

Rishi wants business to step up – business wants him to do the same

Here is [Rishi Sunak last night talking to the CBI](#): “Change doesn’t happen behind a desk in Whitehall. Not even the [chancellor](#)’s desk. It comes from all of you.”

He wants the “wealth creators, the entrepreneurs” to step up and make the world a better place.

Let’s leave aside how many [CBI](#) members are genuine wealth creators – most of them are just administrators, same as the Chancellor – how do they feel about this?

Well, here is CBI director general Tony Danker talking just a few days ago. Immediate support for the poor to cope with the cost-of-living crisis is “a moral imperative” and it is “unacceptable” that people are having to choose between heating and eating, he said.

He wants [tax](#) cuts to stimulate investment, but since there are zero circumstances in which the CBI doesn’t want a tax cut, we can skip past that one.

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The point is that the best known business lobby group, using language that could come from Citizens Advice or even Oxfam, is saying that business isn't the solution to the present situation.

The [Conservative Party](#) wants to take a step back from controlling the economy and let its sponsors get on with it. And the sponsors are instead begging for ongoing intervention.

On one level it just shows how serious the present situation is and how bad it could get. On another, it feels like a shift in mindset.

When it comes to really big issues – a pandemic, say – the solution can only come from big government, even big business says so.

Philosophically, intellectually, this is a real problem for people like Rishi Sunak. Everything about his whole upbringing leaves him hard wired to think that individuals are best left alone to sort out their own lives. Cliches to do with bootstraps and rising tides lifting all boats are itching to escape from his mouth.

When can he get back to his small government, tax cutting agenda? Maybe never.