

Southend Airport lives up to job promises for local community

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SOUTHEND Airport has lived up to its promise to create more than 500 new jobs – with 408 positions going to people across Southend, [Basildon](#), [Rochford](#) and Castle Point.

Bosses have released their first annual report, which details the airport’s performance against a number of planning conditions which were set by Southend Council, Rochford Council and Essex County Council.

Figures reveal 79 per cent of its 517 jobs, from air traffic controllers and baggage handlers to cleaners and duty free shop assistants, went to people living in the SS postcode and another 13 per cent went to people living elsewhere in Essex.

Managing director, [Alastair Welch](#), said: “We advertised the jobs locally and a lot of people have worked in the airport before or had relatives who worked here in the Sixties and knew how much of a fun place it can be. A lot of other people who live locally worked at other airports, maybe Stansted, so we have had a real mix of employees.

“It’s always easier for us if people live closer to the airport in case we need to draft extra staff in quickly, maybe because of a strike at one of our destination airports causing delays, or bad weather.

“We’re an airport which thrives on people and it’s lovely to see so many of our staff recognise passengers as their neighbours, old schoolfriends or even relatives. It really is a very friendly place with a community spirit, which you don’t expect from an airport”

The terminal is currently undergoing a £23million expansion, which will be completed in December.

The Echo revealed earlier this month it will enable capacity for up to one million passengers to depart and arrive at the airport every hour during peak times – providing up to 300 further jobs.

Mr Welch added: “I want to make sure we stay ahead of the targets we have set ourselves.

“I think the report reflects just how much work has gone into the airport.

“I hope it will deliver a degree of comfort and show we are delivering what we said we would deliver.”