

The Prime Minister's speech to conference

The Prime Minister this week has a great opportunity and a great platform to set out his vision of the future and tell us how Conservatives can make things better and help people improve their lives.

Today I ask what should Rishi Sunak tell the nation this week, from such a good platform?

After 5 years of a Coalition government and 8 years of a Conservative one he must not trash the past and can be proud of some achievements. The transformation of school standards, the freedom from the large EU budget contributions and escaping from the running up of big new EU debts, the global reach of an independent UK strengthening our ties with Australia, New Zealand and the Trans Pacific Partnership are all to be welcomed. Nor must he spend much time on the past, but show he as a new Prime Minister is looking forward to the huge opportunities ahead for the UK now Brexit and the covid lockdowns are behind us.

He needs to reassure us that the high levels of taxation are temporary, brought on by covid and the Ukraine war. He should point the way to a slimmer, fitter and better public sector after several years of poor productivity and service interruptions from lockdowns and strikes. We need empowered users of public services, and well rewarded public servants with the machine power and data to be more productive. People want access to doctors and hospital appointments to be easier and quicker, for their children to have a choice of good schools, for our public transport to be on time and affordable and for our roads to have fewer potholes.

He began the fight back over the last two weeks. Government should not be telling us which cars and heating systems to buy and then stopping us buying ones they do not like. It should not be keeping our oil and gas in the ground and importing it from abroad. They should not be raising taxes on drivers, savers and small businesses.

Tomorrow will offer some ideas on what he can now deliver.