

## PRESS RELEASE

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*For immediate use*

### GOVERNMENT SHIFT ON HEATHROW EXPANSION POLICY

The Government have shifted its emphasis away from expansion at Heathrow to a new 10-point approach for the future of UK aviation (1).

*Flightpath to the Future*, a 73-page document launched at Heathrow today, makes no direct reference to expansion at Heathrow or the Airports National Policy Statement – the legislation which acted as the enabler for expansion.

Instead, the document states that the government will *“support growth in airport capacity where it is justified, ensuring that capacity is used in a way that is delivered for the UK”*.

Campaigners believe this is a significant shift from government policy which previously sought to propel the supposed benefits of Heathrow expansion at every opportunity, just a few years ago. In 2018, the Airports National Policy Statement was voted on in Parliament, which had a three-line whip by the Conservative Party.

Heathrow are highly indebted and were struggling to find a 3<sup>rd</sup> runway even before the pandemic crippled their revenues. This strategy may be a subtle acknowledgement from Government at the scale of the challenges Heathrow face and an effort to refocus their attention on delivering any growth in the regions.

The plan also proposes the creation of a new Aviation Council, which have been dismissed by campaigners as yet another opportunity for an already lobby-heavy sector to impose their views on an already compliant government.

**Paul McGuinness, Chair of the No 3<sup>rd</sup> Runway Coalition, said:**

*“It is notable that Heathrow expansion fails to get a mention. Moreover, the document's thrust suggests that the need is fast approaching for a joined-up, national aviation strategy to preclude regional airports from being overlooked”*.

ENDS.

Notes:

1. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1078684/flightpath-to-the-future.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1078684/flightpath-to-the-future.pdf)

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