

Leader of the House visits Ferryhill and Shildon

August 25, 2022



Leader of the House of Commons, Mark Spencer, met local residents and commuters who would benefit from the reopening of Ferryhill Railway station for the first time in over 50 years. Spencer was joined by Rail Minister, Wendy Morton MP, at Ferryhill, one of the “Restoring Your Railway” schemes receiving a share of the government’s £500 million to reopen stations closed more than 50 years ago by the controversial Beeching era cuts to investment.

The Leader met local County Councillor and avid Ferryhill Station campaigner Joe Quinn who successfully engaged his community and worked with local MP for Sedgefield Paul Howell in the campaign for the station to be reopened. Mr Spencer praised Joe for his determination in securing funding to develop the proposal for the station’s reopening.

Ferryhill Station, which closed in 1969, would provide vital transport links for communities, open up job opportunities and encourage a shift from road to rail – helping to reduce congestion and environmental impact. As well as linking the community to Teesside, Ferryhill becomes the first step in the proposal for the Leamside Line reopening, which would further connect the community to Newcastle and Sunderland.

The Leader of the House also visited Locomotion, a site which was recently awarded £5.9 million of Levelling Up funding via Durham City Council. This will allow the site to open a brand new building – “New Hall”- which will house up to 50 more vehicles and will make Locomotion home to the largest undercover collection of heritage rail vehicles in the world. By engaging its audiences in new ways through redevelopment, the site expects visitor numbers to increase by 50,000 people each year.

Leader of the House of Commons Mark Spencer said:

“It has been fantastic to see first-hand how government investment is making a real difference in the North East. Both the successful bid by Durham City Council for Levelling Up funding and the tireless lobbying by the Ferryhill community including Councillor Joe Quinn are true examples of democracy in action – where the community asked and the government answered.

Projects like the ones I have visited today show just how diverse the work of MPs and departments really is – from reconnecting communities by reopening railway stations through the Restoring Your Railway Project to investing in our rich culture through the Levelling Up fund.

“I look forward to seeing the projects once they are complete.”

Paul Howell, MP for Sedgefield and supporter of the Ferryhill Station reopening said:

“I am delighted that Leader of the House of Commons, Mark Spencer MP, and the Rail Minister, Wendy Morton MP, have both taken the time to come and see for themselves how important the opening of a passenger service from Ferryhill to Teesside is to these communities.

“The towns and villages in the immediate vicinity of the Ferryhill station have some of the lowest car ownership in the country so introducing transport infrastructure connecting them to job opportunities will be fantastic.

“The impact of this investment is a clear and tangible sign of levelling up opportunities for these communities. The recent announcement by Wendy Morton that this had proceeded to a detailed evaluation by Network Rail was very welcome and I hope these visits can encourage pace into the decisions and we can see spades in the ground as soon as possible.”

Dr Sarah Price, Head of Locomotion said:

“I am excited to welcome Mark Spencer MP to Locomotion today to visit the museum during our busy summer period and to see plans for our newest collection building which will open next year.

The building is part of a wider programme of regeneration which will help us celebrate Shildon’s unique role in the development of the railways, displaying up to 50 additional vehicles from the national collection and creating a lasting legacy for the area.”