Events Industry Alliance End of Week Report

Friday 6th November

EIA update

- **National Events Strategy proposals have been further developed, incorporating feedback from AEO and the wider membership.**
- **Political outreach continues, with meetings progressed with James Asser, Caroline Dinenage and DCMS advisers.**
- **AEO and AEV constituencies are being mapped to identify new MPs who could support EIA's work.**

Hi all,

This week, we continued to develop EIA's proposals for the Government's National Events Strategy, incorporating feedback from the wider membership. The proposal is focused on securing a dedicated business events chapter within the strategy, with practical recommendations covering how government can better attract and retain strategically important events, improve support for major bids, and reduce barriers to hosting and attending events in the UK.

Following last week's meeting with Sir Jeremy Wright, we have also continued to build political support around the proposals. We are following up with him on how he can support the campaign, while progressing meetings with James Asser MP, Caroline Dinenage MP and advisers within DCMS. We are also seeking engagement with Shadow Culture Secretary Rebecca Paul to ensure we are building support across the political spectrum.

It was also great to hear the outcomes from the Wales Business Events and Economic Growth Roundtable which Rachel and Anna attended last week. The discussion identified key priorities for strengthening Wales' business events offer including focusing on sectors where Wales has particular strengths and ensuring major events leave a lasting economic legacy for local businesses and communities. These provide useful lessons for our wider work on the National Events Strategy, particularly around the role that places and destinations can play in attracting and retaining events.

Finally, building on ESSA's successful approach of mobilising members to engage their local MPs, we have started mapping where AEO and AEV members and major events have the strongest constituency presence. The aim is to identify MPs and mayors who can make the case for the sector through the economic impact of events in their own areas, broadening the group of political advocates beyond those already allied with the EIA.

Best,
Alexander

Government this week

Wednesday 4th October

- The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government introduced the Visitor Levy Bill, which will allow mayors to charge a levy on overnight stays, to Parliament. It confirmed:

    - The levy must be a percentage of the accommodation cost, not a flat fee, and applies only to the first 28 consecutive days of a stay.
    - National exemptions cover student accommodation, care homes, children's homes and school boarding houses. Temporary accommodation, shelters and refuges are not charged, and authorities can add limited local exemptions, such as camping pitches.
    - Before introducing a levy, an authority must publish a draft plan and impact assessment, and consult local people and businesses. In Foundation Strategic Authorities, a levy needs unanimous support.
    - Ten Labour mayors have committed to a rate of no more than 5%.
- No date has been announced for the Second Reading, but Henham will continue to monitor its passage for any further updates.

What happened in Parliament

Tuesday 3rd November

- In the Budget debate, **Martin Rhodes (Lab, Chair of the Events APPG)** welcomed the £6 million announced for the Scottish Event Campus. He said: "That is a vote of confidence in the SEC, Glasgow and the events sector more generally". He added that “some of the biggest economic benefits from the events sector come not from one-off sporting or music events, but from business events such as conferences and trade shows. These events tend to last longer, so visitors spend more time at the destination, use more hotels and support more local restaurants, bars and cafés.”

- During Treasury oral questions **Alison Griffiths (Con, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton)** asked what the Government will do “to reduce the tax burdens on the hospitality and tourism industry, and when will that happen”.
    - **James Murray (Financial Secretary to the Treasury)** said that the Budget announced “a two-year real-terms freeze to business rates bills for all retail, hospitality and leisure properties in England; cut bills by an extra 20% for pubs and all but the largest live music venues; and removed 70,000 smaller properties from business rates altogether”.

- In a Lords oral question, the **Earl of Effingham (Con)** said the Government was "considering allowing mayors to introduce a holiday tax on British and international visitors" and that it "will weaken tourism and put jobs at risk".
    - **Baroness Twycross (Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office)** replied that the Government was empowering strategic authorities to introduce a potential levy "in order to drive economic growth, including full support for the visitor economy".

Written questions

Friday 30th October

- **Lizzi Collinge (Lab, Morecambe and Lunesdale)** asked whether visitor levy receipts could be excluded from the VAT registration threshold calculation.
    - **James Murray (Financial Secretary to Treasury)** answered that "VAT is due on any amount equal to a visitor levy that is included in the price charged to the guest for taxable accommodation."

Monday 2nd November

- **Kevin Hollinrake (Con, Thirsk and Malton)** asked what assessment had been made of the levy's impact on touring musicians and actors and on festival viability.
    - **Jim McMahon (Minister for Local Government, Devolution and Regional Growth)** answered that "Mayors and local leaders will decide whether introducing a levy is the right choice for their area". The answer did not include an assessment.

- **Steve Darling (LD, Torbay)** asked when the Visitor Economy Growth Strategy will be published.
    - **Stephanie Peacock (Minister for Sport, Tourism, Place and Digital Government,)** We are continuing to work with industry and the strategy will be published when that work has concluded.

Tuesday 3rd November

- **Baroness McIntosh (Con)** asked what risk assessments have been done of business rates increases for hotels.
    - **Lord Pitt-Watson (Treasury Parliamentary Secretary)** answered that the Government is "undertaking a focused review of the valuation methodologies used for pubs and hotels" and that "the review is ongoing".

Week ahead

Tuesday 10th November

- The Business, Innovation, Science and Trade Committee takes evidence on UK export support services.
- Hamish Falconer (Minister for European Relations, Cabinet Office) is due to meet the European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security.
- The Lords European Affairs Committee holds a session on dynamic alignment.

Wednesday 11th November

- Prime Minister's Questions. **Henham to monitor.**
- Angela Rayner (Secretary of State) and Tom Riordan (Permanent Secretary) give evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee on the work of MHCLG. **Henham to monitor for news on Visitor Levy Bill.**
- Lord Pitkeathley (Lab) has a Lords oral question asking if the government is considering transferring business rates liability from occupiers to property owners as part of their high street strategy
- A Commons committee considers the draft order amending Temporary Event Notices under the Licensing Act.

Thursday 12th November

- Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Oral Parliamentary Questions. **Henham to monitor transcript.**
- Chris Webb (Lab, Blackpool South) leads a Westminster Hall debate on the Impact of VAT policy for the hospitality sector on local economies, employment and growth.

Regional News

Steve Rotherham welcomes latest step to introduce visitor levy

Liverpool City Region Mayor Steve Rotherham welcomed the Visitor Levy Bill, claiming a modest levy could raise up to £18 million a year for reinvestment in events, culture and infrastructure. Bev Craig (Mayor of Greater Manchester) echoed Rotherham's claim of the potential for the levy to enable greater reinvestment into places to support the visitor economy, although she said the levy needed to be shaped by councils, businesses and the local hospitality sector.

Media snapshot

UKHospitality calls the Visitor Levy Bill 'genuinely shocking'

Allen Simpson (Chief Executive, UKHospitality) criticised the government's Visitor Levy Bill, saying it would hike the cost of a family holiday and risk 33,000 jobs. Sector leaders have criticised the lack of a binding legal cap on the levy, although the government argued the levy would bring England in line with Germany, Italy and the United States.

London Tech Week celebrates record-breaking growth

It was reported that London Tech Week hosted its biggest ever edition in 2026 expanding by around 40%, and welcoming 35,000 attendees from 142 different countries to Olympia. The event's growth was driven by the ability of Olympia to provide the space and flexibility needed to scale without disrupting the event experience, said Director of Event Delivery at London Tech Week.

ICC Wales announced two major new medical association conference wins.

The Association of Upper Gastrointestinal Surgeons of Great Britain & Ireland (AUGIS) will hold its AGM at ICC Wales in September 2027, bringing 800 delegates. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) Annual Conference will follow in May 2029, welcoming 2,000 delegates.

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

Get in touch

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