



## Weekly Monitoring 9th December 2022



### Political Update

Leader of the Opposition, Sir Keir Starmer and former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown unveiled their new report entitled “A New Britain,” which includes 40 recommendations including proposals to replace the House of Lords with a smaller elected second chamber, a ban on second jobs for MPs and greater power to local Government to generate its own revenue. Labour also hosted 400 senior business leaders at their business conference at Canary Wharf as the party continues to promote itself as being a Government in waiting.

This is against a backdrop of the CBI urging Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak to find a plan for growth as it predicted that the economy will shrink by 0.4% by next year. Strike action continues to cause chaos and threatens Christmas as more sectors vote to take part in industrial action and the Government sees itself having to train the armed forces in an attempt to minimise disruptions.

### News

#### [Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy launch review to prevent small firms being ripped off by larger companies](#)

Business Secretary, Grant Shapps announced an in-depth review, 'The Payment and Cash Flow review', that will scrutinise existing payment practices and the measures in place to make sure small firms are not ripped off by their larger clients – with over £23.4 billion currently owed in outstanding invoices to UK businesses.

#### [Department for Education announces £490 million investment into skills training](#)

The Department for Education has announced a £490 million investment into skills training to radically improve university and college facilities and provide better

teaching for students. This investment will see students benefit from state-of-the-art medical suites alongside cutting edge engineering and science labs.

### **The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities launches first Freeports**

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has launched the UK's first Freeports in Plymouth, Solent and Teesside. Each Freeport will receive up to £25 million of seed funding. These Freeports are expected to bring millions of pounds in investment and thousands of highly skilled jobs, turbocharging local economies and benefitting the whole of the UK.

### **Department for International Trade seek views ahead of South Korea free trade agreement (FTA)**

The Department for International Trade has launched an 8-week public consultation on an enhanced free trade agreement with South Korea building on our existing £14.3 billion trade relationship. The FTA will include areas such as digital trade, enhanced climate provisions and further support for small and medium sized businesses. They are asking for businesses, organisations and individuals' input to shape the UK's negotiating aims before the talks.

The consultation will be open until 11:45pm on 2nd February 2023.

### **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities takes back control of EU funding and kickstarts £2.6 billion investment in communities**

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has approved local spending plans for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund as it takes back control and approves spending plans for funding previously run by the European Union. It will see people across the country benefit from £2.6 billion of investment in – amongst other things – skills and support for local businesses.

## **Parliament**

House of Commons

### **Motion for leave to bring in an Employment Bill**

Shadow SNP Spokesperson in Defra, Steven Bonnar brought forward in the House of Commons chamber a motion to bring in an Employment Bill which would “include[e] the right to request more predictable terms and conditions of work; to amend the definition of worker; and for connected purposes.” The Bill will be read a Second time on Friday 3 February 2023.

### **Department for Education written questions on Further Education Finance**

Conservative MP for Ipswich, Tom Hunt asked the Secretary of State for Education, “what recent assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of further education college funding for (a) 16-19 provision, (b) adult education and (c) apprenticeships.”

Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education, Robert Halfon replied:

*“The department is investing a further £3.8 billion in further education and skills over this parliamentary session to ensure people across the country have access to the skills they need to build a fulfilling career in jobs the economy needs. [...] The*

department are continuing to invest in education and skills training for adults through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) at £1.34 billion in the 2022/23 academic year. [...] As part of the department's £2.5 billion investment aimed at re-skilling and up-skilling opportunities for adults, we have introduced the Free Courses for Jobs offer and Skills Bootcamps. The department is committed to supporting more employers in using apprenticeships to develop the skilled workforces they need, and to supporting more people to benefit from the high-quality training that apprenticeships offer. To support more employers and learners to access apprenticeships we are increasing funding for apprenticeships in England to £2.7 billion by the 2024/25 financial year. The department is also investing £2.8 billion of capital funding for skills over the Spending Review period, including to improve the condition of further education estates, create more post-16 places and support the rollout of T Levels."

## House of Lords

### Debate on Immigration Skills Charge (Amendment) Regulations 2022

Lords Minister, Lord Murray of Blidworth moved a debate on the Immigration Skills Charge (Amendment) Regulations 2022 in the House of Lords Grand Committee. Lord Murray of Blidworth laid out the circumstances in which he believed that employers be exempt from paying the charge, listing scale-up workers and EU workers.

In his concluding remarks he stated:

*"it is important that the Government ensure that overseas recruitment is considered alongside investment in the development of skills in the domestic labour market, not as an alternative to it. The immigration skills charge incentivises employers to recruit and train domestically and provides funding to enable the Government to support them to do so. [...] these exemptions are designed to support high-growth businesses in the UK and to strengthen trade and investment both to and from Europe."*

### Oral questions on aviation and the cost of travel

Baroness Hoey asked His Majesty's Government "what assessment they have made of the options for reducing the cost of travelling by plane from Great Britain to (1) Northern Ireland, and (2) other parts of the United Kingdom not attached to the mainland."

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Aviation, Maritime and Security, Baroness Vere of Norbiton replied:

*"My Lords, the Government recognise the importance of air travel for UK connectivity, and we are supporting this connectivity through public service obligations, or PSOs, and a 50% cut in air passenger duty on domestic flights from 1 April 2023."*

### Debate on Arts and Creative Industries Strategy

Viscount Chandos put forward a general debate on the arts and creative industries strategy to maintain the UK's global leadership within the sector and align the industries' economic benefits with the government's levelling up agenda.

Responding on behalf of the Government, Minister for Arts and Heritage and DCMS Lords Minister, Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay included in his remarks:

*"The point of levelling up is to make sure that everyone, in every part of the United Kingdom, can be part of the arts and creative industries' success story. [...] The noble Viscount's Motion talks of "the case for" a strategy towards the arts and creative industries, implying that there is not one already. I am happy to reassure him that there is, and glad to have the opportunity to explain how it is shaping the approach taken by the Government and our partners, such as Arts Council England."*

## **Key dates**

**December 2022:** Publication of Energy Bill Relief Scheme review outcome



**Change is a challenging idea. We make it matter.**

**[cavendishadvocacy.com](https://cavendishadvocacy.com)**