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Weekly Monitoring – Friday 12 December



EIA Update

This week EIA Director, Rachel Parker, was delighted to give evidence to the Culture, Media, and Sport Select Committee inquiry into Major Events, alongside Faye Dyer, Chief Executive at The ACC Liverpool and Robert Wright, Chief Executive at the Business of Events.

The EIA is also delighted to be organising a meeting with Nigel Huddleston, Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and who the EIA previously engaged with under the last Government.





Political Update

As Parliament starts to prepare for winter recess the Government is continuing to come under fire following the Budget. Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, rejected claims he is a “caretaker PM”, highlighting achievements on cost of living and energy bills while accusing Kemi Badenoch of focusing on saving her job. Badenoch countered that Labour MPs are distracted by leadership manoeuvres, as the Speaker warned MPs against turning proceedings into a Christmas panto.

Following Donald Trumps, criticism of London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, the Prime Minister said he was “wrong”, praising Khan’s record on clean air, housing and school meals. The prime minister faced calls to tell Trump not to interfere in UK politics after the US president branded Khan “disgusting” and a “disaster” in a renewed attack.

Reform UK has overtaken Labour to become Britain’s largest political party by membership, after Labour lost 100,000 members since the general election.

Parliament will rise for recess on 18th December and return on 5th January 2026.

News

[Highland Council Urged to Wait on Tourist Tax Plans](#)

Highland Council has paused plans for a 5% visitor levy on overnight accommodation after the Scottish government proposed giving councils greater flexibility over charges. The levy, estimated to raise £10m annually, faced strong opposition from accommodation providers and local business groups concerned about its impact on tourism. Councillors agreed to await details of new powers, which could allow flat rates or varied charges. Industry bodies welcomed the delay, while housing campaigners criticised the decision.

[UK- Turkey Trade Negotiations](#)

The UK and Turkey have concluded the third round of negotiations on an enhanced Free Trade Agreement in Ankara, aiming to strengthen economic ties worth £28 billion annually. Talks progressed on financial services, professional services, goods market access, customs, and regulatory standards, alongside measures on labour, environment, and anti-corruption. The agreement seeks to unlock opportunities for UK exporters while maintaining high domestic standards. A fourth round of negotiations is scheduled for early 2026.

Live Music Industry Urges PM to Review Business Rates Over Venue Survival Fears

Seventeen live music industry organisations have urged the Prime Minister to review recent Business Rates changes, warning of severe consequences for venues nationwide. The open letter, signed by groups including LIVE, highlighted tax hikes of up to £1.85 million for arenas, risking closures, job losses, and higher ticket prices. Industry leaders call for immediate 40% relief and fundamental valuation reform to prevent damage to the UK's cultural and creative sector.

UK Sport Board Members

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has extended the second terms of Sally Bolton OBE, Annie Panter and Martyn Worsley on the UK Sport Board until July 2026. Bolton, Chief Executive of the All England Lawn Tennis Club, Panter, an Olympic medallist and sports marketing leader, and Worsley, a senior HR executive with extensive sporting involvement, will continue contributing expertise to UK Sport's governance.

Trade Remedies Authority

The Government has issued its first strategic steer to the Trade Remedies Authority, aiming to make the UK's trade defence system simpler, faster, and more responsive. Reforms include streamlined investigations, enhanced support for producers and SMEs, and a new import monitoring tool to identify risks. Greater powers will allow higher duties and quicker action under WTO rules, aligning the UK with international peers.

UKEvents Announce their Latest Figures for the UK Events Industry

The UK events industry is now valued at £68.7 billion. The report goes on to say that despite challenges such as rising costs and visa issues, the sector is embracing hybrid formats, sustainability and inclusivity, with annual growth forecast at 3-5% through 2027.

Commons Tie on EU Customs Union Talks

Thirteen Labour MPs backed a Liberal Democrat bill calling for negotiations on a bespoke customs union with the EU, despite Labour's manifesto ruling out re-joining. The vote ended in a rare Commons tie, with Deputy Speaker Caroline Nokes casting the deciding vote to allow further debate. Although the bill progresses, it is unlikely to become law without government support. Most Labour MPs abstained, while Conservatives and Reform UK opposed the measure.

Parliament

House of Commons

Written Question on Business Rates

Louie French, Conservative MP for Old Bexley and Sidcup asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer:

"How much revenue was generated in 2023/2024 from business rates on hereditaments that are being used for the provision of (a) sport, leisure and facilities to visiting members

of the public and (b) casinos, gambling clubs and bingo halls; and how much the same venues are forecast to pay in 2025/26 and 2026/27."

Dan Tomlinson, Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury responded:

"The Government does not hold data on the amount of business rates revenue raised by different types of hereditaments."

Debate on Seasonal Work

During a debate on Seasonal Workers, Dame Caroline Dinenage, Conservative MP, and Chair of the Culture, Media, Sport Committee, emphasised the critical role of hospitality, leisure, and major events in creating flexible employment opportunities for young people, following the committee session on Major Events. She warned that rising business rates and energy costs threaten these sectors, which depend on adaptable staffing for large-scale occasions such as the London Marathon. Highlighting a 31% increase in youth unemployment in Gosport, she argued that government policies risk closing off vital entry routes into work.

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