

Last week I had the pleasure of visiting the sites of two major projects underway right here in our borough.

On the former UGB site next to Saints, work is underway on the construction of Glass Futures, the world-first, internationally significant research and development facility. It's almost 200 years since the Pilkington brothers began making glass here in St Helens, and for our town to still be leading the way almost two centuries later is remarkable.

When complete, Glass Futures will help the industry focus on decarbonising glass production. It was a project at the forefront of COP26 and it will not just put St Helens at the forefront of glass innovation but help us play a significant role in the Green Industrial Revolution, leading the way for other industries to cut their carbon emissions. The council is one of the key backers of the project and I was honoured to speak at the reception held at Saints to mark the start of construction.

The fact that work is underway only a few years since the scheme was conceived is testament to some exceptional partnership working, and when you consider much of that work has taken place through a global pandemic, it's nothing less than exceptional.

And it's a similar story with Parkside and the new Link Road we're delivering to not just regenerate the former colliery site but to provide easy access directly to the motorway network for vehicles away from the A49 and residential areas.

The Parkside development will be one of the most important strategic investment sites in the north west and it's a key component of the Liverpool City Region Freeport.

Glass Futures and Parkside are both significant, and towns and cities across the country – and in the case of Glass Futures, the whole world – would love to have them. We should be very proud that they're both here in St Helens borough, and that they're just two of several huge projects currently at various stages of development.

Finally this week, I want to wish the best of luck to everyone at Saints on the coming season. I'll be there for the game against Catalans with my family and we can't wait – let's hope it's another successful season for the club on and off the pitch. Come on you Saints!

Best wishes to all Star readers.