

The Government has delivered its first significant reshuffle since the December 2019 election. Despite briefings beforehand that it would be scaled back, on the day it has been seismic.

Boris Johnson's No10 operation is reportedly exerting entirely new levels of control over the Treasury, and the forthcoming Budget will outline the Prime Minister's blueprint for post-Brexit Britain. Rishi Sunak, the new Chancellor, stood in for the PM during televised election debates. As auditions go, it was clearly a success.

Energy and the environment are priorities for the Government and the PM has completely overhauled the teams behind them. In addition to Alok Sharma replacing Andrea Leadsom as Business Secretary and gaining responsibility for the difficult COP26 brief, Theresa Villiers, the Environment Secretary, also leaves the Government. George Eustice will step into her shoes at Defra and will have his work cut out for him during the UK's trade negotiations with non-EU countries and on the Government's anti-waste / anti-pollution agenda.

The appointment of Sharma and Eustice point to the Government's ambitions to level up Britain's regions and enhance the country's environmental standards, as both are viewed as competent and issue driven individuals.

Chris Skidmore, the departing Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation at BEIS, was well liked in the sectors he worked with. With a huge uplift to research and innovation funding expected, in part to help drive net zero innovation and the levelling up agenda, his successor will step into the role at a huge moment.

Oliver Dowden moves out from the heart of Government in the Cabinet Office to become the DCMS Secretary. As a passionate advocate for the technology sector, Dowden's appointment reflects the importance that senior advisers like Dominic Cummings have placed on tech and innovation in running a modern government.

While new appointments may need to learn their briefs, in the key areas we've been watching, authentic and delivery focused individuals have been put into position to lead on the areas they know.

HM Treasury

Chancellor of the Exchequer:
Rishi Sunak MP



A banker by trade, Sunak was elected to Richmond (Yorks) in 2015, winning a healthy 27,210 majority in December 2019. He has risen rapidly, starting 2019 a Junior Minister at MHCLG and before his previous appointment as Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

In Sunak's own words, he is an advocate of "delivery, outcomes-focussed approaches" in Cabinet and will bring renewed verve to the Treasury, reportedly now closely controlled by No.10. He is considered a continuity candidate for this position. However, at the time of printing the Government was unable to confirm whether the forthcoming Budget, set for the 11th of March, will go ahead as planned.

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) & COP26 Minister

Secretary of State for BEIS:
Rt Hon. Alok Sharma MP



Sharma held his Reading West seat in the 2019 General Election with a slightly increased majority of 4,117 and has represented it since 2010. With a background in accountancy, he has served as minister in the FCO, MHCLG and, most recently, was the Secretary for International Development.

Sharma is considered a safe pair of hands and his elevation to Business Secretary and the Minister for COP26 demonstrates the Government's appreciation of the challenges faced by net zero and its policy to level up the regions. His interest in growth, infrastructure and energy policy will serve him well in this post.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)

Secretary of State for DCMS:
Oliver Dowden CBE MP



Dowden developed his political acumen as the former PM David Cameron's Deputy Chief of Staff, before his election to the Hertsmere seat in 2015. Holding strong majorities in the last two elections, he has played a key role in the running of Government as the Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office.

Like previous DCMS incumbent Matt Hancock, Dowden firmly believes that technology and innovation can transform the UK's public services for the better. His appointment echoes the Government's strong interest in this sector, and he is poised to put Digital back at the heart of DCMS.

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)

Secretary of State for Defra:
George Eustice MP



Eustice has held the rural constituency of Camborne and Redruth since 2010 and comes from a long line of farmers. His interest in agriculture has led him to serve on the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee and in his former position as Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

In the past, he has taken a strong stance in favour of tough food standards and will work to shore up the Government's approach on this subject in its trade negotiations, post-Brexit. Eustice will likely continue Defra's drive towards a UK circular economy, a key component of the Government's 2019 General Election manifesto.