



VIRGIN ATLANTIC PARTNERS WITH VERTICAL AEROSPACE

News / Airlines, Manufacturer



Virgin Atlantic partners with Vertical Aerospace to pioneer sustainable and zero emissions air travel in the UK. The partnership includes an option for Virgin Atlantic to purchase up to 150 eVTOL aircraft and exploration of a UK Joint Venture with Vertical Aerospace, to deliver a Virgin Atlantic branded short haul eVTOL network.

The fully-electric [VA-X4](#) is a zero emissions, near silent aircraft with a range of over 100 miles and it will carry four passengers in addition to a pilot. The VA-X4 has four tilting advanced rotors at the front and stowable rotors at the rear, capable of speeds over 200mph, and is set to revolutionise urban mobility and electrify air travel, with certification to the same safety standards as commercial airliners.

In line with Virgin Atlantic's focus on building strategic, best in class partnerships with companies that share its values, ambition and innovative mindset, Virgin Atlantic and Vertical Aerospace will be working together to explore a Joint Venture to deliver next generation eVTOL passenger operations in the UK, combining the world class knowledge

and expertise of both partners. Vertical Aerospace and Virgin Atlantic will seek to establish short haul, electric aircraft connectivity between UK cities and airport hubs starting with London Heathrow, Manchester and London Gatwick.

The goal is to enable sustainable, price competitive, regional connectivity across the first and last 100 miles of the customer journey. For example, reducing the 56-mile journey from Cambridge to London Heathrow to just 22 minutes, in comparison to a 1 hour 30 drive by road. With 37 towns and cities with populations over 100,000 within 100 miles of London Heathrow Airport, the VA-X4 offers huge potential to support zero emissions short haul transfers for 7.7 million customers outside of London, for flights to and from the UK's main hub airport.

A full-scale prototype of the VA-X4 is currently in production and the first test flight is planned for later this year.

Shai Weiss, CEO, Virgin Atlantic said: "With innovation and sustainability leadership firmly in our DNA, we are excited to be partnering with Vertical Aerospace to pioneer sustainable and zero emissions air travel in the UK. We pride ourselves on building enduring strategic partnerships and are thrilled to be working alongside Vertical in its mission to bring eVTOL travel to the UK. Our partnership includes an option for Virgin Atlantic to acquire up to 150 eVTOL VA-X4 aircraft and exploration of a Joint Venture to bring short haul, electric vehicle connectivity to cities and our UK airport hubs, starting with London Heathrow as well as Manchester and London Gatwick. Combining the design, engineering and manufacturing expertise of Vertical with the award-winning customer experience and operational excellence of Virgin Atlantic."

Stephen Fitzpatrick, Vertical CEO and Founder, said: "This is the most exciting time in aviation for almost a century; electrification will transform flying in the 21st century in the same way the jet engine did 70 years ago. By bringing together two entrepreneurial organisations who share the same passion for innovation and best in class partnerships, we can revolutionise urban mobility in the UK and electrify air travel. We look forward to working closely with Virgin Atlantic and completely changing how people think about flying through the skies."

Commercial operations of the VA-X4 are planned for 2024 following European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) certification.

As a founding member of the UK Government's Jet Zero Council and alongside an existing commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2050, Virgin Atlantic's partnership with Vertical is a further step towards it becoming an industry sustainability leader - finding innovative solutions to decarbonise aviation.

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