

# Warringtonfire celebrates successful grand opening for Birchwood Park Laboratory

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With over 150 guests in attendance, [Warringtonfire](#), part of Element Materials Technology (“Element”), a global leader in testing, inspection and certification (TIC) services, hosted the grand opening of its new state-of-the-art fire resistance testing facility at Birchwood Park, Warrington.

To mark the occasion, customers, academics, trade bodies, media and local dignitaries were given a tour of the new facility as well as the opportunity to hear from some of the leading minds in the construction industry on a range of critical safety topics. Speakers included Element’s CEO, Jo Wetz, technical experts in fire resistance from the company, as well as keynote speaker, Paul Morrell OBE, who previously served as Chief Construction Adviser to the UK government.

Peter Barker, Technical Policy Manager for Warringtonfire, and Paul Morrell both called for a cultural shift within the industry towards better collaboration, a better understanding of what due diligence means, and putting safety at the heart of all key construction decisions.

The day also included an official ribbon-cutting ceremony with Mr Deputy Mayor of Warrington, Councillor Mo Hussain, in attendance to do the honours.

Jason Dodds, VP, Built Environment, Element Materials Technology, said: “The launch of this state-of-the-art fire resistance laboratory is a significant investment for our company and a major step forward for the industry as a whole.

“With growth in the construction industry forecasted over the next two years by the Construction Products Association, coupled with an increasingly complex regulatory landscape, this new facility helps us meet the needs of our customers.”

The new \$30 million (£24 million) fire resistance testing laboratory, spanning 101,000 sqft, is one of the largest in Europe and began operating on January 2, 2025. Further investment is planned for the laboratory, and it will eventually house seven industry-leading fire resistance testing furnaces, with five already in operation.

It was also built with sustainability and environmental factors front of mind, with extensive measures in place to maintain air quality, reduce energy use and minimise impacts. These measures include advanced abatement systems for efficient smoke cleaning, a gas infrastructure set up to accept green gas and hydrogen mixes once available in the area, cutting-edge power supply units, and low-energy lighting and heating.

Jason concluded: “We’d like to thank all our guests for supporting the grand opening. This includes our loyal customers, the media, our principal contractors – Tilbury Douglas – for bringing our vision for this laboratory to life, and all our hardworking colleagues for the great work that they do every day. It is through their dedication to fire safety that we are staying true to our ultimate goal of ‘Making Tomorrow Safer Than Today’.”

For more information about Warringtonfire’s new laboratory, please visit its website [here](#).