

CAVENDISH

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Weekly Monitoring
Friday 26th April



EIA Update

This week, ESSA met with Sarah Owen MP to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing the events sector.

The Labour MP for Luton North was keen to understand the role of the industry in boosting trade and providing skills opportunities across the country. The meeting was very positive and Ms Owen promised to add her support and voice for our industry with relevant Shadow Ministerial teams, including Culture, Media and Sport and Business and Trade.

We also received confirmation that the SASIE report that has been shared with Shadow Business and Trade Secretary Johnny Reynolds and his external affairs team.

Political Update

Scottish First Minister Humza Yousaf is facing a vote of no confidence next week following his decision to terminate his power-sharing agreement with the Scottish Greens (more details below).

Rumours have since begun to circulate that the First Minister (FM) will resign to avoid going to the vote and the potential removal of the SNP from power entirely although the First Minister has insisted he will "fight on".

Although the chances of an imminent election in Scotland remain remote, Humza Yousef's leadership clearly hangs in the balance.

Meanwhile in Westminster, Labour announced their plan to reform rail services this week and the Government confirmed that the implementation of its Deposit Return Scheme to improve recycling rates of bottles and cans would be delayed further, until 2027.

News

Labour announces plan for Rail.

Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, Louise Haigh, this week announced Labour's Plan to Fix Britain's Railways.

The Shadow Secretary pledged to renationalise most passenger rail services within five years, if the Party is elected to Government. They have pledged to establish a new arm's length public body – Great British Railways (GBR) – to act as the “guiding mind” in charge of the railway infrastructure and services and remain responsible for the day-to-day operational delivery of the railways.

Under Labour, the delivery of freight operations on the rail network will remain within the private sector, but a unified railway will be tasked with reducing complexity for freight customers. GBR will be led by rail professionals and industry experts and have operational independence. It would gain control over station management and track from Network Rail.

Other commitments from the plan include, a new Passenger Standards Authority to independently monitor standards and champion service improvement in addition to introducing a statutory role in the rail network for devolved institutions.

UK exports of services growing significantly faster than goods.

New data from the ONS shows that UK services exports volumes have increased nine times faster than goods since 2010.

Figures published on Monday show a 63% growth in export of services since 2010, while goods have only increased by 7%. The data also showed that goods export volumes have not recovered since the pandemic, with volumes still below 2013 levels.

John Springford, of the Centre for European Reform think-tank said that: “Trends in UK trade have been a long-run shift from goods exports to services exports, as competition from both the EU and other manufacturing centres has pushed UK comparative advantage towards services...Brexit has accelerated that shift.”

SNP terminate Bute House Agreement with Scottish Greens.

The SNP, led by First Minister Humza Yousaf, has terminated its power-sharing agreement with the Scottish Greens. This move resulted in the dismissal of Green co-leaders Patrick Harvie and Lorna Slater from their Ministerial positions. Yousaf's decision came before Green members could vote on the agreement's continuation.

Former Scottish Green Co-Leader Lorna Slater criticised the SNP for the decision, labelling it as political cowardice and a betrayal of the electorate. She pledged to continue advocating for a fairer, greener Scotland. On the other hand, the Scottish Conservatives criticized Yousaf's judgment, calling the collapse of the coalition an utter humiliation.

The Scottish Conservatives initiated a vote of no confidence against the SNP leader, with Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar since laying a separate motion of no

confidence, which carries more far-reaching implications including the threat of an election.

Rumours are now beginning to circulate that the First Minister will resign before the vote next week.

Shadow Chancellor says Labour will be more pro-business than any other UK Government.

Speaking at the first meeting of Labour's national wealth fund taskforce, Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves commented that "the next Labour government is going to be the most pro-business government this country has ever seen."

The Shadow Chancellor said in the interview that business groups and financial institutions would be "in the room" with Ministers making key decisions as part of Labour's "mission" to make the UK the fastest-growing economy in the G7.

She also hinted that the party would listen to concerns over its plans to reform workers' rights, saying the policy had "to work for business as well".

Government launches free business management courses .

The Department for Business and Trade have launched Help to Grow: Management Essentials. A new online training course for small businesses. The site can be found [here](#).

The intention of the site is to help business people access the advice and resources they need to "scale up and grow", with Small Business Minister, Kevin Hollinrake describing 2024 as "the year of the SME". He added "whether it's through access to finance, support and advice, or removing barriers to growth: we're helping them go further than ever before."

Parliament

House of Parliament

Committee examines UK trade strategy.

The Business and Trade Committee held an Oral Evidence session this week as part of its inquiry into Export-led Growth. The Committee quizzed the former UK Brexit Chief Negotiator and the Director of the UK Trade Policy Project on the UK's trade strategy.

Discussion focused on the Government's failure to hit its target for trade agreements, whether the Government has given away too much in trade deals, how Brexit has affected UK trade and the possibility of closer trade links with the EU.

House of Lords

Committee seeks views on UK's future skills needs.

The Industry and Regulators Committee has launched an inquiry into skills policy, focusing in particular on apprenticeships and training in the context of the skills the UK economy needs for the future.

The inquiry will examine whether the UK's current systems and policies for apprenticeships and in-work training are working and, if not, how they should be reformed

The Committee invites contributions to its inquiry by **30 May 2023**.

The Committee will be holding public evidence sessions in the coming weeks, and aims to report to the House before the summer recess.

**For any queries regarding this round-up
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