

Events Industry Alliance End of Week Report

Friday 3rd July

EIA update

Hi all,

On Monday, Andy Burnham gave his first major speech as PM-in-waiting from Manchester, three weeks before he is expected to enter Number 10 on 20th July. The speech revolved around Burnham's familiar analysis that the UK is being held back by an overcentralisation of power in Whitehall, a reduction of capacity and resources at the local level, a loss of public control over the economy, and an adversarial political culture that rewards party factionalism. His proposed solution was to go further on devolution, more state intervention in the economy to reduce the cost of utilities and basic goods, and a new, more inclusive type of politics.

It's also an exciting time for our own Parliamentary activity – with the Culture, Media and Sport Committee's 'Major Events' report expected on Monday. We have prepared a press release to be sent out on the day, which we are hoping will welcome the report's recommendations around the need for ministers to adopt a more structured approach to attending major events, as well as recognising the sector's economic potential. This can be a significant moment for our asks to Government, and we will look for any opportunities of further engagement that arises out of it.

We are also preparing for our double header of presentations on Thursday which include both the ESSA AGM and the AEO/AEV CEO Summit. We're really looking forward to seeing you all in Hertfordshire and Northamptonshire alike!

On the Industrial Strategy front, we have sent briefing materials to the Department for Business and Trade, including an overview of major UK trade shows and exhibitions across the eight Industrial Strategy sectors, with notes on their relevance to DBT's work. As a follow up piece of work, we are also looking to demonstrate the value of major events organised by UK companies abroad, and the platform these provide for UK firms globally.

Best,
Alexander

Government this week

Thursday 2nd July

- The Department for Culture, Media and Sport signed a five-year UK-Greece tourism [Memorandum of Understanding](#). **Stephanie Peacock (Minister for Sport, Tourism, Civil Society and Youth)** and her Greek counterpart agreed cooperation across eight areas including tourism promotion, investment, digitalisation and vocational training. The MoU explicitly names collaboration on "fairs, exhibitions, seminars and other events". It also confirmed that the Government will set out its plans to grow the visitor economy and strengthen its relationship with the EU in the forthcoming Visitor Economy Growth Strategy.

What happened in Parliament

Tuesday 30th June

- During an Estimates Day debate on the spending of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on sport and youth services, **Damian Hinds (Con, East Hampshire)** [stated that](#) he was “gobsmacked by the decision to cut the business events growth programme” as it cost relatively little but drives “billions of pounds’ worth of contribution to the economy”.
 - **Stephanie Peacock (Minister for Sport, Tourism, Civil Society and Youth)** said that as the debate centres on sports and youth she will focus her responses to opposition only around those subjects, adding that she will instead write to members who raised other issues.

Thursday 2nd July

- During [Business and Trade Oral Parliamentary Questions](#), **Richard Baker (Labour, Glenrothes and Mid Fife)** said that the EU is a key trading partner for Scotland and asked that while we wait for a new date for the EU summit, what work is being done.
 - **Chris Bryant (Minister for Trade Policy)** said that the UK’s trade in goods has fallen with the EU but that the UK’s trade in services has increased. Bryant said that the previous Government signed a terrible deal with the EU and that the Government is committed to undoing this.
- **Andrew George (Lib Dem, St Ives)** also noted that many hospitality businesses will fail within the next 12 months due to the high tax burden, asking if the Minister would talk to Treasury ministers to find a solution to this?
 - **Kate Dearden (Minister for Employment Rights and Consumer Protection)** said that the Government is permanently reducing business rates multipliers for retail, hospitality and leisure properties and the Government has increased hospitality support fund to support larger projects. Dearden said she is committed to work in partnership with the sector, including through the Hospitality Sector Council.

Written Questions

Wednesday 1st July

- **Alex Brewer (LD, North East Hampshire)** [asked](#) the Department for Business and Trade to compare the impact of the pandemic with that of business rates and National Insurance rises on small firms.
 - **Blair McDougall (Minister for Small Business and Economic Transformation)** replied that the Government had made no such assessment but pointed to the Valuation Office Agency’s updated 2026 revaluation property values published at the Budget and the permanently lower retail, hospitality and leisure multipliers in force from April 2026.

Regional news

National Audit Office report warns of tension over devolution

On Wednesday, the National Audit Office published a report titled ‘[Devolution in England: funding and accountability](#)’, which warned of tension between mayoral strategic authorities’ expectations of autonomy and the continuing control of funding by Whitehall departments. It concludes that this tension will need to be resolved, and local accountability arrangements substantially strengthened and tested, before the devolution of funding and accountability can be considered to be working effectively to support improved outcomes for local people.

Week ahead

Tuesday 7th July

- The Business of Events holds its 2026 Policy Forum at IET London, with an opening address from Tourism Minister **Stephanie Peacock** and contributions from **Martin Rhodes (APPG for Events Chair)** and **CMS Committee Chair Dame Caroline Dinenage**.
- The Business and Trade Committee will hold a session on 'The work of the Department'. Witnesses include **Peter Kyle (Secretary of State)** and **Amanda Brooks (Interim Permanent Secretary)**.

Wednesday 8th July

- PMQs. **Henham to monitor**.
- **The Business and Trade Committee** will hold a session on 'Artificial Intelligence, business and the future of the workforce'. Witnesses include **Kate Dearden (Minister for Employment Rights and Consumer Protection)**, **Blair McDougall (Minister for Small Business, Department for Business and Trade)** and **Kanishka Narayan (Minister for AI and Online Safety, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology)**

Media snapshot

BCD survey shows events market has stabilized, but it's still demanding.

BCD Meetings & Events' 2026 Global Client Survey [shows](#) the industry has stabilised post-disruption but is now operating under tighter cost pressures and increased demand for measurable ROI. While budgets, event volume and size are largely holding steady, organisations are focusing on extracting more value from existing events, with 36% citing ROI as a key internal driver. The findings highlight a shift toward optimisation, strategic partnerships and more practical sustainability efforts, as events are increasingly judged on business impact rather than activity.

EU push for deal with the UK in time for Burnham's premiership

[Politico report](#) that the EU is seeking to accelerate negotiations on a post-Brexit reset with the UK despite Keir Starmer's resignation, with priority areas including sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) rules, emissions trading alignment and a reciprocal youth mobility scheme. A postponed EU-UK summit is expected to be rescheduled for October, as Brussels looks to secure agreements quickly amid political uncertainty and the rise of Reform. UK-EU Relations Minister Nick Thomas-Symonds travelled to Brussels on Wednesday to maintain momentum, although further technical work is required across trade facilitation, defence participation and electricity market integration.

Hosts announced for The Business of Events Policy Forum 2026

Earlier this week The Business of Events [announced](#) that BBC journalist Lucy Grey will host its 2026 Policy Forum on 7th July. Also joining the programme is public safety campaigner Figen Murray OBE, who will be sharing insights into the journey to Martyn's Law, while accessibility advocate Dr Shani Dhanda will present a session on closing the accessibility gap in events, highlighting the opportunities and responsibilities facing organisers and venues.

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

Get in touch

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