

# News story: Minister powers up Cumbria's potential

Based on the success of his recent 'Powerhouse Live: Tour of the North', Mr Berry visited 2 local firms to chat to the Cumbrian workforce.

His first port of call was Forth Engineering at Maryport, before going onto meet apprentices at the Gen2 training facility at Lillyhall.

The Northern Powerhouse is designed to drive economic growth in the north via investments in skills, innovation, transport and culture.

Jake Berry, Northern Powerhouse Minister, said:

The Northern Powerhouse is all about ensuring economies like Cumbria are able to achieve their full potential, by working together with other towns, cities and rural communities.

To learn about the challenges and opportunities in the area, from those who live and work here, has helped us understand how the Northern Powerhouse can support local and national economic growth in the area.

Sellafield clearly plays a huge role already in the north's economy, employing more than 11,000 people and spending more than £1.1bn a year in the supply chain.

It is encouraging to see first hand how small businesses like Forth Engineering are diversifying away from the nuclear industry, and I am impressed by the range of high quality apprenticeships being developed here.

Jamie Reed, head of community and development for Sellafield Ltd, said:

It was fantastic to welcome Jake to the area to see first-hand the unlimited potential of our fabulous county.

Sellafield has always been a powerhouse in its own right, but our greatest challenge is ensuring we leave a positive legacy for our community.

This is why we joined the Northern Powerhouse, to rebalance the economy away from London and the South East and connect Cumbria with other northern towns and cities.

Together we can create diverse and resilient communities and drive the economic future of the country.

This is something Sellafield can not do alone, and this visit has highlighted that as businesses, councils, trade unions and politicians, we are all responsible for overcoming the challenges we face.

Forth Engineering was founded in 2000 by former Sellafield apprentice, Mark Telford, he said:

The Minister was interested to learn how having Sellafield on our doorstep has given us a testbed to develop unique skills and technologies, which we are now transferring into other industries.

Our workers also appreciated the opportunity to find out more about the Northern Powerhouse and how it might help create more jobs and opportunities in our region.