

Events Industry Alliance End of Week Report

Friday 11th September

EIA update

- **The Budget representation has now been submitted to Treasury.**
- **Preparation begins for meeting potential Labour allies at conference.**
- **Success with ESSA members' outreach to MPs.**

Hi all,

We were glad to hear the AEO Conference went down very well last week - and had far fewer spanners in the works than the neighbours next door at the NEC.

The final draft of the Budget representation has now been submitted to Treasury on behalf of the EIA. Thank you to all who fed in their concerns and responses. This representation provides a great opportunity to underline the cumulative impact of related policy costs on the events sector and the wider business environment, as well as to reinforce to HMT the sector's strategic importance in ongoing policy discussions.

This will also soon be paired with our fully designed IS8 document providing concise, sector-specific explainers demonstrating how business events support delivery of the Government's eight Industrial Strategy priority sectors. This comes ready (and printed) right on time for handing out during conference season!

Speaking of conference, we have also reached out to possible-allied Labour MPs for potential meetings at the conference in Liverpool. Although conference is a busy period where many in the party are time-poor we know even a couple of these interactions can be hugely valuable – and have the potential to be particularly poignant when they occur at a business event itself.

Finally, it's been great to hear positive feedback off the back of ESSA outreach to local MPs. ESSA Chairman Rob Brackstone's meeting with MP Kevin McKenna on Monday was a great success, with Kevin even offering to visit Rob's business in Sittingbourne. We really appreciate all members pitching in and helping build relationships with MPs across the country. If you have any questions or would like any help with follow up, please do get in touch!

Best,
Alexander

Government this week

Monday 7th September

- **John Healey** [used his first major speech](#) as Chancellor to continue the government's dual message of regional devolution and "good growth" alongside firm adherence to fiscal discipline ahead of the October Budget. He announced a package focused on investment, innovation and workforce – including a fiscal devolution roadmap, a £150m northern scale-up fund, Green Book reforms, deregulation measures, and closer alignment of public financial institutions with growth priorities. The speech struck an optimistic tone on economic recovery despite market volatility and industrial

pressures, with key trade-offs between growth and fiscal restraint deferred to the Budget. It also serves as a useful outline of the priorities and vision of Number 11 and is worth noting for how we frame arguments to the Burnham administration.

- The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government announced that plans for major reorganisation of English local government have been paused after the government received updated legal advice suggesting the proposals may not comply with the law. **Jim McMahon (Minister for Local Government, Devolution and Growth)** wrote to council leaders [withdrawing local government reorganisation decisions](#) for Essex/Southend-on-Sea/Thurrock, Hampshire/Isle of Wight/Portsmouth/Southampton, Norfolk and Suffolk, and launched a rapid review of the wider reorganisation programme.

Thursday 10th September

- The Government [published its response to the consultation on an overnight visitor levy](#), confirming it will legislate to give Mayoral Strategic Authorities - and, subject to further design, Foundation Strategic Authorities – the power to charge a percentage-based levy on overnight accommodation stays. A bill will follow in due course, with mayors expected to set out spending plans by early 2028. **Angela Rayner (Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government)** said the measure "will give mayors the choice to raise and reinvest funding where it's needed most." On the same day, Labour's ten regional mayors in England pledged to cap the fee at 5%.

What happened in Parliament

Tuesday 8th September

- At [Treasury Oral Questions](#), **James Murray (Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Paymaster General)** confirmed the 20% retail, hospitality and leisure business rates cut for pubs, social clubs and "all but the very largest live music venues" takes effect from April 2027, building on the existing 15% reduction. He also confirmed a review of how pubs and hotels are valued for business rates.
 - In response, **Daisy Cooper (Deputy Leader, Liberal Democrat)** asked whether Labour's manifesto pledge to "overhaul the entire business rates system" before the next election "still stands." **Murray** said the Government "will continue to look at what more we can do to support pubs, hospitality and other high street uses."
- In the same session, **Nigel Huddleston (Con, Droitwich and Evesham)** accused the Government of offering empty rhetoric rather than real help, pointing to continuing pub closures and job losses in hospitality, and pressed for 100% business rates relief in line with Conservative policy. The Speaker objected to his use of the word "hypocritical," which Huddleston withdrew and apologised for.
 - **Murray** hit back, noting how many pubs closed under the previous government, and pointed to a newly announced review of how pubs and hotels are valued, due to report in time to inform the next revaluation.

Written questions

Wednesday 10th September

- **Neil Coyle (Labour, Bermondsey and Old Southwark)** [asked](#) Treasury what research it holds on the impact of a lower VAT rate for hospitality on visitor numbers, spend and length of stay.
 - **James Murray** gave a non-committal answer but said potential impacts "are carefully considered as part of policy development."

Week ahead

Monday 14th September

- Motion to appoint **Nigel Huddleston (Con, Droitwich and Evesham)** to the Culture, Media and Sport Committee; removing **Damian Hinds (Con, East Hampshire)**

Wednesday 16th September

- The House of Commons will rise for Conference Recess, returning on 12th October.

Regional News

Tuesday 8th September

- **Dan Carden (Labour, Liverpool Walton)** told [Treasury Oral Questions](#) that "Liverpool city region's visitor economy reached £6.8 billion" last month, and pressed for a ministerial meeting with Liverpool Mayor Steve Rotherham at party conference to build on this progress. **Dan Tomlinson (Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury)** confirmed the meeting was already planned.

Thursday 10th September

The County Councils Network [broadly welcomed](#) the Overnight Visitor Levy news as part of wider fiscal devolution, but warned that without guaranteed redistribution to county and unitary councils, many areas may see little benefit, and urged government to complete devolution coverage by 2028.

Media snapshot

International Confex 2027 opens its call for sessions

International Confex [has opened its 2027 call for sessions](#) for the UK's meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) industry event taking place 3–4 March at Excel London, with over 6,000 attendees expected across eight theatres. It is seeking insight-led speakers across themes including AI, sustainability, corporate events and a new careers hub, focusing on practical, discussion-led formats rather than pitches. Submissions close 1 November 2026.

EICC to host Tour de France's first Scottish start

Edinburgh's International Conference Centre [was named race headquarters](#) and international press centre for the Tour de France 2027 'Grand Départ', which starts in Edinburgh in July 2027. Cllr Lezley Marion Cameron (EICC board chair) called it "a historic moment and huge honour for the city."

Autumn Fair opens at the NEC

'Autumn Fair', the UK's leading trade show for home, gift, garden and fashion, [opened at NEC Birmingham](#) on Sunday, with organisers projecting more than 13,000 retail buyers and 800 exhibitors.

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

Get in touch

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