**PRESS RELEASE**

20 January 2025

*For immediate use*

**GATWICK, LUTON, OR BUST?**

Chancellor Rachel Reeves has been reported to be preparing to back a third runway at Heathrow in a speech next month, according to Bloomberg, citing the Government’s drive to be seen as creating economic growth (1).

Yet these rumours appear to fly in the face of Labour’s own four own tests on Heathrow expansion, which evidence shows cannot be met (2).

Crucially, however, the story reports that in addition to Heathrow, the Chancellor is set to give the green light to expansion plans at Luton and Gatwick airports, both of which are due final decisions in coming weeks following lengthy planning inquiries. And the Government gave expansion plans at Stansted the go-ahead in October (3).

Legally binding climate targets mean that there is no room for airport expansion on the scale of Heathrow’s proposal, if expansion at Gatwick or Luton were given the final go-ahead. And it would also kill any prospect of any regional airport expansion outside of the already overheated London and the South East of England.

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

*“Gatwick and Luton’s expansion projects are oven ready and Gatwick’s runway is actually already built. Whereas Heathrow’s application – once submitted – will take years to process. So, any signals from Government that Heathrow’s expansion will not be impeded are meaningless, when other expansions in the South East will have already rendered Heathrow expansion uneconomic. There will be no yield from investing in it and no carbon budget left for it.”*

ENDS.

Notes:

1. Bloomberg story: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-01-20/uk-poised-to-back-heathrow-airport-expansion-in-push-for-growth>

1. Labour’s four tests and why Heathrow cannot meet them <https://www.no3rdrunwaycoalition.co.uk/_files/ugd/8b8ad1_2e8e458f6ee846ee8c7ad1ba55a45779.pdf>

1. Stansted expansion given green light <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/11-billion-investment-to-expand-stansted-airport-welcomed-by-ministers>

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