

Events Industry Alliance End of Week Report

Friday 6th March

EIA update

We're pleased to announce that Henham Strategy has begun work as the EIA's retained public affairs adviser, taking over from Cavendish following a competitive appointment process. Henham will support the Alliance's engagement with government and Parliament. A key focus of their work will be ensuring the economic and strategic contribution of business events, both trade and consumer, is properly recognised by government and reflected in policy decisions, as well as in ministerial engagement with the sector's events.

Government this week

Tuesday, 3rd March

- **The Chancellor's [Spring Statement](#)** this week was absent of policy announcements but told us a few things about what the future direction of the government might be. In the wake of the Gorton and Denton by-election, it appears the party is shifting to the left on the economy. Reeves' speech on Tuesday was further evidence of that, using phrases such as "active and strategic state" and references to a government that "doesn't stand back but steps up". What's behind this shift? One reason may be that Number 10 believes Labour has underestimated the Greens and Liberal Democrats, who've capitalised electorally on perceptions that the government has not been sufficiently bold on economic policy. The Chancellor also highlighted major geopolitical risks, including escalating Middle East conflict and rising energy prices, which could affect household costs, while stressing monetary policy's role in supporting the "restored stability" narrative. The OBR forecast shows growth slowing to 1.1% in 2026 before averaging 1.6% through to 2030, inflation returning to target by 2027, and a post-war high tax-to-GDP ratio of 38% by 2030–31.

Wednesday, 4th March

- At Space-Comm Expo in the Excel Centre, London, **Liz Lloyd (Minister for Digital Economy)** used her visit to the event as a platform [to announce a £500 million government investment package](#) for the UK space sector, setting out plans to boost satellite communications, launch capability and emerging space technologies. The minister said the funding would help make the UK a "competitive, agile space power", highlighting the role of industry events in bringing together government and businesses to launch major policy announcements.

Thursday, 5th March

- The Security Industry Authority (SIA) - which is preparing to enforce the new Martyn's Law venue security requirements - [published a progress update](#) on implementing this legislation. The SIA's update emphasised that Martyn's Law (2025) is still in its two-year implementation phase, meaning venues, premises and events are not yet legally required to comply. The regulator cautioned organisations against spending money now on purported "Martyn's Law compliance" products or services, since official guidance is still being finalised.

What happened in Parliament

Wednesday, 4th March

- The APPG for Events [published their 'Quarterly Briefing'](#) providing updates on recent activity, upcoming engagement with government, and initiatives supporting growth and accessibility in the UK events sector. Announcements included:
 - Further meetings being arranged with **Lisa Nandy (Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport)** and **Ian Murray (Minister for Creative Industries, Media and Arts)** as part of the APPG's ongoing government engagement.
 - An evidence session in Parliament will be held 'in the coming months', inviting a cross-section of industry representatives to discuss key sector issues and opportunities.
 - Work continues to organise a summit with Metro Mayors to explore growth opportunities for the business events sector.
 - The APPG plans a session to review the accessibility report from *The Business of Events* and discuss ways to support a more inclusive events sector.
 - The APPG will review the forthcoming Culture, Media & Sport Select Committee report on Major Events and highlight findings in Parliament, following evidence given in December.
 - It also confirmed its AGM would take place on Wednesday 25th March, at 12.30
- During the Department for Business and Trade supplementary estimates debate, **Joshua Reynolds (LD, Maidenhead)** [warned that](#) the UK is facing a "cost-of-doing-business crisis", arguing that rising employer national insurance contributions, high energy costs, business rates and regulatory uncertainty are placing significant pressure on multiple sectors, including hospitality. He said many venues are being forced to cut staff hours, reduce hiring or consider closure, and criticised the Government's approach to business taxation and rates reform as failing to reflect the scale of the pressures facing customer-facing industries. **Chris McDonald (Minister for Industry)** said the Government is supporting small businesses through legislation on late payments, a business growth service, and tailored high street support to help them scale and manage costs.
- The Foreign Affairs Committee's [report on UK-EU relations](#) recommended new agreements with the EU on mutual recognition of professional qualifications and short-term business mobility. The report also highlighted post-Brexit barriers facing UK professionals touring in the EU, including customs, haulage, tax and work permits. **For the EIA, it may be worth reaching out to this committee to highlight the challenges faced by the events sector in this area.**

Written Questions

Monday, 2nd March

- **Neil Duncan-Jordan (Lab, Poole)** [asked](#) what assessment the Government has made of the potential impact of introducing a visitor levy in England on visitor numbers and local economies.
 - **Alison McGovern, (Minister for Local Government and Homelessness)** said the impacts will depend on local decisions, with mayors and local leaders able to introduce a levy following consultation and confirmed the Government will publish its response to the recent consultation on the levy's design and scope in due course.
- **Mary Glendon (Lab, Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend)** [asked](#) whether the Government had considered extending the proposed 15% business rates relief for pubs to the wider hospitality, retail and leisure sectors.
 - **Dan Tomlinson (Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury)** said the Government's £4.3 billion business rates support package will protect retail, hospitality and leisure properties, with most seeing rates increases capped at 15% next year, while pubs and live music venues will

receive an additional 15% discount, alongside plans for permanently lower rates for eligible premises and a forthcoming High Streets Strategy.

- **James Cleverly (Shadow Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government)** [asked](#) whether the Government had estimated the monetary value of Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) business rates relief to individual qualifying businesses in 2024–25, 2025–26 and 2026–27.
 - **Alison McGovern, (Minister for Local Government and Homelessness)** said the scheme provides a 75% rates discount (up to £110,000) in 2024–25 and a 40% discount (up to £110,000) in 2025–26, but there is no equivalent relief in 2026–27, and the Government does not collect data on the value of relief to individual businesses.

Wednesday, 4th March

- **James McMurdock (Ind, South Basildon and East Thurrock)** [asked](#) the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government what assessment he has made of the potential impact of a visitor levy on school trips, business travel and major events.
 - **Alison McGovern (Minister for Local Government and Homelessness)** replied that the precise design and scope of the power to introduce an overnight visitor levy are still being developed. Decisions on whether to introduce a levy will ultimately be for Mayors and other local leaders, based on what is right for their area. She added that the Government’s consultation on the design and scope of the visitor levy closed on 18 February, and an official response will be published in due course.

Regional news

Monday, 2nd March

- The **Local Government Association (LGA)** [said](#) it supports the introduction of an overnight visitor levy as it could enable “significant investment in the visitor economy”, including culture and heritage attractions, following the Government’s consultation on an overnight stay levy in England. It argued councils and mayors should jointly decide whether to introduce a levy and reinvest revenues into visitor services, culture and heritage, and direct support for tourism and hospitality businesses, citing Bath, Edinburgh and Manchester as examples of how locally designed levies can boost footfall, services and economic growth.
- Ahead of the 2026 Senedd election, the **Wales Tourism Alliance and PASC UK** (the Professional Association of Self-Caterers) [launched a “Tourism Recovery Manifesto”](#) warning that tourism in Wales is “at breaking point” due to rising costs and new regulations. Top of their six-point plan were pleas to scrap Wales’s planned visitor levy as well as a relief on business rates.

Week ahead

Tuesday 10 March

- **Treasury questions:** In the Commons - worth watching for any exchanges on growth, business taxation or economic policy that could intersect with the sector’s asks.
- **Treasury Committee:** Session on the **Spring Statement 2026** - relevant because fiscal decisions on business costs, growth and investment shape the backdrop for the sector.

Thursday 12 March

- **Business and Trade questions:** In the Commons - probably the single most relevant chamber business next week, given the EIA’s focus on trade, growth, exports and the UK’s attractiveness as a destination for international business events

Media snapshot

Overnight visitor levy

The Local Government Association has backed proposals for a locally controlled overnight visitor levy, arguing it could generate new revenue to support the visitor economy and fund services used by tourists.

Councils want flexibility to set and spend the levy locally, with funds potentially supporting infrastructure, public services and tourism businesses. The proposal is framed as part of wider fiscal devolution to give local authorities new income-raising powers. - [MA](#)

Business rates

Businesses in Hampshire are urging the Chancellor to prioritise reform of business rates in the Spring Statement, arguing the current system is outdated and unfair for high-street sectors. The Hampshire Chamber of Commerce has called for the existing business rates relief for pubs and music venues to be extended to hospitality, retail and leisure, saying it would provide a significant boost to struggling operators. Business groups say wider reform is long overdue and necessary to improve confidence and support growth. - [BBC](#)

Asda chairman Allan Leighton has criticised the current policy environment, arguing government decisions are placing increasing pressure on businesses through higher costs and regulation. He said companies are facing a range of burdens, including rising employment costs and business rates, and suggested government engagement with business has become less supportive than in the past. The comments come as retailers warn that cumulative policy changes are making the operating environment more challenging. – [Telegraph](#)

If you have any questions regarding this update, please contact the Henham Strategy team

Get in touch