

Briefing: Manchester Airport express drop-off

Background

- Manchester Airport has seen a significant increase in passenger volumes in the past five years and is investing heavily in further growth and improvements to the customer experience, most notably through its £1bn Transformation Programme.
- This growth, coupled with imposed restrictions on forecourt capacity and an inability to increase available space, has led to extreme congestion on the forecourts and surrounding estate especially at peak times. This has a huge impact on operations and service levels. In addition, we experience recirculation rates of around 20% at peak time, which means one in every five cars enters our forecourt areas at least twice, significantly adding to the congestion.
- As we continue to grow, it is clear that we need to take a proactive approach to managing this congestion, especially as we have one of the highest levels of “kiss and fly” traffic (passengers being dropped off/picked up by a friend or relative, or taxi) in the country. This stands at more than 50% at Manchester and was identified at our Surface Access Forum last year as the number one issue to tackle.
- Our forecourts were simply not designed to handle the current volume of vehicles that they do and we cannot accommodate any further growth in this ‘kiss and fly’ traffic or continued recirculation of traffic.

Free drop-off area

- We are creating a dedicated site away from the forecourt areas for people being dropped off at the airport, from where we will transport them free of charge to their terminal on dedicated shuttle services.
- Journey times to the terminals will be between seven and 12 minutes on a strong frequency, particularly at peak times.
- The location of the free area (within JetParks1) has been selected as it is close to the motorway network and ensures that cars will not be passing through surrounding neighbourhoods on route to the site. We will be converting paid-for spaces into free drop-off spaces in this area.
- Directions and further details about this area will be on our website ahead of the launch in June.

*We also recognise that our Ground Transport Interchange (GTI) serves as the main commuter station for people living in surrounding neighbourhoods and so we are working with local stakeholders to create a scheme that gives those users free drop-off at the GTI and will communicate the details of this shortly.

Free drop-off location
(JetParks1)
Next to M56 junction



What is express drop-off?

- In parallel, we are launching an express drop-off charge for those still wanting to be dropped directly outside the terminals and ground transport station. It will launch in June.
- This is similar to most UK airports and, as such, we have been able to benchmark our pricing structure against them. We believe this to be fair to consumers, while working to tackle the congestion issues and we have worked with our Passenger User Group in recent months as we have devised the plans.
- 84% of passengers currently take fewer than five minutes on the forecourts and so offering a free short stay on the forecourts will not help to alleviate the congestion.
- The charges for the forecourt areas are £3 for five minutes and £4 for 10 minutes. There will be no permitted stays longer than 10 minutes.
- The system will include ANPR in and a barrier system out with payment taken at the barrier.

*This situation will only affect those dropping off at the terminals. The situation for picking passengers up remains that people can be picked up in the arrivals car parks as per the current process. We will also have colleagues on hand to direct those dropping-off and picking-up to the right places.

Developing public transport

- We will be investing a six-figure sum in to a brand new Public Transport Development Fund, which will be used to support measures to improve access to our site for employment as well as for passengers.
- We will be working in partnership with Cheshire East Council, the GMCA, TfGM and others to administer the fund and ensure that we improve public transport to the benefit of local residents.
- We will share further details in due course.

Staff

- We are working towards an arrangement to give staff who do not have a parking space provided by MAG or their employer to get free drop-off and pick-up access, and we will communicate the exact details of this to them in the coming weeks.

Passengers with reduced mobility

- There will be special measures in place for passengers with reduced mobility and hidden disabilities.
- We are working with disability organisations on the solution and will confirm arrangements ahead of June.

Taxis/Third party meet and greet operators/Coaches/frequent travellers

- There will be a discount scheme for commercial operators who are frequent users of Manchester Airport, which will apply to both the forecourts and the car parks.
- For example, this will consist of a significant discount for private hire taxi firms, who will be able to get permits that limit the charge they may feel they have to pass on to passengers.
- Details on this will be communicated before the launch in June.