

# A NEW INDUSTRIAL FUTURE FOR WEST CUMBRIA



Labour. A brighter future.

**JOSH  
MACALISTER**

# West Cumbria Needs a New Plan

Our area has a proud history of shaping the UK's future. Our ports and docks were the engine room of the Industrial Revolution. We were home to the world's first civil nuclear power station. Workington steel can still be found in rail tracks around the world.

We have since fallen behind because of the failure of successive governments to develop and deliver an industrial strategy for our area. But there's a new opportunity if we seize it.

The UK is on the precipice of another industrial revolution, driven by the energy transition and new technologies like AI and robotics. Across the North, communities are standing up to claim their part of this new economy.

Will West Cumbria be part of this new economy? And if we are, then what will our role be?

Despite our industrial heritage, we've been poorly served by short-term thinking from political leaders and dependence on one-off funding pots from London. We have been forced to beg for crumbs off the table rather than walk our own path to new highly-paid jobs that provide our area with renewed pride and purpose.

We have been told to wait for others to deliver on their promises to our community. The failure to make a best bet on what our economic future should be, means that we have lost time, investment and jobs.

We need to regain control of our own future. We need a realistic, ambitious and focussed plan that backs and enables the enterprise and determination of local leaders. And we need jobs that families can count on for the future. This is that plan.

This industrial plan puts our unique history, our skilled people and our community in prime position to benefit from the next industrial revolution. We have led before, and we can again.

If you elect me as your Member of Parliament, I'll be a tireless champion for removing barriers, creating opportunities and bringing power back to our community so that we can make this plan a reality. The plan also shows where the policies of a national Labour government would boost our chances of local success.

Out of the wreckage of Tory mismanagement, Labour can restore our economic future with West Cumbria in control of its own destiny once again. As your MP, I'll be proud of our past and ambitious for putting our area on the map again.



Josh MacAlister, standing to be West Cumbria's Labour MP

# An Industrial Plan for West Cumbria

This is a plan that puts our unique history, our skilled people and our community in prime position to benefit from the next industrial revolution. It would generate 1,000 new jobs and unlock billions of pounds of private sector investment for West Cumbria. We've led before, and we can again.

## 1. Invest in New Nuclear for West Cumbria



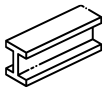
Building new nuclear is critical for lowering bills and unlocking new energy-intensive advanced manufacturing jobs. There is a local plan with £6 billion of private investment to build small modular reactors and create 600 jobs, but Tory chaos and incompetence is putting this at risk. Labour backs new nuclear and, as your MP, I'll work with private investors and a Labour government to bring nuclear energy back to our area.

## 2. Double the Size of the Port of Workington



A bigger, modern port is central to West Cumbria being ready for this new industrial revolution. A Labour government will spend more than £1.8 billion upgrading UK ports. I will campaign to bring some of this investment to the Port of Workington to double the length of the main quay, develop its craning facilities and ensure the landside is ready for industrial investment.

## 3. Bring Steel Back to West Cumbria



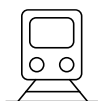
A modern steel industry should come back to West Cumbria, with Workington as the home of the first all-new green steel processing plant in the UK. By 2035, Workington could produce close to 0.8 Mt of processed steel for the energy transition, supporting 320 new jobs for the area. I'll fight to bring back steel, with a Labour government committed to a modern UK steel industry.

## 4. Back Innovative Local Business



Our nuclear expertise can be the launchpad for West Cumbria becoming a self-sufficient economy. This means making changes to public-procurement rules so that Sellafield and the NDA can take long-term bets on local businesses. It means clustering universities with a presence in West Cumbria so that we get more than the sum of the parts. And it means giving business here access to investors with serious cash.

## 5. Upgrade the Cumbrian Coast Rail Line



This would enable a half-hourly service between Carlisle, Workington and Whitehaven and accommodate major new freight demands from the steel plant or other industry, especially given the direct link to the port.

**MY PLAN FOR A NEW FUTURE FOR WEST CUMBRIA COULD DELIVER:**

**£6.2bn   £200mn   1000**

PRIVATE INVESTMENT  
IN WEST CUMBRIA

PUBLIC INVESTMENT  
IN WEST CUMBRIA

NEW INDUSTRIAL JOBS  
FOR WEST CUMBRIA

# 01 Invest in New Nuclear Power

Bringing new nuclear power to our area is critical for lowering bills and unlocking new energy-intensive advanced manufacturing jobs. We once led the world in producing civil nuclear power – we must reclaim our role as a community at the forefront of nuclear power generation.

Despite our natural local strengths in nuclear, we have been limited by successive Tory governments in Westminster to only nuclear decommissioning. Poor planning, delays and indecision in Westminster are putting our area's nuclear leadership and economic future at risk.

The last Labour government gave the go-ahead for new sites in 2009, including the Moorside site at Sellafield.<sup>1</sup> Yet under this Conservative government, those plans dried up in 2018 and there has been no meaningful progress on securing new nuclear for West Cumbria since then.

Bringing back nuclear power to our area is critical for generating the steady flow of clean energy that will unlock new industrial and advanced manufacturing jobs. Alongside an expanded port, a reliable supply of clean nuclear energy will help to put West Cumbria at the heart of the next industrial revolution.



**Nuclear is a core part of our identity and heritage in West Cumbria. It's not only about the jobs and supply chains, it's also about new investment and industry we could attract to the region."**

Paul Foster, Chief Executive, Solway Community Power Company

There is a locally led plan for new nuclear power. The Solway Community Power Company wants to build small modular reactors on part of a site adjacent to Sellafield.

This is a privately backed scheme that has secured the £6 billion of funding needed to deliver the infrastructure and create 600 new jobs.<sup>2</sup> This would deliver 1 Gigawatt (GW) of power – enough to power 750,000 homes. It has widespread support from across the local political spectrum and is backed by strong local consent, but the government is getting in the way and putting this investment at risk.

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<sup>1</sup> The Guardian, "[Timeline: Nuclear Power in the United Kingdom](#)," 27 May 2008

<sup>2</sup> Generation, investment and jobs data provided by Paul Foster, Chief Executive, Solway Community Power Company



I believe in new nuclear. I think it's very important for the country, very important for Cumbria. These would be good, well-paid, secure jobs for decades in relation to new nuclear. In order to make that happen we need to be tough on the decisions that get in the way of building projects to make sure this happens fast and at pace.”

Keir Starmer MP, Leader of the Labour Party

There are three practical steps I will push for as your MP so that we can lead the way in nuclear energy again:

1. **End the government's block on the purchase of land** near Sellafield so that a company like Solway Community Power can build new nuclear here. This land is government owned, and the government block is jeopardising investment in the local economy and in local jobs.
2. **Boost staffing at the Office for Nuclear Regulation** to speed up the approval of new nuclear power station designs. This currently takes about three years so it's a major barrier for building new nuclear. Without improvement, investors will look elsewhere.
3. **Make West Cumbria a priority site for new nuclear power.** This will give confidence to workers, businesses, training providers, the supply chain, public services and local government so that we can be ready to make new nuclear happen in West Cumbria.

#### UNLOCKING THIS NEW NUCLEAR POWER GENERATION WOULD CREATE:

**1GW**

CLEAN DEPENDABLE  
ENERGY BY 2032

**£6bn**

INVESTMENT IN  
WEST CUMBRIA

**600**

NEW JOBS IN  
WEST CUMBRIA



## 02 Double the Size of the Port of Workington

For more than 150 years, railway tracks that circled the world were made in Workington and exported from the Port. Today, we must recapture this ambition and put the Port of Workington at the centre of the industrial future for West Cumbria.

Yet, as a country, the UK lacks the port infrastructure to accommodate the supply chains for off-shore wind. This is one reason the UK has fallen behind other countries in manufacturing wind turbines.

Major port-infrastructure development is needed to support the UK's fixed and floating offshore wind targets and the country's larger net zero ambition.

In the Irish Sea alone, more than 10 GW of offshore wind capacity are set to be developed by 2030, and this is set to increase.

Ports like Workington are perfectly positioned to capitalise on Labour's commitment to quadruple offshore wind generation and double onshore wind generation by 2030.<sup>3</sup>



One of the reasons we're not manufacturing wind turbines here is because our ports are not set up to do that. We're proposing as part of our national wealth fund the biggest investment in our port infrastructure since privatisation, £1.8 billion. That makes it possible for the private investors to come in and manufacture turbines here.”

Ed Miliband MP, Shadow Climate Change & Net Zero Secretary

The Port has the right geography to benefit from these opportunities.<sup>4</sup> It is connected by road and rail to Tees Port on the east coast, while the council-owned land immediately next to the Port is ripe for industrial development.

<sup>3</sup> Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, Port of Workington Expression of Interest

<sup>4</sup> Recommendation based on conversations with the Port of Workington

For the Port of Workington to be a hub for the new industrial revolution, its infrastructure will need to be upgraded.

**As your Member of Parliament, I will fight to:**

- Secure funding to double the length of the quay and develop the Port's crange facilities. Currently, the Port has 150 metres of quayside available for use by the offshore wind industry. It would need a quayside length of 200 to 300 metres to support steel fabrication for onshore and offshore wind, hydrogen and carbon capture, or construction of new nuclear facilities.<sup>5</sup> This could require ~£100 million.
- Ensure the Port and Oldside land are ready for industrial investment. Combined, this is 26 hectares of land that are owned by Cumberland Council. This is expected to cost £5 million.

**Labour policies to deliver port upgrades nationally:**

- **Set up a £1.8 billion port upgrade fund** – as part of the £8 billion National Wealth Fund – to invest alongside the private sector in upgrades to make ports ready to support supply chains for renewable energy infrastructure.

**DOUBLING THE SIZE OF THE PORT OF WORKINGTON WOULD CREATE:**

300m	£105mn	30
TOTAL MAIN QUAY LENGTH	INVESTMENT IN WEST CUMBRIA	NEW JOBS IN WEST CUMBRIA

<sup>5</sup> Strategic Infrastructure and Supply Chain Development, Floating Offshore Wind Centre of Excellence.

<sup>6</sup> Strategic Infrastructure and Supply Chain Development, Floating Offshore Wind Centre of Excellence. Analysis in Tables 16-18 suggest that the cost of developing port Infrastructure to support a steel substructure component fabrication facility would cost £100 million.

<sup>7</sup> These are permanent jobs. More jobs will be created in expanding the Port's capacity.

## 03 Bring Steel Back to West Cumbria

Steelmaking in West Cumbria was an engine room of the first Industrial Revolution. Sir Henry Bessemer's earliest converters – which transformed steelmaking – were based in Cumbria.

Today, steel remains a foundational sector, critical to the UK's national security and ability to transition to cleaner, cheaper energy.<sup>8</sup>

Yet despite the need for a better, greener steel industry in the UK, the Tory government has run down the sector, with steel output 58% lower than in 2010.<sup>9</sup>

Instead of a long-term industrial strategy to support the transition to greener steel, build steel processing capacity in the UK and deliver competitive energy prices, the Tories have delivered only short-term sticking plasters.

This is bad for our economy, bad for communities that rely on steel and bad for Britain.

In contrast, Labour knows our ambitions to deliver cleaner, cheaper energy needs to be built on British steel.

Labour's plans to quadruple offshore wind capacity and double onshore wind capacity represent a potential £100 billion opportunity for steel fabrication in the UK.<sup>10</sup>

West Cumbria can be at the forefront of this next chapter in British steel.



Our commitment to boost generation of offshore wind, solar, nuclear, hydrogen will generate demand for millions of tonnes of UK steel. Labour's investment plan for UK steel will be underpinned by an industrial strategy, which will provide the long-term stability and certainty that business and industry are crying out for."

Jonathan Reynolds MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Business and Trade

### The Local Plan for Steel

With new investments in the Port of Workington and a readily available supply of clean energy from new nuclear, West Cumbria would be an ideal location for private and public investment in new industry. What could this industry be?

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<sup>8</sup> UK Supply Chain Capability Analysis: Summary Report, Offshore Wind Industry Council

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/datasets/ukgdpolowlevelaggregates>

<sup>10</sup> UK Supply Chain Capability Analysis: Summary Report, Offshore Wind Industry Council



The UK has significant gaps in steel processing, and West Cumbria has a proud steelmaking heritage. With 25% of offshore wind due to come from the UK's western coast, some of the supply chain for manufacturing wind turbines needs to be on the west coast of England. This creates the opportunity to bring back steel to our area, with capacity focused on three potential capabilities:

- steel fabrication for onshore and offshore wind;<sup>11</sup>
- pipes for hydrogen and carbon capture and storage; or
- rebar for construction in the nuclear sector.

Global investors, including Temasek from Singapore and Al Gore's Just Climate fund, are looking for opportunities to invest in green steel.<sup>12</sup> A downstream green steel processing mill producing 0.8 Mt would help meet domestic demand and cost £300 million.<sup>13 14</sup>

**As your MP, I will fight to secure this kind of investment.** I will campaign for £75 million in initial funding from a Labour government's Green Steel Fund to unlock the full private investment needed.

Investing in green steel processing capacity in West Cumbria would put the UK in control of the transition to cheaper, cleaner, more secure energy. And West Cumbria would be back in the business of steel.

**Labour policies for the future of green steel nationally include:**

- **Clean power by 2030.** Labour will take up to £1,400 off the annual household bill and £53 billion off energy bills for businesses by delivering a cheaper, zero-carbon electricity system by 2030.
- **Establish GB Energy**, a publicly owned company investing in clean energy technologies alongside the private sector.
- **Set up a £3 billion Green Steel Fund** – as part of the £8 billion National Wealth Fund – to invest in green steel plants alongside the private sector.

**HIGH-TECH STEEL IN WORKINGTON COULD DELIVER:**

**0.8Mt    £300mn    320**

GREEN STEEL  
FABRICATION CAPACITY  
PER YEAR BY 2035

INVESTMENT IN  
WEST CUMBRIA

NEW JOBS IN  
WEST CUMBRIA

<sup>11</sup> The Resilience of Steel: Navigating the crossroads

<sup>12</sup> Al Gore backed Swedish start-up examining overseas moves after funding, Ft.com, September 7 2023.

<sup>13</sup> According to analysis by Energy Transitions Commission and Material Economics for the Mission Possible Partnership's Net - Zero Steel Initiative, a commercial-scale low-CO<sub>2</sub> production plant, with a capacity of 1Mt/year, can cost somewhere between \$600 million and 800 million (£480 million and £640 million). According to Strategic Infrastructure and Supply Chain Development, Floating Offshore Wind Centre of Excellence, a new steel substructure component fabrication facility would cost £150 million to £250 million to build. The cost indicated here is taken as the average of the two estimates for a 0.8 million tonne steel fabrication facility.

<sup>14</sup> The H2 Green Steel plant in Boden is set to create 2,000 jobs to produce 5 million tonnes of green steel per year by 2030. Producing 1 million tonnes in Workington would, based on the H2 green steel example, create 400 direct jobs.

## 04 Back Innovative Local Businesses

One of the founders of Marchon, perhaps West Cumbria's most successful private company, was an entrepreneur at heart. Frank Schon was a refugee who made West Cumbria his home and then built a business that brought great wealth and opportunity to our area.

We need to find and back the next generation of Frank Schons who are committed to investing in the opportunities of our community.

Today, West Cumbria has lower rates of productivity, fewer business startups and scale-ups, lower investment in promising ideas and a declining population.

These are all challenges for people who are trying to build or grow brilliant businesses. The ingredients for supporting innovative business include access to people willing to invest money into great ideas that can be commercialised. It also helps if this process is linked to a strong anchor industry.

Nuclear is our anchor and it should also be our launchpad for new industry and technology. As well as using our skills in nuclear to be at the forefront of new nuclear power generation – producing clean reliable energy to fuel energy-intensive industry – we should use our nuclear expertise as a foundation to diversify, so that we can become a more self-sufficient economy.



We have universities and research institutes that lead the world. We have the workforce and unions with the skills and knowledge to deliver. What's missing is a government with the vision, energy and determination to deliver."

Peter Kyle MP, Shadow Secretary of State, Science, Innovation & Technology

There are great examples of people using our nuclear expertise as a launchpad for new business growth. Business that are part of Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster (BECBC), researchers from the University of Manchester Dalton Nuclear Institute, the early plans for the Industrial Solutions Hub, Eagle Labs in Whitehaven and businesses that are innovating off the back of nuclear skills, such as Createc and Hudson Swan.



But our local entrepreneurs need a bigger launchpad.

This means making changes to public-procurement rules so that Sellafield and the NDA can take long-term bets on local businesses. It means clustering universities in West Cumbria in the same location so that we get more than the sum of the parts. And it means giving business here access to investors with serious cash.

**As your Member of Parliament, I will push the following so that we can grow the next generation of successful businesses:**

- **Creating a “Universities Out West” Civic Agreement**, modelled on the Universities of Nottingham Civic Agreement, so that we can get more research and development funding to build on the region’s capabilities in robotics and AI in extreme environments. This should lead to a dedicated shared university innovation campus in the middle of Whitehaven, as part of a redevelopment of the town.
- **Attracting private investment into our startups.** I will forge a West Cumbrian link with Northern Gritstone, the independent investment company investing £250 million in technology entrepreneurs, academics and inventors in the North of England. Northern Gritstone shows what is possible when groups of northern universities work together to create investment opportunities for themselves rather than asking for more funding from Westminster.
- **Prioritising community investment in public-procurement contracts.** Research commissioned by the union Prospect shows that a stronger commitment and freedom to support local communities in public-procurement contracts can create thousands of good quality jobs in areas that need them the most and can strengthen domestic supply chains.<sup>15</sup> I will push for Sellafield and the NDA to get new operating freedom to back commercially promising local businesses.

**A Labour government will create a new “Growth and Skills Levy”.** This will give employers greater flexibility to deliver the training they need while protecting existing apprenticeships. Alongside this, Labour will give more power to regional leaders to ensure the training provided in their area meets their local needs. Local leaders will work in coordination with a new expert body, Skills England, to make sure that across the UK local businesses have the skills they need to thrive.

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<sup>15</sup> Design, Build, & Maintain - Effective defence procurement. Prospect, 2023.

# 05

## Upgrade the Cumbrian Coast Rail Line

Rail has long been a critical part of West Cumbria's economy. Yet today, our local economy is being held back by unreliable and infrequent transport services.

In our community, both Workington and Whitehaven rank in the bottom 30% of all UK stations for performance, with only 45% of trains running on time and around 10% of all trains being cancelled.<sup>16</sup>

In addition, there is only one freight slot per day on the Cumbrian Coast Rail Line. Industrial investment into the area could see the need for at least four freight slots per day.<sup>17</sup>

Limited freight slots on the line act as a significant constraint on our economic growth. The Tories claim they will invest some of the £36 billion in savings from the chaotic scrapping of HS2. Yet only five of the dozens of rail projects the government announced in its Network North plans are new.<sup>18</sup>

If we could not rely on Tory promises on HS2, how can we rely on their promises to upgrade the Cumbrian Coast Rail Line, which was first announced in 2019 and then again in 2023?



The days of tinkering around the edges of a system that has clearly failed the public are over. The Labour government will bring an end to the farce on our railways."

Lousie Haigh MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Transport

**As your MP, I will fight for government to finally deliver upgrades to the Cumbrian Coast Rail Line** between Barrow, Whitehaven, Workington and Carlisle. These upgrades to infrastructure and signalling will increase the number of freight journeys per day to allow for increased demand from the new steel plant or other industry. In addition, these upgrades will improve both capacity and journey times, delivering reliability to passengers.

**Labour will bring the railways back into public ownership.** In place of a fractured and fragmented rail network, Labour will deliver a unified railway under public ownership, with every decision tested against the interest of the passenger.

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.ontimetains.co.uk/stations/WTH#google\\_vignette](https://www.ontimetains.co.uk/stations/WTH#google_vignette)

<sup>17</sup> Transport for the North, Freight Logistics Enhanced Analysis Report

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.politicshome.com/members/article/message-government-rail-projects-please-tell-us-want-delivered?s=09>





**Double the Size of the  
Port of Workington**



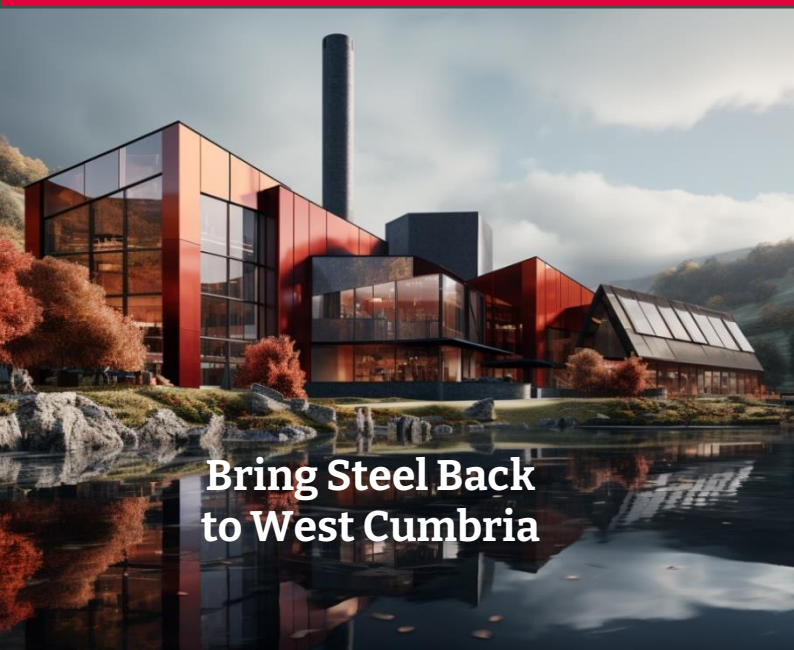
**Invest in  
New Nuclear Power**

“Our National Wealth Fund stands with business, ready to invest in the critical infrastructure we need.

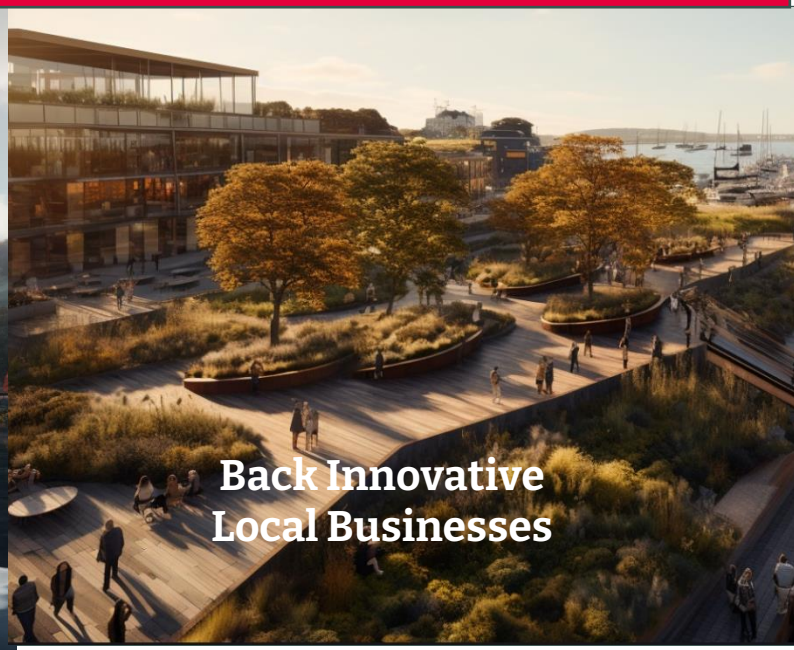
The gigafactories, the clean British steel, the ports that can finally handle large industrial parts.

More growth, more demand, more jobs.”

Keir Starmer MP, Leader of the Labour Party



**Bring Steel Back  
to West Cumbria**



**Back Innovative  
Local Businesses**

# Labour's New Industrial Strategy

Britain stands at the precipice of immense change. That change presents incredible opportunity. And the Labour Party stands ready to seize it.

The choices made by successive Conservative governments have left British families uniquely exposed during the cost-of-living crisis. Their decisions have left our public services and our economy weaker and businesses reluctant to invest.

We also know that economic strength needs partnership. State and market. Business and worker. Bringing together the everyday economy and the technological frontier to transform challenge into opportunities.

A hallmark of this Conservative government has been to act in the heat of the moment and lurch from crisis to crisis. We know business can't operate like that. A Labour government will provide a clear and consistent policy framework that businesses can trust and prosper within.

Labour's clear driving mission for economic growth is fuelled by a suite of future facing, costed, practical policies. These policies will support your ambitions, inspire creativity, devolve money and power to where it's needed, and secure prosperity for every part of the country.

**“We must care about where things are made and who owns them. We need a state that is willing to invest in building the capacity of the industries that will determine the nation's success tomorrow. Labour will invest in homegrown industries in every corner of our country. And together, we will get Britain its future back.”**

Rachel Reeves MP, Shadow Chancellor

## **A National Wealth Fund**

A new strategic body to invest public money to drive forward investments will be targeted at industries where public investment can crowd in further private sector investment to deliver jobs and growth across the country. Initially, Labour will invest in:

- Upgrading our ports so they are renewable-ready, with an investment worth £1.8 billion over the parliament.
- Channelling up to £500m into green hydrogen manufacturing over the parliament
- Transitioning the steel industry, with a £3 billion investment over a decade.
- Decarbonising industrial clusters in every corner of the country, with an additional investment of £1 billion over the parliament.
- Breaking the ground for new gigafactories to ensure the future of our automotive industry, with £2 billion investment over the parliament.



## **The British Jobs Bonus**

Labour will provide £500m a year for each of the first five years of government to provide capital grants to companies in low-carbon industries, including wind and solar energy, hydrogen and carbon capture and storage. The bonus would particularly benefit industrial heartlands and coastal communities, and areas that have past or current coal, oil and gas industries, creating 65,000 new jobs.

## **A New Growth and Skills Levy**

This will give employers greater flexibility to deliver the training they need while protecting existing apprenticeships. Alongside this, Labour will give more power to regional leaders to ensure the training provided in their area meets their local needs. Local leaders will work in coordination with a new expert body, Skills England, to make sure that across the UK local businesses have the skills they need to thrive.

## **A New Planning Regime**

Labour will accelerate the building of critical infrastructure for digital connectivity, laboratories, and energy – to drive growth, create jobs and unlock private sector investment. The reforms would include:

- Speeding up the planning for critically important infrastructure by updating all national policy statements – which set out what types of projects the country needs – within the first six months of a Labour government.
- Fast tracking the planning process for priority growth areas of the economy, such as battery factories, laboratories, and 5G infrastructure.
- Ensuring local communities get something back by providing communities and businesses with a menu of potential incentives, which could include cheaper energy bills.
- Tackling unnecessary, egregious, and time-consuming litigation by setting clearer national guidance for developers on the engagement and consultation expected with local communities.
- Strengthening public sector capacity to expedite planning decisions by raising the stamp duty surcharge on non-UK residents to appoint 300 new planning officers.



# A BRIGHTER FUTURE

**JOSH  
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A brighter future for West Cumbria



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