

RISHI SUNAK

The New Prime Minister

Briefing note and analysis
October 2022



RISHI SUNAK IS THE NEW PRIME MINISTER

Having finished behind Liz Truss in the member vote in the last Conservative Party leadership election, Rishi Sunak was elected unopposed as the new Leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister on 24th October.

Named as leader on Diwali, Sunak will be the UK's first Hindu, and British-Asian Prime Minister.

Elevated to Chancellor of the Exchequer just weeks before the Covid-19 pandemic, Rishi Sunak is probably best known for the 'Eat Out to Help Out' and furlough schemes, as well as his resignation from the Cabinet – which lit the fuse for the downfall of Boris Johnson.

Like the previous leadership election, Sunak was the leader in the MP ballot throughout the campaign. He will therefore expect to lead a much more united parliamentary party. However, his popularity among party members is not as strong – not least because of his taxation priorities, Fixed Penalty Notice during 'Partygate', and his family's tax status.

As Chancellor, he gained a high-tax, high-spend reputation, and we expect him to have a very different economic policy agenda than his predecessor hoped to have. Speaking shortly after his election, he noted that the UK faces "*profound economic challenges*" and tackling them will be his focus in the short-term.

This briefing sets out the main policy positions given by Rishi Sunak during the previous leadership election campaign and will be updated as he appoints his new ministerial team.

TOP BACKERS:

- Jeremy Hunt
- Suella Braverman
- Kemi Badenoch
- Dominic Raab



KEY POLICY CHECKLIST

Focus on tackling inflation and ensuring financial stability

Opposes a second Scottish referendum

Maintain Net Zero by 2050 target

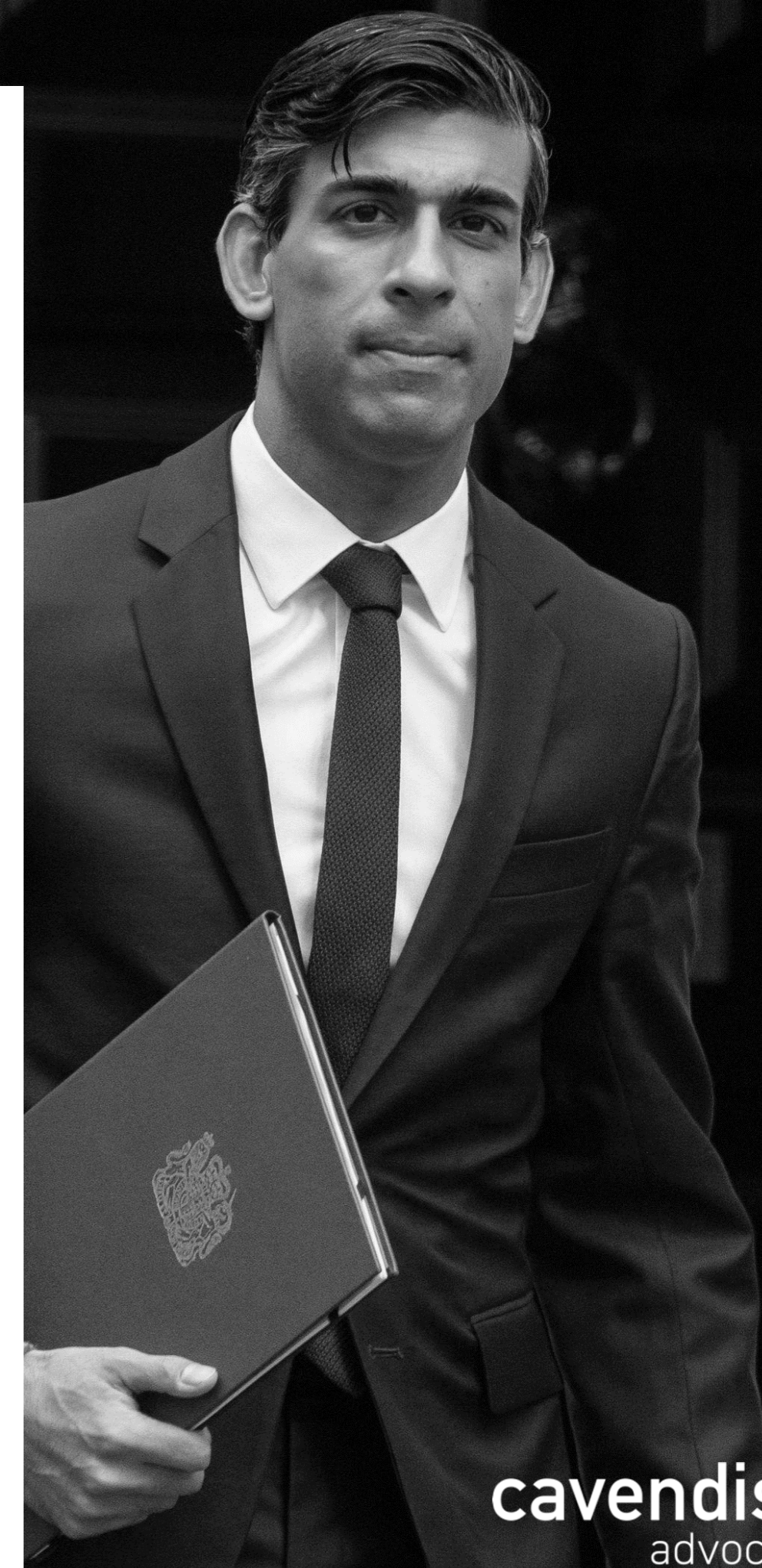
Non-committal on increasing defence spending

Had promised to increase Corporation Tax to 25%

Previously pro-National Insurance increase and 19p tax rate

Had promised to uphold Rwanda deportation policy

Wants a crackdown on the unions and minimum service levels



ON THE ISSUES: POLICY GRID

Given the short timescale of this leadership election, we have heard very little on policy from the new Prime Minister. However, the previous leadership election saw a number of key announcements that give an idea of his policy priorities.

These policy platforms are likely to be affected by the changed economic climate since the previous election, but give a good indication of the direction of travel.

Housing



- Opposes 'arbitrary' housing targets.
- Will promote **urban densification** and prioritise brownfield land.
- Has committed to **improving the energy efficiency** of existing housing.
- Will seek to **address 'land banking'** by big developers.

Environment



- Will **maintain the 2050 Net Zero commitment**.
- Will launch an '**energy sovereignty**' strategy, moving towards energy self-sufficiency by 2045.
- Will re-establish a separate Department of Energy and create a new Energy Security Committee tasked with reforming the market.
- Will keep the ban on building new onshore windfarms, but start a 'massive expansion' in offshore wind.

Levelling up



- **Signed the Northern Research Group's (NRG) Pledge** for the North - including delivering the **Northern Powerhouse Rail**, creating a **Minister for the North** and two new vocational institutions in the North, reviewing the Levelling Up Formula.

Cost of Living Crisis



- Has said he will seek to reduce reliance on French ports to tackle supply-side issues that lead to increased prices, looking towards Dutch and Danish ports.
- Was in favour of direct payments to households and scrapping VAT on household energy bills.

Immigration



- Has said he will keep the Rwanda policy.
- Will aim to double the number of overseas offenders deported each year by making more severe penalties for offending.
- Will try to tighten up the immigration system, setting a cap on the intake of refugees and speeding up the asylum processing speed to a rate of 80% of claims resolved within 6 months.

Crime



- Will initiate a tougher approach on crime. This includes expanding police powers against anti-social behaviour, extending sentences for criminals who don't attend court, and giving the Justice Secretary power to veto parole board decisions.
- Will focus on crime against women and girls, creating a new criminal offence of belonging to or facilitating grooming gangs and protect funding for police forces' child sexual exploitation teams. Will also create a new offence for taking pictures down women's tops.

Brexit



- Campaigned to Leave but has not gained the support of many prominent Brexiteers.
- Has **committed to reforming all retained EU law** and bureaucracy by the next General Election.

Economy



- Expected to approach the economy in a similar manner to his approach as Chancellor.
- Has **warned against cutting taxes** until inflation is under control.
- Proposed to **keep the National Insurance increase** and Corporation Tax rise.
- Argues that there is 'no such thing as Covid-debt' and that **reducing the Government's debt burden** is a key priority.

Welfare & Pensions



- Will seek to bring down costs by expanding the labour force and doubling the number of hours someone on welfare has to work a week to avoid looking for a full-time job.

Devolution



- Committed to Northern Research Group Pledge card - including **right to devolution** for all areas of UK.
- Will consider reforming the UK Government's Union unit to ensure 'every single' Government department operates UK-wide, despite key policy areas having been devolved.

Agriculture



- Will set new targets for domestically produced food and regulations to prevent good quality farmland being used for other purposes to protect Britain's agricultural land.
- Will start a '**Buy Local**' campaign and support famers in future UK trade deals.

Public Health



- Will **bring forward the National Insurance increase** to fund reforms to adult social care.
- Will set up a 'Backlog Taskforce' with independent leadership to drive NHS reform.
- Will increase the number of community diagnostic hubs, specialist surgical hubs and hospital beds in areas of need.
- Has said that he will introduce a £10 fine for those who miss two appointments in a row.

Education



- Will aim to phase out university degrees that do not have good outcomes for students and create a Russell Group of 'world class' technical colleges.
- Has discussed the introduction of a new 'British Baccalaureate' which would see pupils study English and Maths until age 18.
- Will expedite the Higher Education (freedom of speech) Bill.

Foreign Affairs



- Has said that he will designate Iran's Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist organisation after the stabbing of Salmon Rushdie.
- Will be tougher on China, banning all 30 of China's Confucius Institutes in the UK and prioritising protection of British assets against Chinese cyber-threats.

Defence



- Has committed to maintaining defence spending levels, but has not committed to an increase.

KEY DATES FOR THE NEW PM

MONDAY 24 OCTOBER 2022

LEADERSHIP ELECTION RESULT
ANNOUNCED

TUESDAY 25 OCTOBER 2022

LIZ TRUSS STEPS DOWN AS PM AND
RISHI SUNAK APPOINTED

REST OF THE WEEK

RESHUFFLE TAKES PLACE

WEDNESDAY 26 OCTOBER 2022

RISHI SUNAK'S FIRST PMQs

**MONDAY 31 OCTOBER
2022**

MEDIUM-TERM FISCAL
PLAN PRESENTED

For more information on how
Cavendish Advocacy can help you
engage with the new Prime Minister
and Government, get in touch:

gareth.morgan@cavendishadvocacy.com



cavendish
advocacy