

## Events Industry Alliance End of Week Report

*Friday 13th March*

### EIA update

Last week the Henham team attended Tech Show London, where they met members of the AEO board and saw first-hand the scale and impact of the sector. Henham is also progressing the Alliance's Parliamentary engagement, helping with preparation for a meeting with Harriet Baldwin MP, Shadow Business Minister. Alongside this, the new partnership was [announced](#) publicly and secured coverage across trade press.

### Government this week

*Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March*

- Tourism Minister **Stephanie Peacock (Minister for Tourism)** [hosted tourism and hospitality leaders](#) at Downing Street to mark English Tourism Week. She highlighted the sector's economic contribution, with VisitBritain figures showing a GDP impact of £147 billion in 2024 (5% of the economy) and a projection of £161 billion by 2030. Peacock also noted the upcoming National Visitor Economy Strategy and highlighted measures aimed at supporting domestic travel, including the first freeze in rail fares in 30 years.

## What happened in Parliament

### Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March

- During Treasury OPQS, **Sir Ashley Fox (Con, Bridgwater)** [asked about](#) the impact of business rate changes on the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors.
  - **Dan Tomlinson (Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury)** said the Government has announced a £4.3bn support package for the sector, including permanently lower multipliers for retail and hospitality and 15% off new bills for pubs from April. He also pointed to the Government's high street strategy to be published later this year.

### Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March

- During Business and Trade questions, **Vikki Slade (LD, Mid Dorset and North Poole)** [raised concerns](#) about the 90/180-day rule affecting road haulage, noting that some event organisers and logistics companies are struggling to move personnel and equipment across Europe for film, TV, music, sport, and other events. She said this is creating operational uncertainty for tours, festivals, and other business events, potentially increasing costs and causing cancelled events and job losses. **Peter Kyle (Secretary of State for Business and Trade)** acknowledged the issue and said it is being considered as part of ongoing discussions with the EU to ease the burden on UK businesses and support smoother cross-border movement for trade and events.
- **Andrew Griffith (Shadow Secretary of State for Business and Trade)** also warned of a “tsunami” of business rate hikes hitting retailers, pubs and hotels from April (following the 2026 revaluation) and urged the government to postpone or soften the rise. **Peter Kyle** defended the government’s approach, pointing to the £4.3 billion relief package announced at the Budget but did not commit to any further U-turn on the revaluation.

## Written questions

### Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March

- **Stephen Gethins (SNP, Arbroath and Broughty Ferry)** [asked](#) the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment she has made of the adequacy of current EU visa arrangements for professional haulage drivers and those in the creative sector.
  - **Keir Mather (Transport Minister)** replied that UK haulage drivers can operate in the EU without a visa provided they do not exceed the 90-days-in-180 Schengen limit. He said the Department for Transport is researching how this rule affects GB-based HGV and coach operators, with findings to be published in due course. He added the Government is exploring ways to improve touring arrangements with the EU, but that the Department has not made a specific assessment of the adequacy of visa arrangements for the creative sector.
- **Richard Holden (Shadow Transport Secretary)** [asked](#) the Chancellor if the Treasury has assessed recent cuts to aviation taxes in countries like Sweden and Germany, and what impact the latest rise in Air Passenger Duty (APD) and higher business rates are having on UK airports’ competitiveness.
  - **Dan Tomlinson (Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury)** responded that the Government considers Air Passenger Duty an appropriate levy to ensure airlines contribute fairly to public finances, since airfares are exempt from VAT and jet fuel is untaxed. He said no immediate changes to APD are planned outside of budgetary reviews.

### Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March

- **Joe Robertson (Con, Isle of Wight East)** [asked](#) the Housing and Communities Secretary about plans to devolve powers for an overnight visitor levy (tourist tax) to metro mayors - specifically, how many meetings ministers or officials have had with mayors on this topic, and what evidence was considered before deciding to consult on such a levy.

- **Alison McGovern (Minister for Local Government and Homelessness)** answered that before launching the public consultation on an overnight visitor levy, the government reviewed a range of evidence on its potential impacts. This included economic analysis and lessons from successful international examples of tourist levies. She noted that ministers regularly engage with metro mayors on devolution and referenced a previous statement which confirmed that several mayors had made representations in favour of a visitor levy power ahead of the consultation's announcement.

## Regional news

### Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March

- Scotland's 'National Events Conference' [took place in Glasgow](#) on 9<sup>th</sup> March, with the theme 'Delivering Positive Change'. The event included a welcome address from **Richard Lohead MSP, Minister for Business and Employment**. The conference was aligned with the national events strategy and comes as Glasgow prepares to host the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

### Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March

- Leaders and senior councillors from London borough councils [gathered outside Parliament](#) to promote the "Keep the Levy Local" campaign, led by 'London Councils', addressing the potential introduction of overnight visitor levies in England. The group is calling for a national framework that would allow councils to retain at least 50% of levy revenues raised in their area, arguing this would help fund services that support the visitor economy, such as street cleaning, public realm maintenance, licensing and community safety. London Councils has also proposed that the remaining revenue could be allocated on a pan-London basis, jointly overseen by boroughs and the Mayor.

### Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March

- Belfast [hosted the inaugural](#) Northern Ireland Event Summit, bringing together more than 250 professionals from the events, hospitality and tourism sectors at W5. Supported by Belfast City Council and Tourism Northern Ireland, the summit focused on issues including event safety, licensing and the role of major events in regional economic growth, with industry and public sector representatives discussing closer collaboration to support the sector's continued development.

## Week ahead

### Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March

- The House of Lords will debate a Parliamentary Question brought forward by **Lord Sharpe (Con)** on the impact of introducing a visitor levy on the cost of domestic travel and holidays. **Henham to monitor.**
- The Public Accounts Committee will hold a session on 'Regulating for growth', with evidence from **Gareth Davies CB (Permanent Secretary, Department for Business and Trade)** and **Jessica Glover (Director General, Growth and Productivity, HM Treasury)**. **Henham to monitor transcript.**

### Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March

- Westminster Hall will host a debate on productivity and economic growth in the East Midlands, led by **James Naish (Lab, Rushcliffe)**. **Henham to monitor.**

### Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March

- PMQs. **Henham to monitor.**

## Media snapshot

### Corporate events bring £19bn to UK economy

Booking.com for business has compiled and analysed the latest industry statistics to reveal the growing economic impact of corporate events in the UK. The company has found that business event spending is

rising faster than inflation in the UK, with delegates staying longer and generating £19.3 billion of direct expenditure. - [Corporate Events](#)

*The impact of the Middle East conflict on the events industry*

British exhibition company ‘Informa’ has postponed around 10 business conferences scheduled in the Middle East due to ongoing regional conflict. CEO Stephen Carter, who recently moved his residency from the UK to the UAE, said the company would try to re-schedule to the second half of the year “to get to the other side of this disruption.” - [FT](#)

The Times have also run a similar story on this – [The Times](#)

*Reeves to make new push for greater single-market access*

Rachel Reeves is seeking closer UK-EU economic ties through sector-by-sector alignment with EU rules, which could reduce trade friction in key industries such as chemicals. While the article does not explicitly mention Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs), this regulatory alignment represents a potential pathway to similar outcomes, making it a possible opportunity to explore MRAs or other mechanisms for easing market access. EU resistance, including concerns over “cherry-picking” and budget contributions, will need to be managed carefully. - [FT](#)

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

**Get in touch**