

Heathrow to charge GBP 5 for airport drop-off from late 2021

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 08 December, 2020



London: Heathrow is exploring a proposal to implement a Forecourt Access Charge (FAC) of GBP 5 for vehicles in late 2021 to drive a car-led airport recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

The charge is part of several revisions to the airport's surface access plan as a result of the near-collapse in passenger numbers and GBP 1.5 billion losses incurred in 2020.

COVID-19 has sent shock waves through the aviation sector. As a result, Heathrow has reviewed all its planned investments which were committed when over 80 million passengers were using the airport annually.

This review has led to changes that recalibrate the airport's spending on surface access projects so that environmental impacts will continue to be reduced, whilst the business and colleague jobs are protected during this time with fewer passengers.

Heathrow expects fewer cars on the road due to reduced passenger demand, but

concerns around using public transport due to the pandemic present a new challenge moving forward. Responding to this, the FAC will replace plans for a Heathrow Ultra Low Emissions Zone (HULEZ) announced in May 2019, although future emissions reductions schemes could be considered.

The revised plan ensures Heathrow remains able to meet its long-term public transport goals and, other measures, including HULEZ, can still be implemented if needed.

Revenue raised through the FAC will be used to offset airport costs, including future sustainable transport investments, as well as lowering the charges for passengers.

Consultation has begun with stakeholders around the details of Heathrow's new proposal, including how the FAC will be administered, with details expected to be finalized in 2021.

The Forecourt Access Charge will apply to all vehicles entering the forecourts of Heathrow's terminals, although some exceptions will apply such as blue badge holders and emergency vehicles. The full list of exemptions has yet to be finalized.

Passengers already have the alternative option of being dropped off in their long stay car parks today and traveling to terminals via a free shuttle bus.

On this note, Tony Caccavone, Director of Surface Access, Heathrow, said, "The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been severe, especially on the aviation industry with Heathrow passenger numbers down over 80 percent and the business losing GBP 5 million a day. These changes will help us to protect the business financially and save jobs in the short term, whilst also allowing us to stay on track for our long-term goals of providing safe, sustainable, and affordable transport options into the future."