



Mark Jenkinson MP



Andrew Johnson

Councillor Mark Fryer  
Leader,  
Cumberland Council,  
Cumbria House,  
117 Botchergate,  
Carlisle  
CA1 1RD

4<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Dear Mark,

Yesterday on *Politics North*, in relation to the Woodhouse Colliery project, prominent Labour frontbencher, Alex Cunningham MP, said:

*"It's not going to happen. We'll be in government before they get to that stage, and believe you me – we will not allow that project to go ahead"*

At the last council meeting, you declined the opportunity to put on record your support for the project. Every time you have been asked, you have failed to support or recognise the benefits that this project will bring to West Cumbria through a £160m investment in West Cumbrian jobs and supply chain.

Writing with Ed Miliband in local newspapers in December 2022 you tried scaremongering that the mine *"is the equivalent of putting 2 million cars on the road every year"*, which, like many of your pronouncements, has no basis in fact. You went on to say that bringing hundreds of well-paid jobs to West Cumbria, and thousands more in the local supply chain, was *"a betrayal of current and future generations"*.

It is, in fact, the ideological opposition of you and your party to progress for West Cumbria that is the biggest betrayal. All we have seen is more of the same managed decline and lack of ambition that our constituents have come to expect from the Labour Party when they get anywhere near power at any level. We have seen you standing in the way of Mayoral devolution of powers and funding from Westminster. We have seen opposition to investment into projects like the Woodhouse colliery; the cancellation of regeneration projects like the Maryport swimming pool; and your refusal to date to spend record government funding intended for resurfacing our local roads or supporting local bus services. All while you have presided over failed bin collections; refusing to pay workers in Allerdale the same as those in Copeland and Carlisle; and hiking council tax by some of the highest levels in England - all while awarding yourself pay rises amounting to a 137% increase, and up to 210% for other members of your Executive.

Rather than realising any of the potential savings delivered through local government reform, you have almost bankrupted the new council with a projected £29m overspend.

Here is your opportunity to repair some of the damage you have done, and to show the residents of West Cumbria that you and the Labour Party are on their side. You can put on record your support for the Woodhouse colliery project by responding to his letter.

Yours truly,

Mark Jenkinson MP  
Member of Parliament for Workington

Andrew Johnson  
Conservative Candidate for Whitehaven and Workington