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Weekly Monitoring
Friday 2nd May



EIA Update

This week the EIA prepared for our upcoming meeting with Jack Rankin MP, who is an Officer for the Events All Party Parliamentary Group. This builds on our recent work in meeting with Committee Members for the Culture Media Sport Committee.

We have also been engaging with the APPG for Events and are attending the Parliamentary dinner being held next week which will offer an opportunity to engage with a range of MPs further.

We continue to observe the Culture, Media and Sport Committee's State of Play inquiries in preparation for the announced session on business events following our request.

Political Update

The focus of UK politics has been firmly national this week with the Government coming under scrutiny at the Local Elections.

On Thursday, 1st May, people across England went to the polls to vote in this year's local council elections. These elections were the first set of simultaneous, country-wide electoral tests since the General Election, placing heavy pressure on Labour and the Conservatives with eager eyes watching the impact of Reform.

With results still to be counted across a number of councils, early indications have highlighted the influence of Reform since the General Election back in July. The Runcorn & Helsby by-election saw Reform's Sarah Pochin become the Party's fifth MP after overturning Labour's previous majority of almost 15,000 votes, taking hold of an area which has been held by the party for more than 40 years.

Five of the six mayor elections have been declared so far. Reform won Greater Lincolnshire with 42 per cent of the vote, while Labour took Doncaster, North Tyneside and West of England and Conservatives have recently claimed victory in Cambridge and Peterborough. More results are expected to be announced across Friday.

The Government has defended its net-zero policies after former Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair criticised the approach, calling it "doomed to fail" and suggesting a new strategy was needed. Labour Ministers insisted their net-zero drive will not require financial sacrifices and will have minimal impact on people's lives, while the Tony Blair Institute supports the Government's 2050 net-zero targets. Despite Blair's criticism, Sir Keir Starmer maintains that Blair's views align with the current policies, and Energy Secretary Ed Miliband continues to have the Prime Minister's confidence.

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News

Liverpool to introduce a tourist tax from June

Liverpool will introduce a £2 per room 'tourist tax' in hotels and serviced apartments starting this June. The Accommodation Business Improvement District (ABID) proposed the charge, which was supported by a vote of 26 to 18 from 83 hotels. The levy is expected to generate £9.2m over two years, with £6.7m allocated to support the city's visitor economy. The charge applies per room, regardless of the guest's residence, and will be managed by ABID.

Free and open trade deal to be signed by Britain and the EU

Britain and the EU are set to sign a declaration committing to "free and open trade" in defiance of Donald Trump's tariff agenda. The draft agreement, seen as pivotal in resetting post-Brexit relations, promises a "new strategic partnership" based on economic stability and mutual trade commitment. The May 19 summit will address defence, security, fishing, and energy agreements, and reaffirm support for Ukraine. This marks a significant step in Keir Starmer's efforts to strengthen UK-EU relations.

Roadshows to connect businesses to exporters.

The Government has launched the 'Made in the UK, Sold to the World' roadshow events to boost exports and grow the economy. Starting today in Blyth, these events will connect SMEs with international buyers and markets. Part of the Industrial Strategy, the roadshow events will focus on key growth sectors like clean energy,

advanced manufacturing, and financial services. Gareth Thomas MP emphasised the importance of maximising export potential to create jobs and raise productivity. The roadshows will feature workshops, seminars, and expert advice zones to support SMEs in seizing export opportunities and expanding their businesses.

Minister for European Union Relations delivers lecture

Nick Thomas-Symonds, Minister for European Union Relations, addressed the Conference on Baltic Studies in Europe, emphasising the UK's commitment to European security and cooperation. He highlighted the UK's support for NATO expansion and the Joint Expeditionary Force, underscoring the importance of a robust UK-EU security and defence partnership. Thomas-Symonds stressed the need for pragmatic solutions to strengthen UK-EU relations, focusing on prosperity, safety, and security. He reiterated the UK's respect for the choice to leave the EU, including clear red lines around the Customs Union, the Single Market, and Freedom of Movement. He finished the lecture by saying that the upcoming UK-EU Leaders' Summit will further these discussions, aiming to bolster collective defence and economic stability across Europe.

UK-India Trade Deal in its final stages

India and the UK are in the final stages of negotiating a free trade deal, with key disagreements over the UK's "carbon border tax" and issues in the pharmaceutical and auto sectors. Talks resumed in February after being paused for elections. Both sides are optimistic, with major chapters signed off, but some points remain unresolved. The deal, expected to be the most significant post-Brexit trade agreement, aims to boost bilateral trade, which reached £41bn in 2024.

India due to set out a live events white paper.

India aims to become a top five live entertainment destination by 2030, driven by investments, supportive policies, and improved infrastructure. Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, L Murugan, will present the white paper 'India's Live Events Economy: A Strategic Growth Imperative' at the WAVES Summit 2025 in Mumbai. The document analyses the 'booming' live events sector, highlighting trends and strategic recommendations which aims to build on the 15% growth that the live events sector saw in 2024.

Parliament

House of Commons

Written Question on the Events Industry

Shaun Davies, Labour MP for Telford, asked the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport:

"What estimate she has made of the potential economic value of the business events sector; and how many civil services in her Department work on supporting and growing the sector?"

Sir Chris Bryant, Minister for Creative Industries, Arts and Tourism responded:

"DCMS recognises that the business events sector is a machine for economic growth and local prosperity. The business events sector is estimated to be worth £34 billion to the UK Economy and an additional £200 billion in trade established at Business Events.

"The Business Events Growth Programme (BEGP), led by VisitBritain, forms part of the UK Government's commitment to grow the business events sector across Britain. Every pound invested in the programme supported £33 of revenue being generated for the British economy through new events secured, or in additional delegate spend, during the five-year review period from 2018 to 2023.

"Within DCMS, we have one civil servant who works full time on supporting the business events sector, plus a percentage of time from senior colleagues who provide oversight."

EU-UK Trading Relationship

During a debate on the EU-UK Trading Relationship Martin Rhodes, Labour MP for Glasgow North, highlighted the significant contribution of the UK's creative industries, particularly music and the performing arts, which add £11.2 billion to the economy and employ 283,000 people. He stressed the challenges performers face due to varying regulations across the EU's 27 member states, hindering emerging talent and cultural exchange. Rhodes went beyond just asking for an agreement between the EU-UK on touring artists and urged the Government to secure a cultural mobility agreement or exemption with the EU to ensure the future of the UK's creative industries and restore cultural ties.

Douglas Alexander, Minister for Trade Policy and Economic Security later addressed Rhodes points by saying *"I put on the record my appreciation of all the work done for our country not just by touring artists but by the creative industries more broadly."*

Written Question on Tourism in Urban Areas

Jim Shannon, DUP MP for Strangford, asked the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport:

"What steps her Department is taking to support the tourism sector in urban areas?"

Sir Chris Bryant, Minister for Creative Industries, Arts and Tourism responded:

"The government is committed to the tourism sector maintaining its competitiveness. VisitBritain launched its latest 'Starring Great Britain' campaign in January, which will harness the powerful draw of Film and TV to drive inbound tourism towards UK's cities and regions.

"DCMS has announced a new Visitor Economy Advisory Council that will see industry and government work together to work towards the creation of a Visitor Economy Growth Strategy, set to be launched in autumn, mapping out plans to support the growth of the tourism industry."

"The Government is implementing the most significant overhaul of regional destination management in a generation, creating a portfolio of nationally supported, strategic and high-performing Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) in partnership with VisitEngland, including those in urban areas such as London and Manchester."

Written Question on ETAs

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department:

"If she will make an assessment of the potential impact of the Electronic Travel Authorisation scheme on tourism?"

Seema Malhotra, Minister for Migration and Citizenship responded:

"Electronic travel authorisations (ETAs) have been introduced to enhance our ability to screen travellers upstream and stop those who pose a threat from travelling to the UK. ETAs will help deliver a more streamlined, digital immigration system which will be quicker and more secure for the millions of people who pass through the UK border each year."

"The Home Office published an [initial impact assessment](#) on the introduction of ETAs, and a further Impact Assessment published alongside the Fee Regulations in March that increased the chargeable ETA fee (alongside other fees) - [The Immigration, Nationality and Passport \(Fees\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2025](#)."

"The experience of other countries with similar schemes in operation shows that genuine visitors are unlikely to be deterred by the small additional cost. For example, the USA (which operates the ESTA scheme) has seen continued growth in overseas visitor volumes since the introduction of the ESTA in 2010."

**For any queries regarding this round-up
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