



Forest of Fingal

A Tree Strategy for Fingal
Executive Summary

Introduction

The revision of Fingal County Council's Tree Strategy 'Forest of Fingal, is an indication of the Council's continued commitment to looking after one of its most important natural resources and assets, its trees. Fingal County Council manages approximately 2,000 Hectares of Public Open Space and many public parks in the county have significant stands of woodland framing important and often iconic landscapes. The '*Forest of Fingal*' encapsulates the planning, establishment, protection and management of trees and associated plants, individually, small groups, or under forest conditions within towns, villages, suburbs and rural areas within the County. This document has also been prepared in the context of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024, Biodiversity Action Plan and Open Space Strategy.

Vision Statement



To protect and enhance Fingal's trees, to maximise both the benefits they offer and the character they bring to the county, to ensure a greener and healthier Fingal for now and future generations.

Main Elements of the Strategy

Part 1 - Setting the Scene

vision, scope, purpose and context

The purpose of this document is to define the appropriate strategy for the sustainable management of trees in Fingal over the next ten years 2021 - 2030. Fingal is continually changing and will continue to need to accommodate growth. New development needs to provide people with a high-quality environment as well as one that adapts to and mitigates the effects of climate change and enhances our landscape and its biodiversity.



Guiding Principles

Values and main drivers underpinning and guiding our future decisions

Aims

What we must achieve in the long term

Objectives

Targets and goals to set in order to reach our aims

Action Plan

Specific, measurable tasks and methodologies

Main Elements of the Strategy

Part 2 - The Value of Trees

Why are trees important?

There is now a growing wealth of knowledge and evidence for the wide range of services and value that trees bring to urban environments. Emphasis was once more typically placed on the costs associated with the presence of trees (e.g. leaf removal, ongoing maintenance etc.) However, it is now more commonly known how trees establish a sense of place and provide healthy environments as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation.



Human Benefits

- Improved health, wellbeing and mental health
 - Play & Learning
 - Shade & Comfort
 - Relaxation
 - Tourism
 - Sense of Place
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Environmental Benefits

- Air pollution removal
 - Carbon storage
 - Urban cooling
 - Wind abatement
 - Stormwater control
 - Healthy soil
 - Water filtration
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Ecological & Biodiversity Benefits

- Improved health of ecosystems
 - Pollination
 - Buffer for pollution
 - Improved species balance & diversity
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Economic Benefits

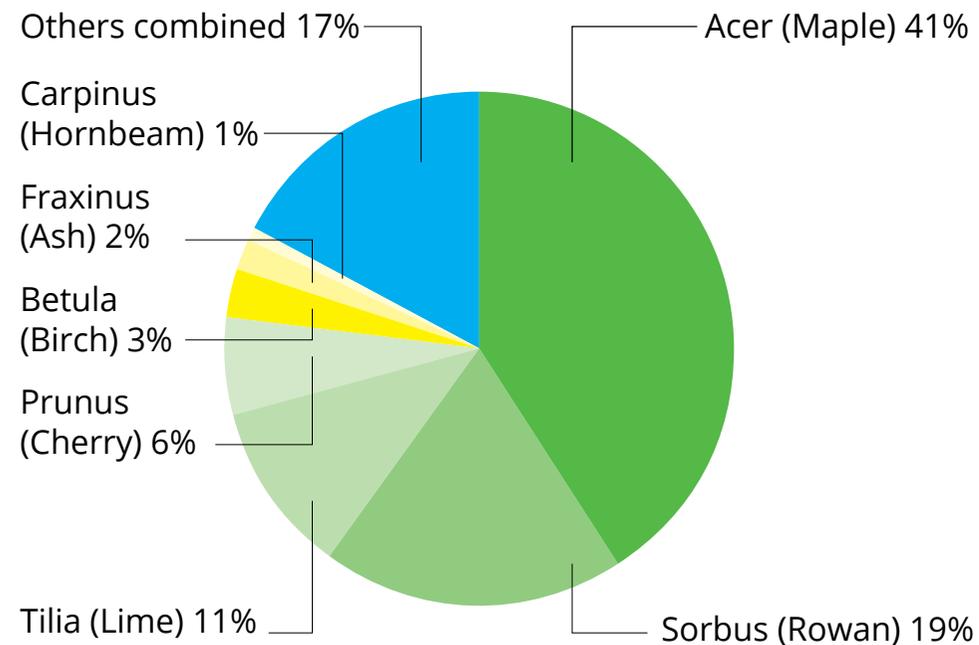
- Increased land and property value
 - Energy savings
 - Tourism
 - Less financial burden on health & emergency services
 - Increased productivity & creativity
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Main Elements of the Strategy

Part 3 - Quality and Quantity of Fingal's Trees

Tree canopy cover across Fingal, which has predominantly rural landcover (74%) is estimated at 6.5%. There are 70,000 Council owned / managed trees in Fingal. Approximately 20% of the publicly owned open space within the county i.e. 400 hectares of land is occupied by woodland.

The breakdown of trees managed by the Council in percentage terms is provided below.



Main Elements of the Strategy

Part 4 - Management of Trees

Trees under the control of The Council require ongoing Management and Maintenance. What is proposed in relation to maintenance is a hierarchal approach with urban centres and main streets receiving the greatest resourcing in terms of inspection and maintenance. The Strategy provides details of the approach to management and maintenance works in line with accepted best practice.



Main Elements of the Strategy

Part 5 - Moving Forward

Aims and Objectives of the Fingal Tree Strategy

This section outlines the ways in which the Tree Strategy will be implemented over the course of its lifetime.

Our 4 main aims derived from the vision and guiding principles are as follows:



Main Elements of the Strategy

The following are the Thirteen Policies recommended for Adoption in the “*Forest of Fingal*” Tree Strategy

Proposed Tree Related Policies

(for inclusion in the adopted Tree Strategy and other relevant Council documents)

Policy1: The Council will carry out tree pruning and felling outside of the nesting period as far as reasonably practicable. A typical exception of this is on the grounds of health and safety concerns, the National Parks and Wildlife Service shall be informed in these instances.

Policy2: The Council will explore and implement biosecurity measures and protocols to keep tree pests and diseases under control within Fingal.

Policy 3: The Council plans to inform and promote the importance of trees as part of the urban environment and put them on a level footing with all urban infrastructure.

Policy 4: In balancing tree risks and benefits the Council will:

1. Manage the risk of significant injury or property damage to levels that are as low as reasonably practicable.
2. Operate a system of proactive and reactive tree inspections.
3. Maintain a detailed record of trees and inspections.
4. Ensure competent individuals carry out tree inspections.
5. Ensure work identified through the inspection programme is undertaken by suitably qualified staff or contractors within the appropriate timeframe.

Policy 5: The Principle of planting the ‘right tree in the right place’ will apply for all new tree planting.

Policy 6: Following instances of tree removal, subject to availability of space and resources, replacement will be in accordance of size of removed tree

Main Elements of the Strategy

Policy 7: As well as pruning for arboriculture reasons, the following shall be the general standard as to (street)trees in the public realm:

- Footpaths: 2.5m overhead clearance
- Roads: 4.5m overhead clearance
- Buildings: 2m clearance

Policy 8: The Council aims to ensure that every tree felled is replaced to guarantee a renewable tree stock in Fingal for future generations

Policy 9: The Council will not remove trees without adequate justification. When felling work is proposed, the reasons for the work will be documented and recorded to include photographs.

Policy 10: The Council will not plant large canopy deciduous trees within a distance equal to their maximum potential height on the south or west side of private dwellings. For evergreen trees this distance will be increased to twice their maximum height. This will minimise or eliminate afternoon and evening shade problems going forward.

Policy 11: The Council may seek to prosecute anyone found to be carrying out unauthorised work or causing damage to its trees without permission and where appropriate apply the maximum penalty.

Policy 12: Where new trees are being planted, these will be located so they do not cause future interference to existing streetlights, typically no closer than 7m from the centre of the main stem to the pole.

Main Elements of the Strategy

The following are the Four Objectives and related Twenty Actions recommended for Implementation

Objective 1: Responsible, Efficient & Coherent Approach to Tree Management

Action

- 1.1** Secure an Annual Dedicated Tree Budget for adequate resourcing of tree management
- 1.2** Recruit a Tree Officer and Tree Management Team to coordinate and implement the strategy
- 1.3** Resurvey and update the public realm tree inventory data (Street & open space trees) to refresh our inventory and inform maintenance
- 1.4** Develop a cyclical proactive tree management programme based on the surveys data, in the interest of tree health and public safety
- 1.5** Commission a woodland management programme to specify required works and ensure sustainability among existing woodlands and use them to their full potential, in line with the biodiversity action plan
- 1.6** Commission the study and report on the ecosystem services/nature-based solutions provided by Fingal's trees with reference to their economic/climate change adaptation benefits.

Main Elements of the Strategy

Objective 2: Tree Protection & Retention

Action

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- 2.1** Prepare tree related planning and design guidelines for inclusion in the next Fingal County Development Plan
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- 2.2** Review the Council's existing TPOs (Tree Preservation Orders) with a view to revising and updating this list.
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- 2.3** Develop best practice guidelines/requirements for utility companies and contractors when working in proximity to trees, to include open spaces.
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- 2.4** Map and survey all significant/historic stands of woodland within the county e.g. in excess of 5ha with a view to updating the County Development Plan's Specific Zoning Objectives in relation to woodlands.
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- 2.5** Assess and adopt tree valuation methods for compensatory / replacement planting, e.g. Cavat, iTree.
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- 2.6** Participate as a member with the Tree Council of Ireland with a view to influencing national policy relating to trees
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Main Elements of the Strategy

Objective 3: Tree Planting and Establishment Initiatives to Ensure a Sustainable Tree Population

Action

- 3.1** A programme of targeted Strategic Annual Tree Planting including identifying and mapping priority locations, to include sites suitable for woodland creation. Reviewed in an annual works programme, presenting what is planned for the coming year. Taking advantage of government funding programmes such as the New Woodland Creation Scheme on Public Lands
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- 3.2** Promote the retrofitting of integrated constructed tree pits incorporating SuDS within urban areas with low levels of tree cover.
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- 3.3** Prepare a list of suitable tree species recommended for differing situations / functions and make available to developers and other stakeholders following the guiding principle of right tree, right place
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- 3.4** Explore opportunities to partner with companies and other entities for Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives involving tree planting.
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Main Elements of the Strategy

Objective 4: Community Involvement, Public Engagement & Awareness

Action

- 4.1** Construct a dedicated and interactive tree webpage on the Council's website. Providing opportunities such as a Tree Champions contact list, citizen science/public participation schemes for tree identification and surveying etc. and other tree related matters. For knowledge sharing and public information and awareness purposes
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- 4.2** Participation in National Tree Week/Day events such as Tree Giveaways and community planting schemes
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- 4.3** Develop protocols for engaging with communities and residents for proposed significant tree management works and works affecting trees
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- 4.4** Involve residents and community groups e.g. tidy town/community garden groups in the establishment of newly planted trees in their area e.g. watering
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