and **Milton** suggested the inclusion of subtitles be considered as well. **Denise** asked **Siobhan** and **Helen** whether they were aware, or could advise, of any programme which could provide audio for the 360° Mapping tool.

The overall concept was considered a success and a very positive step by the forum, who felt that it would be very beneficial to a number of their service users. **Amy** also confirmed that it would be better than a simple airport video in her opinion, as the passenger would be able view the content appropriate to them and have control of what they viewed.

Denise then thanked the organisations represented at the forum who had already provided content and contact details for the airport's website. She talked about a discussion at a recent meeting with her Marketing department, advising of their intention to have all the information uploaded to the website within the next few weeks.

Denise continued advising of her participation as a guest speaker at a recent Dementia action week event, in which she was asked to talk about her role and responsibilities at London Luton airport.

Denise then informed the forum that **Milton** from the RNID had visited the airport in April to conduct an audit of the airports 130 hearing loops. All but 4 were confirmed as operational, including the mobile loops. 2 of the 4 could not be checked as parts of the airport were still closed due to low passenger numbers at that time and the other 2 loops were found not to be working, which has now been addressed.

Denise confirmed that she was still working on the business case for the upgrade of the Accessible toilet facilities and hopes for this to be completed by the time the funds will be made available during July.

Denise then mentioned that nearer the autumn, the airport was looking to complete an end-to-end PRM journey evaluation from Luton Parkway station, via the DART, up to the terminal building. At that time forum members will be invited to give insight into the access and suitability of the journey from their service users perspective, following the audit inspection.

Finally, **Denise** asked if any organisations had training materials, they would be prepared to share in order to improve the quality of the airport's current Disability Awareness & Etiquette training modules. Any thoughts or proposals would be gratefully received.

To round up **Andy** and **Denise** asked everyone how they were coping with the never-ending pandemic, and how their organisations were faring, especially with such financial challenges facing many of the country's charities? Most members commented that their organisations were finding it very tough at the moment and many were undergoing various restructures and, in some cases, reduced hours in order to keep costs to a minimum.

Future LLAAF scheduled meeting dates

The next forum meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, 1st September 2021**. Further information about timings and formats will follow in due course.