Report on Public consultation in relation to the Draft Tree Management Plan

**Introduction**

South Dublin County Council’s first Tree Management Plan – Living with Tree – was adopted in 2015 with a time frame of 5 years. The Policy was reviewed in 2020/21.

The achievements of the 2015-2020 Tree Management Policy are as follows

All Council owned street trees are in the process of being surveyed with half of estimated 60,000 street trees recorded. A cyclical tree maintenance programme is in place based on the results of the tree surveys. This includes a planned maintenance programme for trees close to electricity wires and a scheduled inspection and maintenance programme for mature trees.

An annual tree planting programme is in place with at least 6,314 trees planted throughout the County in the last 5 years.

Information on the tree maintenance programme outlining detailed schedule is available on Trees page [www.sdcc.ie](http://www.sdcc.ie/)

Following the review, a draft policy was prepared and presented to the SPC in May 2021. The draft policy and a short video were prepared and placed for non-statutory public consultation on the Council’s portal from 1st July – 6th August 2021.

**Outcome of the Public Consultation process:**

The public consultation process was positive highlighting issues relating to tree management, maintenance, and the environment. There were a number of individual tree queries relating to operational issue and not relevant to the policy.

51 submissions received under the headings below. The submissions covered a wide range of topics with 102 observations noted.

The most frequent topics mentioned are listed below

Summary of issues raised with response and recommendations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| **Tree Management** |  |
| **Summary - Tree Management** | **Responses** |
| 1. Availability of information to public | Section 2.7 public education, awareness, and engagement |
| 2. Develop policy in relation to hedgerows | Include hedgerow management plan in the policy |
| 3. Tree replacement program required | Section 3 deals with tree replacement |
| 4. Permeable and flexible tree planting solution required/ Tree pits | Examine the use of tree pits in urbanised areas |
| 5. Carbon sequestering policy | Include the development of Carbon Sequestering within public trees in action plan |
| 6. Increase the number of TPOs | Section 7.5 outlines TPOs. |
| 7. Encouraging of re-wilding of spaces | Include in the development of urban woodland programme |
| 8. Attend to trees blocking services | Section 4.3 and 6.21 addresses this issue |
| 9. Develop protocol for dealing with utility companies | Section 6.8 and Action 1.2 outline tree maintenance approach with Utility Companies |
| 10. Address trees and the planning process | Section 7 discusses Trees and development in relation to planning |
| 11. Tree planting abiding by DMURS | DMURS included in Appendix 4 |
| 12. Development of a leaf composting area | Develop a community leaf composting trial in Action Plan |
| 13. Justification for the removal of trees | Section 4.3  Include information campaign in policy |
| 14. Budget | Include resource allocation in annual budget |
| 15. Pollarding to be utilised as a maintenance tool | Include pollarding information in policy |
| 16. Tree Sculptures | Include the use of tree sculptures in parks and open spaces |
| 17. Tree Officer | Tree team in place |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Tree Maintenance** |  |
| **Summary - Tree Maintenance** | **Responses** |
| 1. Maintaining tree growth into private property and on roadways | Section 2 Policy |
| 2. Clearing trees from pathways | Section 2 Policy |
| 3. Trees damaging pathways | Section 2 Policy |
| 4. Dealing with Ash dieback | Section 4.3.4 Policy – include planning for Ash tree replacement campaign in Policy |
| 5. Dealing with dead trees and stumps | Stump removal under Section 4.6., Dead Trees in Section 2.6 |
| 6. Maintenance plan development | Details available on website |
| 7. Giving constituents notice | Section 4.2 |
| 8. Replacement of removed trees | Section 3.5 |
| 9. Using members of the public to help with surveys | Examine option of community tree data collection |
| 10. Reduction of tree height and densities | Section 2 |
| 11.Maintain trees outside nesting period | Section 4.8 and Appendix 3 |
| 12. IAS information | Invasive Species Policy to be developed separately |
| 13. Unauthorised removal policy/protocol | Action 1.6 in Action Plan -develop a procedure for unsanctioned removal of trees. |
| 14. Ivy policy | Section 4.10 |
| 15. Recognise importance of park trees | Section 2.8 |
| 16. Greater maintenance required | Details available on website.. Include social media campaign |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Tree Planting** |  |
| **Summary - Tree Planting** | **Responses** |
| 1. Set minimum number of trees per street | Appendix 4 DMURS |
| 2. Tree planting plan | Annual tree planting plan presented to Area Committee and available on www.sdcc.ie |
| 3. Tree planting using fruit trees | 3.4 and 6.27 Develop a fruit trees planting scheme for schools |
| 4. Replacing dead trees | Section 3.5 |
| 5. Avoid felling | Section 5 |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Action Plan** |  |
| **Summary - Action Plan - 13 Submissions** | **Responses** |
| 1. Survey and map all trees in the county | Currently underway |
| 2. Specify types of trees to be planted, suitable for their environments and the improvement of biodiversity | Section 9 outlines tree lists Native tree list will be added |
| 3. Develop education and awareness program | Section 2.7 s public education, awareness and engagement, |
| 4. Improve information and availability of tree maintenance program | Tree maintenance information available on the website. Social media plan for trees to be put included in Action Plan |
| 5. Develop ambitious tree planting plan including stepping stone forests | Develop a mini-woodland program as part of urban forest plan |
| 6. Consequences for breaching of planning and non-sanctioned tree maintenance/removal | Section 7 Trees and development in relation to planning, |
| 7. Outline planning process in relation to trees | Section 7 Trees and development in relation to planning, |

It is proposed to include the amendments outlined in the recommendations above in the new Tree Management Policy 2021-2026 to reflect issues raised as part of the public consultation process and the considerations of the Council’s Environment, Public Realm & Climate Change SPC sub group.