

New CIWM President calls for UK to 'Turn Off the Resources Tap'

2 years ago



The new CIWM (Chartered Institution of Wastes Management) President, Tim Walker, has provided a rallying call to the sector as it accelerates its transition from waste managers to custodians of the raw materials which are so vital for the UK economy.

Following his inauguration in Belfast last night (20 June 2024), Mr Walker launched his Presidential Report entitled '[Turning off the Tap: Why better design can increase resource resilience and reduce consumption](#)', explaining that: "Resource and waste managers see the results of overconsumption, disposable design and imperfect service models every day in the millions of tonnes of material they handle. Society has become accustomed to not seeing the consequences of these wasteful behaviours as our sector has become so good at managing the resulting wastes. However, it is critical to remember that the first action of the waste hierarchy is waste prevention.

Processed items made from multiple materials are not good for the health of the planet, especially at the scale we see today. It's time to seriously address the role of design and development in the creation of 'stuff' and recognise how the resources and waste sector, which is at the nucleus of circularity, can support better decision making to effectively reduce our use of these precious resources.

As a sector we are gifted a wealth of materials every day. Our profession is serious about delivering circularity and to aid us we need better engagement across the whole supply chain. This will help to make better use of these materials so we can support others in reducing societies impact on nature and our planet."

The report recognises that CIWM is ideally placed to support this change and makes several

recommendations designed to accelerate the transition to a more circular economy, including:

- Using CIWM and the CEI (Circular Economy Institute) to lead the way towards circularity
- Supporting collaboration by facilitating cross-industry best practice
- Elevating circular skills development as critical to the transition
- Identifying opportunities for evolving regulation to help stem the flow of resources
- Providing constructive challenge to help reduce consumption and problematic items
- Working with brands and retailers to support the reduction in single use items
- Working with other trade organisations to promote the benefits of circularity.

Tim Walker is a keen environmentalist and passionate believer in highlighting our place in the natural world. He is currently the Chief Executive of arc21, having previously headed up waste management at Belfast City Council for two decades.

A member of the DEFRA Advisory Committee on Packaging (UK), Tim also holds a number of professional and academic qualifications, sits on the Board of both CIWM and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and is a Visiting Research Fellow with Queen's University Belfast looking at the Circular Economy.

[Access the full report here.](#)

[Access the Executive Summary here.](#)