

# 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.