Events Industry Alliance End of Week Report

Friday 23rd October

EIA update

- The Budget takes place next Wednesday (28th October).
- IS8 document outreach continues, with a press release and LinkedIn posts going live this week.
- A briefing has been prepared for the Wales Business Events and Economic Growth Roundtable, which Rachel Parker (AEV) and Anna Golden (AEO) will be attending.

Hi all,

As we approach next week's Budget, speculation continues to run rife on what it may contain. The prevailing view is that it will be more business-friendly than many had feared a Burnham Budget would be; however, it is most likely to be a "holding Budget", with many of Burnham's bigger policy agenda items not yet fleshed out enough to be covered. The multi-year spending review that will come later in 2027 is predicted to be the more detailed and impactful fiscal event for this administration. For next week, it appears Capital Gains Tax will not rise, but there will be more allocated to regional funding. We will include an update on the measures announced in the Budget in next week's newsletter.

This week, we continued to push the IS8 document out to MPs, SpAds, and other relevant stakeholders. It will be circulated via your association's newsletter as well. We've also published a press release and posted about it on LinkedIn, and will follow up with MPs in the coming weeks as a result. Thank you again to everyone who contributed to the document, helping make the case for business events as key infrastructure for the Industrial Strategy.

We're continuing to incorporate feedback from the Board on our approach to the UK National Events Strategy that the Government has committed to publishing. What the chapter for business events should contain and how we can use this to push other parts of the agenda forward will be key to our work in the coming months.

Finally, thank you again to the ESSA members who have reached out to their MPs. Responses continue to come in, and it's great to see so many. If you get a response from your MP, do let Andrew or us know, as we can provide a briefing ahead of the meeting on the MP and anything else it might be useful to know. Well done on the outreach!

Best,
Bea

Government this week

Wednesday 21st October

- The Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade updated its Industrial Strategy Jobs Plans page, which commits the Government to working with industry, trade unions, local partners and wider stakeholders to develop plans that address the workforce needs of each of the eight growth-driving sectors. In the plans published so far, there is no mention of business events.

Thursday 22nd October

- The Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade updated its timeline for the Plan to Make Work Pay and the Employment Rights Act 2025. On 30th October, employers face a new duty to take "all reasonable steps" to prevent sexual harassment, including by third parties, alongside trade union access and recognition reforms. On 1st January 2027, the unfair dismissal qualifying period falls to six months and tipping law is strengthened. Timings for the zero hours reforms (guaranteed hours and payment for short-notice shift changes) will be updated after consultation. This is relevant to members who rely on temporary and freelance event crews.

What happened in Parliament

Tuesday 20th October

- During the Public Bill Committee on the Sporting Events Bill, **Louie French (Con, Old Bexley and Sidcup)** argued, on his proposed new clause 7 for a review of economic policies on hosting major events, that "the introduction of the hospitality tax, the tourism tax and the like are significant pressures on businesses that would normally be in a position to benefit from hosting such tournaments." This clause was rejected.
    - **Stephanie Peacock (Minister for Sport, Tourism, Place and Digital Government)** responded to Mr French's new clause 8 by committing the Government to publishing a UK national events strategy by spring 2027. She said it would span "culture, sport, live music, ceremonial and business events" and "will recognise the importance of events in driving economic growth". Mr French withdrew the clause.

Written questions

Monday 19th October

- **Steve Darling (LD, Torbay)** asked the Chancellor whether the Treasury will publish an impact assessment on the overnight visitor levy.
    - **James Murray (Financial Secretary to the Treasury)** replied that "the impact of the Overnight Visitor Levy will largely be determined by local decisions" and that mayors and local leaders will decide whether a levy is right for their area. He did not say whether an assessment would be published.

- **Steve Darling** asked the Culture Secretary whether her department plans to publish a visitor economy growth strategy**.**
    - **Stephanie Peacock (Minister for Sport, Tourism, Place and Digital Government)** said the Government "is committed to publishing a Visitor Economy Growth Strategy which will set out a long-term, place-based plan to increase visitor flows across the UK". No date was given.

Wednesday 21st October

- **Jim Shannon (DUP, Strangford)** asked the Chancellor what discussions he had with stakeholders before the decision to introduce tourist taxes.
    - **James Murray (Financial Secretary to the Treasury)** replied that at Budget 2025 the Government announced an intention to empower local leaders to introduce a visitor levy. He said the 10th September consultation response drew on feedback from the accommodation sector, local government and members of the public.

Week ahead

Tuesday 27th October

- The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee will take oral evidence in its tourism inquiry in two panels. The first hears from Anthony Breach (Director of Research and Policy, Centre for Cities),

Bernard Donoghue OBE (Director, Association of Leading Visitor Attractions) and Alistair Handyside MBE (Executive Chair, Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK). The second hears from Laura Citron OBE (Chief Executive, London & Partners), Joss Croft OBE (Chair, Tourism Alliance) and Merryn Kidd (Chair, Somerset and Exmoor Local Visitor Economy Partnership).

Wednesday 28th October

- Prime Minister's Questions. **Henham to monitor.**
- The Chancellor, John Healey, will deliver the Budget statement after PMQs. Henham will send a note on the Budget.

Thursday 29th October to Tuesday 3rd November

- The Budget debate continues on Thursday 29th October and Monday 2nd November, and concludes on Tuesday 3rd November.

Wednesday 4th November

- The Commons takes the remaining stages of the Sporting Events Bill [Lords]. **Henham to monitor.**
- Both Houses then rise for the November recess at the close of business. The Commons returns on Tuesday 10th November and the Lords on Monday 9th November.

Regional News

Burnham to give mayors power to override councils for tourism levy

The Times reports that Prime Minister Andy Burnham told a virtual meeting of mayors, as part of the National Economic Council, that he is "determined" to give mayors the authority to overrule local councils on the overnight visitor levy. Under present proposals, councils can block a mayor's levy (capped at 5%) if two-thirds of them are opposed. The Times understands he said legislation will be tabled in the coming weeks, with local consultations to follow and a rollout estimated for January 2028. Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London) asked for authorities to be able to start taxing overnight stays by the middle of next year. Kim McGuinness (Mayor of the North East) and Tracy Brabin (Mayor of West Yorkshire) described "significant opposition" to the levy in their areas. The same report says UKHospitality estimates the levy would mean 12 million fewer visits and 33,000 job losses. It also says Mr Burnham told mayors the Budget will include more fiscal devolution, and that mayors will receive a share of business rates raised in their areas from the spring, followed by a devolved share of income tax from 2028.

Media snapshot

UKHospitality seeks a Budget tax cut

Allen Simpson (Chief Executive, UKHospitality) has called the tourist tax "socially regressive" and asked for a VAT cut to 10%, a business rates solution (particularly for hotels), National Insurance changes and a rollback of what it calls the "holiday tax".

Event marketing budgets rise at fastest rate in over two years

The IPA Bellwether Report for the third quarter of 2026 found the net balance of companies raising event budgets rose from +11.0% to +15.1%, the highest in nine quarters.

Excel London reports a rise in US events

James Rees (Executive Director, Excel London) said the venue has hosted 60% more US events over the past 18 months, with 55% of them run by major US technology companies. The venue is also building a £220m

expansion adding 25,000sqm. These are the venue's own figures, as reported by Exhibition News (19th October), and have not been independently verified.

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

Get in touch

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