

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate use

LABOUR TO OPPOSE THIRD RUNWAY AT HEATHROW

The Labour Party is to oppose a third runway at Heathrow, it has been announced, in the very week when the future of the mega-disruptive project at Britain's biggest airport has been debated (1).

Mike Kane, Labour's shadow aviation minister, told the recent Airport Operators Association Conference that Labour will not support the construction of a third runway. Asked if Labour would support the plans, Kane said: "not at the moment, no", citing concerns as to the project's environmental and economic viability. Kane stated that "we probably have enough runway capacity as it is", in a move that will please the party's environmental supporter base.

The CEO of Heathrow, John Holland-Kaye, announced last week he would be stepping down, with Heathrow's current Director of Operations, Emma Gilthorpe, touted as his successor (2). Holland-Kaye told the AOA Conference that Heathrow would be having another go at securing a third runway "later this year". This would be the third time this century that the airport will have begun a drive for a third runway; its first push lasted from 2002 – 2010, then again from 2014 – 2020, before the plans were halted once again due to the pandemic.

Paul McGuinness, Chair of the No 3rd Runway Coalition, said:

"Labour's antipathy towards expansion at Heathrow is a likely foretaste of what's to come on this issue. After all, the policy documents in play when Parliament approved Heathrow expansion are now six years out of date, and the ex-Chair of the Airports Commission who prepared them now doubts that an economic case can still be made for it.

"Since then, insurmountable environmental barriers have been added by the government, whose climate advisers state that an expansion at Heathrow will need to be offset by restrictions or closures at regional airports.

"So, building another airport, larger than Birmingham's, next to what is already the world's most disruptive airport, to suck aviation out of the regions is increasingly being seen as irresponsible policy.

"And with politicians moving away from Heathrow's self-interested lobbying campaign to gobble up an even large portion of the aviation cake, the time may be well dawning for a National Aviation Strategy to protect regional opportunity and provide a fair and sensible solution for wider country".

ENDS.

Notes:

- 1) Mike Kane MP comments to Airport Operators Association Conference
<https://travelweekly.co.uk/news/air/heathrow-to-set-out-third-runway-plans-in-next-few-months>
- 2) Emma Gilthorpe touted as possible new CEO of Heathrow
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2023/02/03/heathrow-lines-whitehall-green-champion-head-airport/>

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