

Getting the low-down



What are consultations and calls for evidence?

Processes by which policymakers seek information, evidence and insight on a broad theme or issue, specific policy, or set of proposals. Responses can inform government decision-making and policy design and help to avoid unintended consequences.

The government department or public body typically publishes documents setting out information on the area or proposals, including relevant impact assessments and a number of questions. Submissions to consultations are made in response to the questions, and they are typically open for around 12 weeks, but this can vary.

Government usually aims to publish a response within 12 weeks of the closing date.

To formulate a response, IOM3 invites input from members in a variety of ways, such as through the website, email newsletters, dedicated workshops and our Technical Communities.

For significant consultations or calls for evidence, IOM3 will hold webinars or publish digests to help unpack the content and facilitate contributions. IOM3 Technical Communities play a vital role in our policy activity and the leadership teams often provide expert insight and contributions.

Example: IOM3 responded to a consultation on the adoption of a mass balance approach for the *Plastic Packaging Tax* and the call for evidence as part of the government's net-zero review.



What are select committees and parliamentary inquiries?

Select committees can be formed from the House of Commons, the House of Lords, or as joint committees with members from both.

House of Commons select committees are typically concerned with checking the work of government departments – there is one for each department, plus a number look at cross-cutting issues. Lords' select committees investigate specialist subjects rather than shadowing the work of government departments.

Select committees run inquiries, inviting written and oral evidence on specific topics. When a committee starts an inquiry, it will usually publish a call for evidence. Written submissions are commonly published online and may be referenced in the report. The committee invites experts to give oral evidence that usually takes place in one of Parliament's committee rooms and are broadcast live on [parliamentlive.tv](https://www.parliamentlive.tv)

Following evidence gathering, a report is often produced that has recommendations for improvements and the outcomes are made public. Committee recommendations are not binding for government, but they are influential. The government regularly responds to a committee inquiry report.

Example: IOM3 submitted evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee's inquiry into green steel and gave oral evidence at the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee inquiry into plastic waste.



How does IOM3 engage in policy activity?

IOM3 members hold a unique wealth and breadth of knowledge that is of great value to policy debates. Through this expert insight and diversity of perspectives, IOM3 provides impartial and trusted contributions to shape policy development across a range of important agendas.

IOM3, informed by members, engages with a wide range of policy activity:

- Making submission to consultations, calls for evidence and parliamentary inquiries.
- Direct engagement with policymakers.
- Producing proactive policy reports.
- Publishing policy papers led by the IOM3 Technical Communities.
- Responding to major government events and announcements that impact materials, minerals and mining and key fiscal events such as the Budget and King's Speech.
- Partnering with key stakeholders and organisations to amplify messages and contribute materials, minerals and mining insight to wider conversations.
- Holding webinars and events, for example, to connect members and policymakers and unpack policy proposals.
- Organising panel discussions at trade shows and conferences to discuss policy changes and hear the latest thinking.
- Participating in working groups, roundtables and taskforces.

For example, IOM3 has recently published *Materials, Minerals & Mining: Securing a resilient and sustainable future for the UK*, setting out its priorities for the new government. This was followed up with congratulatory letters to the new Secretaries of State for Science, Innovation and Technology; Business and Trade; Energy Security & Net Zero; Education; Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. The letters highlight relevant priority areas across the respective departments and the positive contribution materials, minerals and mining make to the economy and modern society.



What areas is IOM3 now focusing on?

For 2024-25, IOM3 has five priority themes for its policy activity:

- **UK Materials Strategy** – calling for a comprehensive, cross-government, cross-economy strategic approach to sustainable use and management of materials, covering the full lifecycle to ensure supply chain resilience, secure access to the materials and minerals required for modern society, and to deliver net-zero.
- **Critical raw materials** – a significant scaling up of critical raw materials production and supply is required to meet the growing consumer demand and net-zero target. This must be done in the most responsible and sustainable way possible, building on the UK's competitive advantage, transitioning to a circular economy, and developing more secure and resilient supplies.
- **Packaging policy reforms** – contributing to effective development, implementation and understanding of Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging and related reforms.
- **Transitioning the Foundation Industries** – supporting energy-intensive industries crucial to UK manufacturing and construction to decarbonise at the urgent pace required, move towards a more circular economy, and remain internationally competitive.
- **Skills and workforce** – championing the role of and need for materials, minerals and mining skills and professionals and a sustainable people pipeline at all stages. Helping to update perceptions and advance equity, diversity and inclusion.

Transitioning to a low-carbon, resilient and resource-efficient society underpins and is embedded throughout all IOM3 policy activity. This encompasses themes such as the role of resource efficiency, moving to a more circular economy and reaching net-zero.

How can I get involved?

There are lots of ways to share your insight and help to shape policy. Keep an eye on the IOM3 Policy & Influence webpage at bit.ly/policyandinfluence, member newsletters and social media for opportunities to get involved. Respond to calls for input and get in touch with IOM3 Head of Policy, Rachel Stonehouse, on rachel.stonehouse@iom3.org