



- Living with Trees -

South Dublin County Council's

Draft Tree Management Policy

2015 - 2020

February 2015

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1.0 Introduction

Trees make a major contribution to the character and appearance of South Dublin County. They provide significant economic, social, environmental, ecological and aesthetic benefits to our communities and to our urban and residential streets, parks and open spaces. They also enhance biodiversity and play a crucial role in mitigating climate change. The Council recognises trees as a living asset, and understands ongoing maintenance, renewal and management is required for long-term sustainability and community benefit.

The development of a Tree Strategy is outlined as one of the actions in Objective 1 of Environment, Water and Climate Change Directorate of the Council's Corporate Plan 2015-2019

- Improve the appearance of our county in the interest of economic development

The Tree Policy/Strategy will inform the Council's approach on the management and development of a sustainable tree population in the County and provide guidance to others. This will allow for a pro-active and systematic approach to tree management and create a greener, more sustainable environment for residents and visitors to the County.

1.1 Why have a Tree Management Policy?

South Dublin County Council has responsibility for the management and maintenance for trees in public spaces – streets, parks and open spaces.

Whilst the County has an estimated population of c.60,000 trees, an inventory of street trees has not previously been undertaken and information on the number, age and condition of trees is limited. It is also well recognised that parts of South Dublin County's administrative area, such as the long established neighbourhoods of Rathfarnham, Terenure, Templeogue, Clondalkin, Palmerstown and Lucan, have ageing and mature tree populations where tree maintenance is required in order to sustain the health and viability of these trees into the future.

The planting of new trees and replacement planting where trees have been removed has also been very limited in recent years and there is a need to plan for the renewal and continuity of our tree population. The absence of a clearly defined policy for tree maintenance and prioritisation of work has resulted in public expectation of the service beyond that which is necessary or achievable.

At present, much of the Council's tree resource is managed by responding to complaints but reactive management is not efficient and does not give our customers the best service. The lack of a planned approach to the management of the Council's tree stock could reduce the quality of the County's landscape character overtime.

The environmental, social and economic factors relating to trees are recognised but the pressures on existing trees, opportunities for new tree planting and the impact of development in its many forms tend to be dealt with in isolation.

The Tree Policy represents a significant change in how we manage trees with the development of a more strategic, proactive, planned approach to inspection, planting, maintenance and management. This will lead to an improved service and more effective tree maintenance programme.

The Council's aim is move towards more efficient, cost effective proactive management rather than reactive management of the County's street tree population. Our objectives are to:

- Improve tree management and create a safer , healthier tree population

- implement a proactive, planned programme of cyclical tree maintenance
- Maximise the use of the Council's resources to provide a better service and give better value for money.

Central to this approach is to recognise and promote the value of existing trees as well as planning for renewal of the tree population. Expectations of how we manage our tree population have to be balanced with the realities of resource availability.

The Tree Policy will plan new tree management initiatives to enable progress towards an improved service, a more informed and strategic approach to tree management, greater understanding of trees and a more aesthetically pleasing County.

The Tree Policy will inform and guide decision making in relation to the County's landscape and environment and enable the prioritisation of resources.

1.2 Why Trees are important

Trees are living organisms and are a unique component of the landscape: They offer aesthetic and environmental value as well as social and economic benefits.

Many trees are long-lived, offering enjoyment and a range of benefits to residents both now and in the future. Trees make a huge contribution to the urban landscape enhancing the quality of life for people living, working and visiting the County

The benefits that trees provide can be categorised as follows

- Environmental
- Climate Change
- Social
- Economic
- Health & Well being

Environmental benefits

- Air quality– Trees absorb carbon dioxide and other gases from the air producing oxygen in the photosynthesis process. Each year a mature tree produces enough oxygen for 10 people. Trees also trap dust particles thus improving air quality.

Dublin Regional Air quality Management Plan

- Flooding – Trees help mitigate the risk of flooding – tree canopies intercept rainfall.
- Noise barrier - Tree can reduce noise by acting as a sound barrier, this is particularly important in absorbing traffic noise in built up areas.

Dublin Agglomeration Action Plan relating to the Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise

Climate Change

- Carbon – trees are Carbon sinks, they store carbon as they grow, temporarily reducing Carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere.
- Habitats – trees and their ecosystem provide habitats for wildlife – trees and timber with cavities are especially valuable for animals such as bats and birds.
- Green links – trees provide links between parks and open spaces allowing opportunities for wildlife to travel from place to place to access new habitats.

Social

- Sense of place – trees create a distinctive landscape –providing a unique sense of place and location.

- Nature – trees connect people with nature, marking changing seasons with leaf, flowers and colour changes.
- Community links – trees are long lived and are a part of the social fabric, culture and history of an area, linking people and building community networks.

Economic

- Property values – Research has shown that the presence of trees can increase the value of residential and commercial properties by between 5-18%
- Village and retail areas – the presence of trees in retail areas positively affects people's behaviour by attracting consumers to an area.
- Effects on heating/ cooling buildings – Trees provide shade, shelter in wind and a regulation of local air temperature thus reducing energy and heat costs.

Health & Well being

- Physical benefits – trees have a positive effect on health through the provision of shade, outdoor recreation amenity and clean air.
- Mental benefits – Research has shown that trees reduce stress and give a greater quality of life.
- Emotional well being – trees with seasonal changes, flowers, colours and aromas can stimulate positive emotional feelings.

1.3 Impact of Climate Change and Trees

Policy: The Council will protect and increase the county's overall canopy cover to mitigate the effects of climate change.

As climate change increasingly becomes a reality, planting and caring for trees in our towns and cities will become even more important. The effects of climate change are predicted to result in warmer wetter winters with an increased risk of flooding and hotter drier summers. This policy has previously highlighted the importance of trees in cooling the urban environment and the health, social and economic benefits that trees provide to the public space environment of South Dublin. Trees also have the ability to maintain and recycle vast amounts of water and, while flooding is not currently a major climate mitigation issue for South Dublin, the part that trees play in flood mitigation may become increasingly significant in the future.

While trees may play a part in mitigating climate change, they are also directly affected by it and unfortunately the effects of changing climate will threaten the health and survival of trees. One of the greatest challenges facing the local and national tree population is the control and containment of new pests and diseases from outside Ireland. New pests and diseases are a threat to Ireland due to the increased international trade in plants, timber and general goods, and the more favourable conditions for new pests and diseases associated with climate change. Recent examples include ash dieback and bacterial canker of horse chestnuts. The spread of new species-specific diseases to Ireland emphasises the importance of species distribution and it is important to ensure the future continuity of tree cover across the county by, where practical, managing the age range of trees and by replanting with a more diverse range of species in order to mitigate the risks that monoculture and climate change present for tree management.

1.5 Challenges of Managing trees in South Dublin

While trees enhance the urban environment, the growing conditions are often hostile to good tree growth. Trees compete for good root growing environments in footpaths and roadside margins with utility networks, foundations for road and footpath works and a variety of pollutants such as car fumes, salt and de-icing agents. Physical damage and disturbance to trees roots is a frequent consequence of road and footpath reconstruction or trenching works of utility companies. Vehicular damage, particularly by skips and high-sided vehicles, and vandalism can damage trees causing death or disfigurement resulting in a misshapen or weak tree. Poor management of trees – incorrect pruning and failure to remove tree stakes and tree ties can also negatively affect tree growth.

All of this demonstrates the need for a strategic approach to tree management – planting and maintenance,

1.6 Vision

This tree management policy supports South Dublin County Council's mission:

'To make our county the best possible place in which to live, work and do business'

Our vision is for our trees to thrive in a well-managed, safe, sustainable environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

1.7 Aims of the Tree Policy

The overall aims of the Tree Policy are to ensure the safety of council trees, maintain and encourage biodiversity, maintain and improve landscape quality, and through these elements, improve the quality of life for residents and visitors to South Dublin now and in the future. We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that the Council has a clear programme of tree maintenance, management and planting;
- maintaining and improving the tree cover for the future;
- appropriate siting and species selections for all new trees;
- promoting the importance of trees in shaping the distinctive local character and appearance of South Dublin's urban landscape;
- recognising the significant aesthetic, landmark, ecological, social and economic value that trees provide;
- effectively communicating, educating and engaging with the local community on trees and their importance;
- continuing the proactive management of the Council's tree population;
- allocating sufficient resources to allow for best practice tree management
- providing clarity over why decisions and actions are taken;
- balancing the risk and nuisance to persons and property against the other aims; and
- recognising the value of trees as a tangible asset.

1.8 Action Plan

An Action Plan has been prepared to support the tree policy. It sets out what will be achieved between now and 2020. The plan identifies a number of key actions, responsibilities and timescales for delivery. Successful implementation of the Tree Policy will involve cooperation across Council services and with external utilities agencies.

1.9 Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be subject to annual monitoring to assess progress against the Action Plan and to pick up any emerging issues. A more thorough review of the policy will be undertaken every five years to adjust and incorporate any new changes in legislation, local policy, working practices or technical developments which may arise..

2.0 Tree Management in South Dublin County Council

Policy: The Council will initiate a tree survey of all council owned and managed trees, so that the collected information can be used to manage the tree resource in a planned and efficient way, which allows for the development and implementation of long term management plans, work schedules and the prioritisation of tree work.

2.1 Tree Management System

The Council will purchase a computerised, GIS based tree management system to enable the mobile mapping, surveying and management of all street trees within the county. This system will also be capable of integration with the Council's Customer Contact System and other operational systems. An integrated street tree management system will provide a comprehensive record of individual trees and enable the Council to trace the full history of any tree including inspections, tree works completed and related customer enquiries.

2.2 Tree Survey

It is estimated that South Dublin County Council has responsibility for the management and maintenance of at least 60,000 trees. However, an inventory of street trees within the Council's administrative area has not previously been undertaken and so accurate and detailed information on the extent, profile, condition and maintenance history of our tree stock is very limited. Information about these trees is essential if our trees are to be managed effectively and to enable planned management. A programme of street tree surveying across the county will be implemented to record details of location, species, age, size, condition, maintenance history and management requirements of individual street trees. Surveyors will input the data collected from surveys into the computerised tree management system. The Council will use the data to better manage its risks and to prioritise actions for our street tree population.

2.3 Tree Maintenance Service

The Council's tree maintenance service will aim to provide a professional and reliable service to the public, all Council members and other Council services. The key roles of the Council's tree maintenance service are:

- To manage inspections and surveys of trees under Council ownership and management
- To develop and maintain the planned computerised tree management system
- To plan and monitor all planned and reactive tree works.
- To deal with public enquiries and complaints on tree related matters.
- To provide professional advice to other Council services and Council members.
- To communicate with community stakeholders.

The Council's tree maintenance works programme is currently delivered by seasonal tree crews operating over an approximate four-month period between November - March and since July 2014 the Council has put in place a skilled, full-time tree maintenance crew to operate on a year round basis.

Occasionally, the Council engages the support of arboricultural contractors for emergency works or when the skills required to deal with a particular tree issue are not available within its own staff resources.

2.4 Annual Arboriculture Programme

The pruning, removal and planting of street trees is currently undertaken under the Council's Annual Arboriculture Programme. This programme is presented to meetings of the Council's Area Committees in November.

The development of the Annual Arboriculture Programme has largely evolved each year in response to requests for tree maintenance works received from members of the public and public representatives via the Customer Care Contact System.

However, planned maintenance is the Council's preferred method of maintenance to maintain trees in a safe and healthy condition. In recent years, the programme has increasingly focussed on tree pruning and removal works on entire roads or whole estates as opposed to acting on isolated requests for arboricultural works. The objective of this approach is to increase the efficiency and productivity of the tree maintenance crews and to advance a proactive programme of cyclical pruning that is targeted at priority locations where intervention is most needed.

2.5 Cyclical Programme of Planned Tree Maintenance

Policy: The Council will progress the phased introduction of a cyclical programme of tree maintenance

To ensure 'Best Value' service delivery, the Council will continue to advance the phased introduction of a planned cyclical programme of tree maintenance. This represents a move away from pruning individual trees on a one off basis to pruning entire roads or whole estates which is more efficient both in terms of cost, efficiency and community benefit. Having a planned approach also reduces the risk of tree failure and nuisance to residents, and will help to pre-empt complaints and meet the majority of customer requirements for tree works. This planned programme of tree maintenance will be made available to the public via the Council's Area Committees and the Council's website.

In addition to the rolling programme of planned works, some works will also arise from unplanned events such as severe weather conditions or insurance claims. Trees which threaten public safety and property will always be given the highest priority which may lead to plans for programmed works having to be delayed.

2.6 Reactive and Emergency Works

There will always be a need to carry out reactive works, although the quantity of this work should reduce over time as cyclical work is embedded. Reactive works are carried out to manage risks to the public. They include felling dead trees, removing hazardous branches, and clearing obstructions to sightlines and infrastructure. Reactive works are carried out in response to enquiries from other Council services, residents and Council member or where staff have identified them when travelling in the county.

The Council has an emergency plan for severe weather conditions and has tree maintenance crews on call 24 hours a day for any tree related emergencies.

2.7 Public Awareness, Education & Engagement

Policy: Where practicable, the Council will engage with the general public, schools, resident groups and environmental non-governmental organisations in the planning, design and management of trees.

Education on good practice in tree management is essential to improve understanding and appreciation of trees. It is an effective method to dispel any negative concerns and fears that residents may have.

Where practicable, the Council will promote awareness and appreciation of trees through encouraging and facilitating the involvement of local communities, schools and other stakeholders in tree planting, management and educational activities. Over the years, South Dublin County Council has taken a leading role in organising events for National Tree Week in March and Tree Day in October, particularly in association with schools and community groups throughout the county. The Council will renew its commitment to organising these events.

3.0 Tree planting / replacement planting

Policy: South Dublin County Council recognises the value of street trees in the urban environment and is committed to planting new trees to ensure that the visual amenity in South Dublin is assured for future generations. We will maintain a database of sites that have been identified as possibilities for new trees and implement an annual programme of tree planting in accordance with available resources.

3.1 Right Tree Right Place

Policy: The principle of planting the 'right tree in the right place' will apply for all new and replacement tree planting.

The careful selection of appropriate tree species and planting location is essential to minimise future nuisance issues and unnecessary maintenance costs. Potential sites for tree planting will be inspected to assess their suitability for new trees, considering factors such as services, sight lines, warning signs and traffic signals, space for future growth, etc. When positioning new street trees the Council will specifically aim to:

- avoid future obstruction of public lighting columns by ensuring that the fully mature new tree canopy will be ideally greater than 5m, but certainly no less than 3m from the lighting column
- seek to ensure that future tree growth does not compromise a minimum footpath width of 1.2m
- make adequate soil volume a priority to sustain tree health and longevity when selecting planting sites and preparing pits for tree planting.

Currently the Council plans its annual tree planting in accordance with available budget resources. The financial constraints of recent years have resulted in very limited implementation of new or replacement tree planting across the county over the last 5 years. From 2015, the Council aims to identify an annual target for tree planting to re-establish its commitment to a countywide programme of tree planting.

Areas targeted for new tree planting will be those where trees have been removed or where there is an identified need to increase the overall tree cover. Requests from Council members and local residents for new trees in their road or area will be taken into consideration within the planting programme. Individual requests will be prioritised according to the number of trees already on the street, including those in front gardens and on adjacent land.

Residents and resident associations must first seek and obtain permission from the Council before engaging in projects to plant trees and shrubs within Council managed streets, roadside margins or open space environments.

The Council's Tree Planting Programme will be implemented between November and March as this is accepted to be the most appropriate time of the year for planting of bare-root and root-balled trees. Tree planting will be carried out by adequately trained or supervised staff, and followed by appropriate post-planting maintenance

The Council will develop guidelines for tree planting and all tree planting works will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Tree Planting Guidelines and with British Standard Codes of Practice:

BS 3936-1: 1992 Nursery stock specification for trees and shrubs

BS 4043:1989 Recommendations for Transplanting Root-Balled Trees and

BS 4428:1989 (Section 7) Recommendations for General Landscape Operations

Many of our streetscapes have been planted with trees over succeeding generations but without the benefit of a clear design. Sometimes this works well, but in some locations the trees actually detract from the overall enjoyment of the street environment because there are too many trees, they are the wrong species or in the wrong place. Given this, we do not

believe that it always appropriate to simply replace a tree in the same place. Where there is a substantial requirement for new or replacement tree planting within a streetscape, our preferred approach is to prepare a tree-planting plan for the site reflecting its character, scale, use and local interests. Such schemes may be subject to community consultation before being adopted and implemented.

3.2 Species Selection

The choice of tree species is dependent on suitability to the planting location and local landscape character. A greater variety of trees can be planted in parks and open spaces and species will be selected on suitability to setting, biodiversity value and visual appearance. The selection of street trees is guided by their mature size, water demand, crown shape and future management requirements. Appendix 2 contains a list of tree species suitable for street tree planting. The list is not definitive and additional species will be considered where they have shown to be appropriate for street tree planting.

Having too many of the same type of tree in the county is a concern because of the increased risk of a loss of one or more species of tree to disease or other environmental factors. We can enhance the resilience of our tree population by increasing the variety of new trees planted and to this end the Council will adopt a best practice 'rule of thumb' guide to plant no more than 10% of same tree species, no more than 20% from the same genus and no more than 30% from the same family.

As well as increasing species diversity, the Council will also seek to plant large canopy trees, wherever possible, to achieve the maximum benefits that trees provide. Large-growing tree species confer much greater benefits to urban areas than small trees. Where space allows, preference will be given to planting as large a tree as is appropriate for the location.

3.3 Replacement tree planting

Policy: The Council aims to ensure, subject to available budget resources, that every tree felled should be replaced to ensure that over the years, the County retains its tree stock for future generations, although it is not always practical or prudent to replace a tree in the same location or with the same species that was previously planted.

If a site where a tree was removed is suitable to support a new tree, the site may be replanted with a suitable tree species. Because the stump has to be placed on a stump removal list and sufficient time needs to elapse to allow breakdown of residual underground root material, the process from removal to replanting may take up to 3-5 years. Replacement tree planting will only take place during the dormant season.

3.4 Sponsored Memorial Tree Planting

The Council will consider the feasibility of a suitable initiative and develop a protocol to address occasional requests to accommodate sponsorship of trees as memorials or to commemorate major life events. Due to potential sensitivities surrounding memorial tree plantings, any development of a scheme for sponsored memorial tree planting in public spaces would have to carefully consider the selection of suitable sites where the risk of vandalism or damage to the tree would be minimal.

4.0 Tree Maintenance

Policy: The Council will maintain trees on public spaces, streets, parks and open spaces adhering to relevant industry guidelines when carrying out arboricultural works to ensure all trees are in a safe condition and not causing actionable nuisance or forseen danger.

Street tree maintenance includes the inspection, pruning, removal and replacement of trees.

4.1 Quality of work

All tree works will be undertaken in accordance with British Standard BS 3998: 2010 Recommendations for Tree Work and current Health & Safety requirements. All staff undertaking tree works shall be competent with appropriate training, experience and qualifications. Any tree surgery contractors engaged to work on Council owned trees shall be competent and adequately qualified, trained, experienced and appropriately insured.

Any tree work carried out should be essential to the long term retention of the tree in its current position rather than simply for appeasement reasons. The Council will aim to maintain a natural silhouette to a tree unless it can be shown to be in the best interests of the long term health of the tree to do otherwise. The Council will not normally consent to pruning works that are greater than the standard set out by the Arboricultural Association or industry best practice, generally accepted to be crown reductions and thinnings of no greater than 30% by volume.

4.2 Public information on tree works

The Council currently presents its Annual Arboriculture Programme to Council members at the Council's Area Committee meetings usually during November. In order to expand public access to information on the Council's planned programme of tree works, it is intended to enhance the Council's website www.sdcc.ie to provide a 'Trees' webpage that will include the up to date Arboriculture Programme.

The planned removal of trees can be a particularly emotive and contentious issue and once a tree becomes a removal candidate, and the works are not emergency works, steps will be taken to provide public notice prior to any trees being removed to inform residents and reduce customer enquiries. Trees that are removal candidates are identified by requests from residents or public representatives or through routine survey work by Council staff. Public notification of any proposed tree removals will consist of a variety of methods that may include posting a list of trees on the Council's website, emailing known residents associations, notices being attached to trees, and/or letter drops to adjacent properties. Timescales for notice will vary according to the type of work, whether it is urgent and the local significance of the tree but wherever practical, the period of notice will be at least 10 working days before any scheduled tree removals. We will not usually give notice where works involve the felling of dead trees or those in imminent danger of failing.

4.3 Reasons for tree pruning and felling

Policy: The Council will wherever possible try to avoid removing a tree or undertaking unnecessary pruning works where there is no good arboricultural reason. It has a duty to manage the tree population for the benefit of the wider community and in accordance with good arboricultural practices.

The Council will undertake tree works to fulfil its legal obligations to ensure the safety of the public and properties. Tree works will be undertaken:

- Where an inspection has identified visible decay, fungal brackets indicating possible root and trunk decay or any other defect that would lead to the tree failing.
- A tree is dead or visibly in decline.

- To abate an actionable nuisance, where branches are touching buildings, e.g. physical contact with walls, windows and gutters.
- Where road signs, traffic signals, street lights, and sightlines for vehicles and pedestrians are obscured.
- Evidence has been provided that the tree is a contributing factor in causing structural damage that cannot be reasonably addressed by an alternative solution and proactive tree management has had no mitigating effect.

Tree removal or pruning will not be undertaken where:

- Trees are perceived to be too large.
- Satellite dish TV reception is interrupted.
- Sunlight may be blocked from reaching properties or gardens.
- Views are obstructed.
- Seasonal or naturally occurring events happen, e.g. falling leaves, fruit, seeds or berries, honeydew sap, bird droppings, pollen allergies.
- Insects or other non-hazardous wildlife are present.

4.3.1 Tree Pruning

The type of pruning works undertaken depends on the trees location and its species. Bad or unnecessary pruning can do more harm than good since each cut has the potential to change the growth of a tree, cause damage or allow the entry of wood decaying organisms, therefore no branch should be removed without a good reason. Older trees do not tolerate pruning as well as younger trees and substantial pruning can be very damaging. The effect of pruning also varies between species and some are not naturally tolerant of cutting. In general, minimal pruning works will be undertaken in order to sufficiently manage a tree. This may often only involve removing the lower branches to increase clearance for pedestrians and vehicle traffic and/or cutting back the branches from adjacent buildings.

4.3.2 Topping of trees

Topping of trees (reduction in height) causes large wounds, exposing trees to decay pathogens and causing their long-term decline, as well as being unsightly and potentially unsafe. Topping is therefore only considered where trees have serious defects, that cannot be reasonably addressed otherwise, and their short-term retention is essential or highly desirable.

It is often the view of residents that removing the crown or 'topping' a tree or trees will improve light levels or views or improve reception to TVs, satellites etc.. Whereas this may be true in the short term, any pruning, but especially 'topping', will cause decline in some species or rapid growth in others. Regrowth resulting from 'topping' will often be denser than the original crown and be weakly attached to the branches it develops from. Wounds associated with topping are often large and are more likely to be colonised by wood decaying fungi. 'Topping' is not good practice and can lead to dangerous trees in the future. For these reasons the Council will not 'top' trees.

4.3.3 Removal of Trees

Trees are removed only when necessary as a last resort. The criteria for tree removal are:

- the tree is dead, dying or is considered hazardous. Hazardous conditions may exist above and/or below ground and may include significant root, trunk or crown decay, split trunks and crotches, and large dead limbs.
- The tree has declined beyond the point of recovery and is no longer meeting the functional or aesthetic requirements of a street tree. Typically, a tree with 30 percent or less of its foliage remaining would meet this criterion.
- Fatally diseased trees (eg. Ash dieback, Fireblight Disease) may be removed before they reach the primary threshold in order to prevent the spread of disease to healthy trees.

- To allow space for development of nearby trees that may be more desirable for retention
- To allow space for new planting
- To make way for any approved engineering or building works when unavoidable construction work will immediately compromise the stability or viability of the tree.
- Tree proven to be causing significant structural damage that cannot be reasonably addressed by an alternative solution and proactive tree management has had no mitigating effect.
- To abate actionable nuisance
- The trunk of the tree is within 2m of a public lighting column and the long term viability of the tree if retained in its location would be compromised by a requirement for ongoing maintenance in order to maintain the effectiveness of the adjoining street light.

4.4 Unauthorised Pruning, Removal or Damage / Vandalism to Council Owned Trees

Policy: The Council will prosecute anyone found to be damaging or pruning its trees without permission and where appropriate apply the maximum penalty.

All Council staff operate from vehicles displaying the Council's logo and tree contractors operating on behalf of the Council are required to erect signage which refers specifically to South Dublin County Council. If someone is observed pruning, removing or causing damage to a Council owned tree who may be without consent (person not associated with a relevant sign or vehicle and / or without clothing that clearly identifies who they are) the Gardai should be called and the Council notified. Unauthorised damage, pruning or removal of a Council owned/managed tree may be prosecuted under the Criminal Damage Act 1991.

Unauthorised works or damage to Council-owned trees may result in a charge being levied. This charge will reflect the amount of damage sustained and where the life/safety of the trees is undermined, it will include the cost of total tree replacement and compensation for loss of tree value. These charges will be drawn up by professional parks staff and each case will be assessed on an individual basis using a recognised tree valuation system (eg. CAVAT or Helliwell)

4.5 Stump Removal

When a tree is felled by the Council, it is not always possible to remove the stump immediately. Stump removal may be delayed for up to 6 months after tree removal. Under these circumstances a short tree stump is left as a temporary measure. The stump is usually left at around 1m high so that does not constitute a trip hazard in the intervening period. Tree stump removal is normally undertaken during the winter months between November and February or may be done when there are a sufficient number for their removal to be economical.

4.6 Timber / green waste use policies

Policy: The Council will seek alternative uses for arisings from tree work to ensure as much as possible is reused or recycled.

A large quantity of wood and woodchip is produced each year from pruning and felling trees. Wherever possible, the wood debris from tree work is converted and recycled into woodchips for use as a mulch in planted areas or surfacing for woodland paths within the Council's parks and open spaces. Larger sections that can't be processed by the chipper are recycled according to the condition and species of timber. At present, these are generally made available to wood turners for carving and crafting or for firewood to charitable organisations through official local contacts. Green waste generated from tree works in woodlands is usually left in situ to create wildlife habitats.

4.7 Nesting Birds

Policy: The council will carry out inspections of trees prior to tree works for bird nests during the nesting period of March 1 – August 31 and comply with the relevant legislation and seek expert advice from relevant organisations where necessary.

The Wildlife Act 1976 (as amended 2000) is the principle legislation protecting nesting birds in Ireland. The Act makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird and to take, damage or destroy any nest that is either in use or being built. Section 40 of the Act prohibits cutting of vegetation on uncultivated land between March 1st and August 31st. However, it is accepted in practice that street trees are cultivated and as such, this allows for tree maintenance works to be carried out during the closed period subject to compliance with best practice protocols in regard to pre-works assessment of trees for active nests or nesting birds. Where an active nest or nesting birds are observed, no tree works should be carried out.

The primary reason for a year round programme of street tree maintenance is to ensure public safety and minimise tree hazards. Phenological and biological research also indicates that a number of tree species including cherry and walnut are best pruned in mid-summer to avoid introduction of disease while maple and horse chestnut will bleed sap extensively if pruned during early season growth.

To comply with the Act, the Council will draft a best practice protocol to ensure minimal impact on wildlife and nesting birds. The Council's tree maintenance crews or contractors engaged by the council, will be required to thoroughly check trees for nesting birds during the nesting period (March 1 – August 31) and take appropriate measures to prevent disturbance prior to the commencement of routine works. Advice from external experts will be sought where necessary. These measures may mean delaying the works until young birds have flown.

5.0 Prioritising Tree Work

It is recognised that residents' views on trees can vary greatly and a tree that is of great beauty and value to one person can be perceived as an unsightly nuisance to another. People rarely contact the Council when they are happy about local trees. Only when trees become an apparent problem are comments made, and therefore a distorted picture of peoples' perception of trees develops. It is important to seek alternatives to felling or severe pruning when conflicts arise, so that the trees can remain for the silent majority who value them.

The Council's role is to try to achieve a compromise, which is acceptable to the community at large but not necessarily to every individual within the community and to safeguard the tree population for the future within available resources. The implementation of this Tree Policy will clarify many of the existing ideologies and improve the management of customer expectations and the Council's website will be enhanced to provide a 'Trees' webpage that will include answers to frequently asked questions about trees.

5.1 Response to Enquiries

During 2014, the volume of tree maintenance requests doubled when compared with numbers from the previous year. This is partly reflective of an ageing and maturing tree population, particularly in long established neighbourhoods of Rathfarnham, Terenure, Templeogue, Clondalkin, Palmerstown and Lucan, where tree maintenance is required in order to sustain the health and viability of these trees into the future. It has also been prompted by a growing public awareness and concern with regard to trees arising from damage to trees during the severe storms of recent times and associated perceptions that all trees require regular maintenance. In addition, the obligation on property owners to pay Property Tax is concentrating increased demand on Council services including tree maintenance.

The Council's Customer Contact System is usually the first point of contact for enquiries and complaints from the public, including those relating to trees. Details of the customer's name, address, contact details, nature of the enquiry and location of the enquiry are logged into the Customer Contact System. The enquiry is then referred to the relevant Council section for response.

Any tree-related emergencies are referred for immediate action in accordance with the Council's emergency procedures. An emergency is defined as a tree that is in immediate danger of collapse or a tree that is causing an obstruction requiring urgent attention.

For non-emergency tree enquiries, customers will be informed of Council policy within 10 working days of receipt of an enquiry. Where a site inspection is considered necessary, customers will be informed that such a site inspection will be undertaken within 40 days of receipt after which the customer will be notified of what action, if any, is considered appropriate.

5.2 Inspections

Currently, the Council undertakes tree inspections primarily in response to requests for tree work. Each inspection involves an assessment of the tree's health and condition, and identifies if any work is required, having regard also to any issues raised in an enquiry that has been received in relation to a specific tree.

Based on figures for 2014, the current requirement for tree inspections is c.1600 per annum. These inspections are primarily of individual trees across a wide geographic spread throughout the county. In order to make most efficient use of the Council's staff resource who undertake tree inspections, non-emergency inspections are normally undertaken when there is sufficient number of tree inspections listed for undertaking within a particular geographic area. Priority for inspection of requests for tree pruning or removal will be given to those that comply with the criteria for tree pruning removal works as specified in section 4.3.

During 2015, training is being provided in Tree Survey & Inspection to ensure that the Council

has an adequate complement of competent staff available to deal with the current and ongoing demand for tree inspections.

In order to progress to a planned rather than reactive approach to tree management, the Council will adopt a more proactive management approach through regular cyclic inspections. The frequency of inspections will depend on available resources and the severity of identified issues for monitoring in our street tree population. Following inspection where it is agreed that tree works are required, they are categorised and will be included for attention on the Council's Arboricultural Programme if required.

5.3 Priority Rating System for Tree Works

To enable efficient use of resources, tree works will be prioritised and programmed based on the Priority Category as shown below, and in each category a list of maintenance that would normally fall into that priority has been given as guidance. However until the tree has been inspected and the relevant information has been recorded its true priority cannot be established. It is strongly emphasised that these categories and figures are only guidelines which are applicable under normal circumstances only. The occurrence of emergencies, storms and other events beyond our control do occur and thus would have to take priority over programmed work. This would result in scheduled work being delayed.

Tree Maintenance Priority	
Priority	Type Of Maintenance
<u>Priority 1 : Urgent Works</u> Target completion - within 24hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making safe of storm damaged trees in adverse weather conditions • Large limbs snapped and hung up over high vehicular and pedestrian flow • Trees that pose imminent danger to people or property
<u>Priority 2: High Priority Works</u> Target completion – action immediately or within 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dead, dying, diseased and dangerous in high pedestrian and traffic flow areas • Tree branches below 2.5m causing obstruction over high pedestrian flow footpaths • Tree branches below 4.5m causing obstruction over high traffic flow roads • Tree branches causing damage to property • Trees with root plate movement
<u>Priority 3: Medium Priority Works</u> Target completion – action within 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crown thinning of trees close to public lighting • Crown lifting/ removal of low branches over footpaths and roadways • Pruning of trees near buildings to prevent damage from occurring • Snapped limbs/branches on public open space with low pedestrian access
<u>Priority 4: Low Priority Works</u> Target Completion – action when resources allow within 24 months +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other general tree maintenance work that is causing no risk of harm to persons or property.
<u>Priority 5: No action / Unnecessary Works</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This category consists of trees that have been inspected and considered healthy and safe with no works required at this time of inspection regime

6.0 Felling & Pruning Policies

To ensure that requests for tree works are dealt with efficiently and consistently, South Dublin County Council's policy in relation to the more common types of request is outlined below.

6.1 Street light obstruction

Policy: The Council will undertake work to a tree in Council ownership/management to ensure that trees do not unduly obstruct the streetlight.

Tree pruning will be undertaken where reasonably feasible to address obstruction of a street light where a tree is within 5m of the lighting column. Where the trunk of a tree is within 2m of a lighting column, the removal of the tree is considered to be the most appropriate long-term option.

Where a tree is removed from a roadside verge, due to proximity to a public lighting column, a replacement tree will not be planted back into the same verge.

6.2 Road traffic sight-lines obstruction / Traffic signal / Street sign obstruction

Policy: The Council will undertake work to a tree in Council ownership/management to maintain clear sight lines, where reasonably feasible, at road junctions and access points and for traffic signals and street signs.

Where an ongoing pruning requirement arises as a result of sightlines / road signs / traffic signals being obscured by tree growth / regrowth, consideration will be given to the removal of trees to minimise ongoing repeat maintenance costs.

6.3 Footpath / Road obstruction due to trees

Policy: The Council will undertake work to a tree in Council ownership/management where a tree is causing an obstruction to a public highway, public footpath or cycleway, public right of way, access to property or public open space, where reasonably feasible.

Tree pruning to achieve the following height clearance is considered appropriate where reasonably practical and where it can be achieved without harming tree health or form:

- Pedestrian areas: 2.5m
- Cycleways: 3m
- Distributor roads / streets: 4.5m

Any works necessary to prevent an obstruction in the width of a public footpath due to the presence of a Council owned tree will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If a privately owned tree / vegetation is causing an obstruction to a footpath or road, powers exist under Section 70 of the Roads Act 1993 which enable the Roads Authority to deal with the matter. The section allows for the serving of notice on the landowner setting out remedial works to be carried out. Failing action by the landowner, the Roads Authority can arrange to have the necessary works carried out and seek to recoup the cost of the works from the landowner concerned.

6.4 Trip Hazard

Policy: The Council will undertake measures to make safe an unacceptable trip hazard on a public footpath or road caused by the growth of a Council owned/managed tree.

The roots of trees exploit the soil in various ways dependent on species, local conditions and history of site disturbance. Direct root action can deform the surfaces of footpaths, roads or other light structures. To constitute a trip hazard the deformation will be assessed by the Council. Where a hazard exists and is attributable to tree roots engineering options will be explored before root pruning or tree removal is undertaken.

It is often possible to repair paths to take account of adjacent trees and tree roots. Where roots protrude they can be root pruned, or the path can be re-laid around the tree with flexible material such as asphalt to provide a smooth surface. Where trees are considered to be causing damage to paths or footpaths, the Council will not normally consider tree removal except where there is a risk to public health which cannot otherwise be mitigated. Removal of the tree will usually be the last resort, accepting that in some circumstances where the tree is low value or easily replaced removal may be the most appropriate solution. The Council will seek to explore engineering options through internal consultation between the Public Realm and Roads Maintenance sections to reduce trip hazards before root pruning or tree removal. The Council will develop a protocol for resolving issues where tree roots are in conflict with public areas under hard surfacing.

6.5 Trees in conflict with the built environment

The Council recognises that trees under its ownership/management may be implicated in causing damage to nearby built structures but is also aware that this is not always the case and that nearby trees often get blamed for damage before a thorough investigation is carried out. Property owners will be expected to provide proof that a particular tree is causing damage to the property and that all reasonable engineering alternatives have been explored before felling will be considered.

6.6 Trees and drains

Policy: The Council will not prune, fell or cut the roots of a Council owned/managed tree to prevent roots entering a drain that is already broken or damaged.

The Council will not normally take action in response to complaints that Council trees are damaging drains. Tree roots do not have the capacity to break into a sound drain but typically they will invade drains that are already broken or damaged. Trees themselves very rarely break or damage the drain in the first place. Tree roots found in a drain are usually symptomatic of an underlying problem requiring repair of the broken pipe. The Council's presumption is that the appropriate way to deal with tree root blockage of drains is to ensure that the drains are watertight. Any concerns about the condition of public drains should be reported to the water authority. Householders are usually responsible for the maintenance of the drains within their own property.

6.7 Trees and utilities

Utility companies have certain legal rights to carry out works to public or privately owned trees to address health and safety problems and to maintain a clearance between trees and their apparatus. This may sometimes involve the loss of trees while excavation works near to street trees brings considerable potential disturbance within the root zone of trees, often reducing their stability and long-term viability. Where works to trees are necessary as a result of proximity or conflict, the Council will encourage utility operators to adopt the most appropriate long term solution, giving consideration to tree health, local tree cover and visual amenity.

Utility companies must consult with the Public Realm section of South Dublin County Council in advance of any pruning, trenching or other works likely to affect Council owned trees, and will refer to the procedures and conditions of the Council's Roadmap system.

The Council will develop protocols for dealing with trees and utilities in consultation with the main utility providers and adhere to the recommendations of the current NJUG (UK National Joint Utilities Group) Guidelines for The Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility apparatus in Proximity to Trees.

6.8 Valuing Trees and Compensating for Tree Damage

Policy: The Council will initiate use the CAVAT system to value all Council street trees and use this information to assist in the management of the tree stock.

In recent years there has been increased interest in quantifying the benefits of trees and translating them into financial terms. A system known as CAVAT (Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees) has been developed by The London Tree Officers Association to allow authorities to prepare a valuation of their tree stock which can then be used to justify managing the trees as if it were a financial asset of the community. The CAVAT system takes into account: tree size, longevity and condition, site suitability and other attributes to give a monetary value used to help guide management decisions. This is a major step forward as traditionally, the management of trees and woodlands by local authorities has been seen solely as a cost, with no acknowledgement of the financial benefits that trees bring.

It is important to place a monetary value on South Dublin County Council's trees because of the contribution trees make to the economic, social and environmental landscape of the county. Assessing the value of each tree will enable a more effective and efficient level of understanding to be applied to a given tree or group of trees when deciding their future management or removal. The Council will also use the CAVAT tree valuation system to provide the basis in calculating the replacement value of any trees that have been significantly damaged or removed and the Council will seek this level of compensation from organisations found to be responsible for such damage.

6.9 Telephone wires

Policy: The Council will not prune or fell a council owned tree to remove or reduce interference with telephone wires.

It maybe that the telephone service provider may be able to suggest an alternative solution to the problem.

6.10 Council owned trees that overhang neighbouring properties / roots encroaching into garden

Policy: The Council will not prune trees that overhang neighbouring properties unless the trees are dangerous or are causing actionable nuisance.

The Council has no legal obligation to prune overhanging trees unless they are causing direct damage to an adjacent property or are imminently dangerous. This reflects the Council's position as an owner of thousands of trees and the resources available. Given that many thousands of Council trees overhang boundaries, it is not an effective use of resources to prune every overhanging limb.

Tree roots in gardens are a natural occurrence and root presence is unlikely to be affected by tree pruning. However, situations where a tree is genuinely generating root encroachment to an exceptional, severe and unreasonable degree are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Adjacent landowners are entitled to prune encroaching tree branches or roots back to the

boundary of their property. Legally, they are required to retain the prunings and offer them back to the Council but the Council is not obliged to accept them

6.11 Trees that overhang private properties from neighbouring private properties

If a tree is growing on privately owned land, then the maintenance rests entirely with the landowner.

Wherever possible however, we would advise that the best way to resolve problems with trees or hedges growing in adjacent properties, is for property owners to talk to their neighbours and to try to come to an amicable agreement. The interactions between neighbours on such issues are private matters and are best dealt with by the parties concerned through discussion, mediation or ultimately through civil procedures.

6.12 Trees touching or causing direct damage to property

Policy: If a tree in Council ownership/managed by the Council is touching your property (dwelling house, boundary wall, garage etc) the Council will take action to remove the nuisance.

The Council will cut back trees to provide 2m clearance from properties where they touch windows, walls, roofs or gutters to avoid damage. In many cases the solution will be for the Council to prune the tree, but in some circumstances it may be more appropriate to fell the tree. If pruning is appropriate we will endeavour to undertake works to stop the problem reoccurring within three-years.

6.13 Trees blocking natural light / sunlight

Policy: The Council will not prune, top or fell a Council owned tree to improve natural light in a property.

A common complaint about urban trees is that they block light from properties or shade gardens. However, the seriousness of this effect is variable and often the removal of the tree will have little effect on the amount of sunlight reaching the house or garden. An example of this is where the house is north facing and the tree is small or at a distance.

There is no right to light under the law and therefore the Council has no legal obligation to abate this perceived nuisance. However, situations where a tree is genuinely blocking daylight from habitable rooms to an exceptional, severe and unreasonable degree are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Minor pruning works may be acceptable in some situations and any decision would take into account the health and significance of the tree, its contribution to wider public amenity, the orientation of the house, and whether the tree was already present when the occupier moved into the property.

Note: A habitable room is defined residential living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens (if they include a dining space and are larger than 12.6sqm). Bathrooms, toilets, landings and lobbies are excluded).

6.14 Obstruction of a view

Policy: We will not prune or fell a council owned tree to improve the view from a private property.

There is no legal right to a 'view'. Vegetation and trees grow and, over time, contribute to the county's distinctive character. It would be impracticable to prune every tree that affected a view, and this would have a major negative impact on public amenity.

6.15 Tree considered too big / too tall

Policy: We will not prune or fell a council owned/managed tree because it is considered to be 'too big' or 'too tall'.

Residents may feel apprehensive about the size of a tree and consider it dangerous. However, trees are not dangerous just because they are perceived as tall, too big for their surroundings or move in the wind. Tree movement in high winds is natural and one of the ways they are able to withstand strong winds. Other problems would need to be shown for the Council to consider it to be dangerous.

6.16 High Hedges

There is currently no legislation in Ireland regulating the height of trees and hedges. In the UK the control of height of evergreen hedges comes under Part 8 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. The Council does not get involved in issues regarding the height of hedges on private lands unless they are hazardous to public road users. Residents with issues in relation to trees and hedges on neighbouring properties are encouraged to try to resolve the issues between the two parties or seek independent legal advice. Involvement in resolving tree and hedge disputes between private landowners is not considered part of the remit of the Council.

6.17 Driveways and new entrances

Policy: Removal of Council owned/managed trees will be managed by protocol through the Planning Application process. No action will be undertaken until such time as driveway widening or the creation of a new entrance has been subject to the planning process.

6.18 Tree and Solar Panels

Policy: The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned/managed tree to facilitate installation or improve natural light to a solar panel.

Whilst the Council appreciates that there is a need to provide renewable energy resources, trees have an important role in maintaining and improving local amenity, in addition to contributing to local and national targets in tackling climate change. The presence of trees must be fully appreciated when considering a suitable location for the placement of solar panels.

6.19 Trees affecting TVs and Satellite Reception

Policy: The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned/managed tree solely to improve TV and / or satellite reception, where the trees in question would not otherwise require works.

The Council acknowledges that television and satellite entertainment are important to residents. However, a balance has to be found between these and the local environment. The Council will encourage residents to seek reasonable alternative solutions to improve television or satellite reception rather than requesting tree pruning or removal. In most cases the situation can be significantly improved or solved by relocation of the aerial. Boosters are also available which can improve the reception. These options are far cheaper and less destructive than the felling or pruning of a tree. When positioning a new satellite receiver, residents are recommended to carefully consider existing trees and their potential for growth to avoid problems in the future.

6.20 Trees affecting CCTV

Policy: The Council will not normally prune or fell a Council owned/managed tree to improve CCTV sightlines.

Exceptions may include Garda CCTV, trees adjacent to CCTV cameras that monitor ATMs or within the field of view being covered to ensure that public security is not compromised. The installation of new CCTV cameras must take into consideration existing trees to prevent requests for unnecessary pruning works or the removal of trees to improve desired sightlines.

6.21 Crime and Anti-social behaviour

Policy: Where a Council owned tree is associated with criminal activity and / or anti-social behaviour, measures to reduce the problem will be considered on a site-by-site basis.

Where a tree is associated with criminal activity and / or anti-social behaviour, steps to reduce the problem will typically require the coordination of a number of agencies including the Gardaí. Pruning or felling a tree is not always the answer to the problem.

6.22 Leaf Fall

Policy: The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned tree to remove or reduce leaf fall or remove fallen leaves from private property.

The loss of leaves from trees in the autumn is part of the natural cycle and cannot be avoided by pruning. The maintenance of gutters is the responsibility of the property / land owner and the Council is not obliged to remove leaves that may have fallen from Council owned trees. Where gutters are regularly blocked by fallen leaves gutter guards may be fitted to provide a low maintenance solution. The Council organises a street cleaning service which will sweep leaves from most streets and residential roads during the autumn period. The composting of leaves is encouraged as a way of environmentally recycling this valuable resource.

6.23 Sticky Deposits from Honeydew (dripping sap)

Policy: The Council will not prune or fell a council owned tree solely to remove or reduce honeydew or other sticky residue from trees.

Certain species of tree for example lime and sycamore are susceptible to aphids or other leaf-feeding insects. Honeydew is the sugary sap / sticky deposit which results from insects feeding and is subsequently colonised once on surfaces by sooty mould fungi giving it a black appearance. Honeydew is a natural and seasonal problem and the severity varies from year to year depending on conditions. A balance between the inconvenience of honeydew deposits and the wider benefits of trees must be achieved and as such there is unlikely to be justification for the pruning or removal of trees due to honeydew deposits. Residents are advised to make their own arrangements to minimise the problem; regular car washing, covering the car or parking in an alternative location. Where honeydew affects cars, warm soapy water will easily remove the substance.

6.24 Bird Droppings

Policy: The Council will not prune or fell a council owned tree solely to remove or reduce bird droppings.

Bird droppings can be unpleasant and a nuisance, but the problem is not considered a sufficient reason to prune or remove a tree. Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976 and Habitats Regulations 1997-2005. Warm soapy water will usually be sufficient to remove the bird droppings.

6.25 Fruit / Berries / Nuts / Blossom

Policy: The Council will not fell or prune Council owned trees solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and/or seasonal phenomena such as fruit / berries, nuts or blossom which are legally outside their control.

Problems caused by falling fruit, berries, nuts or blossom are natural and seasonal occurrences and not something the Irish legal system recognises as a 'legal nuisance'. Whilst we appreciate these problems, they are judged a relatively minor inconvenience when considering the many benefits of having trees within an urban environment. Fruit trees such as apple, cherry and pear are welcomed in many locations for having the double benefit of spring blossom and autumn fruit. This makes fruit trees good for wildlife and a source of free food. However, where fallen fruit is leading to a significant anti-social behaviour problems the Council will consider measures to reduce the problem including whether a phased removal and replacement with alternative species is reasonable. If there is a hazard on the public footpath the Council's Public Realm section should be notified of the problem to arrange clearance.

6.26 Tree and Poisonous Berries

Policy: The Council has no general policy to remove trees bearing poisonous fruit / foliage (such as yew trees), however where it is claimed or known that young children, under supervision, are likely to be exposed to poisonous berries or foliage, such cases will be investigated and appropriate action considered.

6.27 Wild animal / insect pest

Policy: The Council will not prune or fell a council owned tree to remove or reduce incidence of perceived pests such as bees, wasps, or wild animals.

6.28 Pollen

Policy: The Council will not prune or fell a council owned tree to remove or reduce the release of pollen.

7.0 Trees and Development

Mature trees can be an asset to a new development. They give a place a sense of character, as well as providing a ready-made landscape. Retaining trees is always desirable, though many trees are lost each year in the course of development. Some are removed due to their condition or because they are directly in the way of development. However, many are lost due to unsuitable protection during the construction phase.

7.1 Tree Retention and Aftercare on Development Site

Policy: The Council will use its powers to ensure that where it is conducive with the objectives of the County Development Plan, and other planning objectives there is maximum retention of trees on new development sites.

The Council is committed to continuously improve the way that tree, biodiversity and landscape issues are considered in relation to applications for new development. There is increasing pressure to both maximise available development opportunities and at the same time protect and enhance existing landscape and biodiversity features.

In the processing of planning applications, the Council will seek the retention of trees of high amenity / environmental value taking consideration of both their individual merit and their interaction as part of a group or broader landscape feature.

The Council will consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders in accordance with Departmental Guidelines for trees of exceptional amenity, landscape or heritage value.

On construction sites all work must be in accordance with British Standard BS 5837 (2005): Trees in Relation to Construction – Recommendations and with the Council's Guidelines for the Open Space Development & Taking in Charge.

The Council will promote the replacement of trees removed to facilitate approved planning and development of urban spaces, buildings, streets, roads, infrastructural projects and private development sites.

7.2 Tree Planting on Development Sites

The Council will ensure that tree planting on development sites is adequate and appropriate by requesting that landscaping schemes to include tree planting proposals are submitted as part of a planning application.

7.3 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)

Making a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is the primary mechanism available to a planning authority to ensure that trees of significant value are preserved. Section 205 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 provides the legal framework and procedures for making a TPO.

A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) enables local authorities to preserve any single tree or group of trees and brings them under planning control. Tree preservation orders are only made if it appears that a tree or group of trees need to be protected in the interests of amenity in the environment.

The establishment of a TPO brings the designated tree(s) under planning control and restrictions do apply. The permission of the planning authority must be sought before any tree with a TPO is lopped, topped or felled. When the authority proposes an order they have to publish a notice in one or more newspapers. Observations and submissions can be made to the planning authority within a period of not less than 6 weeks. Tree preservation orders are only made after careful consideration of all submissions and observations by the local authority.

The Council will carry out a review of its existing TPOs and will seek to identify important/special trees in the county and protect those worthy of Tree Preservation Orders.

There are currently three TPOs in place in south Dublin County as follows

Order	Location
Dublin County Council TPO 1973	St. Brigids (now Newlands garden centre), New Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22
Dublin County Council TPO 1987	Beaufort Downs, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14
Dublin County Council TPO 1990	Townlands of Quarryvale and Brooklawn, Palmerstown, Dublin 10

8.0 Living With Trees - Action Plan 2015-2020

Objectives

- To establish the current position with regard to street trees in the County
- To implement a pro active tree management programme
- Prepare and implement a public awareness and education tree programme

Objective 1 - To establish the current position with regard to street trees in the County

Ref	Action	Measurement	Who	When
1.1	Evaluate and purchase a tree management system	Purchase and use of system	Public Realm	Sept 2015
1.2	Survey all street trees in County and collate all data on computerised tree management system	Number of trees surveyed	Public Realm	2020
1.3	Prepare an ongoing system for the update of street trees data in a spatial format	Real time availability of information on street tree location, number, condition and maintenance history	Public Realm	2020
1.4	Use the CAVAT system to value all Council street trees and use this information to assist in the management of the tree stock	All trees have accurate CAVAT value	Public Realm	2020
1.5	Review existing Tree Preservation Orders in the county	Annual Review	Public Realm	Ongoing

Objective 2 - To implement a pro active tree management programme

Ref	Action	Measurement	Who	When
2.1	Establish guidelines to prioritise maintenance work on street trees	Guidelines in place and used	Public Realm	2015
2.2	Develop a 5 year cyclical tree maintenance programme for street trees	Publish programme on Council's website	Public Realm	Sept 2015
2.3	Develop an annual tree planting programme	Number of trees planted	Public Realm	2016
2.4	Develop tree planting and management guidelines	Guidelines in place	Public Realm	2016
2.5	Pilot a tree replacement programme in urban street setting	Agree area and complete	Public Realm	2017
2.6	Monitor the removal of	Annual review	Public Realm	2016

	street trees and ensure that new trees are proposed.			
2.7	Ensure tree maintenance is completed in a safe manner in accordance with recognised standards and best practice	Ongoing development and training of all Council staff involved in tree work Employment of qualified, trained, competent contractors	Public Realm	Ongoing
2.8	Develop best practice protocol for tree maintenance works and nesting birds	Protocol agreed and in practice	Public Realm; Heritage Officer	2015
2.9	Work with a range of partners to secure active protection of Council-owned trees from avoidable damage caused by the activities of other agencies.	Procedures and protocols agreed and in practice with internal Council Departments and external agencies	Public Realm	2016
2.10	Develop protocols for dealing with trees and utilities in consultation with the main utility providers	Procedures and protocols agreed and in practice with utility providers	Public Realm	2016
2.11	Maximise the recycling of tree related green waste generated by the Council's own tree management.	Annual review	Public Realm	Ongoing
2.12	Use the Council's planning powers to retain and protect trees on development sites and enforce as necessary	Annual review	Public Realm & Planning Department	Ongoing

Objective 3 - Prepare and implement a public awareness and education tree programme

Ref	Action	Measurement	Who	When
3.1	Prepare and publish a Trees page on the Council's website	Information available on website	Public Realm	2015
3.2	Develop tree trails in each of the regional parks	Tree trails in parks	Public Realm	2017
3.3	Liaise with tree organisations to prepare information for schools on tree	Information on trees available for schools	Public Realm	2016
3.4	Promote Tree week and Tree day in association with the Tree Council	No. of Tree week & Tree Day activities organised each year	Public Realm	ongoing
3.5	Develop a 'Trees'	Webpage in place	Public Realm	2015

	webpage on the Council's website www.sdcc.ie	and maintained		
3.6	Make tree maintenance programme available on website	Information available on website	Public Realm	2015

Draft

9.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Consultation Process

The preparation of South Dublin County Council's Tree Policy – Living with Trees - will be carried out in consultation with elected members, members of the public, internal and external stakeholders. The draft Policy will be reviewed by members of the Environment, Water & Climate Change Strategic Policy Committee. Following this review, the document will be made available on the Council's website www.sdcc.ie and in Council offices and libraries to allow members of the public, internal and external stakeholders' to give their views and comments on the Policy.

Time Frame Consultation period February – June 2015

- February 2015
Draft Tree Policy presentation to Environment, Water & Climate Change Strategic Policy Committee
- Mid March – End April 2015
Public consultation period
- September 2015
Report to Environment, Water & Climate Change Strategic Policy Committee
- October 2015
Recommendation and Adoption by South Dublin County Council

Appendix 2: List of Tree Species Suitable for Street Planting

The selection of street trees is guided by their mature size, water demand, crown shape, future management requirements and suitability to the location. The following is a guide to the type of species considered appropriate for street planting. It is not an exhaustive list, and other trees may be equally suitable.

Latin Name	Common name	Height at Maturity
Acer campestre 'Elsrijk'	Field maple	10-15m
Acer platanoides 'Globosum'	Maple	6-8m
Amelanchier arborea 'Robin Hill'	Serviceberry	5-10m
Betula albosinensis 'Fascination'	Chinese Birch	10-15m
Betula pendula	Silver Birch	10-15m
Betula utilis 'Jacquemontii'	Himalayan Birch	
Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine'	Hornbeam	10-15m
Corylus columna	Turkish hazel	10-15m
Crataegus monogyna 'Stricta'	Hawthorn	5-10m
Malus trilobata	Crab Apple	5-7m
Malus tschonoskii	Crab Apple	5-7m
Pyrus calleryana 'Chanticleer'	Ornamental Pear	10-15m
Sorbus aucuparia (Cultivars)	Rowan	10-15m
Sorbus aria 'Lutescens'	Whitebeam	7-10m
Sorbus discolor	Chinese Rowan	7-10m
Sorbus intermedia 'Brouwers'	Swedish Whitebeam	10-15m

Sorbus 'Sheerwater Seedling'	Rowan Hybrid	10-15m
Sorbus x thuringiaca 'Fastigiata'	Rowan Hybrid	7-10m
Tilia cordata 'Greenspire'	Small leaved Lime	10-15m

Trees with a larger mature size will also be planted as street trees when appropriate to the location. Examples of large growing species to be considered for planting may include:

Latin Name	Common name	Height at Maturity
Alnus cordata	Italian alder	15-20m
Betula ermanii	Ermans Birch	15-20m
Juglans regia	Walnut	15-20m
Quercus ilex	Holm Oak	20m +
Robinia pseudoacacia	False acacia	15-20m

Tree Size Specification

The vast majority of new trees planted will be of advanced nursery stock; that is trees with a stem circumference of between 12-16cm and a height of 3-5m.