

SNP want Ryanair to think again

✘ SNP MSP Colin Keir is urging Ryanair to reconsider its plans to cut routes from Edinburgh Airport and says the company should be working to ensure the future of the airport is focused on expansion and not retraction.

Ryanair's Chief Executive Michael O'Leary made the announcement today that will see routes to Berlin and Tallinn axed and the planned routes to Malmo, Murcia and Ibiza scrapped.

It is reported that this proposal would result in 300,000 fewer passengers and the potential loss of up to 300 jobs associated with the routes.

Mr O'Leary said this was a result of rising passenger fares – including the increasing costs of Air Passenger Duty.

Mr Keir, SNP MSP for Edinburgh Western, whose constituency covers Edinburgh Airport, said:

“The future for Edinburgh Airport should be expansion not retraction. Ryanair should be working with the airport to ensure jobs and growth are at the heart of any proposals.

“This is a hammer blow to Edinburgh and I am urging Ryanair to reconsider. It is an extremely disappointing announcement at a time when companies should be encouraging development in the aviation industry.

“Edinburgh is an expanding Airport and I'd like to see Ryanair play a part in that expansion process. Edinburgh needs more direct flights to European and worldwide destinations.

“It's particularly disappointing that the capital city will lose its only direct connection to Berlin – that's bad news

for consumers and businesses that depend on the service.

“I have written to the company urging it to find an alternative to this plan and seek reassurances about any potential job losses.

“But it also gives weight to Air Passenger Duty being devolved as the UK Government’s refusal to do this is extremely damaging to Scotland’s aviation industry.

“Recovery in the aviation sector is fragile and I fear this announcement will have a damaging effect both on the industry and, as a consequence on the Scottish economy, which is why I will continue to urge Ryanair to halt this plan.”