

Richard Burden MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS, LONDON, SW1A 0AA

### **Heathrow expansion**

Thank you to everyone that has contacted me about the expansion of Heathrow Airport.

Labour has long held that support for the construction of the new runway had to be conditional on the proposal meeting 4 tests – on capacity, on the UK's climate change obligations, on air pollution, noise and other environmental factors and on how far the proposal would benefit the whole of the UK rather than the South East alone. Labour MPs had a free vote on the proposal and Shadow Transport Secretary, Andy McDonald recommended opposition to the proposal on the basis that Labour's Four Tests had not been met.

As Labour's Shadow Aviation Minister between 2015 and 2017, I was heavily involved in pressing the case for Labour's Four Tests, and as a Birmingham MP I have always urged the Government to adopt a perspective on aviation policy that goes much wider than the questions of Heathrow and airport capacity in the South East. All too often Ministers give the impression that they regard airports outside the South East as second-rank, referring to them as "regional airports".

But airports like Birmingham and Manchester are not simply regional airports. They are International Gateways to the UK in their own right. Indeed, with Birmingham International Station next door, Birmingham Airport is already at least as convenient a gateway to central London as Heathrow. HS2 will make it still more so. Airports like Birmingham and Manchester also have spare capacity that Heathrow and Gatwick do not have and they can play major roles in helping rebalance the economy to spread prosperity beyond the South East.

I remain in close touch with Birmingham Airport and will continue to press Ministers to be more proactive in supporting the airport to realise its potential to secure a wider range of direct international routes in the years ahead – whether or not a new runway is finally built at Heathrow.

Thanks again to everyone who has contacted me about Heathrow expansion.

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Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Burden', with a stylized, cursive script.

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