

## BHS Policy on Society Responses to External Consultations

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The Society is often invited by Government departments, agencies and other organisations to provide a BHS response to external consultations. In deciding whether to respond to a consultation request and formulating any subsequent response, the Society will apply the following policy:

### 1. General

- 1.1. The Society's Main/Executive Committee may submit responses to external consultations on behalf of the whole Membership.
- 1.2. Any consultation response which has not been submitted in accordance with this Policy will be considered the individual opinion of a member(s) and not that of the Society at large.

### 2. Requests for consultation response:

- 2.1. Any request for the Society to respond to a consultation must be considered by the Main (or Executive) Committee. The Committee will consider any request made directly to either the Society's Secretary or Member of the Main Committee. If any other Member would like to request the Society respond to a consultation, they should contact the Honorary Secretary or President who will take the request to the Main (Executive) Committee for consideration.
- 2.2. The Main Committee (or, where the timescale for a response is not compatible with the Main Committee's meeting timetable, the Executive Committee) will decide on whether the Society will respond to the consultation. No consultation responses should be submitted on behalf of the Society without the prior approval of the Main (or Executive) Committee.

### 3. Response process:

- 3.1. Where it is decided that a Society response to a consultation is appropriate, the Main/Executive Committee will allocate one (or more) Main Committee Member(s) to act as the lead author(s) for the response. They may request the Technical Secretary and/or Secretary to provide support to the lead author(s).
- 3.2. The lead response author(s) will seek response input from the Main Committee by email circulation of the relevant consultation documents. A minimum of one week will normally be given for input. The lead author(s) may canvas the opinion of the wider Membership (for example, via a website announcement, article in Circulation or via MailBase) if time allows and they deem this appropriate.
- 3.3. Taking into consideration any views received, the lead author(s) will draft the Society's response. In doing so, the lead author(s) should remember that they are representing the views of the whole Membership. Responses should clearly state in the opening paragraph that they have been authored by the Society's Main Committee on behalf of the Membership and explain whether this has been done with/without seeking the input of the wider Membership.
- 3.4. The draft response will be circulated to the Main Committee for comment before submission. This will normally be by email circulation or tabling of the draft response at a Main Committee meeting. A minimum of one week will be allowed for comment.
- 3.5. On the basis of comments received the draft response will be finalised and sent to the Executive Committee for final approval. If approved, the Society's response will be submitted to the consulting organisation by the Technical Secretary. All Society responses should be signed by the President or Honorary Secretary.
- 3.6. In exceptional circumstances (for example, where the consultation timetable does not allow the normal windows for Main Committee input or draft response comment) the Executive Committee may approve drafting and submission of a Society response without the Main Committee's approval or comment. Where such responses are submitted, the Main Committee will be informed and the response should clearly state that it has been authored by the Society's Executive Committee, without input from the wider Membership.

### 4. Publishing society responses:

- 4.1. All consultation responses submitted by the Society will be circulated to the Main Committee and published on the Society's website within two weeks of submission.