

## **Response to National Planning Policy Framework consultation**

### **Introduction**

We all know that our trees, woodlands and green spaces promote healthy communities, with benefits including climate mitigation, improved air quality, flood alleviation and better physical health and wellbeing, not to mention beauty. Trees are vital strategic assets in our transition to sustainable places, businesses and communities and must be treated as such in government policy.

### **Key recommendations**

1. We unreservedly support the proposal for tree-lined streets in all new developments. We also encourage government to extend this commitment to retrofitting existing streets. For new trees, plans must allow space for their growth and include provision for ongoing maintenance. Proper consideration of trees needs to be embedded earlier in the process.
2. Links between the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Model Design Code need to be stronger and clearer. There must also be strategic read-across to other policy developments such as Biodiversity Net Gain, Nature Recovery Networks and tree cover targets. It is vital the team works with relevant departments and public bodies, notably Defra and the Forestry Commission.
3. Planning reforms must afford the right protections for existing trees and woodland including ancient, veteran and open grown trees. This period of change is a chance to get tree strategies embedded in local plans, drive better management of local authority trees, place requirements on developers to manage trees and mitigate against losses.
4. It is critical that government addresses the skills shortage. We don't have the experts needed to advise on planning, particularly local tree officers but also ecologists and landscape specialists. This needs to be raised in the government's green recovery agenda as a chance to draw in new entrants to the environmental professions.

We continue to partner with prominent organisations across planning, arboriculture, forestry, conservation, landscape and design, with significant alignment across our key points. There is considerable appetite for collaboration between the professional bodies in these areas and we would welcome engagement with MHCLG to capitalise on this.

### **Who we are**

The Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) is the Royal Chartered body for foresters and arboriculturists in the UK. The Institute regulates standards of entry to the profession, doing so by the provision of services and support to its members; guidance to professionals in other sectors; information to the general public; and educational advice and training to students and tree professionals seeking to develop their careers in the forestry and arboriculture industry.