

News story: Milestone for multibillion pound project as apprentices meet Minister for London

Apprentices taking part in a scheme set to boost the economy in south west London met Minister for London Jo Johnson today, 31 October 2018.

The minister spoke to apprentices working at the Battersea Power Station site in Wandsworth, to mark the 1000th person placed into work through the borough's successful [work match scheme](#).

He also visited the site of the new London Underground extension – where tunnelling works are now complete ready to extend the Northern Line to Battersea, previously backed by government investment through a £1 billion loan to the Greater London Authority.

Two new stations are being built, at Nine Elms and Battersea, with work targeted for completion in 2020.

Minister for London Jo Johnson said:

It is exciting to see first-hand the work that is going on as part of the regeneration project at Battersea – this London landmark is being put to excellent use to ensure existing neighbourhoods flourish, while attracting a wealth of new businesses to the area.

The Northern Line extension is a key part of this – we have to be ambitious for London in the decades to come and this will bring new jobs and opportunities to the area.

I enjoyed meeting some of the people who have found work through Wandsworth's scheme, and wish them continued success in the future. This comes alongside the government's drive to create 3 million quality apprenticeships – set to change the lives of young people and the prospects of businesses.

In total 150 apprentices have worked in construction as part of the Battersea project – in jobs ranging from crane drivers to carpenters – with more than half coming from the local community.

Wandsworth Council set up the work match scheme in 2013 to help get local residents into work, and struck up a partnership with Battersea Power Station Development Company to match local people to job vacancies.

Datuk Wong, Chairman of Battersea Power Station Development Company (BPSDC), said :

We were delighted to welcome Jo Johnson MP and Richard Graham MP to Battersea Power Station and show them the great progress being made on creating a new town centre for London.

Providing opportunities for local people is ingrained in Malaysian culture and therefore a huge priority for us, hence our involvement with Wandsworth's Work Match programme and the establishment of the Battersea Academy of Skills Excellence (BASE). This will remain a key focus throughout the lifetime of this project and long after the regeneration of the area has completed.

This is such an iconic landmark that Malaysians are very proud to have invested in. Not only are we entrusted to restore the Power Station to its former glory but we are also committed to delivering a world-class destination for all to enjoy.

Leader of Wandsworth Council, Cllr Ravi Govindia, said:

We are incredibly proud of what the team at work match has done for our residents – to have put 1,000 Wandsworth people into employment is an incredible achievement.

As the range of jobs available in the Nine Elms area grows and changes with new shops and hospitality businesses opening up, we have found that businesses really trust work match to provide them with excellent candidates.

The minister was accompanied during the visit by Richard Graham MP, Special Envoy to Malaysia – to discuss Malaysian investment in the project. The Power Station site is owned by a consortium of Malaysian investors, demonstrating that the UK is open for business as we leave the EU.

During the visit, the minister also heard about the Battersea Academy of Skills Excellence (BASE), a jobs and training service created for people living locally, which was launched in 2016. It is focused on matching people with jobs at Battersea as well as providing training relevant to the work needed to make the development a reality.

The government is working to create 3 million quality apprenticeships that will change the lives of apprentices and the prospects of businesses. We are making apprenticeships longer, with more off-the job training and proper assessment at the end.

News story: Education Secretary appoints new Social Mobility Commissioners

The new commissioners come from all walks of life and include leaders from the fields of business, education and technology. Many have their own personal stories of how they have overcome barriers to success and now work to improve social mobility in their sectors.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

Dame Martina and I share a vision for a country where we raise our ambitions for every child, whatever their background. Education is at the heart of this, giving everyone the chance to fulfil the spark of potential that exists in them.

This new team of commissioners brings together established business men and women, policy makers, academics and young people all with important perspectives to bring. The Social Mobility Commission will benefit from the expertise of this diverse mix of individuals, all of whom will bring their own unique stamp to what social mobility means in their lives.

I look forward to working with the new Commission to make our shared vision a reality.

The appointments follow approval from the Prime Minister and the Public Appointments Committee, and include the editor of a women's magazine Cosmopolitan, a university professor, a headteacher and two youth ambassadors.

Dame Martina Milburn, Chair of the Social Mobility Commission said:

I am delighted to welcome a record number of Social Mobility Commissioners who will work to make England a fairer society.

This is a group of people with real-life experiences of social mobility to help challenge government, business, and society as a whole, to create a fair system where people can thrive.

Many of our new Commissioners had modest starts in life and know the barriers that young people must overcome to become successful. They are also individuals with the skills, resources, and energy to drive real change around the country, united by a passion for fairness and an ability to make a real difference to people's lives.

The Social Mobility Commissioners will take up their new roles next month with an event planned to mark the Commission's relaunch on 11 December.

Their appointments build on Dame Martina's vision to bring greater ethnic, gender and age diversity to Commission by tapping into a diverse range of backgrounds.

Younger commissioners, as well as members based outside London and the south east will make sure its work is better represented regionally, helping to raise its profile and influence young people directly.

Joining Dame Martina as commissioners will be:

- Alastair da Costa, Chair of Capital City College Group
- Liz Williams, Group Director of Digital Society at BT
- Farrah Storr, Editor-in-chief of Cosmopolitan
- Harvey Matthewson, Volunteer, and part-time Sales Assistant at Marks & Spencer
- Jessica Oghenegweke, Project co-ordinator at the Diana Award
- Jody Walker, Senior Vice President at TJX Europe (TK Maxx and Home Sense in the UK)
- Pippa Dunn, Founder of Broody, helping entrepreneurs and start ups
- Saeed Atcha, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Xplode magazine
- Sam Friedman, Associate Professor in Sociology at London School of Economics
- Sammy Wright, Vice Principal of Southmoor Academy, Sunderland
- Sandra Wallace, Managing Partner UK and Joint Managing Director Europe at DLA Piper
- Steven Cooper, Outgoing Chief Executive Officer of Barclaycard Business

Press release: £3 million to boost digital skills in Manchester

The funding announced in the Budget will see the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) team up with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) for the pilot project.

Employers and training providers will identify which digital skills are in short supply in the local area and design a targeted approach that can help people prepare to move into digital roles.

Greater Manchester is one of the largest digital clusters in the UK with almost 8,000 digital businesses employing more than 80,000 people.

Digital Minister Margot James said:

We want everyone to benefit from the digital revolution and by working in partnership with industry we can make sure that we're giving people the skills they need to succeed in the future.

Greater Manchester has a thriving and growing tech sector and as part of our modern Industrial Strategy we're helping to make the UK one of the world's most digitally skilled nations.

Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham said:

Ensuring people in Greater Manchester have the skills they need to access the jobs that are being created in our outstanding digital and tech sector will be a key part of making our post-Brexit future a success.

Greater Manchester is already leading the way with the devolution of adult skills funding and creating our own Local Industrial Strategy, alongside the Government, to ensure everyone here can access good jobs and benefit from the growth in our economy. This project will help take this work even further.

Our devolved administrations are primed and ready to make decisions on key domestic agendas and with further devolution over areas like skills, we can truly make the difference people need.

The project will be co-funded with employers and will particularly look to encourage training provision that is offered flexibly so that those already in work or with other responsibilities can benefit from opportunities to develop new digital skills and move into exciting new roles.

This will support the Local Industrial Strategy for Greater Manchester and complement the devolution of adult skills funding which is making it more responsive to the needs of local employers.

The announcement builds on the other good news for Greater Manchester in the budget, following the plans outlined for the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy.

The progress statement published this week showcases the work that has been done so far by local leaders in the Northern Powerhouse who are working with the Government and businesses to identify economic opportunities that the region can seize in the years to come.

[Press release: Government launches consultation on community involvement in shale gas proposals](#)

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[Press release: Government launches consultation on community involvement in shale gas proposals](#)

Shale gas developers could be required to consult local communities, even before submitting a planning application, following the launch of the latest [government consultation](#) seeking to further reform shale industry practice in England.

Launched today (31 October 2018), the consultation seeks the views on whether to:

- require developers to publish relevant information
- open a meaningful dialogue with communities and stakeholders
- listen to residents and take account of what they say

Developers would then be able to address concerns where possible before submitting final proposals to local authorities.

Early engagement with communities at the pre-application stage would give local people an earlier say on proposals, whilst making developers aware of issues of importance to the community that may need to be resolved through working with the relevant local authority.

It's part of the government's commitment to speed up decision making, as it's

recognised that no one benefits from unnecessary delays when determining planning applications.

Those with an interest have until Monday 7 January 2019 to respond.

Today's announcement follows the [consultation on re-designating exploratory drilling as permitted development](#). This closed on Thursday 25 October and a response is currently being considered.

Further information

View the [consultation documentation](#).

The new planning rulebook and existing guidance makes it clear that early engagement has potential to improve the effectiveness of the system for all those involved. However, the proposed reforms out for consultation seek to take it a step further by making it a formal requirement before submitting an application.

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