

# Forest of Fingal

## A Tree Strategy of Fingal

Blaketown Drive Community Group [BDCG] make this submission by way of comments, observations and recommendations

### Setting the Scene

The attainment of the overall objectives of this strategy will require the formulation of clear policies that can be reasonably implemented. Structures to ensure the effective participation of all stakeholders, County Council, Organisations/Businesses and the wider community.

Provision of adequate management resources. Setting, securing and ring-fencing realistic budgets to achieve the objectives of the Strategy is crucial to the success of the Strategy. Targets set throughout the span of this Strategy and evaluation of achievements at set intervals during the course of the Strategy should be of high importance together with remedial action taken accordingly when targets are not met.

### Value of Trees

Trees provide recreational, functional, environmental, ecological, social, health and an aesthetic value to all those who live work, visit and do business in Fingal. Trees and green well care for spaces not only make people happier and healthier they make communities more liveable. Sustainable Development Goals 3 Good Health and Well-being, Goal 11 Sustainable cities and communities. Trees have been shown to nurture community ties and this in turn can have a direct result in reducing crime in an area.

Promoting and valuing amenity trees as public assets is often an aspect of trees that is overlooked. We acknowledge and welcome the inclusion of the Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees(CAVAT) as a tool to provide a compensation replacement value for single trees (full method) and the Quick Method, which can be used to value a population of trees as an asset for asset management purposes. Trees are financial assets, we should protect and evaluate them accordingly.

### Quality and Quantity of Fingal Trees

We support the policy of Right tree for the right place as included in the draft which encapsulates so many aspects of best practice to include sufficient root space provided for the tree- insufficient root space is associated with short life span.

Promoting Native trees where possible

We would welcome that every tree planted is tagged and an up to date record kept.

Planning for climate change – Ireland may be warmer and will rely even more on our tree biodiversity. Air pollution is already a problem and it would be prudent for the Tree Strategy to take this into account and provide for pollution tolerant varieties of trees.

## The sustainable Management of Trees in Fingal

[BDCG] consider the following to be important

- Hedgerows and shrubbery are of vital importance to the biodiversity of an area and they also improve air quality.
- Recognition and due regard given to Ivy as a food source to pollinators throughout the year but especially at the beginning of Spring when food is so scarce.
- Biodiversity taken as a whole picture when planting- complementary planting adding to biodiversity. Where there are tree as a matter of policy consideration given to planting mixed Hedgerow, native,berries and flowering.
- Setting and adhering to best Practice maintenance schedules
- Replanting schedules are generally far too long and do not take into account the effect a long term loss of trees in an area can have.
- Alternatives to chemical weed control around trees. Mulching as an example would maximise the use of leaves and woodchip which are readily available. The council would also be seen as leading by example.
- A policy of one tree cut down and one replaced in the area if possible or close by does not take into account the maturity of the tree cut down and the loss associated. We believe that the recommended inclusion of Policy 6 does not adequately address this issue. Age diversity of trees is a crucial component of a healthy and thriving ecosystem.
- [BDCG ] would offer that not only should Policy 6 include replacement in accordance of size of removed tree where right tree right place policy would reflect, the size of this replacement tree when planted should also be a consideration. New trees when planted should be from advanced nursery stock. The associated advantages of this policy are well documented.

## Moving Forward

### Annual Net Increase in Tree Canopy Cover

Determining appropriate canopy cover goals needs to be assessed on an area by area basis while mindful of overall targets. Budgets set for each electoral area based on these targets. This will ensure that all citizens in Fingal will reap the benefits according to their needs.

### Creating a Strong Sense of Ownership with Residents, Communities and Stakeholders

BDCG would suggest that creating a Strong Sense of Stewardship rather than Ownership would be a desired outcome of the Strategy.

Clearly identifying who the relevant stakeholders are is critical to the success of this policy. Fostering strong connections to these stakeholders to include other County Council Departments and staff, Tree Ambassador Programme and a Business Support Programme ( businesses sponsoring planting and maintenance programs in their area, workplace initiatives) Schools, hospitals and Government buildings can all get involved- too often people are willing to help they just don't know how. Measurable targets set and evaluation of outcomes. Education and partnerships are key

Nesting season to be strictly adhered to. Between 1 March to 31 August when work to be carried out on a health and safety basic we propose that included in the strategy is a requirement that site specific risk assessments are carried out. This information to be retained and made available on the proposed Interactive Fingal Tree Website. Clear notice, signage and information displayed

at the location in advance of the work being carried out would be welcome. Fingal County Council's role in education of those who live and work in the area would be enhanced through leading by example and not only doing the right thing but being seen as doing the right thing. This same procedure would also be of benefit at other times when a tree is to be felled in a community.

Communication is key.

Changing mind set from trees being viewed in terms of leaf removal, ongoing maintenance etc. is also an important aspect of the success of this strategy.

Promoting strategies between councils and impressing upon Government to produce a National Tree Strategy.

We would welcome the evaluation of this strategy after 2 years and a full evaluation at 5 years. Media campaign to maximize community awareness, understanding and appreciation of the value and benefit of trees and hedgerows.

Act Local Think Global as an overarching theme for this Strategy.

