



## BACK TO THE FUTURE WITH RISHI SUNAK

Prime Minister's first reshuffle sees old Departments returned to the Government fold, Greg Hands appointed Party Chair

*Briefing by PoliMonitor*

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## The Prime Minister's first reshuffle

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### Summary

A hundred and five days into his Premiership Rishi Sunak is keen to show he's a man of action, has a vision and, importantly, a plan to address the numerous crises facing the country. While veteran commentators might cynically portray today's reshuffle as the tried and tested slicing and dicing of Whitehall which makes big headlines but delivers little more than a big rebranding bill, or a reshuffle forced upon the PM by the latest Government scandal engulfing his Party Chairman and Cabinet member, it could be more. Much more. It could lay the foundation stones for what *Sunakism* will be in the months and years ahead. Energy linked directly to security compared to a previously laissez faire, short term approach, business as usual perhaps, but with a new focus on equality, and technology and innovation put front of stage rather than sidelined in a clumsy ensemble with culture, media and sport.

PoliMonitor has the latest in what seems to be a monthly ritual in British politics: another Cabinet reshuffle.

# Cabinet Reshuffle: trusted hands take on new roles

**Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**



**Grant Shapps**

**Digital, Culture, Media and Sport**



**Michelle Donelan**

**International Trade**



**Kemi Badenoch**

**Conservative Party Chair**



**Vacant**

BEFORE

AFTER

**Energy Security and Climate Change**



**Grant Shapps**

**Science, Innovation and Technology**



**Michelle Donelan**

**Business and Trade**



**Kemi Badenoch**

**Culture, Media and Sport**



**Lucy Frazer**

**Conservative Party Chair**



**Greg Hands**

## Musical chairs - the 4 'new' Government Departments

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, as well as the Department for International Trade and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, have been pulled apart and re-arranged into four distinct Government Departments. All 3 Secretaries of State have retained their places in Cabinet, albeit with new portfolios, with Kemi Badenoch and Grant Shapps assuming leadership of their former Departments' spiritual successors. Michelle Donelan makes the move to the newly formed Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, leaving Lucy Frazer to make the step up to lead the slimmed-down Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

### Department for Energy Security and Net Zero - Grant Shapps

The least surprising of the new Departments created today, this Department fulfills a campaign pledge made by the Prime Minister during his unsuccessful campaign to succeed Boris Johnson last summer. Grant Shapps makes the lateral move over from BEIS.



Labour's Ed Miliband, who served as Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change in the Department of Energy & Climate Change during the Premiership of Gordon Brown, called for the creation of this Department in the fallout of the ongoing energy crisis exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, which revealed the relative weakness of the UK's energy security when faced with unavoidable global pressures. Additionally, the Conservative Government's commitment to Net Zero is now codified, finally, within the name of a Department for the first time. Shapps will be joined by former BEIS colleagues **Andrew Bowie** (PuSS) and **Graham Stuart** (MoS).



### Department for Business and Trade - Kemi Badenoch

Kemi Badenoch, who sprung to national prominence after her campaign to be leader of the Conservative Party last year, makes the lateral move to the newly-minted Department for Business and Trade, spun out of the now defunct Department for International Trade that until this morning she served in as its Secretary of State. The Women and Equalities brief is also retained by Badenoch.

The new Secretary of State for Business and Trade will be joined by **Nus Ghani** as Minister of State, former DfIT colleagues **Maria Caulfield** (PuSS) and **Nigel Huddleston** (MoS), as well as former BEIS Ministers **Kevin Hollinrake** (PuSS) and **Stuart Andrew** (PuSS).

## Department for Science, Innovation and Technology - Michelle Donelan



**Michelle Donelan**, who woke up today as the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, finds herself heading up the newly created Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, leaving behind the 'CMS' to be taken up by newly appointed Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport **Lucy Frazer** (more on that below).

This new Department addresses some inconsistencies that have existed across recent Government administrations struggling to find a natural home for the 'Digital' in DCMS and the tech and innovation portfolio held by BEIS. The answer, it seems, is to make a home for it to stand alone as a distinct Government Department looking to drive the Government's digital strategy. It is likely that SIT will often work across Government Departments as the machinery of Government looks to further innovate in areas such as health and education. SIT will also likely spearhead what is reportedly Rishi Sunak's ambition to turn the UK into the next Silicon Valley, encouraging investment into UK startups and driving innovation.

The long serving Minister of State for Science, Research and Innovation, **George Freeman**, as well as Parliamentary under-Secretary **Paul Scully** will make the move from BEIS and DCMS respectively to join Donelan at SIT.



## Department for Culture, Media and Sport - Lucy Frazer

Signs emblazoned with 'Department for Culture, Media and Sport' can be dusted off today, as the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport returns to its old moniker. The 'Digital' always sat heavy on DCMS, at times feeling like a marriage of convenience rather than one that made much sense. In 2017 it was announced that it would take on the 'Digital' name to reflect its increased involvement in Digital Affairs, but with the ever-increasing impact of digital and tech in society and across all Government departments in some way, shape or form, it appears that critical mass has been reached where it can no longer remain grouped with the relatively lighter issues of Culture, Media and Sport.

Long considered a more lower-tier Department of Government, DCMS has in recent years taken on a more important role as it has sought to address the impact of social media and address the hold that tech giants have over our ability to communicate and share information. It has also led on projects around telecommunications and gigabit roll out, an impressive portfolio for a Department that boasts one of the lowest employee headcounts across Government. The



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flagship Online Harms Bill remains with the Department, freeing up space for the new home of Digital, SIT, to focus on issues related to the digital economy as a driver for growth. Stepping up to the plate is **Lucy Frazer**, who makes her Cabinet debut as Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. An experienced Minister who has worked across four Departments for four Prime Ministers since joining the Government benches 5 years ago in 2018, including a stint alongside Rishi Sunak at the Treasury whilst he was Chancellor, Frazer is one of the great survivors of the tumult of recent years, serving continuously in Government despite mass resignations of colleagues around her and holding steadfast in her loyalty to all incumbent Prime Ministers that she has served. She has held the roles of Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice, Solicitor General for England and Wales, Minister of State for Prisons and Probation, Minister of State for Transport and until her promotion this morning was serving as Minister of State for Housing and Planning in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Joining her in moving to the new-look DCMS is **Stuart Andrew** (PuSS) (joint with BaT).

## Chairman of the Conservative Party - Greg Hands



In Greg Hands the Prime Minister has found a steady pair of hands, a well-seasoned campaigner who is sharp and effective in front of the cameras and on morning media rounds. This is Greg Hand's second Cabinet level position, having attended Cabinet whilst serving as Chief Secretary to the Treasury from 2015 until 2016 during the premiership of David Cameron. Though in a somewhat unenviable role as what is effectively a human meat shield to the Prime Minister, and onto whom blame will fall if the Conservative Party suffers heavy defeats at this year's local elections, it is likely that - if he survives what will be a tough local election campaign - Hands will lead on developing his Party's General Election strategy for the next General Election, expected to be held in 2024.

Like Frazer, Hands has maintained his position as a Minister in the Conservative Party throughout numerous changes in leadership, formerly holding the role of Minister for Trade Policy in the previously existing Department for International Trade. Hands had also previously held the role of Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change from September 2021 to September 2022. The new Conservative party chairman shared his excitement on being appointed on Twitter, outlining his journey in the Conservative party since he joined in 1986. "I joined the Party in 1986 - a ward chairman in 1992, a councillor in 1998, a Group Leader in 1999, an MP in 2005, a Minister in 2011 - an honour to chair it in 2023!"

He is joined by straight-speaking arch Brexiteer **Lee Anderson**, who takes on the role of Deputy Chairman.

Please contact the PoliMonitor team at [info@polimonitor.com](mailto:info@polimonitor.com) for more information

