

2021 UK Political Timeline - What happens next? Cicero/AMO, January 2021

Overview:

- The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) was agreed on Christmas Eve and approved by the UK Parliament on 30 December 2020. The UK formally exited the transition period, and left the European Union, at 11pm on 31 December 2020.
- The Prime Minister described the UK's withdrawal as “the start of a new era of national change and renewal,” adding that “the destiny of this great country now resides firmly in our hands”. But the question remains: what happens next?
- The Government faces no shortage of challenges in navigating the post-Brexit and post-COVID landscape. The Prime Minister needs to navigate spurring economic activity and his ‘levelling up’ ambitions, with efforts to rebalance public finances, all while demonstrating the tangible ‘benefits’ of a sovereignty-first Brexit that increases friction with our closest trading partner.
- The below document sets out the core No.10 priorities that will dominate political debate over the rest of the Parliamentary term, as well as a timeline of the key political events throughout 2021.

No.10 Economic and Business Priorities

Deregulation and the Opportunities of Brexit:

“ *The treaty banishes the old concepts of uniformity and harmonisation, in favour of the right to make our own regulatory choices and deal with the consequences... In every respect, we have recovered our freedom of action.* ”

[Boris Johnson, December 2020](#)

The Government has oft-discussed the economic opportunities that lie in the UK's new-found ability to chart its own course post-Brexit, particularly regarding the pursuit of divergence and deregulation. Despite the ongoing debate on the impact of stringent ‘level playing field’ conditions, the Government has since made clear its desire to take advantage of such opportunities. In a call with business leaders, the Prime Minister [reportedly](#) said the “time is now” to cut red tape. Similarly, Chancellor Rishi Sunak told [CityAM](#) that the City should “get on and remain the most dynamic place to do financial services anywhere in the world”, akin to a Thatcher-esque “Big Bang 2.0”.

The COVID-19 Recovery:

“ *We will turn the UK into the world's number one centre for green technology and finance, laying the foundations for decades of economic growth by delivering net zero emissions in a way that creates jobs and allows us to carry on living our lives.* ”

[Boris Johnson, November 2020](#)

A diffuse phrase and one that spans numerous countries across the globe, 'Build Back Better' represents the ambition to build a "fairer, greener and more resilient" economy. The Government developed three pillars: infrastructure; net zero; and planning, and began fleshing out each of these ambitions with specific policy programmes last year. The Government's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, National Infrastructure Strategy and Energy White Paper from 2020 lay the groundwork for a raft of new strategies to be published in 2021, before COP26 in November. Similarly, more information on the National Infrastructure Bank is expected at the March Budget.

Levelling up & Regionalism:

“ We will be doubling down on our strategy. We will double down on levelling up. I believe in building people up giving everyone growing up in this country the opportunity they need. Whoever you are, whatever your ethnicity, whatever your background. ”

[Boris Johnson, June 2020](#)

A foundation of the 2019 manifesto, 'levelling up' represents the pledge to address regional inequalities in the UK. It encompasses educational, employment, productivity, and wealth disparities, and has taken on a renewed impetus in the wake of COVID-19. It also receives significant support among the backbenches, with numerous groups set up to hold the Government to account on delivering on its regional promises. The imperative is two-fold, maintaining the new-found Conservative heartlands across the regions, and addressing growing antipathy towards Whitehall among the devolved nations, particularly Scotland.

Global Britain & International Trade:

“ We are re-emerging after decades of hibernation as a campaigner for global free trade. It has been free trade that has done more than any other single economic idea to raise billions out of poverty and incredibly fast. ”

[Boris Johnson, February 2020](#)

Since the 2016 EU referendum, cutting free to boost trade with fast growing economies across the world has been a key tenet of the Eurosceptic argument. And it is one with significant buy-in among the Cabinet. The UK defied modest expectations in securing a number of roll-over trade deals prior to the end of the transition period, but its ambitions are greater, with a vision to shaping a global trading system fit for the future, with tech and services at the heart. Success in this space will also be crucial in driving much-needed foreign direct investment (FDI) into the UK. A bolstered trade department is likely in the coming years, building on the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) merger last year.

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BREXIT:
UK enters new trading relationship with EU, leaving Single Market and Customs Union. New global trade agreements come into force.

BREXIT:
New points-based immigration system comes into force.

BREXIT:
UK to publish General Health Insurance Card, replacing EHIC.

JAN

UK:
Spring Budget 2021 (3 March). Finance Bill to be introduced.

BREXIT:
UK and EU to reach financial services MoU.

COVID-19:
Applications to Coronavirus Loan Schemes end (31 March).

MAR

UK:
Local and devolved nation elections due to take place across the UK, subject to COVID-19 restrictions (6 May).

MAY

BREXIT:
UK requires importers from the EU to meet full customs requirements and security declarations, and prepare for customs compliance checks.

JUL

UK:
Party Conference season begins.

GLOBAL:
Pre-COP 26 Summit, Milan (30 September – 2 October).

SEP

GLOBAL:
COP 26, Glasgow (1-12 November).

NOV

FEB

BREXIT:
EU Parliament to ratify TCA.

APR

BREXIT:
Traders required to submit pre-notification of relevant documentation for Products of Animal Origin (PoAO). Under the NI Protocol, the grace period for authorised traders from official certification for PoAO and other goods ends.

COVID-19:
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ends (30 April).

JUN

GLOBAL:
UK to host 2021 G7 Summit.

BREXIT:
UK data adequacy temporary provision ends.
UK-EU agreement expected.

BREXIT:
UK to join all regional fisheries management organisations.

BREXIT:
Deadline for registration to EU Settlement Scheme (30 June).

AUG

UK:
Summer parliamentary recess expected.

OCT

UK:
Comprehensive Spending Review expected.

DEC

BREXIT:
Phase-in process under NI Protocol for implementing medicines regulation and grace period on CE marking standards come to an end (31 December).

KEY EXPECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- Q1:**
- Hydrogen Strategy
 - Digital Strategy
 - Response to National Data Strategy
 - Defence Integrated Review
 - Online Safety Bill
 - Strategic Review of FinTech
 - Payments Landscape Review

- Q2:**
- Comprehensive 'Net Zero Strategy'
 - HM Treasury 'Net Zero Review'
 - UK's 6th Carbon Budget
 - Smart Data Working Group
 - Transport decarbonisation plan