

CAVENDISH

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Weekly Monitoring
Friday
30th January



Amendment: Stephanie Peacock, Minister for Sport, Tourism, Civil Society and Youth hosted the roundtable.

EIA Update

The EIA were pleased to be invited to represent the business events industry at a roundtable on Major Events earlier this week. The roundtable was hosted by Stephanie Peacock, Minister for Sport, Tourism, Civil Society and Youth, and attended by Blair McDougall, Minister for Small Business and Economic Transformation from the Department for Business and Trade.

The roundtable provided a valuable opportunity to raise issues affecting our sector, highlight the contribution our industry makes, and outline how the Government can better utilise business events to drive economic growth.

It was important that our sector had the chance to participate alongside others from the wider events industry, reflecting the growing understanding and recognition of the business events sector's role and influence.

Political Update

Following Andrew Gwynne's resignation last week, Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, announced his intention to seek selection as the Labour Party candidate. This was rejected by the Labour Party, which said the disproportionate cost of triggering a mayoral by-election if he were elected formed part of its decision; Burnham has previously expressed interest in becoming Labour leader.

Elsewhere this week, Suella Braverman, the former Home Secretary, defected to Reform UK, becoming the third sitting Conservative MP to do so. The Conservative Party responded by saying it had been "always a matter of when, not if, Suella would defect".

Prime Minister Keir Starmer became the first UK premier in eight years to visit China. During the trip, China announced it would lift all sanctions on six UK parliamentarians following talks with President Xi, though those affected said they would rather remain sanctioned than be used as a bargaining tool, amid continued political debate over the UK's approach to China and human rights concerns.

News

Government Announces Targeted Business Rates Relief for Pubs and Live Music Venues

The Government has confirmed that pubs and live music venues will receive 15% business rates relief in 2026–27, with bills then frozen in real terms for two further years. The relief applies to pubs open to the public, offering free entry, bar service and drinking without food, while excluding restaurants, nightclubs, hotels and similar venues. Live music venues must be principally used for live performance, with other activities only ancillary. Eligible premises will see rates capped and discounted to ease the impact of the 2026 revaluation, supporting sector stability during rising costs.

This comes after 50 Labour MPs wrote to Chancellor Rachel Reeves urging her to halt April's planned rise in business rates for music venues, warning bills could increase by 45% to 275% and pose an "existential threat" to the sector. The BBC-seen letter, coordinated by MP Anneliese Midgley, called for a pause while a fairer valuation system is devised and raised concerns that support may exclude live venues and studios.

Investment into UK Grassroots Sports Facilities

Nearly 1,000 community projects across the UK are receiving new and upgraded grassroots sports facilities, including all-weather pitches, floodlighting and modern changing rooms, as part of the Government's Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme. With at least half of funding directed to the 30% most deprived areas, the investment aims to expand affordable access to sport, support women and girls, and improve community health. The Government has also opened applications for a further £85 million for 2026/27, as Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy highlighted the programme's role in boosting participation and strengthening local sports provision.

UK Banks Deliver £11 Billion Boost for Small Business Growth

UK lenders have agreed a landmark £11 billion lending package to help small and mid-sized businesses invest, hire and expand into international markets, following a Westminster roundtable convened by Business Secretary Peter Kyle. The commitment from NatWest, HSBC UK, Barclays, Lloyds and Santander marks one of the banking sector's largest joint moves in over a decade. Supported by UK Export Finance guarantees of up to 80%, the funding will give firms improved access to finance and expert export advice.

The Telegraph Reports UK Poised for Strong Economic Upswing

The Telegraph reported that Britain is entering a time of cyclical recovery, with analysts forecasting some of the strongest growth rates in a generation as households and businesses emerge from a major debt-deleveraging cycle. The paper highlights rising confidence, falling energy prices and a surge in global stimulus feeding into renewed momentum across services, manufacturing and housing. Early AI-driven productivity

gains are beginning to show, echoing trends in the US. While Labour may inherit the upswing, The Telegraph argues the boom stems from long-term structural forces rather than Government policy.

UK Soft Power Council

The UK Soft Power Council met on 9 October 2025 to review progress on the Government's Soft Power Strategy, with officials outlining work to strengthen the UK's global influence. Members discussed strategic goals, how to leverage soft power more effectively, and reflected on the Council's first year, highlighting future opportunities.

Review of the UK's Free Trade Agreements

The Government's monitoring report assessed how the UK's FTAs with Australia, New Zealand and Japan are operating in practice, showing strong early uptake of preferential tariffs and notable growth in services trade. It highlights that UK-Australia and UK-New Zealand trade has risen faster than global averages, driven by business, financial and travel services, despite falls in goods exports. For Japan, trade and services growth since 2018 lags global performance, though tariff utilisation remains high. Overall, the report shows FTAs are being actively used while medium-term impacts continue to develop.

Parliament

House of Commons

Debate on EU-UK

During a House of Lords debate on the case for a UK-EU customs union, several peers warned that ongoing post-Brexit trade barriers continue to harm touring artists and musicians. Lord Doyle, Labour, stressed that performers and crews face costly bureaucracy, restrictive visa rules and equipment-movement barriers that have reduced work, income and opportunities. He argued that issues such as the 90-day limit, complex customs processes and higher haulage costs are not abstract policy concerns but daily obstacles preventing UK creatives from touring Europe at scale. Citing Sir Elton John's warning that red tape is "downtrodding" young talent, peers urged the Government to fix visa waivers, streamline mobility arrangements and prioritise the creative sector in UK-EU negotiations.

Debate on Business Rates

In a Commons debate on business rates, Exchequer Secretary Dan Tomlinson announced a 15% reduction for pubs and grassroots music venues from April, alongside a real-terms freeze for two further years. He said many music venues are valued in the same way as pubs, making it "fair and reasonable" to extend the relief to both sectors.

Shadow Chancellor Mel Stride criticised the plan as a "temporary sticking plaster", warning that bills for venues and hospitality businesses will still rise sharply over time.

Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for the Treasury Daisy Cooper said multi-use and higher-value venues could still face steep increases and urged wider reform.

MPs from across the House, including Alex Sobel, Florence Eshalomi and Jonathan Davies, pressed for stronger long-term support for music venues, stressing their

economic and cultural importance. Tomlinson confirmed a review of valuation methods but insisted targeted relief would prevent closures while wider reforms are developed.

**For any queries regarding this round-up
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