

Events Industry Alliance End of Week Report

Friday 20th March

EIA update

This week the Henham team met with Jeremy Rees at ExCeL London to discuss the venue's priorities and opportunities to strengthen alignment across the events ecosystem. We also secured an early-April meeting with a senior DBT official to discuss the sector's contribution to the Government's Industrial Strategy, including potential UK-EU regulatory cooperation. The team has begun refreshing the EIA's stakeholder map to ensure it captures the most relevant parliamentary, departmental and regional actors ahead of the next phase of engagement. Preparations are also underway for next week's strategy session, where we will begin outlining the priorities for the months ahead.

Government this week

Tuesday 17th March

- As set out in our note earlier this week, **the Chancellor** used the [Mais Lecture](#) to signal what has become widely referred to as a "Brexit reset" - outlining a strategic shift towards closer UK-EU cooperation in areas such as chemicals and aerospace, with Ministers now exploring where duplicated regulatory regimes can be removed. Negotiations with the EU will begin this summer, forming the first wave of post-Brexit alignment and creating a potential opening for reducing friction for UK industries reliant on cross-border trade. A shift towards closer UK-EU cooperation may also support progress on a Mutual Recognition Agreement, offering a route to reducing the frictions that currently affect European exhibitors at UK events. Alongside this, Reeves set out her broader economic strategy centred on a partnership between the state and private sector, with AI investment, regional growth, and fiscal devolution - including giving mayors a share of national tax revenues and a £2.3bn City Investment Fund.

Thursday 19th March

- The Treasury [set out the next phase](#) of its 'Northern Growth Strategy', confirming £2.3bn in new City Investment Funds for large-scale regeneration across Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield and the North East, underpinned by Northern Powerhouse Rail. Ministers also announced £150m for industrial cluster partnerships and launched work on a fiscal devolution roadmap to give mayors a share of national tax revenues. An autumn update will follow.

What happened in Parliament

Monday 16th March

- During a House of Lords debate on the UK Domestic Visitor Levy, **Lord Sharpe (Con)** [raised concerns](#) that introducing a levy would increase the cost of domestic holidays and harm the tourism economy, citing analysis suggesting reduced visitor numbers, lower tourism spend and job losses. **Baroness Taylor (Lords Minister for Housing and Local Government)** responded that the policy is still under development and would be a devolved power for mayors, arguing that international evidence suggests modest levies have minimal impact on visitor numbers and can help fund local growth and improvements.

Wednesday 18th March

- During a House of Lords debate on the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, **Lord Walker (Lab)** [pressed the Government](#) on the need for a “fairer” business rates system noting that many businesses struggle under the current “Victorian” business rates, and urged consideration of an online sales tax to better balance the burden between brick-and-mortar retailers and online giants. **Baroness Taylor** responded that the Government has already taken steps to ease business rates: the recent Budget permanently cut the business rates multipliers, with no cash cap on relief, meaning three-quarters of retail/hospitality premises will see bills frozen or fall. She added that the Government is “carefully considering” evidence from a call for evidence on business rates, which will inform any future reforms including the idea of an online sales tax.

Written questions

Monday 16th March

- **James Cleverly (Con, Braintree)** [asked](#) what assessment the Chancellor has made of the potential impact on the hospitality industry of recent government policies.
 - **Dan Tomlinson (Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury)** said that the Government values the hospitality sector’s contribution to high streets and the wider economy and carefully considers policy impacts on the sector during decision-making. Any changes are accompanied by impact assessments published at Budget or other fiscal events, as per usual practice. Ministers regularly meet hospitality industry representatives to discuss challenges they face. The Government continues to provide targeted support to hospitality through the tax system and other measures, and keeps all taxes under review, making further decisions at future Budgets as appropriate.
- **Lord Mott (Con)** [asked](#) the Cabinet Office what assessment it has made of the number of UK hospitality businesses that have ceased trading since November 2024.
 - **Baroness Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office)** answered that an ONS analysis showed 6,145 accommodation and food businesses closed in Q4 2024, rising to 6,485 in Q4 2025. She noted that these figures cover accommodation and food services

overall because hospitality cannot be separately identified in the quarterly data.

Tuesday 17th March

- **Chris Evans (Lab, Caerphilly)** [asked](#) the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps her Department can take to communicate more clearly and promptly with businesses about rising operating costs.
 - **Blair McDougall (Minister for Small Business)** replied that ministers and officials work closely with SMEs and trade bodies to ensure information on operating costs and Government support is communicated through established channels (including the *Backing Your Business* campaign). He added that the Government is reducing regulatory burdens by £5.6 billion by the end of this Parliament and highlighted a £4.3 billion support package over three years to help businesses facing increases in business rates bills.

Regional news

Saturday 14th March

- A major Scottish events organiser, Ourea Events, has [ceased trading](#), leading to the cancellation of several high-profile endurance races including Skyline Scotland. The company cited the lasting financial impact of Covid-19, reduced international participation following Brexit and rising costs linked to the cost-of-living crisis as key pressures. The collapse has raised wider concerns about the financial sustainability of large-scale outdoor and participation events in Scotland.

Tuesday 17th March

- Camden Council [announced its support](#) for London Councils' "Keep the Levy Local" campaign, which urges that London boroughs retain at least 50% of any future overnight tourist levy's revenue for local use. The campaign insists that if a visitor levy is introduced in London, at least half of the funds should be reinvested directly into the communities that generate them. Cllr. Camron Aref-Adib, argued that while tourism is vital to London's economy, it also puts immense pressure on local services.

Thursday 19th March

- As part of the [Belfast Region City Deal initiative](#), Newry, Mourne and Down District is moving ahead with major regeneration projects, including plans for a new Theatre and Conference Centre in Newry. The City Deal investment across the region is expected to create thousands of jobs and significantly boost tourism and the wider economy over the next decade.

Week ahead

Monday 23rd March

- The Northern Culture APPG will host an evidence session on cultural capital and Metro Mayor powers. Witnesses include **Shanaz Gulzar (Creative Director, Bradford 2025)** and **Max May (CEO, Hey Creative)**

Tuesday 24th March

- APPG on Welsh Hospitality, Events, Food & Drink - update on business trends across Wales' hospitality and events sectors.

Wednesday 25th March

- PMQs. **Henham to monitor.**
- The APPG for Events will host its AGM. This will include election of officers and review of plans for the year ahead. **Henham to monitor for updates.**
- A Westminster Hall Debate on the proposed visitor levy in England, led by **Damian Hinds (Con, East Hampshire).**
- APPG for London will host a session on supporting London's Tourism Economy. Speakers include **Claire Holland (Chair, London Councils), Antonia Stratford (Head of PA, Heart of London Business Alliance)** and **Laura Chiplin (Director of Third-Party Events & Euro 2028, Tottenham Hotspur)**

Media snapshot

Business of Events expands 2026 partnership network

The Business of Events [has announced](#) its 2026 partner line-up, adding the Edinburgh International Conference Centre and The Meetings Show alongside existing partners including VisitBritain, VisitScotland Business Events, ICC Wales, MeetEngland and the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Events. The organisation said the expanded network will strengthen its ability to convene the global business events community, support policy and advocacy work, and ensure its priorities reflect the opportunities and challenges facing destinations and organisers across economic growth, skills, sustainability and innovation.

ExCeL London strengthens operations leadership amid expansion

ExCeL London [has unveiled four new senior director roles](#) within its Operations Leadership Team, aimed at strengthening venue performance, resilience and customer experience as it responds to record client demand and the success of its new 25,000sqm ICC expansion, which is already hosting a strong programme including 10 major international congresses in 2026. The restructuring, led by **COO James Mark**, introduces new appointments including **Chris Scott OBE (Safety, Security & Resilience), Kerrie Kemp (Event & Venue Experience), Lee Lacey (Facilities & Estates)** and **Tom Edwards (Venue Services).**

KBSA moves annual conference to May to avoid German trade show competition

The Kitchen Bathroom Bedroom Specialists Association (KBSA) has [announced that its annual conference](#) will move from its traditional autumn slot to May 2027, with the decision driven in part by increased competition for delegates' time from major international trade exhibitions in Germany alongside other autumn pressures such as new product launches and the run-up to Christmas trading.

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

[Get in touch](#)