

Weekly policy update from the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

A round-up of key policy changes from the past seven days (18-25 September 2025)

Communities to Gain New Powers Over High Streets

The government has launched the Pride in Place programme, part of the wider Plan for Change, devolving decision-making for high street regeneration to over 330 local areas across the UK. The initiative introduces new Community Right to Buy powers that enable residents to acquire and repurpose vacant assets, alongside expanded compulsory purchase powers to turn derelict properties into housing or commercial space. Councils will also gain tools to limit the concentration of betting and vape shops, supporting more balanced and diverse high streets. The reforms come as many London high streets continue to face persistent vacancy rates, changing retail dynamics, and pressure on affordable spaces — issues that particularly affect smaller firms seeking physical premises.

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UK Ambition on Trade and Tech

At the Business Secretary's Lancaster House Address, Peter Kyle outlined the government's ambition to build on the momentum of the recent US State Visit and further strengthen UK-US economic cooperation. Central to this is the new Tech Prosperity Deal, designed to accelerate collaboration in areas such as AI, quantum computing, and clean energy, while supporting companies operating across both markets.

The UK and US, whose bilateral investment stock already exceeds \$1.5 trillion, announced a further \$300 billion in cross-border commitments — building on the £150 billion in US investment unveiled during the State Visit — with projects in financial services, nuclear energy, and life sciences. Alongside the earlier Economic Prosperity Agreement, the deal is expected to expand trade, generate additional market opportunities, and reinforce collaboration across strategically important sectors.

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UK and US Launch Taskforce on Future Financial Markets

Building on recent announcements to strengthen transatlantic economic cooperation, the UK and the US have agreed to establish a Transatlantic Taskforce for Markets of the Future to deepen collaboration in financial innovation and capital market development. Announced following a joint roundtable between Chancellor Rachel Reeves and US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, the initiative will focus on enhancing links between the two countries' financial systems, supporting cross-border capital raising, and exploring opportunities in areas such as digital assets and wholesale digital markets. The taskforce, chaired by officials from both finance ministries and involving key regulators, will work with industry partners to produce recommendations within 180 days aimed at reducing regulatory barriers, improving market access, and supporting innovation-led growth across both financial centres.

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CMA Sets Out Pro-Growth Competition Agenda

At the Delivering Impact in Times of Change conference, Competition and Markets Authority Chief Executive Sarah Cardell set out how the regulator will adapt its approach to support the government's economic growth objectives. Speaking at the Fordham Competition Law Institute event, she announced the introduction of the 4Ps framework — pace, predictability, proportionality, and enhanced process — designed to reduce regulatory uncertainty and improve engagement with businesses and investors. The CMA will place greater emphasis on pro-investment and pro-innovation outcomes, including more flexible merger remedies, more explicit guidance on permissible collaboration to support scale-ups and industrial strategy sectors, and streamlined casework to speed up decisions. A new Growth and Investment Council will also strengthen dialogue with industry, signalling a shift towards competition enforcement that maintains consumer protection while giving greater weight to business confidence and long-term economic priorities.

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Funding to Accelerate UK Semiconductor Innovation

At the Microelectronics UK Conference, the government announced a £10 million fund to support up to 40 British companies in developing next-generation semiconductor technologies and bringing them to market. Delivered through InnovateUK, the funding will focus on areas where the UK has established strengths, including graphene-based devices, navigation technologies, and power semiconductors, with the aim of boosting competitiveness in a global market worth hundreds of billions of pounds. The initiative is designed to strengthen domestic supply chains, support advanced manufacturing and clean energy technologies, and improve resilience in critical sectors such as defence, communications, and cybersecurity. It also supports the government's Plan for Change by facilitating the commercialisation of cutting-edge research, improving firms' routes to market, and strengthening the UK's position in global semiconductor value chains.

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Government Steps Up Fraud Prevention

The government has reported record savings of £480 million over the past 12 months through its latest public sector fraud crackdown, a significant share of which stems from fraudulent claims made by companies during the pandemic. Enhanced data matching and new AI-driven detection tools have prevented the dissolution of firms with unpaid Covid-era Bounce Back Loans, recovered funds from multiple or fraudulent loan applications, and blocked attempts to exploit future support schemes. The measures aim to protect public finances, reduce distortions in the business environment caused by fraudulent activity, and strengthen confidence in government-backed financial support. The initiative will also underpin future policy design, with a new AI tool capable of identifying vulnerabilities in new programmes before launch — a move expected to cut fraud detection times by up to 80% and improve the resilience of future business support schemes.

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