**[ADD YOUR ADDRESS HERE IF WRITING TO YOUR MP]**

Dear **[insert name of your MP]**

**RE: England Tree Strategy consultation**

I **[work with / support]** Architects Climate Action Network (ACAN)1, a network of individuals within architecture and related built environment professions taking action to address the twin crises of climate and ecological breakdown.

The UK Government is currently running a public consultation on the England Tree Strategy, *informing a new England Tree Strategy which we will publish later this year. The strategy will set out policy priorities to deliver our ambitious tree planting programme. It will focus on expanding, protecting and improving our woodlands, and how trees and woodlands can connect people to nature, support the economy, combat climate change and recover biodiversity. This will ensure that trees are established and managed for the many benefits they provide for people, the economy, the climate and nature itself* 2.

**The Issue**

I praise the Government’s engagement with the topic and commend the interdisciplinary nature of the strategy. I believe it has the potential to be a significant achievement for the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, the Government and the British public.

 However, the format of the consultation is not conducive for professionals and the general public to give a meaningful response. The consultation is limited to multiple-choice options, and the questions are framed from the perspective of those in forestry management, as opposed to the broader, holistic view of tree planting. This is a missed opportunity to gather in-depth insights from a wide range of respondents and has been criticised by the Arboricultural Association, the Landscape Institute and others already3.

**England Tree Strategy & The Climate and Ecological Breakdown**

The environmental impact of construction and the built environment is extensive; accounting for around 40% of the UK's carbon emissions. In light of the IPCC's recommendation that global emissions need to be halved by 2030, industry regulations must be commensurate with the significant share of emissions that the sector is responsible for including regulations on the types of materials from which buildings are constructed.

I feel the England Tree strategy could greatly aid the construction sector to meet the target of net-zero carbon set by the Government, develop a robust timber industry in the UK while restoring biodiversity lost through rural and urban developments.

**Your Support**

Together with UK Construction Declare steering group, ACAN have reached out to experts from beyond the architecture profession to ensure our response is robust and addresses concerns beyond our professional silo. We have collaborated with a range of experts in forming our Key Messaging, including landscape architects, bee experts, representatives from the forestry industry and those working in tree mapping data. ACAN are calling the Government to recognise that:

1. **The construction industry needs productive and diverse working woodlands**

**We believe The Government should:**
• Commit to building with homegrown timber to assure nurseries and foresters of diverse demand, resolve the reticence of insurance providers by supporting tests for fire safety and durability, and incentivise procurement from diverse working woodlands in the UK.
• Prioritise construction over combustion. Timber buildings can sequester carbon and act as carbon sinks for upwards of 60 years beyond the tree’s life. Forestry energy cannot be a solution in meeting our Carbon targets.
• Ensure that forests are not tools for carbon offsetting to allow polluting companies to continue business as usual.
• Commit firmly to support the biodiversity of England’s working woodlands.
• Target more than a 2% increase in woodlands by 2060. Currently, England woodland cover is 10%. The average European forest cover exceeds 30%.

1. **We need to increase tree canopy cover in our towns and cities**

**We believe The Government should:**• Recognise the benefits of urban trees. They help our homes and cities to be more resilient to climate change, by reducing the urban heat island effect, for instance.
• Ensure that urban tree planting embodies the biodiverse nature of woodlands, supporting a variety of species, producing fruits and supporting pollinators.
• Retain and protect mature urban tree and canopy cover should be used as a primary measure for strategically planning around and protecting existing trees. One 150-year old plane tree is not equivalent to one 6-year-old birch tree.
• Ensure that increased green spaces are a universal right and not only a tool to increase property value. Street trees and new woodlands should benefit existing communities and not simply new developments.
• Raise awareness of the value that trees bring and the protections that exist for trees in urban areas within the wider general public.

As my MP, I ask for your support in the following ways:

● To write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, George Eustice and the Minister of State for Pacific and the Environment, Lord Zac Goldsmith requesting that they review the format of the consultation to allow for a greater input from professionals and general public, take into consideration our key messaging and request that a cross-sector panel must be consulted in the development of the new England Tree Strategy.

● To use your voice to raise parliamentary questions to highlight this issue as it could have a significant impact on the furthering of this debate.

Please do not hesitate to contact ACAN if you wish to support this cause or have any further questions. You can find further information using the links included below.

Thank you for your time and support.

Yours, **[YOUR NAME]
[Architect (if applicable)]**ACAN contact: mail@architectscan.org

**Footnotes**

1: The Architects Climate Action Network response to the consultation: <https://www.architectscan.org/tree-campaign>
2: The Government Consultation on the England Tree Strategy <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/forestry/england-tree-strategy/supporting_documents/englandtreestrategyconsultationdocument%20%20correctedv1.pdf>
3: The Arboricultural letter to Lord Goldsmith, co-signed by cross-sector partners
<https://www.trees.org.uk/Trees.org.uk/media/Trees-org.uk/Documents/AA/Rt-Hon-Lord-Goldsmith-22nd-July-2020.pdf>