

An open letter to all members and readers of *The Structural Engineer*



Martin Powell

Chief Executive, Institution of Structural Engineers

I am writing this letter just a few days following the publication in the UK of a consultation document issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as the next stage in determining what action is necessary to prevent the horrific tragedy at Grenfell Tower two years ago ever being repeated. In the busyness of the review process taking place across the entire sector, it is important that we pause and reflect on the human impact of that disaster and the responsibility we now share to diligently review, advise and be part of an industry-wide change agenda.

The consultation document builds on the recommendations of Dame Judith Hackitt's review of Building Regulations commissioned by the government shortly after the fire. Since that review was published, considerable work has continued behind the scenes by government and industry. The Institution has been an active participant and contributor in that activity. The consultation document now published makes clear that, among the many changes advocated, government will bring forward legislation to enact certain of those proposed changes.

This issue of the magazine includes a very helpful overview of the consultation proposals (page 31) prepared by Alastair Soane, Director of Structural-Safety, which encompasses SCOSS and CROSS. Readers will know that the Institution shares the responsibility for SCOSS and CROSS alongside the Institution of Civil Engineers, with active support from the UK Health and Safety Executive.

In the weeks ahead and in advance of the consultation response deadline of 31 July, Institution representatives will be continuing to work on understanding and clarifying details of how the proposals will work in practice. There will be changes to **process** and changes to **competency requirements**, all of which impact on the profession of structural engineering, both in its own right and, most importantly, in the interface with other disciplines and across the supply chain.

Alongside these process and competency issues, both Dame Judith and the MHCLG consultation have highlighted the need for better reporting and learning from incidents. The importance and contribution of CROSS is specifically highlighted, with very clear guidance that scope exists to significantly increase the impact and visibility of CROSS reporting as part of the change.

A separate article in this issue from Structural-Safety addresses the specifics of the challenge and opportunity (page 34). I urge you most strongly to consider how you might respond to the consultation as outlined by Structural-Safety. This is a very real opportunity for our profession to contribute most positively. The enhanced reporting recommendations sit outside the legislation process and, with your help, MHCLG may well be in a position to give an early green light to the support necessary for strengthening the existing CROSS scheme.

On all other matters relating to the Institution's responses to process and competency, I will keep you posted. I close by thanking and acknowledging the phenomenal contribution being made by Institution members and staff in the various review and consultation processes.

Exciting changes are here



Silvia Pilotto

Digital and Data Director,
Institution of Structural Engineers

The Institution launched its new website in late May as the first visible step in transforming our online presence.

Changes

The most obvious change is a completely new look and feel: our new brand reflects a dynamic and modern profession, giving us a stronger voice for championing the vital contribution structural engineers make to society.

We've rewritten much of the site, using clearer and more concise language wherever possible, so we can better serve our global membership and improve the general public's understanding of the role of structural engineers. We have the ambition to inspire through the site, showcasing our members and their extraordinary accomplishments.

We have also built a much leaner site to help you find information more quickly, choosing to reduce redundant content and create something you can use on your phone as efficiently as your desktop. The ambition is that you can find what you are looking for in an intuitive way, particularly when searching for courses, events, resources or information about Institution activity.

What next?

The programme of change has just started, and we're planning more development phases as part of an iterative development to minimise risk in an affordable fashion.

We are regularly adding more content, including guidance, past exam papers and reports: keep checking as more of our archive is migrated.

We are also developing new services, such as online membership applications, in order to remove barriers to Institution membership and offer better customer service.

Learning from feedback and data usage

With the site now live, we are closely monitoring developments (using data and analytics) to understand how it is serving your needs: the way you use the site will tell us what works well and what areas require improvements. We've already learned a lot from feedback on social media and email, and we'll continue to learn as the project progresses.

Our thanks again to all those members who have contributed to the site through the research, development and launch phases with thoughts, suggestions and comments. We want to continue the conversation with you over the coming months, ensuring that we shape a site that delivers for you, the Institution, and the structural engineering profession.