

Funding the Future

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It was interesting to hear Louise Nicholls of Marks & Spencer talking about sustainable business [in Ely Cathedral last night](#).

The discussion focused on the environment, the clear need for reform and the nature of inequality and how it threatens M & S's goals. But there was an issue that she did not discuss despite many mentions of business and its role in society. That issue was tax.

The reality is that you cannot be green, sustainable or community focussed unless your money is on the table. Community programmes are all well and good (and I am not for a moment saying they should stop) but it's tax that drives real change in society.

Plastic was discussed, for example. It was said that this is an issue beyond anyone by themselves to change. I agree. But the demand for change is not from business. It is from communities, activists and responsible media who are leading politics and business in the right direction. And it is only government acting on the determination of these people that will change the regulation that will really change plastic use and that requires more government activity, which in time may require more tax to be paid (even allowing for MMT).

Business can be responsible. But if it wants to talk responsibility it has to talk tax. I look forward to the day when I hear it doing so.