

Events Industry Alliance End of Week Report

Thursday 3rd September

EIA update

- **AEO Conference took place this week at the Vox, NEC Birmingham, with briefings prepared for Solihull councillors on the sector's local economic impact.**
- **Parliamentary outreach continues as conference season kicks off.**

Hi all,

A very happy #ChooseEvents week to all EIA members! Choose Events is not only an important initiative, but a timely one this year, with a prime minister outspoken about skills and addressing local and regional needs. If you'd like to share your story of how you got into events to inspire others to choose it as a career, the AEO has resources [here](#).

Parliament has returned for two weeks, before rising again on the 16th for party conferences barring Reform's. Those of you at the AEO's conference in Birmingham today may have noticed that the NEC was also being used by those in teal. We're sure the AEO conference was better! Ahead of the conference we prepared briefing materials on the local economic impact of the events industry for Solihull Council's Lead Councillor Karen Grinsell and Economy and Business portfolio holder Heather Delaney.

Outside of Birmingham, a first draft of the Budget submission has been prepared ahead of next week's Wednesday deadline. Thank you to all who fed in their concerns and responses. While many of our main asks through our outreach work are less Treasury and Budget focused – such as moving business events to BIST – we still want to take the opportunity to raise the cumulative cost some policies and its impact on events and conducting business more generally – and to remind the HMT team about the importance of the sector.

Finally, it's been great to hear that the ESSA outreach effort is bearing some fruit! This week we put together a quick briefing for Andy Slaughter MP (home MP for Olympia London, too) off the back of an ESSA member's email, and for an in person meeting secured with another MP. We really appreciate all members pitching in and helping build relationships with MPs across the country. If you have any questions or would like any help with follow up, please do get in touch!

Best,
Bea

Government this week

Monday 1st September

- DCMS announced its first "Freelance Champions," Leila D'Aronville and Lizzie Crump, to represent the creative industries' self-employed workforce on the Creative Industries Council. Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy said: "The creative industries are built on the talent and dedication of freelancers, from runners on film sets to session musicians in recording studios." Andy Burnham said the UK [should take a more ambitious approach](#) to strengthening ties with the European Union, including closer cooperation on education, culture, defence and security. UK and EU officials are

preparing for an autumn summit with Ursula von der Leyen, where agreements on trade alignment and a youth mobility scheme are expected to be finalised. Discussions may involve concessions such as reduced tuition fees for EU students, though the Prime Minister has ruled out rejoining the EU despite previously expressing support for it.

- The UK's accession to the [CPTPP trading bloc](#) took full effect with Canada's ratification, extending business-visitor stay limits for UK businesses operating in Canada from 90 days to up to six months.

Tuesday 2nd September

- A [£10 million Hospitality Grant Scheme](#) was launched for independent pubs, restaurants and cafés, reiterating that pubs, clubs and live music venues are set to receive a 20% cut to business rates bills from April.

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- A [Statement of Changes to the Immigration Rules \(HC 584\)](#) was laid before Parliament, extending the list of permitted business-visitor activities to include workshops and debates, adding a new “skills competitions” category, and expanding provision for entertainment staff supporting events in the UK. The changes take effect 8th October.

What happened in Parliament

Parliament returned from summer recess on Tuesday 1st September.

Wednesday 2nd September

- The [Northern Ireland Affairs Committee](#) held its session on the taxation of the hospitality and tourism sectors, examining the case for a VAT cut for Northern Ireland's hospitality industry following the Republic of Ireland's reduction on food services from 13.5% to 9%. A transcript has not yet been published.

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- DCMS Oral Questions on Thursday were dominated by the overnight visitor levy and the business rates review for pubs and hotels. **Jessica Toale MP (Lab, Bournemouth West)** said that hotels in her constituency are largely in favour of an overnight visitor levy as long as the money is ringfenced for tourism purposes. **James Wild MP (Con, North West Norfolk), shadow DCMS minister**, argued it was a holiday tax that will hammer the industry. **Tourism Minister Stephanie Peacock** confirmed the pubs and hotels business rates review [“has been welcomed by a number of people, including the CEO of UKHospitality.”](#) and said there is “a strong case for any money raised [from a visitor levy] to be reinvested in tourism.”

Written questions

Tuesday 2nd September

- Charlie Dewhurst (Con, Bridlington and The Wolds) [asked](#) the Secretary of State for Wales whether he has had discussions with the Welsh Government on the potential impact of the proposed visitor levy on the Welsh economy.
 - Anna McMorrin (Wales Office) replied that the UK Government has followed the lead of the Welsh Government by introducing a similar overnight levy in England, enabling mayors to invest further in transport, infrastructure and the visitor economy.

- Afzal Khan (Lab, Manchester Rusholme) [asked](#) the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment she has made of the adequacy of fees charged for standard visitors and Electronic Travel Authorisations.
 - Jo White (Home Office) replied that Impact Assessments are produced whenever fee legislation changes, and pointed to the assessment published alongside the changes that came into effect in April 2026, which covered both Standard Visitor and ETA fees.

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- Dr Neil Hudson (Con, Epping Forest) [asked](#) the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government whether his department has made an assessment of the potential impact of the visitor levy on the fishing industry.
 - Jim McMahon (Minister of State, MHCLG) replied that it will be for Strategic Authorities to decide whether to put in place an Overnight Visitor Levy in their area, and that any impacts will largely be determined by local decisions, including whether local leaders choose to introduce a levy and the detail of any local scheme.

Week ahead

Monday 7th September

- Housing, Communities and Local Government OPQs. **Henham to monitor.**

Tuesday 8th September

- Treasury OPQs. **Henham to monitor.**
- Westminster's Rating Advisory Panel considers business rates hardship and discretionary relief applications (exempt item; no public detail on which sectors are covered).

Friday 11th September

- Second Reading of the [Hospitality Services \(Value Added Tax Exemption\) Bill](#), a Private Member's Bill sponsored by Sir Christopher Chope MP.

Regional News

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- Manchester City Council held an extraordinary meeting to formally appoint a new Leader of the Council, following Bev Craig's move to Mayor of Greater Manchester. The result could not be confirmed at the time of writing.

Media snapshot

Glasgow's Scottish Event Campus (SEC) secures International Congress of Mathematicians 2030

The SEC will host the [International Congress of Mathematicians](#) in 2030 — the first time the event has come to Scotland — with Glasgow reported to deliver over £200 million in annual economic benefit from delegate spend. Dawn Lauder, SEC's Director of Conference Sales, called it “a fantastic achievement.”

GES runs live broadcast studio at AEO Conference

GES activated a [live broadcast studio](#) at this year's AEO Conference. Anna Golden, AEO Chief Executive, said “GES Live will give us another way to celebrate the brilliant people and thinking within our industry, while creating content that can take those conversations beyond the day.”

Tracy Halliwell steps down from London & Partners after 20 years

Tracy Halliwell MBE, London & Partners' Director of Tourism, Conventions & Major Events, has departed after two decades in post.

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

Get in touch

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