

London City Airport saw a 12 per cent rise in passenger numbers in 2008 with a record 3.3 million people travelling through the Docklands airport. In spite of the current economic and financial challenges, December still showed a 10 per cent growth in passengers on the previous year.

2008 has been a significant year for London City Airport. In February British Airways announced its intention to launch the first ever business-class only service to New York. The twice daily 32-seat flat bed service will operate on the A318 in autumn 2009. The New York route will be the first ever scheduled transatlantic destination from London City Airport.

In May 2008 the airport completed the largest ever capital investment programme since first opening. Construction of four new aircraft parking stands with a connecting pier and gate lounges was finished. The 20,000 square metre stands were constructed on concrete piles over the King George V Dock, providing additional capacity for aircraft on the ground and significantly improving punctuality statistics. At the same time, the airport's departure lounge was extended and refurbished, increasing passenger seating by 250. Common User Self Service (CUSS) kiosks were introduced in the terminal concourse and the outbound baggage handling facility was extended. The total investment by the airport's shareholders in enhancing infrastructure at London City Airport in 2008 totals some £50 million.

In October 2008, the London Borough of Newham resolved to approve the airport's planning application, increasing the number of permitted flight movements from 80,000 to 120,000 per annum. In the same month, London City Airport marked 21 years of operations since opening in October 1987. Throughout its history, the airport has been a catalyst for regeneration and employment in East London.

London City Airport received the European Regional Airlines (ERA) Airport Achievement Award 2008/9, in addition to winning Buying Business Travel's Best UK Airport Diamond award and Wanderlust magazine's Best UK Airport award.

In December 2008, British Airways placed an order for a fleet of 11 new generation fuel efficient Embraer aircraft, operating exclusively from London City Airport from September 2009, at an investment of US\$376 million.

At the end of 2008 London City Airport commenced phase two of its departure lounge refurbishment project at a cost of £1.5 million.

Four new routes were introduced in 2008 with increased frequency on many other routes. At the end of the year, nine airlines, members of Oneworld, Star Alliance and Sky Team, operated services to 33 UK and European destinations.

Richard Gooding OBE, Chief Executive of London City Airport, said: “Our performance and progress has been good this year. With a significant investment in facilities, a core emphasis on passenger experience and high service standards, 2008 has proved to be the most successful ever with another record year in terms of passenger numbers. We remain cautious about 2009’s prospects until stability returns to the financial services industry and the wider economy. Nevertheless the continued commitment of our partner airlines and our many regular users gives us continued confidence in the longer term.”