

Engineering the Future: a Public Private Partnership

Chi Onwurah is the Labour Candidate for Newcastle Central. She is a chartered engineer.

It is a long time since engineering has been as talked about as it is now. When I graduated from Imperial in 1987, after eight years of Tory government, there was little left of the great Northern tradition of engineering which inspired me. The Tories told us that our future depended on the financial services. The UK should not make anything anymore. They were wrong. We know that now. If we are to pay our way in the world, and play our part in combating climate change, we need a green industrial revolution. All the parties agree on that. What they don't agree on is how to make that happen.



Labour believes that it requires a partnership between the private and public sectors. We need good schools, which inspire kids to go into STEM. We need the right infrastructure, from roads to superfast broadband. And we need targeted support for innovation and emerging industries, the kind of support that helped to bring the Nissan electric car plant to Sunderland recently. I particularly welcome the Chancellor's Patent Box, whereby a corporation tax rate is halved for income received from new patents. The private sector then needs to bring the innovation, the risk-taking – and the investment.

Newcastle University is a world leader in fuel cell research and the best in the country. Engineering, health and the environment have always been strengths of Newcastle University. But to be at the forefront of battery technology, that is fantastic. The green revolution on which all our futures depend, will be driven, sometimes literally, by fuel cells. That kind of research pre-eminence is priceless. The right co-operation between business, Government and academia can turn that research into jobs.

If I am elected as MP for Newcastle Central I will work with the University, local businesses, One North East (our Regional Development agency, assuming the Tories don't abolish it) to attract investment to the region and build a sustainable manufacturing jobs base – which can reduce that disparity in employment rates across the constituency.

This article is an extract of a blog taken from <http://blog.sciencecampaign.org.uk/>

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