# Chancellor Rachel Reeves faces scrutiny over economic growth strategies in the north



Chancellor Rachel Reeves is facing increasing scrutiny regarding her economic growth strategies, particularly as concerns mount over a perceived southern bias. This tactical short-sightedness could severely jeopardise Labour's standing in the upcoming electoral contest. Andy Burnham, the Labour mayor of Greater Manchester, voiced his frustration over Reeves' recent announcements, highlighting the growing disconnect between Labour's promises and the realities faced by the northern regions.

Labour's endorsement of substantial developments, like the expansion of Heathrow Airport and the prioritisation of high-tech jobs around Cambridge and Oxford, are glaring examples of this neglect. Burnham has been vocal in declaring, "Whenever the next general election comes, two things already seem clear: it will be unlike any we have experienced before, and it will be won or lost in the north of England." This statement illuminates the urgent necessity for change, as Labour risks losing support from the very regions that once were its backbone.

As only three months remain until the spending review scheduled for June 11, Burnham is urging Labour mayors and ministers to redirect their focus and ensure significant investment is allocated to the north. However, the warning bells are ringing louder with the ascendance of opposition parties that are drawing significant support in these areas. In the last election, they finished second in a staggering 87 constituencies previously held by Labour, signalling a tectonic shift in the political landscape.

In her speech at the Convention of the North conference in Preston, Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner pledged to give mayors greater control over local transport and economic development—a feeble attempt to quell discontent while highlighting the party's ongoing struggle to connect with the needs of the north. Burnham's assertion that the upcoming election will present a choice between fundamentally different visions underscores the severity of Labour’s situation.

He cautioned that the party's current narrative, focused on growth centred around southern cities and the expansion of airports, showcases a troubling lack of ambition for the north. If Labour fails to develop proposals that provide equitable economic opportunity, it risks further alienating its base and opening the door even wider for those offering fresh, genuine alternatives.

Rayner’s acknowledgment of the north's impatience for real change, while commendable, rings hollow without actionable commitments. As leaders try to navigate the complexities of regional aspirations and national growth initiatives, it is clear that the Labour Party must recalibrate its approach or face dire consequences come the election. The stakes have never been higher, and with the emergence of new political forces advocating for real and meaningful change, Labour's window to reclaim northern support is rapidly closing.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://chamberuk.com/what-is-rachel-reeves-strategy-for-growth/> - This URL supports Chancellor Rachel Reeves' economic growth strategies, including her focus on the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor and the expansion of Heathrow Airport, which are seen as prioritizing southern regions.
* <https://www.theglobaltreasurer.com/2025/01/29/rachel-reevess-economic-growth-plan-will-it-deliver/> - This article discusses Reeves' plan to boost economic growth through infrastructure projects and investments, highlighting concerns about a southern bias in her strategies.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/reeves-i-am-going-further-and-faster-to-kick-start-the-economy> - This government news release details Chancellor Reeves' plans to accelerate economic growth, particularly through the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor, which adds to concerns about regional disparities.
* <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/andy-burnham-labour-north-election-26444445> - This article could provide context on Andy Burnham's views regarding Labour's focus on northern regions and the need for more investment there, though it is not directly available in the search results.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/sep/27/labour-party-north-of-england-election-strategy> - This article might discuss Labour's strategies for the north of England and the challenges they face in maintaining support in these regions, though it is not directly available in the search results.