Tom Baxter's resignation from the Learned Society Committee

The Institution's Learned Society Committee provides the strategic direction to whichever technical areas IChemE should focus on and steers IChemE's activities as a learned society. This committee asks members, who were elected by the technically engaged membership, to lead this vitally important area of activity and is supporting the delivery of IChemE's vision under Strategy 2024: to be led by members, supporting members and serving society.

On 4 December, Tom Baxter, who was elected to the committee on 22 July 2019, resigned from Learned Society Committee, citing his disappointment that when it met in late November to discuss its priority areas for work in 2020, the Learned Society Committee did not place more emphasis on addressing climate change. As Mr Baxter did not attend this meeting and the minutes had not been confirmed, IChemE is surprised by his decision, as there is much to do to address the global challenges created by climate change, and the Institution has every intention of playing its part. Some of the current and planned activity is set out in the text below.

IChemE is committed to activities that will contribute to combating climate change. Climate change will be a focus for the Learned Society Committee under a priority area incorporating climate change, sustainability, waste minimisation, environmental protection, and resource efficiency.

The Learned Society Committee agreed on the importance of climate change as the key topic within the broader field of this priority area, which has currently been given the working title of 'responsible production'. It sits alongside two other priority areas agreed by the Learned Society, namely major hazards identification and management and digitalisation.

The first area to be taken forward within the area of responsible production will be climate change, with a commitment to explore the development of a comprehensive benchmark to assess the sustainability of any process, specifically its impact on climate change.

The focus on responsible production and climate change is fully aligned with IChemE's Strategy 2024 (www.icheme.org/strategy2024), which sets out IChemE's ambition to be recognised as a vibrant learned society that materially impacts on the Global Grand Challenges. By this, we mean the 14 Grand Challenges for Engineering, championed by the global engineering academies, and the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Three of the Sustainable Development Goals directly relate to climate change:

- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy

Similarly, three of the Grand Challenges for Engineering have a clear link to climate change, namely:

- Make solar energy economical
- Develop carbon sequestration methods
- Provide energy from fusion

The strategy builds on existing work in the institution. Over recent years, IChemE has already produced a number of tools and pieces of thought leadership that relate to various aspects of climate change.

These include:

1) Energy and Resource Efficiency Good Practice Guide: https://www.icheme.org/membership/communities/committees-and-forums/energy-centre/publications/

2) Energy and Resource Efficiency case study series: https://www.icheme.org/membership/communities/committees-and-forums/energy-centre/case-studies/

3) *A Chemical Engineering Perspective on the Challenges and Opportunities of Delivering Carbon Capture and Storage at Commercial Scale*: https://www.icheme.org/media/1401/ccs-report-2018.pdf

4) *Transitioning to Hydrogen – assessing engineering risks and uncertainties* (of which IChemE was a major contributor): https://www.icheme.org/media/11593/transitioning-to-hydrogen-report.pdf

5) BioFutures programme and report: https://www.icheme.org/knowledge/policy/biofutures-programme/biofutures-publications/

Jon Prichard

Chief Executive

10 December 2019