

Our Net Zero Ambition

Context

The Sixth Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Reportⁱ presented a reality check and a stark warning that 'unless there are immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, limiting warming to close to 1.5°C or even 2°C will be beyond reach'.

In its 2020 report, **Resource Efficiency and Climate Change - Material Efficiency Strategies for a Low-Carbon Future**ⁱⁱ, the UN Environment Programme's International Resource Panel notes that raw material extraction accounts for half of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and concludes that measures to improve resource efficiency could play a key role in meeting global climate change targets.

If food loss and waste were a country, it would be the third biggest source of GHG emissionsⁱⁱⁱ

The evidence clearly shows that conserving and ensuring sustainable use of natural resources, including improved resource management and resource efficiency, will play a significant role in helping to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions in the UK by 2050, supporting efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C. The Climate Change Committee notes that the UK needs to reduce its overall carbon footprint, which is 50% higher than territorial emissions^{iv}. Furthermore, 45% of emissions come from products where carbon emissions are not easily mitigated by changes to the energy mix^v.

CIWM believes that, by shepherding valuable resources back into the mainstream economy and fully embracing circular business models, our sector is uniquely placed to help deliver some of the changes that society needs to make in order to mitigate climate change.

The world is waking up. People, now more than ever, are increasingly aware of the impact their disposable lifestyles are having on the environment. And the practice of waste management has rightly been recognised as having a critical role to play in helping to mitigate the climate emergency.^{vi}

Current Position

The resources and waste sector is already putting valuable resources back to work; in 2018 alone, this resulted in nearly 50 million tonnes of avoided CO₂e emissions across the UK economy.

CIWM supports the ambitious vision set out in the ESA's **Net Zero Strategy**^{vii} for the resources and waste sector to reach Net Zero by 2040. The strategy rightly describes this as a collective ambition, emphasising that success depends on collaborative action across the whole supply chain, with clear policy and regulatory support from government.

CIWM's expertise can help bring about a shift from dealing with waste as an end-of-pipe problem to designing it out at the concept stage; minimising it; recovering greater proportions of resources during the required transition; promoting sharing, designing for durability, and leasing business models; and influencing and helping consumers and companies to move away from wasteful behaviours and towards *A World Beyond Waste*^{viii}.

Ambition and Opportunities - What CIWM is going to do

CIWM is committed to the resources and waste sector's critical journey towards Net Zero and fundamentally believes that "Effective waste prevention as part of a functioning circular economy will be essential to support the UK's climate objectives." We are also committed to launching our own Net Zero Strategy in 2022, whilst embracing the principles of ESA's Net Zero vision. CIWM's strategy will recognise the unique and wider role that we, as the sectors' professional body, can play in supporting the behaviours, skills and knowledge required to drive positive change across the whole gamut of actors involved in designing, producing, using and reusing products and resources, as we enable our industry



Together, we stand for a world beyond waste

to transition into one that embraces and supports circular business models, whilst recognising the crucial role that sustainable waste management practices will continue to play.

CIWM is now a signatory to the **Pledge to Net Zero**^{ix} and the **Professional Bodies Climate Action Charter**^x, and is working on its own organisational GHG reduction measures in line with a 1.5°C climate change scenario. We will report annually against these targets so that we can lead by example and make our own direct contribution to reducing GHG emissions.

By signing the **Pledge to Net Zero**, we have committed to:

- Achieving Net Zero as an organisation by 2035 for Scope 1 and 2 emissions, and by 2040 for Scope 3 emissions. To meet these targets, we will consider changes to:
 - the way we procure goods and services (e.g., computers and energy);
 - the way we travel on business (e.g., minimising car travel in favour of rail/public transport); and
 - the way we deliver training (e.g., offering more training on-line).
- Publicly reporting greenhouse gas emissions and progress against this target each year; and
- Publishing one piece of research or thought leadership each year on practical steps to delivering an economy in line with climate science and in support of Net Zero carbon emissions.

By signing up as a supporter of the **Professional Bodies Climate Action Charter**, we have committed to:

- Chart the path to sustainability for our members;
- Speak with a unified voice to, and with, professional bodies, government and the public; and
- Empower and inspire our members to drive sustainable growth.

Next Steps

As well as taking internal actions to reduce our own operational carbon footprint, CIWM will support its members to do the same, both as individuals and within their organisations. We will use our influence and advocacy to encourage and enable others on their path to Net Zero.

In particular, we will:

- Support the sector's Net Zero journey through research, thought leadership and advocacy;
- Champion the sector as part of the solution, articulating the relationship between Zero Waste, resource efficiency and Net Zero Carbon, and how waste minimisation and circular economy approaches can support green economic growth across all industry sectors;
- Develop and deliver essential training, professional development and sector standards that contribute towards carbon reduction and climate change resilience;
- Demonstrate that, as an essential utility, the resources and waste sector is also part of the climate resilience debate;
- Collaborate with and support other stakeholders who are aligned with CIWM's Net Zero goals; and
- Work to connect different audiences and agendas at a global, national, local and citizen level - from challenging consumption and wasteful behaviour, pushing for effective policy and regulation, through to cross-government co-ordination in crucial areas such as green skills.

To achieve this, we are forming a **Climate Change Advisory Group**, comprised of CIWM members, which will guide our thinking and formulate a sector-wide strategy that will help our members on their journey towards Net Zero.

[ENDS]



References:

- i [Sixth Assessment Report — IPCC](#)
- ii [Resource Efficiency and Climate Change: Material Efficiency Strategies for a Low-Carbon Future | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#)
- iii [Inger Andersen - Forward to UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2021](#)
- iv [The Committee on Climate Change 6th Carbon Budget](#)
- v [Material Economics, Completing the Picture, Report for the Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#)
- vi Dr Adam Read – CIWM President, August 2021
- vii [ESA-Net-Zero-Exec-Summary.pdf \(esauk.org\)](#)
- viii [CIWM Strategy - A World Beyond Waste](#)
- ix [Home | Pledge to Net Zero](#)
- x <https://professionalsclimatecharter.org/>

Notes to Editors:

1. CIWM: CIWM is the leading professional body for the resource and waste management sector representing around 5,500 individuals in the UK, Ireland and overseas. Established in 1898, CIWM is a non-profit making organisation, dedicated to the promotion of professional competence amongst waste managers. CIWM seeks to raise standards for those working in and with the sector by producing best practice guidance, developing educational and training initiatives, and providing information on key waste-related issues. More information can be found at www.ciwm.co.uk

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