

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate use

PARTIES MOVING AWAY FROM HEATHROW EXPANSION

Political parties are moving away from Heathrow expansion, with the major two parties their manifestos stating either complete opposition or phrasing that suggests that suggests it could be dropped if they win the general election on 12 December.

Published on 24 November, the Conservative manifesto said that *“Parliament has voted in principle to support a third runway at Heathrow, but it is a private sector project. It is for Heathrow to demonstrate that it can meet its air quality and noise obligations, that the project can be financed and built and that the business case is realistic. The scheme will receive no new public money”* (1). Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Transport Secretary Grant Shapps have stated that they will be watching the current judicial review procedures *“very closely”* (2).

This is in stark contrast to their 2017 manifesto that referred to their party’s *“programme of strategic national investments, including. the expansion of Heathrow Airport”* (3).

The Labour Party has also indicated it won’t support the plans, stating that *“any expansion of airports must pass our tests on air quality, noise pollution, climate change obligations and countrywide benefits. We will examine fiscal and regulatory options to ensure a response to the climate crisis in a way that is fair to consumers and protects the economy.”* (4). Labour state that Heathrow cannot meet any of these tests. This was confirmed by the shadow transport secretary Andy McDonald when the vote went to Parliament in 2018 (5).

The Liberal Democrat manifesto also published last week, said that the party would be *“opposing any expansion of Heathrow, Gatwick or Stansted and any new airport in the Thames Estuary, and introducing a zero-carbon fuels blending requirement for domestic flights”* (6).

The Scottish National Party, who published their Westminster manifesto on 27 November, called for better rail connectivity between Scotland and London and stated that *“aviation emissions should be counted within national emissions and targets. Aviation emissions in Scotland count towards our carbon reduction targets and the same approach should be taken across the UK”* (7). The party abstained in the Parliamentary vote on Heathrow expansion and Nicola Sturgeon announced earlier this year that the Scottish Government are currently

reviewing its policy on Heathrow expansion in light of their declaration to achieve net zero emissions by 2045 (8).

Plaid Cymru are opposing Heathrow expansion, citing the costs of the project as a key reason, stating that they *“oppose the construction of a third runway at Heathrow. Although Heathrow has put a £14bn figure on its expansion costs, others say the true figure will be nearer £30bn”* (9).

The Brexit Party made no reference to Heathrow or any other aviation policies in its manifesto (10). The Green Party has long opposed the expansion of Heathrow and other airports.

Rob Barnstone, Coordinator of the No 3rd Runway Coalition, said:

“In stark contrast with 2017, political parties are moving away from supporting Heathrow expansion at this election. It is an encouraging sign that shows recognition that a third runway is edging closer to being scrapped, whoever forms the next Government.

“If one of the major parties do not obtain a majority, they cannot ignore that parties they might look to prop them up in Westminster are not interested in supporting Heathrow expansion, on grounds of climate change alone.

“Since last year the UK and Scottish Governments have adopted net zero emissions legislation – something that was not in place when Heathrow expansion was brought to Parliament – which makes the project even less deliverable that it was before.”

ENDS.

Notes:

No 3rd Runway Coalition representatives available for further comment, contact Rob Barnstone on 07806 947050 or rob@no3rdrunwaycoalition.co.uk

1. Conservative Manifesto 2019, p. 28
2. <http://stopheathrowexpansion.co.uk/press-releases-1/2019/8/14/shapps-hints-at-scrapping-heathrow-expansionnbsp> A Judicial Review into Heathrow Expansion, lodged by the Mayor of London, four local authorities, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and Plan B Earth, was heard in the Court of Appeal in October.
3. Conservative Manifesto 2017, p. 26
4. Labour Party Manifesto 2019, p.21

5. <https://labour.org.uk/press/labour-four-tests-heathrow-expansion-not-met/>
6. Liberal Democrat Manifesto <https://www.libdems.org.uk/plan>
7. SNP Manifesto 2019, pp. 30 - 31 https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/www.snp.org/uploads/2019/11/11_22e-SNP-Manifesto-2019-for-download.pdf
8. SNP reviewing Heathrow support <https://inews.co.uk/news/scotland/heathrow-third-runway-scottish-government-may-abandon-support-540065>
9. Plaid Cymru Manifesto 2019, p. 60 https://www.partyof.wales/full_manifesto
10. Brexit Party Manifesto <https://www.thebrexitparty.org/contract/#top>