

News in Review

25 May 2022



"There is no measure any government could take... that can make these global forces disappear overnight"

Inflation continues its ascent, with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rising to 9.0% in the 12 months to April 2022, up from 7.0% in March, according to the latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Rishi Sunak addressed the Confederation of British Industry last week, following release of the latest data saying, "the Bank of England now expect inflation to peak at 10% later this year. And those inflationary pressures are starting to weigh on growth... There is no measure that any government could take, no law we could pass, that can make these global forces disappear overnight."

Warning that the next few months will be tough, the Chancellor called on businesses to "invest, train and innovate more" to help boost productivity and improve the long-term prosperity of the UK. He said the government's response to the cost-of-living crisis will "evolve" as the situation does, however he did not outline any immediate action, citing that ministers "stand ready to do more."

Jubilee celebration city status winners and the Elizabeth Line finally opens

As part of 2022 Platinum Jubilee celebrations, eight new cities were named last week, with at least one featuring in every UK nation, plus on the Isle of Man and the Falkland Islands. As part of a Platinum Jubilee civic honours competition, applicants had to showcase their cultural heritage, and their local and community identity. Colchester, Doncaster, Wrexham, Bangor, Milton Keynes and Dunfermline received the royal honour, as well as Stanley in the Falklands and Douglas

on the Isle of Man, completing the geographically diverse list of eight.

According to the Cabinet Office, 'city status can provide a boost to local communities and open up new opportunities for people who live there.' By way of example, granted city status in 2012, Perth, 'has reaped the full benefits, with the local economy expanding by 12% in the decade it was granted city status.' According to some residents, being awarded the status has firmly established them on the 'international map as a place to do business.'

Just before Jubilee celebrations kick into full swing, the Elizabeth Line, linking Reading and Essex via central London, opened to passengers on Tuesday. Hampered by several delays, and originally due to open in 2018, passengers are now able to travel the Abbey Wood to Paddington section, with those wishing to travel the length of the line currently having to change at Paddington or Liverpool Street, until 2023. The government has outlined that the new line will bring £42bn to the UK economy and it has created over 55,000 jobs across the UK. Expectations are that the line will support regeneration and new homes along its route.

Record level of fraud prevented

Specialist police force, the Dedicated Card and Payment Crime Unit (DCPCU) comprising the Metropolitan Police Service, City of London Police officers and Metropolitan Police Service and staff from UK Finance, prevented a record £101m worth of fraud in 2021. Established 20 years ago, and funded by the finance and banking industry, the total amount

prevented from being stolen was the highest in the unit's history.

Managing Director of Economic Crime at UK Finance, Katy Worobec, commented on the success of the DCPCU, "The unit's work in tackling organised criminal gangs has stopped stolen money from funding other serious criminal activities including terrorism, human trafficking and drugs smuggling. Unfortunately, criminals will continue to try to scam the public, so we urge everyone to follow the advice of our Take Five to Stop Fraud campaign: always take a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information."

Retail sales experience surprise increase

Alcohol and tobacco sales were found to have driven an unexpected rise in headline retail sales in April. According to ONS data, UK retail sales volumes increased by 1.4% last month, this follows a 1.2% fall in March. Food store sales volumes increased 2.8% in April, while non-store retailing sales volumes, predominantly online-only retailers, rose by 3.7% in the month, led by stronger clothing sales. Off-licences also saw a boost in sales last month, suggesting that people were choosing to stay at home in an effort to save money. The proportion of online retail sales rose to 27.0% in April from 25.9% the previous month, considerably higher than the 19.9% recorded in February 2020 prior to the pandemic.

Here to help

Financial advice is key, so please do not hesitate to get in contact with any questions or concerns you may have.