

Events Industry Alliance End of Week Report

Friday 27th March

EIA update

This week was a significant one, with Henham and the EIA holding our strategy session on Tuesday. It marked the start of shaping priorities for the months ahead and setting measurable goals to progress the EIA's agenda within Government. We also held a productive meeting with Dame Harriet Baldwin (Shadow Minister for Business and Trade), during which we discussed flagship business events that could benefit from ministerial attendance.

Government this week

Tuesday 24th March

- The Department of Business and Trade [brought out reforms](#) to crack down on late payments to small businesses, introducing the toughest late-payment laws in the G7. New measures will impose a 60-day limit on payment terms, mandate interest on overdue invoices, and empower the Small Business Commissioner to issue multi-million-pound fines against large companies that pay suppliers late. These changes aim to improve cashflow for SMEs (including event and hospitality firms) and tackle a problem that causes dozens of UK businesses to close every week.

What happened in Parliament

Monday 23rd March

- The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Events [announced](#) it will hold its first, invitation only, industry evidence session on 13th April in Parliament. The 90-minute roundtable has been designed to open a formal dialogue between parliamentarians and the events sector, giving industry leaders a direct platform to set out the key issues, challenges and opportunities facing their organisations. The APPG will use the evidence gathered to inform its policy priorities and future parliamentary engagement.

Tuesday 24th March

- The Culture, Media and Sport Committee [held a session](#) on major events strategy and event safety.
- **Rebecca Edser (VisitScotland)** argued that a UK-level major events strategy could add value by providing clearer routes into government, long-term funding certainty, and more consistent impact measurement, while cautioning that any UK approach must not override devolved or local strategies. She also warned that locally introduced visitor levies could affect cities' competitiveness when bidding for major events, depending on how revenues are applied, noting there is no automatic requirement for funds to be ring-fenced for events or visitor economy infrastructure. She also cautioned that a UK strategy focused only on the largest events risks benefiting "the few, not the many", and said national approaches must support the full events pyramid.
- **Anne Marie Chebib (UK Crowd Management Association)** called for a national framework or oversight body for major event safety, including clearer guidance on SAG membership, training and competencies, and warned against politicisation of safety decision-making. She and **Ken Scott MBE (Sports Grounds Safety Authority)** both highlighted challenges around "Zone Ex" areas outside venues, noting unclear ownership, fragmented responsibility and the fact that Martyn's Law does not cover external public realm risks.

Wednesday 25th March

- During a Westminster Hall debate on the proposed visitor levy in England, **Damian Hinds (Con, East Hampshire)** argued the levy would undermine international competitiveness, add costs to an already heavily taxed tourism and hospitality sector, and risk deterring inbound tourism, which he described as a major UK export and source of growth. In response, **Alison McGovern (Minister for Local Government)** said the levy is intended as a devolved power for mayors, enabling local leaders to raise revenue for visitor economy infrastructure and services, stressing that use of the levy would be optional, locally determined and subject to consultation. She further acknowledged concerns raised by MPs about ringfencing, exemptions and impacts on affordability, confirming that final design decisions - including exemptions and treatment of short term lets - will be set out following consultation and through future legislation.

Written questions

Tuesday 24th March

- **Liz Jarvis (LD, Eastleigh)** [asked](#) the Minister for the Cabinet Office what discussions had taken place with the Department for Transport (DfT) regarding DfT's priorities for the 2026 UK–EU summit.
 - **Nick Thomas-Symonds (The Paymaster General)** said that Cabinet Office Ministers and officials have regular and ongoing discussions with counterparts across the Department for Transport regarding a wide range of policy issues, including preparations for the upcoming 2026 UK-EU summit. These discussions are facilitated through established Cabinet committee structures.

Wednesday 25th March

- **Dr Scott Arthur (Lab, Edinburgh South West)** [asked](#) the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of Live Nation Entertainment and its subsidiary Ticketmaster controlling a majority share of the UK live event ticketing market on competition and consumer outcomes.
 - **Kate Dearden (Minister for Consumer Protection)** said it is the role of the CMA (Competition Market Authority) to examine potential breaches of competition law, including abuse of a dominant position, and investigate markets if it thinks there are competition or consumer problems. As an independent authority, the CMA has discretion to investigate competition matters which, according to its prioritisation principles, it considers most appropriate.

Thursday 26th March

- **Sir Julian Smith (Con, Skipton and Ripon)** [asked](#) the Housing, Communities & Local Government Secretary to assess the potential impact of introducing an overnight visitor levy on (a) the hospitality sector and (b) local employment levels.
 - **Alison McGovern (Minister for Local Government)** said that impacts will depend on local decisions. Under new devolution plans, mayors and local leaders will decide whether to introduce a tourist levy, after consulting locally on proposals. The precise design and scope of the visitor levy power is still being developed, and the Government will publish its response to the recent consultation (closed Feb 2026) in due course.
- **Cameron Thomas (LD, Tewkesbury)** [asked](#) the Culture, Media & Sport Secretary what steps are being taken to ensure UK artists can tour in Europe viably, addressing challenges like visas, work permits, and transporting equipment post-Brexit.
 - **Ian Murray** (Minister for Creative Industries, Media and Arts) said that the Government has “reset our relationship with the EU” and is committed to improving conditions for touring artists. He noted that government is continuing to engage with the European Commission, EU Member States, and industry stakeholders to address the remaining challenges for touring professionals and staff. This work is described as mutually beneficial, aiming to help UK artists contribute to Europe’s cultural landscape and to support shared growth in the creative sector.

Tuesday 24th March

- The Scottish Parliament [approved changes](#) to the visitor levy system allowing councils to charge either a fixed fee or a percentage on overnight stays, giving greater flexibility than the original 2024 law, which only permitted percentage-based levies. The change aims to help local authorities better fund tourism-related services while improving transparency and administration. Several cities - including Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen - are preparing to introduce percentage-based visitor levies, though they may now switch to fixed charges under the new rules.
- A [major funding package](#) of almost £25 million was announced for Mid Wales to support economic growth and improve regional connectivity. This includes £13 million for transport upgrades (covering roads, public transport, active travel routes and EV charging) and around £11.9 million from the UK and Welsh Governments for Mid Wales Growth Deal projects. Planned developments include enhancing visitor experiences at key sites such as the Elan Valley Lakes, redeveloping the Centre for Alternative Technology near Machynlleth, and supporting projects like the Montgomery Canal restoration. Zoe Hawkins, chief executive of Mid Wales Tourism, welcomed the funding for the tourism and hospitality sector.

Thursday 26th March

- Cardiff Council [has approved](#) a Visitor Levy, set to take effect from April 2027, following a public consultation in which 62% of nearly 2,000 respondents supported the proposal. The levy will apply to overnight stays across hotels, guesthouses, hostels, Airbnb properties, campsites, and temporary event accommodation, raising an estimated £3.5 million annually to be reinvested in tourism promotion, infrastructure, and visitor experience.

Week ahead

Parliament has now entered recess; both Houses will return on Monday 13th April.

Media snapshot

NEC Leadership Team Update

On Wednesday, the NEC [announced](#) a realignment of its leadership to support its next phase of strategic growth. Ian Taylor assumes the role of Chief Operating Officer, leveraging his operational track record across flagship events and core exhibitions, while Sarah Harvey is appointed Deputy CEO and Managing Director of Exhibitions, consolidating responsibility for both the core platform and future growth initiatives, including the NEC Campus. CEO Paul Reeve emphasises that these changes strengthen operational capabilities and provide unified leadership to drive sustained, scalable growth.

Exhibition Trends for 2026: Why Delivery Matters More Than Ever

An article on 2026 exhibition trends [highlights a clear shift](#) in the sector from standard, graphics-heavy stands to more purpose-led environments designed to drive engagement and interaction. It notes that effective stands are now conceived as live, multi-functional spaces that support demonstrations and content creation, increasing the importance of strong technical delivery, logistics, and reliable execution in ensuring a seamless visitor experience and successful brand impact.

Whitepaper released to help organisers prepare for Martyn's Law

Ginger Owl Productions, a live events company and provider of staffing and event management software, has [released a whitepaper](#) to help event organisers understand the implications of Martyn's Law, entitled 'Accreditation Systems & Martyn's Law: Practical Considerations for the UK Events Sector'. Although full official guidance from government is yet to be released, the paper uses industry knowledge to cover: The UK festival and live events landscape, an overview of Martyn's Law itself including the tiered approach, and challenges organisers are now likely to face.

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

Get in touch

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