

Sir Keir Starmer MP KCB KC
Leader of the Labour Party
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

4th December 2023

Dear Sir Keir,

Yesterday on *Politics North*, in relation to the Woodhouse Colliery project, one of your frontbenchers, 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.”

Your Shadow Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, Ed Miliband, wrote a joint piece with Cumberland Labour Council Leader Mark Fryer in our local newspapers in December 2022, scaremongering that the mine *“is the equivalent of putting 2 million cars on the road every year”*, a statement that has absolutely no basis in fact. They went on to describe the bringing hundreds of well-paid jobs to West Cumbria, and thousands more in the local supply chain, as a *“a betrayal of current and future generations”*.

The real betrayal comes from your lack of honesty with our constituents - that you would rather import a critical mineral, coking coal, that is necessary for the production of virgin steel by any commercial method, including Electric Arc Furnace.

Here in Cumberland, from the Labour council that you championed after the May 2022 elections, all our constituents have seen is more of the same managed decline. The picture we see whenever Labour is in power at any level is the same: opposition to investment. Locally, we have seen the cancellation of regeneration projects like the Maryport swimming pool and the refusal to date to spend record government funding intended for resurfacing our local roads or supporting our bus services. All the while they presided over huge disruption to our bin services, refusing to pay workers in Allerdale the same as those in Copeland and Carlisle. They also hiked up council tax by some of the highest levels in England, while awarding themselves pay rises amounting to increases up to 210%.

Here is your opportunity repair some of the damage they 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.

I look forward to that happening.

Yours truly,



Mark Jenkinson MP
Member of Parliament for Workington



Andrew Johnson
Conservative Candidate for Whitehaven and Workington