

CAVENDISH

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Weekly Monitoring
Friday 5th
September



EIA Update

Over the course of the parliamentary recess, we continued to progress work across several areas of political engagement. This included submitting a response to the Major Events inquiry being conducted by the Culture, Media and Sport Committee, where we reiterated our call for the development of a national business events plan.

We have also continued with our campaign for a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) between the UK and EU, engaging positively with MPs and officials in the Department for Business and Trade. Our campaign has continued to secure coverage which across the trade media which is incredibly positive to see. In addition, we are collaborating with our counterpart organisation in Europe to ensure a coordinated approach towards the same resolution.

Finally, preparations are well underway for our panel event at the Labour Party Conference, and we have confirmed the panel participants.

Political Update

Parliament returned with a bang on Monday 1st September, with the week originally expected to centre around the launch of the Government's 'Phase 2' programme. However, proceedings were quickly overshadowed by persistent rumours of a Cabinet reshuffle.

Matters worsened for the Prime Minister following revelations that Angela Rayner had underpaid stamp duty on her property in Hove. This culminated today in her resignation from both her role as Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local

Government and as Deputy Prime Minister. Her departure is expected to trigger a deputy leadership contest among Labour Party members.

The resignation has prompted a full-scale Cabinet reshuffle. Lucy Powell and Ian Murray have been removed from their posts as Leader of the House of Commons and Secretary of State for Scotland, respectively. David Lammy has been appointed Deputy Prime Minister, alongside his new role as Justice Secretary, while Steve Reed is set to take over Rayner's former brief.

Yvette Cooper has moved to Foreign Secretary, and Shabana Mahmood becomes Home Secretary. Despite months of speculation surrounding her future, Lisa Nandy is expected to remain as Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Peter Kyle has been appointed Business Secretary, replacing Jonathan Reynolds.

Elsewhere, the Green Party announced the result of its leadership election, with London Assembly member Zack Polanski emerging as the winner. Meanwhile, the political party conference season has officially begun, with Reform UK hosting its inaugural two-day conference.

News

New Members appointed to VisitEngland Board

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Lisa Nandy, has appointed Helen Bonser-Wilton and Dr Sarah Green OBE to the VisitEngland Board, effective 1 September 2025. Helen, CEO of Leeds Castle Foundation, brings extensive heritage and tourism leadership. Sarah, CEO of Newcastle Gateshead Initiative, is a prominent advocate for regional visitor economies.

UK-Spain Strategic Framework Strengthens ties between the countries

On 3 September 2025, the UK and Spain signed a strategic bilateral framework to deepen cooperation across trade, security, and culture. Key provisions include enhancing short-term business travel between both nations, supporting SMEs, and fostering innovation. Tourism is recognised as a vital economic link, with commitments to develop a sustainable, digitally driven tourism model and improve traveller experiences, including reciprocal e-gate access. The framework also promotes youth mobility, cultural exchange, and educational collaboration, reinforcing the enduring ties between British and Spanish citizens and boosting mutual economic and social prosperity.

Edinburgh's Tourist Tax to Launch in 2026 with Transition Period

Edinburgh will introduce a 5% tourist tax on accommodation from 24 July 2026, capped at seven nights. A new council report proposes a transition period: only bookings made after 1 May 2025 for stays post-launch will be taxed. The levy is

expected to raise up to £50 million annually for infrastructure, housing, and cultural investment. While some operators fear reduced competitiveness, officials argue the modest fee won't deter visitors. The Highlands are also considering a similar scheme.

Government Warns International Students Against Overstaying Visas

The Government has launched a campaign warning international students not to overstay their visas, following a rise in asylum claims post-study. Around 130,000 students will receive texts and emails stating they must leave if they have no legal right to remain. Home Secretary Yvette Cooper cited misuse of the asylum system, with 14,800 claims from student visa holders last year. Universities UK called for better data sharing, while refugee advocates stressed that some claims reflect genuine fears of persecution.

Research briefing launched into tourism in the UK

UK tourism reached record levels in 2024, with 42.5 million inbound and 94.6 million outbound visits, surpassing pre-pandemic figures. Tourism contributed £58 billion to economic output and supported 1.2 million jobs in 2023. Business travel accounted for 17% of inbound and 9% of outbound trips, with business visitors spending the most per day. The sector faces challenges from energy costs, staffing, and policy changes, including the end of VAT-free shopping and new travel authorisations. The government aims for 50 million visitors by 2030 and will launch a new tourism growth strategy later in 2025.

Parliament

House of Commons

Debate: Hospitality

The Opposition motion, tabled by Andrew Griffith (Con), criticised the Labour Government's policies, particularly the reduction in business rates relief and increased employer national insurance contributions, which he claimed have led to 84,000 job losses and two venue closures per day.

MPs highlighted the vital role of pubs, cafés, restaurants, and hotels in local economies and community life. From wedding venues in Luton to seaside cafés in South Devon, hospitality was described as the "beating heart" of British towns and villages. Several members called for VAT reductions, business rates reform, and targeted support for seasonal and rural venues.

Minister for Tourism and Arts, Chris Bryant defended the Government's approach, citing plans for a visitor economy growth strategy and permanent tax relief for smaller venues. Gareth Thomas, Minister for Services, Small Business and Exports, reaffirmed support for the sector, referencing meetings with publicans and outlining measures to reduce regulatory burdens and boost investment.

Written Question on Youth Schemes

Edward Morello, Liberal Democrat MP for West Dorset, asked the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport:

"If she will take steps to develop a cross-departmental strategy on youth work."

Stephanie Peacock, Minister for Sport, Media, Civil Society and Youth responded:

"DCMS is leading a National Youth Strategy in collaboration with a number of other key departments to set out a new long-term vision for young people and an action plan for delivering this. This strategy will cover youth services, provision and policy at local, regional and national levels. We are co-producing this National Youth Strategy with young people and cross-sector experts and so the breadth of issues will be shaped by our engagement."

"The Strategy will better coordinate youth services and policy at a local, regional and national level, moving away from siloed working - ensuring we are better coordinated and more than the sum of our parts. We will publish the Strategy in the Autumn."

**For any queries regarding this round-up
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