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BSA Summary: King's Speech 2024

The briefing note on the King's Speech has now been published. It contains further details on the 40 Bills and Draft Bills.

The Speech is divided into six sections:

- [Economic Stability and Growth](#)
- [Great British Energy and Clean Energy Superpower](#)
- [Secure Borders, Cracking Down on Anti-Social Behaviour and Take Back Our Streets](#)
- [Break Down the Barriers to Opportunity](#)
- [Health](#)
- [National Security and Serving the Country](#)

You can read the full briefing note [here](#). A summary of the key bills for BSA members is included below.

Economic Stability and Growth

Budget Responsibility Bill

This Bill will introduce a 'fiscal lock' which will:

- ensure any Government making significant and permanent tax and spending changes will be subject to an independent assessment by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), giving them the power to produce an assessment at a time of its choosing; and,
- reinforce market credibility and public trust by preventing large-scale unfunded commitments that are not subject to an OBR fiscal assessment.

Employment Rights Bill

This Bill will "deliver on policies as set out in the Plan to Make Work Pay that require primary legislation to implement". You can read the BSA summary of the Plan [here](#).

National Wealth Fund Bill

This Bill will establish the National Wealth Fund (NWF) which will directly invest in the priority sectors set out in the manifesto in every corner of the country. The NWF will work with local partners, including mayors, to bring together a finance and investment offer that supports the needs of local areas and catalyses growth in all corners of the country.

The Fund will deploy funding through the UK Infrastructure Bank, expanding its remit and providing an additional £7.3 billion to catalyse private investment at an even greater scale. It will aim to generate £3 of private sector investment for every £1 it invests.

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Pension Schemes Bill

The Bill's measures include:

- Consolidation of Defined Contribution individual deferred small pension pots.
- Ensuring all members are saving into pension schemes delivering value through the Value for Money framework.
- Introducing a standardised test that trust based defined contribution schemes will need to meet to demonstrate they deliver value. The Financial Conduct Authority will ensure the framework is applied to contract schemes and therefore consistently across the whole pension market.
- Requiring pension schemes to offer retirement products by placing duties on trustees of occupational pension schemes to offer a retirement income solution or range of solutions, including default 15 investment options, to their members.
- Consolidating the Defined Benefit market through commercial Superfunds.
- Reaffirming the Pensions Ombudsman (TPO) as a competent court, removing the need for pension schemes to apply to the courts to enforce TPO decisions in relation to the recovery of overpayments.
- Amending the Special Rules for End of Life (Pension Protection Fund and Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS)) extending the definition of 'terminal illness', allowing eligible members within the Pension Protection Fund and the Financial Assistance Scheme to receive a lump sum payment at an earlier stage.

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

This Bill is intended to streamline the delivery process for critical infrastructure including accelerating upgrades to the national grid and boosting renewable energy. It will simplify the consenting process for major infrastructure projects and enable new National Policy Statements to come forward, establishing a review process that provides the opportunity for them to be updated every five years.

Further reform of compulsory purchase compensation rules to ensure that compensation paid to landowners is fair but not excessive where important social and physical infrastructure and affordable housing are being delivered.

Increasing local planning authorities' capacity, to improve performance and decision making, providing a more predictable service to developers and investors.

The Government will also work with nature delivery organisations, stakeholders and the sector over the summer to determine the best way forward. It will only act in legislation where it can confirm to Parliament that the steps being taken will deliver positive environmental outcomes. Where government can demonstrate this, the Bill will deliver any necessary changes.

The majority of the Bill is expected to extend and apply to England and Wales. Some measures may also extend and apply to Scotland.

English Devolution Bill

This Bill will establish a new framework for English devolution which will include:

- Putting a more ambitious standardised devolution framework into legislation to give local leaders greater powers over the levers of local growth. This will include enhanced powers over strategic planning, local transport networks, skills, and employment support, enabling



them to create jobs and improve living standards. The Government will also introduce new powers and duties for local leaders to produce Local Growth Plans.

- Making devolution the default setting, meaning places will be granted powers without the need to negotiate agreements where they meet the governance conditions. Local leaders will be able to formally request 24 additional powers according to the framework and the Government will be required to consider the request and either devolve them or publicly explain their reasons for not doing so.
- Making it easier to provide devolved powers quickly to more areas through establishing a simpler process for creating new Combined and Combined County Authorities, to ensure that every part of England can rapidly benefit from devolution. The Bill will establish a legislative foundation upon which to widen and deepen devolution, with a weighting towards creating advanced mayoral settlements where there is the capacity and ambition to do so.
- Improving and unblocking local decision making through more effective governance arrangements, ensuring mayors and Combined Authorities can get on and deliver for their areas.
- Empowering local communities with a strong new 'right to buy' for valued community assets, such as empty shops, pubs and community spaces.

Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill

This Bill will amend existing railways legislation so that appointing a public-sector operator is the default position rather than merely a last resort.

Train operations will transfer to a public-sector operator as existing contracts expire or operators fail to meet their commitments, avoiding the need to pay compensation to the current operators.

Railways Bill

This Bill will follow the PRS(PO) Bill and will make further legislative changes to reform the rail sector - bringing track and train back together and planning services on a whole-system basis, to better deliver for passengers and freight customers, and to unlock growth.

It will also establish a single body, Great British Rail, which will oversee the management of the network and the delivery of passenger services.

High Speed Rail (Crewe to Manchester) Bill

The Government has confirmed that it is “not reversing the decision to cancel the second Phase of HS2. Instead, we are repurposing the High Speed Rail (Crewe - Manchester) Bill to provide powers to construct and operate rail projects which improve east to west connectivity across the north of England”.

The Bill includes powers for important rail infrastructure in Manchester and the surrounding area, including new stations at Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport.

Better Buses Bill

This Bill will provide local leaders with the powers necessary to deliver the Government’s 5-point plan to build better bus networks across England.

Arbitration Bill

This Bill will implement the recommendations made in a 2022 Law Commission [review](#) of Arbitration Law.



Digital Information and Smart Data Bill

This Bill will establish Digital Verification Services to support the creation and adoption of secure and trusted digital identity products and services from certified providers to help with things like moving house, pre-employment checks, and buying age restricted goods and services.

It will also develop the National Underground Asset Register, a new digital map of the pipes and cables buried beneath our feet.

Smart Data schemes will be introduced which are the secure sharing of a customer's data upon their request, with authorised third-party providers. The Bill also includes a move to an electronic system for the registration of births and deaths.

The ICO will be transformed into a more modern regulatory structure, with a CEO, board and chair, and it will have new, stronger powers. This will be accompanied by targeted reforms to some data laws that will maintain high standards of protection.

Draft Audit Reform and Corporate Governance Bill

The draft bill will replace the Financial Reporting Council with a new regulator - the Audit, Reporting and Governance Authority - with the powers it needs to tackle bad financial reporting and to build that trust.

Great British Energy and Clean Energy Superpower

Great British Energy Bill

The Bill establishes Great British Energy - a new, publicly-owned energy production company which will own, manage and operate clean power projects up and down the country.

Great British Energy will:

- develop, own and operate assets, investing in partnership with the private sector. It will have a capitalisation of £8.3 billion of new money over the Parliament.
- facilitate, encourage and participate in the production, distribution, storage and supply of clean energy, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from energy produced from fossil fuels as well as measures for furthering the transition to clean energy and improving energy efficiency.

The Crown Estate Bill

The Crown Estate Bill will modernise The Crown Estate so that it can manage our public assets more effectively. This will include widening its investment powers and giving it the powers to borrow in order to invest at a faster pace.

Secure Borders, Cracking Down on Anti-Social Behaviour and Take Back Our Streets

Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill

This Bill establishes the Border Security Command and is intended to end hotel use for asylum seekers through clearing the backlog, ensuring fast-track returns for individuals coming from safe countries, and ending the "failed and incredibly costly Migration and Economic Development Partnership" to redirect money into the Border Security Command.



Crime and Policing Bill

The Bill will include measures to:

- rebuild neighbourhood policing, bringing forward arrangements to get neighbourhood police and Police Community Support Officers back on the beat in local communities;
- expand the powers of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services to intervene in failing police forces, introduce higher mandatory national vetting standards across policing, and establish new mandatory arrangements to deliver efficiency savings through nationwide standards for procurement, shared services and specialist functions;
- crackdown on anti social behaviour, introducing new Respect Orders to tackle persistent adult offenders, fast-track Public Spaces Protection Orders to make it quicker and easier to clamp down on rapid escalations in street drinking, and new powers to tackle the dangerous and anti social use of off road bikes. Create a duty for local partners to co-operate to tackle anti social behaviour, with an anti social behaviour lead in every local authority area;
- create a new specific offence of assaulting a shopworker and introduce stronger measures to tackle low level shoplifting;
- ban ninja swords and other lethal blades, and introducing strict 57 sanctions on senior executives of online companies who fail to operate within the law;
- strengthen the law to tackle those who exploit children for criminal purposes, and create arrangements for local Young Futures prevention partnerships to bring together services to support at-risk teenagers; and
- provide a stronger, specialist response to violence against women and girls.

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill

This Bill requires those responsible for certain premises and events to take steps to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack and reduce harm in the event of a terrorist attack occurring. The measures required vary according to the capacity of the premises or event.

Break Down the Barriers to Opportunity

Skills England Bill

This Bill will transfer functions from IfATE to a new body 'Skills England'. Skills England will convene employers, unions, education and training providers, and experts with national government to:

- develop a single picture of national and local skills needs. Skills England will work with industry, the Migration Advisory Committee, unions and the Industrial Strategy Council to build and maintain a comprehensive assessment of current and future skills needs. This will also inform the Department for Education's policy priorities.
- identify the training for which the Growth and Skills Levy will be accessible - this includes consulting on (and maintaining a list of) levy eligible training to ensure value for money, and that the mix of government funded training available to learners and employers aligns with skills needs.
- ensure that the national and regional skills systems are meeting skills needs and are aligned, including using local and regional vacancy data as part of a robust evidence base. Skills England will convene MCAs and other key stakeholders to identify system issues and provide advice to Government, leading to a more coherent system.



Children's Wellbeing Bill

Amongst other measures, this Bill will require free breakfast clubs to be introduced in every primary school to ensure that every child, no matter their circumstances, is well prepared for the school day and can achieve their full potential.

It will also bring multi-academy trusts into the inspection system.

Draft Equality (Race and Disability) Bill

This Bill will enshrine in law the full right to equal pay for ethnic minorities and disabled people. It will introduce mandatory ethnicity and disability pay reporting for larger employers (those with 250+ employees).

Health

The Mental Health Bill

This Bill takes forward the vast majority of Professor Sir Simon Wessley's 2017 recommendations for legislative reform.

National Security and Serving the Country

Cyber Security and Resilience Bill

This Bill will:

- expand the remit of the regulation to protect more digital services and supply chains;
- put regulators on a strong footing to ensure essential cyber safety measures are being implemented. This would include potential cost recovery mechanisms to provide resources to regulators and providing powers to proactively investigate potential vulnerabilities; and,
- mandate increased incident reporting to give government better data on cyber attacks, including where a company has been held to ransom.

Hillsborough Law

This Bill will place a legal duty of candour on public servants and authorities.

Armed Forces Commissioner Bill

This Bill will create a new Commissioner who will:

- be a new, direct and independent contact point for serving personnel and their families, outside their chain of command, to raise issues which impact service life;
- strengthen parliamentary oversight of issues facing Armed Forces personnel, and report directly on an annual basis to ensure proper accountability; and,
- be fully empowered to investigate and highlight issues, with access to information and MoD sites as appropriate. This could include inspecting accommodation, work-life balance, faulty kit, childcare arrangements and other issues impacting service and family life.

House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill

This Bill will mean that hereditary peers will no longer be able to sit and vote in the House of Lords.