

Events Industry Alliance End of Week Report

Friday 15th May

EIA update

Hi all,

Following the resignation of Wes Streeting, Andy Burnham has confirmed his intention to return to the House of Commons by standing in a Makerfield by-election, with Josh Simons stepping aside. A subsequent leadership challenge is now widely expected. Burnham's previous attempt to return via a by-election was blocked by Downing Street, but this time it is not expected to intervene; however, no date has yet been set, and the leadership contest has not been formally triggered. Alongside Burnham, figures such as Al Carns and Ed Miliband are also being discussed as potential candidates, whilst Starmer himself is also expected to run. In the meantime, Starmer will continue governing, potentially with a reshuffled ministerial team.

Meanwhile, in Henham's week, we have submitted EIA's response to the CMS Committee's tourism inquiry call for written evidence, focusing on the importance of business events to business tourism, and the impact business tourism has in regions, on the IS-8 growth sectors, and for the Government's 50 million visitor target.

We've also been planning further stakeholder engagement with DBT this week as well as drafting our "best practice" note on ministerial attendance at business events, which we intend to use as a basis for discussions with DBT colleagues.

We have received further responses to our ministerial attendance survey this week, but it would be great to maximise responses from EIA's members. For any organisations, that are not venues, that would like to list multiple events please use the [venue's version](#) of the survey and stipulate that you are an organiser instead. The standard survey for organisers can be found [here](#). Please do take a few minutes to respond, as the insights will help us better understand current government involvement in the events sector.

Best,
Alexander

Government this week

Monday 11th - Friday 15th May

- **Chris Bryant (Minister for Trade)** visited Spain and Finland this week, as the government aims to improve business mobility with the EU and its member states. In both countries, he spoke with his ministerial counterparts in trade and business.

Wednesday 13th May

- [The King's Speech](#) set out a largely pre-announced legislative programme against a highly unstable political backdrop. The agenda reflected a continued push for an "active state," focusing on housing, infrastructure, energy, and public ownership, while also signalling closer regulatory alignment with the EU in targeted areas.

The key bills relevant to the EIA were:

- Overnight Visitor Levy Bill: Which gives mayors and other local leaders powers to introduce a levy on overnight stays, broadly mirroring approaches already used in Scotland and Wales, with implementation details - particularly around ringfencing and revenue use - expected to be decisive for industry impact.
- European Partnership Bill: The Bill creates a legal framework allowing the government to implement agreements with the EU, including powers to align with EU single market standards where there is a perceived economic benefit, and to extend that framework to future treaties.
- Sporting Events Bill: Which gives ministers powers to determine what measures are appropriate for future sporting events and coordinating the necessary transport planning. The detail will come later through secondary legislation and ministerial direction. Although not directly relevant to the EIA, it signals a willingness to create bespoke frameworks to support major events, coordinate across departments, and treat event infrastructure as a policy problem worth solving.

What happened in Parliament

Thursday 14th May

- In a debate on the '[Economic growth, trade and EU partnership](#)' section of the King's Speech, **Lord Frost (NOAF)** criticised the European Partnership Bill, calling it the "European subordination Bill" and arguing it would "deprive this Parliament of any say" by locking the UK into accepting EU law and dynamic alignment. He also highlighted what he said were failures against manifesto commitments, including that "on help for touring artists, they have got nothing." In response, **Baroness Bi (Lab)** argued the UK faces a strategic choice between deregulation and "closer dynamic alignment with the European Union," which she supported as the better route for growth and economic resilience.

Regional news

Tuesday 12th May

- Rhun ap Iorwerth was sworn in as First Minister of Wales after Plaid Cymru secured the largest share of votes across Wales and became the biggest party in the Senedd. Reform UK, however, recorded the strongest surge in support, increasing its vote share by around 28 percentage points compared to 2021. The result marks a significant political shift in Wales, with Labour losing ground and a far more fragmented Senedd expected to follow.

Wednesday 13th May

- The [All-Energy Exhibition and Conference](#), the UK's largest dedicated renewables and clean-energy exhibition, celebrated its 25th anniversary edition at the SEC Glasgow with approximately 13,000 attendees. The event had significant ministerial attendance with **Michael Shanks (Minister for Energy)** giving an address at the start of the conference.

Week ahead

Monday 18th April

- The Commons will debate on the Address 'Backing Business to Create Economic Growth'

Tuesday 19th April

- The [Lords European Affairs Committee](#) will hold oral evidence on 'Dynamic alignment', with witnesses including **Tom Bradshaw (President, National Farmers' Union)**, **Richard Ballantyne**

(Chief Executive, British Ports Association) and Professor Emily Lydgate (UK Trade Policy Observatory).

- The Economic Affairs Committee will hold oral evidence on 'Fiscal devolution in England' witnesses include **Paul Johnson, Provost (The Queen's College, University of Oxford)**

Wednesday 20th April

- PMQs. **Henham to monitor.**

Thursday 21st April

- Business and Trade OPQs. **Henham to monitor.**
- The Lords will enter the final day of debating the King's Speech, with focus on international relations.

Media snapshot

King's Speech visitor levy plans put hospitality industry in focus

Conference News [notes](#) that the Overnight Visitor Levy Bill is drawing attention across the sector, amid concerns that higher accommodation costs could potentially undermine conference and exhibition attendance in England. There is also concern over the possibility of differing arrangements across England, with some regions introducing levies while others do not, potentially affecting visitor demand between destinations. Industry bodies have called for clarity on fund allocation and possible business travel exemptions.

New UK research reveals face-to-face is vital in AI-enabled world

New research [commissioned by The Meetings Show](#) finds that 62% of UK business leaders believe AI is actually increasing the need for human meetings and alignment, rather than replacing them. The UK Productivity Gap Index reports that businesses are losing around 25 working days a year due to slow or unclear decision-making, with 47% saying meetings often end without clear outcomes and half reporting projects regularly stall. Despite AI adoption, 65% of leaders say complex or sensitive decisions are still made faster in person, reinforcing the role of face-to-face meetings in resolving operational complexity.

Event Tech Atlas 2.0 enhances decision-making tools for event planners and suppliers

Event Tech Atlas (ETA) has [launched its 2.0 update](#), introducing new tools aimed at helping event planners and suppliers better manage and compare event technology. Key additions include a Tech Stack Tracker for monitoring tools, costs and renewals, AI-powered search, and expanded listing management features that allow multiple users and clearer visibility of connected products and integrations. The update also adds peer review groups and improved resource dashboards, positioning ETA as a more collaborative, data-driven decision-support platform for the business events industry.

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

[Get in touch](#)

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