

The Echo takes a sneak peek at London Southend Airport's new terminal extension

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Welcome - operations manager David Lister

SOUTHEND Airport has unveiled its £10million, extended terminal building.

The extension will offer more space for passengers, more shops and is bringing 300 new jobs.

The Echo was given a peek behind the scenes before the building opens towards the middle of next month.

It is the latest stage of development at the airport, in which £120million has been invested since the [Stobart Group](#) took over in 2008.

The bigger and better terminal comes just a few months after Which? magazine named Southend Britain's best airport in August 2013, receiving a customer satisfaction score of 84 per cent.

Operations director David Lister said: "We are proud of the award. It is important to us to be able to continue that service and improve it.

"One of the areas where we did not score five stars was for retail, but this extension allows us more variety.

"Travellers will be able to make use of a more relaxed, open and spacious departure lounge and also shop, or have a drink and something to eat in our new bar."

The departure lounge is four times the size of the current facility, with the extension also tripling retail floor space.

It has seating for 300 which, when combined with the 170 seats in the new bar – scheduled for a summer opening – more than triples the current 150 seats.

Changes have also been made to maintain passenger flow. The number of check-in desks will increase from six to ten, with space for a further four, and the gates have doubled, from three to six.

Mr Lister added: “All this has been done to maintain our timing of 15 minutes from plane to train, even with our new enhanced capacity.”

The airport aims to transport more than one million passengers this year, after setting a record with 970,167 passengers passing through in 2013.