

MINISTER FOR LONDON OPENS LONDON CITY'S LUXURY LOUNGE

NICK RAYNSFORD MP, Minister for London, cutting the red ribbon to officially open the new departure lounge development at London City Airport, complimented the airport on its success story: "I have taken a close interest in the airport's fortunes and am delighted that this unique facility is beginning to repay the faith of those involved in its conception and development," he said in his address.

The Minister also commented on the employment value of the development: "The new departure lounge, which created 80 short-term construction jobs and 30 new direct long-term full-time jobs, mainly for local people, is simply the latest development in the success story that is London City Airport."

That thought was echoed by its Chairman Ray MacSharry, outlining the project to guests at the ceremony on March 31. Uniquely in the UK, the lounge integrates domestic, international and common travel area passengers, an arrangement which has required active cooperation from HM Customs and Excise, Immigration and the Metropolitan Police which is working successfully.

Richard Gooding, the airport's Managing Director, spoke of the challenge of offering all passengers an executive-standard lounge. "We pride ourselves on our high standard of customer service," he said. "But we knew there was a need to bring our facilities up to date, and we wanted to exceed our customers' expectations. Now there is an elegant, club-style lounge with super shopping, a restaurant, water views all around and a continuation of the hassle-free philosophy we aim for right across the airport experience."
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Guests included representatives of the CBI, London Chamber of Commerce, Newham Chamber of Commerce and local businesses as well as local residents, airline operators, the control authorities, airport retailers and handling agencies, with local MPs Jim Fitzpatrick and Stephen Timms and Cllr Carol Knights, Deputy Mayor of Newham. Flying the flag - at half mast - for the outgoing LDDC was Lady Jane Pickard, representing its Chairman Sir Michael.

To mark the occasion guests were entertained by musicians from the Newham Music Trust, and received gifts including a commemorative silver bookmark and a copy of the airport's souvenir book of photographs by Ruth R Stirling: *Walking on the Wind*. The Minister was presented with a framed photograph by Ruth Stirling of a plane landing at sunset entitled *Homecoming*. "It's just the view of the planes I can see from my window," commented the Minister, "Wonderful!"

Editor's note: Currently 10 airlines operate from London City Airport to 20 European cities:

• Amsterdam •	KLM UK	• Antwerp •	Sabena•VLM
• Berne •	Air Engiadina	• Brussels •	Sabena
• Dublin •	CityJet	• Düsseldorf •	VLM
• Edinburgh •	KLM UK	• Frankfurt •	Lufthansa CityLine
• Geneva •	Crossair	• Gothenburg •	Malmö Aviation
• Lugano •	Crossair	• Malmö •	Malmö Aviation
• Manchester •	KLM UK	• Milan •	Alitalia
• Paris •	Air France	• Rotterdam •	KLM UK•VLM
• Stockholm •	Malmö Aviation	• Strasbourg •	Air France
• Turin •	Alitalia	• Zurich •	Crossair

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