

# Junior Minister lauds Southend Airport



George Pile (LSA, Executive Handling Co-Ordinator), Kate Willard (Stobart Group), Penny Mordaunt MP, Ben Whawell (Stobart Group) & Eileen Sheikh (Southend Airport, Executive Handling Co-Ordinator)

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A Junior Minister has said that Southend Airport is unrecognisable to what it was seven years ago during a stop at the thriving airfield.

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Penny Mordaunt MP, visited [Southend Airport](#) this morning as part of a tour of South Essex to hear about the region's booming economic growth and plans for the future.

The Minister started her tour at Europe's Fastest Growing Airport\* with Kate Willard, Corporate Affairs Director, [Stobart Group](#) and Chair of the South Essex [Thames Gateway](#) Partnership. She also visited [Basildon](#) and Craylands on the [A127](#) commercial corridor,

Tilbury Port, London Gateway and Purfleet. All projects are leading examples of private and public investment working in partnership to create a significant economic contribution, and all offer major opportunities for further expansion in the region.

Commenting on her visit to London Southend Airport, Local Growth Minister Penny Mordaunt said “Southend Airport is unrecognisable from the local airfield it was just seven years ago and is clearly having a major impact on the town, creating hundreds of new jobs and acting as a magnet for further investment. This is in no small part thanks to the efforts of the Stobart Group and local partners who I know are working hard to make Southend a top-class destination for businesses. We are supporting that vision by investing nearly £7 million to regenerate the town centre and promote wider growth in the area. It’s all part of a long-term economic plan that is driving forward local economies and delivering real benefits to hard-working people.”

Stobart Group CFO and Executive Director Responsible for Aviation, Ben Whawell, who met with Penny Mordaunt MP this morning, added “This has been a great opportunity to show the Minister for the Thames Gateway what we’ve achieved at London Southend Airport, and how the airport is now a major contributor to both the local and regional economy – a model we are now echoing at Carlisle Airport. Over £120million of private sector investment has gone in to making London Southend Airport what it is today and one million passengers from Essex, London and across Europe made use of this superfast facility last year. There is so much potential here to capitalise on these and other developments across South Essex and we are delighted to be working closely with all our local and regional partners to realise it.”

Leader of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Cllr Ron Woodley, said I was delighted to welcome Penny Mordaunt to the airport and be able to talk to her about our town’s unfolding renaissance and the ambitious plans we’ve agreed with [Rochford](#) to generate over 7,000 jobs and build new homes in the area round the airport. We are very thankful for Government’s previous investment in Southend, which shows their commitment and confidence in what we are achieving here. Because of this, we have been able to successfully deliver several major infrastructure projects and encourage significant private sector investment, with money now beginning to filter into large and small-scale commercial, residential, leisure and retail developments across the Borough. Southend is a town that is open for business and has a clear commitment to apprenticeships, skills development and education. There’s still a lot to do to deliver the new Airport Business Parks and enable the surrounding development area to reach its full potential. But this is a challenge we and our partners will face together with determination, shared vision and hopefully the continued support of senior Government decision-makers.”

Leader of Rochford District Council, Councillor Terry Cutmore, said “It is an honour to welcome the Minister to our District in order to showcase the huge potential we have for economic growth. We are particularly proud of the success of the Airport, which has enabled us to produce our Joint Area Action Plan, set to bring upwards of £100 million of investment to the area and 7,000 job opportunities through the creation of nearby business parks. These plans, recently approved by a Government Inspector, will not only mean local jobs for local people, but will also help us to nurture the younger generation by offering ‘once in a lifetime’ apprenticeships in highly skilled trades.”