

SUMMARY

- + Labour and Conservative party conferences
- + Reports and publications
- + APM forthcoming

Labour and Conservative party conferences 2017

This year, APM's External Affairs team attended both the Labour and Conservative party conferences in Brighton and Manchester respectively. Links to key speeches and summaries of key policy announcements are provided below.

The Labour party conference September, Brighton

Leader of the Labour party, Jeremy Corbyn's [speech to conference](#):

- In Jeremy Corbyn's speech to conference he claimed that Labour "now occupies the centre ground" of British politics as he called on his party to unite and prove it is ready for power. At an hour and 13 minutes, the conference speech was the longest in living memory by a party leader and featured only one new policy – a pledge to end "forced gentrification and social cleansing" by giving social tenants more rights. There was nothing new on Brexit, although Mr Corbyn again stressed that Labour only supports continued membership of the European single market during a "temporary" post-Brexit transition phase.

Summary of policy announcements:

- Along with shadow housing minister John Healey, confirmed the party will be launching a review of social housing policy focusing on building, planning, regulation and management;
- Councils will have to win a ballot of existing tenants and leaseholders before any redevelopment scheme can take place;
- Announced that people who live on an estate that's redeveloped must get a home on the *same site* and the *same terms* as before;
- Confirmed that the party would change the donation law to bring in a soft 'opt-out' system for consent to donation.

Shadow chancellor, John McDonnell's [speech to conference](#):

- John McDonnell vowed in his speech at the Labour party conference to end the private finance initiative (PFI) 'scandal' by bringing all contracts into the public sector. Illustrating his rationale for the policy, the shadow chancellor stated that in the NHS £831m in pre-tax profits have been made by private firms involved in PFI contracts. This was met with criticism from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) – with Carolyn Fairbairn stating that "forced nationalisation of large parts of British industry will send investors running for the hills, and puts misplaced nostalgia ahead of progressive vision". John McDonnell's vision of massive state intervention was, she said, the "wrong plan at the wrong time".

Summary of policy announcements:

- Confirmation that the Labour party would bring existing PFI contracts back in-house.
- Labour would establish a Strategic Investment Board, comprising the chancellor, secretary of state for business and the governor of the Bank of England, to co-ordinate the promotion of investment, employment and real wages.
- Labour would legislate for a fair distribution of investment, would devolve decision making through the regional development banks and mayors, and regenerate the powers and resources available to local councils.
- On transport and infrastructure, he confirmed the party would:
 - build Crossrail for the north and extend HS2 into Scotland;
 - deliver the funding for Midlands Connect;
 - electrify railway lines from Cornwall through to London.

The Conservative party conference October, Manchester

The prime minister's [speech to conference](#):

- The Conservative party conference 2017 will likely be remembered for Theresa May's conference speech – overshadowed by a lengthy coughing fit and a prankster handing her a mock P45. Despite the mishaps, delegates in the packed conference hall gave the prime minister a standing ovation and her aides later claimed she was pleased with how it had gone. The prime minister attempted to use her speech to conference to shift the focus from Brexit infighting to domestic policy on energy bills and council housing – but at times struggled to deliver her words as her voice faltered. After accepting a glass of water and a cough sweet from the chancellor, Philip Hammond, the PM ploughed on with a conference speech that was designed to set out her credo but ended with questions about her future.

The prime minister unveiled two eye-catching policies that aimed to wrest back momentum from Jeremy Corbyn. These included a promise to publish draft legislation for an energy price cap for families on "rip-off" rates, and a £2bn plan to build more council homes. Capping energy prices was a Conservative manifesto commitment, and the prime minister said the current set-up "punishes loyalty with higher prices". The prime minister said she wanted to see "a new generation of council houses to help fix our broken housing market". Under the plan, the size of the government's affordable homes programme will be increased by £2bn to £9.1bn.

Summary of policy announcements:

- Government will invest an additional £2bn in affordable housing – and will encourage councils as well as housing associations to bid for this money and provide certainty over future rent levels. The prime minister said she would take personal charge of the government's response to the housing shortage.
- Confirmation that the government would publish, in the week commencing October 9, a draft bill to put a price cap on energy bills.
- Government will undertake a review of university funding and student financing; to end the increase in fees that was due next year, and freeze the maximum rate while the review takes place. Increasing the amount graduates can earn before they start repaying their fees to £25,000.
- Suggestion of a possible future change in rules on international aid in order to recognise the particular needs of communities when disaster strikes.
- Confirmation of a change in policy to a presumption in favour of organ donation.
- Government will introduce an independent public advocate for major disasters, to act on behalf of bereaved families to support them at public inquests and inquiries;
- Government has asked Professor Sir Simon Wessely to undertake an independent review of the Mental Health Act.
- Government will extend the free schools programme – building 100 new free schools in every year of this parliament.

Chancellor of the exchequer, Philip Hammond's [speech to conference](#):

- In his keynote speech to the Conservative conference, Philip Hammond announced a £300m boost to rail links in the north of England as part of the Northern Powerhouse programme. Cities in the east Midlands such as Leicester will also benefit from the new scheme, with quicker links between HS2 and Midlands rail projects. Mr Hammond pledged in his keynote speech that this investment "will go towards ensuring HS2 infrastructure can link up with future Northern Powerhouse and Midlands rail projects – helping the towns and cities of the north reach their full potential". On roads, Mr Hammond promised a further £100m to improve roads in the north, with a total of 33 new projects in the north-east, north-west and the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Summary of policy announcements:

- Announced £300m to future-proof the railway network in the north, ensuring HS2 infrastructure can link up with future Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Rail projects while keeping open all options for services through Manchester Piccadilly.
- Confirmation of an extra £10bn in funding to provide loans under the Help To Buy scheme through to 2021.
- Confirmation that the patient capital review will report in the autumn (presumably with Budget on November 22).

Other policy announcements from Conservative party conference 2017:

Secretary of state for health, Jeremy Hunt's [speech to conference](#)

Summary of policy announcements:

- New flexible arrangements extended to all NHS employees.
- Pledge of an expansion of 5,000 training places for nurses in the NHS.
- Confirmation that when NHS land is sold, the first refusal on any affordable housing built would be given to NHS employees. This will benefit up to 3,000 families.

Secretary of state for digital, culture, media and sport, Karen Bradley's [speech to conference](#)

Summary of policy announcements:

- Announced the publication of an *Internet Safety Strategy Green Paper* in the week commencing October 9 – this will include an online code of practice for social media companies to sign up to.
- Emphasised the importance that the government has placed on improving digital infrastructure and reiterated the government's commitment to universal broadband access by 2020, data access and connectivity.

Secretary of state for defence, Michael Fallon's [speech to conference](#)

Summary of policy announcements:

- Announced £800m of support contracts that would produce faster turnaround and improve the availability of the Royal Navy's warships.

Secretary of state for transport, Chris Grayling's [speech to conference](#)

Summary of policy announcements:

- Announced plan to deliver £100m for local road schemes across the north of England – with details of individual schemes announced in due course.
- Set out details of £80m programme to bring smart ticketing – using mobile phones, barcodes and smartcards – across almost all of the rail network by the end of next year.
- Reiterated government ambitions to give Heathrow's third runway the formal go ahead in the first half of next year.

From Westminster and Whitehall/government departments:

The prime minister's [speech to conference](#):

■ Business secretary Greg Clark announced the universities that will lead pioneering research into the next generation of battery technology. The flagship **Faraday Battery Institute** will bring together the best minds from seven founding partner universities and industry to make UK global leader in battery research and technology. The universities forming the institute are: Imperial College London, Newcastle University, University College London, the University of Cambridge, the University of Oxford, the University of Southampton and the University of Warwick. The Faraday Battery Institute, with £65m from the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, is part of government's £246m investment in battery technology through the Industrial Strategy.

■ Each parliament the **National Infrastructure Commission (NIC)** will publish a *National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA)* analysing the UK's long-term economic infrastructure needs. This assessment outlines a strategic vision for the next 30 years and sets out recommendations as to how these needs should be met.

The first stage of the NIA process is to determine a 'vision' for the UK up to 2050, identifying long-term infrastructure needs in light of that vision and then highlighting priority areas for action over the medium term. This report, entitled [Congestion, Capacity, Carbon – priorities for national infrastructure](#), was published on 13 October 2017. The Commission will now consult widely on the report to inform its final conclusions on the UK's infrastructure needs and priorities to 2050. The NIA will be published in 2018.

■ Following an independent review commissioned by the **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)** and the **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)**, an independent [report](#) *Growing the artificial intelligence industry in the UK* has been published. The review was carried out by Professor Dame Wendy Hall and Jérôme Pesenti and reports on how the artificial intelligence industry can be grown in the UK.

■ Lord Adonis, chair of the NIC, welcomed the findings saying he was particularly interested in the potential benefits of these technologies in improving the productivity of infrastructure, as well as reducing the costs of its construction, operation and maintenance.

■ The **Office for National Statistics (ONS)** published a [statistical bulletin](#) *Construction output in Great Britain: August 2017* showing that construction output contracted by 0.8 per cent in the three month on three month series in August 2017 – but remains at relatively high levels. The three month on three month decline in output was due to decreases in both repair and maintenance – which fell 0.6 per cent, and all new work – which fell 0.9 per cent.

■ The **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)** published a blue-print for Britain's low carbon future entitled *The Clean Growth Strategy: Leading the way to a low carbon future*.

■ On October 11 a Nuclear Safeguards Bill was introduced in parliament in preparation for the UK's departure from Euratom. Equivalent high standards of Euratom are to be maintained with a domestic nuclear safeguards regime in place.

■ The **House of Lords Science and Technology Committee** continue to gather evidence for its inquiry into Life Sciences and the Industrial Strategy. Over three evidence sessions the Committee will question global leaders in pharmaceuticals GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and AstraZeneca, as well as representatives of SMEs and healthcare regulatory and advice bodies.

Reports and publications - professional bodies/think-tanks/other:

■ The 2017 [CBI/AECOM Infrastructure Survey](#) has been published, with 1,688 responses including responses from 727 firms. For the first time, this year's survey included the public's views on infrastructure. Despite the government's strong commitment to improving the UK's infrastructure, both business and the public are concerned about the pace of delivery and a record number of firms are dissatisfied with the state of infrastructure in their region.

■ The **Construction Products Association (CPA)** published its latest [forecast](#) which shows that the construction industry is reliant on infrastructure and housebuilding to avoid declines in 2018: "Infrastructure is expected to be a major driver of construction activity in the next few years with work on major projects but the sector has been dogged by constant cost overruns and delays. Given that construction activity is forecast to be flat in 2018, if government cannot improve delivery of its infrastructure plans, construction output is likely to decline next year."

■ The **Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)** launched an [insight paper](#) exploring the impact of using artificial intelligence (AI) in the built environment, and the urgent need for industry professionals to understand how it will influence their role, as the future "will rely less on human labour and more on technology". This is of particular interest in light of APM's fifth paper in the Chartered series (see APM publications below).

■ The **Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC)** led a coalition of employers, academics, think-tanks, recruiters and labour-market experts, to create a Future of Jobs Commission. The commission was chaired by former employment minister Esther McVey with the core aim of articulating an aspirational vision for the 2025 UK jobs market, building a roadmap for getting there. The *Future of Jobs* [report](#) makes recommendations to business and employers, government and recruiters about the part they can play in building the best jobs market in the world.

■ The **Northern Powerhouse Partnership (NPP)** published its [report](#) *Powerhouse 2050: The North's Routemap for Productivity* setting out fully costed, evidence-based proposals for four areas of northern excellence "which could, with government funding and business support, rival the best countries and regions in the world". Months of research, workshops and engagement with more than 500 businesses of all sizes, in addition to universities, interest groups and many others by the NPP revealed the steps needed to be taken to make the north's prime capabilities – advanced manufacturing and materials, energy, digital and health innovation – world-class. The proposals in the report have been submitted to the government for consideration in the autumn budget on 22 November.

- **The Institute of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) and Lloyds Commercial Banking** published the sixth annual *MHA Manufacturing and Engineering [report](#)* stating that three quarters of manufacturers surveyed could not recruit appropriately skilled staff, while 20 per cent have lost staff or are at risk of losing staff because of the vote to leave the EU. With more than 12 months of negotiations with the EU remaining, businesses have not yet felt the full effects of Brexit and indeed some 94 per cent of survey respondents said they expect further increases in production costs, and a growing number said customers would face rising prices.

- Following the biggest-ever consultation with industry, the **Construction Industry Training Board's (CITB)** levy rate has been backed by the sector – alongside calls for reform. The vote showed strong support for CITB's continued Levy-raising powers, across employers of all sizes in England, Scotland and Wales, with the proposed levy rate set at 0.35 per cent for all PAYE employers – down from 0.5 per cent in previous years. The subcontractor NET CIS rate remains at 1.25 per cent.

- A [policy briefing](#) has been published by **UK Energy Research Centre** and the **University of Sussex Centre on Innovation and Energy Demand** entitled *Unlocking Britain's First Fuel: The potential for energy savings in UK housing*. Energy efficient improvements to home heating, insulation, lighting and appliances could reduce the energy consumed in UK households each year by a quarter and knock £270 off the average household energy bill of £1,100 – a saving that is equivalent to the output of six nuclear power stations the size of Hinkley Point C.

- The **Centre for London** has published a [report](#) by the Commission on the Future of London's Roads and Streets – chaired by Sir Malcolm Grant, chair of NHS England. The report sets out the commission's vision for a London that is “loved by its citizens” and “admired across the world for the way it enables easy, pollution-free and affordable movement around the city, the vitality of its neighbourhoods and the quality of its public realm”, setting out a range of tactical objectives to help achieve this vision, developing seven packages of policies to meet the objectives.

- The final [report](#) of the **Northern Energy Taskforce** was published by IPPR, entitled *A Northern Energy Strategy*. The report contains recommendations for national, regional and local stakeholders, including the formation of energy for the north, the formation of a new northern energy accelerator, and a northern carbon budget.

- Analysis published by the **Resolution Foundation (RF)** shows that there has been a concerning fall in apprenticeship starts after years of steady progress. RF analysis found that the biggest falls in apprenticeship starts in the final quarter of 2016/17 have taken place in Level 2 apprenticeships, for those aged 25+ and in retail, business and engineering – suggesting that the government will need to make the apprenticeship levy “more user-friendly for businesses” in order to get the welcome progress of recent years back on track.

Reports, publications, and activity from the world of project management:

- The [PMI global conference](#) took place from 28–30 October 2017 in Chicago, based around the theme, *The Evolving Role of Project Management*.
- The finalists for the PMI *Project of the Year* have been [announced](#).
- The Major Projects Association launched their [Project Initiation handbook](#).
- **Call for papers – European Academy of Management (EURAM) 2018 SIG 10: Project Organising (PO)**. The call for papers for the Project Organising SIG of EURAM 2018 is open until January 2018. The EURAM 2018 conference, to be held in Reykjavik from 20–23 June 2018, will also include a new project management track entitled *Projects and Society*. For more information, contact and deadlines please [click here](#).
- The [AIPM 2017 national conference](#) was held at the Melbourne Convention Exhibition Centre from 22 – 24 October 2017.
- [German PM Forum 2017](#): The 34th PM Forum will take place in Nuremberg on the 24 and 25 October 2017 led by the German Project Management Association (GPM).
- The latest [Project Challenge](#) exhibition event took place on the 10 – 11 October.

APM forthcoming:

- APM will publish a policy briefing update on Brexit in November.
- **Developing the next generation of major project leaders:** collaborative event between the Major Projects Association and APM on the 8 November 2017. [Click here](#) for details.
- **APM sponsored event: Putting social science into project management** – APM are pleased to be supporting an event led by the University of Bournemouth as part of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Festival for Social Science entitled *Putting social science into Project Management*. The event is taking place on the 9 November at UCL's new Olympic Park campus and focuses on the people and behavioural elements of project management.
- The **APM Research Fund** call for funding opens on the 30 October 2017 and runs until 5 February 2018 for submissions. Please [click here](#) for more information.

APM Research and Policy Outputs:

- APM published a [policy briefing](#) on T levels.
- APM published the [fifth paper](#) in its *Road to Chartered* series entitled: *The robot professional? The role of project professionals in the digital future*. The paper focuses on the importance of technology and big data, the advent of AI, and how it might impact our profession, work, society and the economy more generally.
- APM published the [sixth paper](#) in its *Road to Chartered* series entitled: *Professional responsibilities and obligations: the case of millennials*. The paper explores why we should embrace the values and energy of the millennial generation to build a Chartered profession and how they can be part of this drive.
- APM published a [research paper](#), supported by the APM Research Fund, entitled: *The importance of conventions: A critical evaluation of current practice in social cost benefit analysis*. The study sought to evaluate current methods to see if it is possible to develop alternative quantification models/frameworks for quantifying these costs and benefits, thus broadening the choice of available quantification frameworks to project management professionals.