Parks & Landscape Services
Community & Cultural Development

TREES & URBAN FORESTRY Strategy 2021-31

A Climate for Trees: Human Well-being and Nature

PRE-DRAFT CONSULTATION: ISSUES PAPER

'Seeding the New Strategy'

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PRESENTED TO SPC ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE ACTION

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1.   KEY DRIVERS - POLICY AND PRACTICE

1.1   Why a New Strategy?

The council has reviewed its "*dlr TREES Strategy* (2011-15)" and is embarked on a new strategy, that will seek to meet current and future challenges. *dlr Trees and Urban Forestry Strategy (2021-31)* – **A Climate for Trees: Human Well-being and Nature** will emphasise the council's commitment to Climate Action and Quality of Life. The **Council wishes to engage with a variety of people**, especially residents, businesses and those working in the county. This Issues Paper provides a basis for that engagement, inviting stakeholders to contribute to a first draft (summer 2021). It outlines the **Key Findings of the Review and poses Questions and Opportunities** for consideration. It also sets out Roadmap to the new Strategy and details of *How To Make a Submission*.

1.2   Background - Aspirations and Expectations

For its time, the council's first strategy - **dlr 'TREES' Strategy (2011-15)** - was a considerable achievement, as the first in the state, and prepared against a background of public sector retrenchment and austerity. **It set out reasonable aspirations and actions - pragmatic in scope and intent, clearly focused on a *"pro-active management"* approach, that would replace inefficient, reactive modes of operation**. Its well-framed policies laid a solid basis for justifiable expectations of delivery of its policies and actions, among the elected members, the public and other key stakeholders (arborists, landscape architects, community groups, NGOs).

Nine years on, it is timely to review and modernize the document. **Any new, fit-for-purpose strategy will need to meet contemporary challenges in Resource Management, Climate, Biodiversity, Infrastructure and Spatial Planning.** The Issues Paper presents a robust, critical review of dlr 'TREES' a proposes a path to drafting a new Trees & Urban Forestry Strategy for a ten-year period, in accordance with best practice.

2.   REVIEW – KEY FINDINGS

2.1   Actions Achieved and Unmet

The review is mandated by Action 14, dlr Climate Change Action Plan (2019-24) "*Update dlr TREES 2011-2015 strategy*". *dlr 'TREES'* policies statements are still largely relevant but will need updating for change circumstances and best practice. The strategy's Action Plan (pg.53) was subject to a critical, internal audit through consultations with in-house professional-technical staff and direct labour supervisors. The results present a mixed though largely sub-optimal picture. **Of 14 Key Actions, 5 (36%) were fully and effectively implemented. The most significant results are: -**

   ∅   Objective 1c, *"appoint in-house Arboricultural Officer"* - **not met**. The absence of a full-time Officer is severely preventing delivery of the Strategy.

∅ Objective 1b, "*Evaluate electronic Tree Management System …"* **achieved in full.** *Ezytree^{Tm}* software procured by Council and used sporadically (staffing constraints).

∅ Objective 1d, "*Set priorities and survey, map and log Council-owned trees on a phased basis*": **Partially achieved, surveys sporadic** (staffing constraints); 16,525 no. trees mapped out of a total estimated 60,000 Street Trees (27.5%)

∅ Objective 2a, "*Identify opportunities for strategic tree planting".* Partially achieved: preliminary desktop study conducted by consultants (JBA.2019)

∅ Objective 2b: *planting target of 5,000 by 2015*: **not fully met** (approx. 3,500)

∅ Objective 4, "*Engage with Interest Groups":* **limited success - no Tree Officer**

Review of **Policy Statements on Trees and Development** (pgs. 37-39)

➢ D. 1 Development Management (DM): tree losses are accelerating especially in high-density developments, requiring a re-balancing of competing objectives. Compliance, inspection, and enforcement is variable and somewhat inadequate. Improved monitoring and enforcement are necessary to achieve consistent conservation

➢ D.2 Tree Planting and Development: amelioration and mitigation through new planting has generally been successful, and achieved by early (pre-planning stage) and continuous collaboration with developers' landscape consultants (construction stage)

➢ DM – Tree Bonds: robust methodology for the calculation and administration of *Tree Bonds* is urgently required for effective control permitted developments
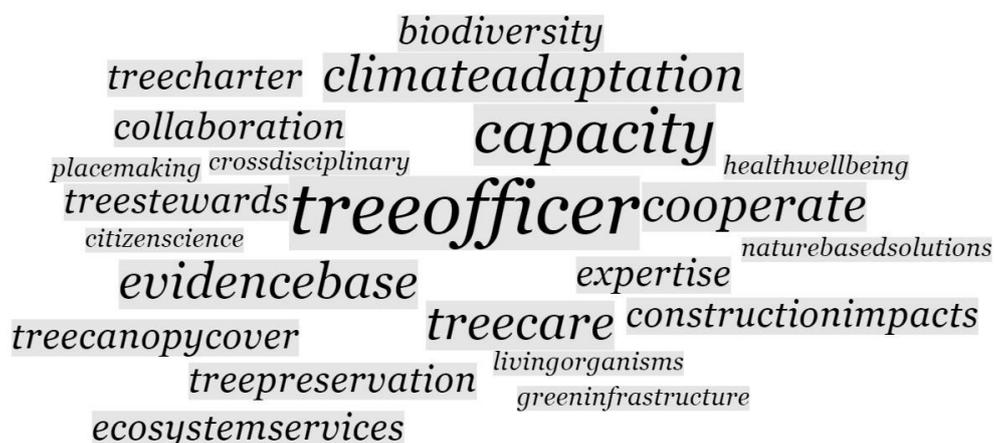

Peri-urban landscape: view from Ballyedmonduff eastward to Killiney/Dalkey and the coast, with private trees/woodlands in foreground and intense urbanisation evident in mid-ground (Carrickmines Retail Park and high-density apartment developments, Glenamuck Road (13.11.2020)

The most significant finding is the failure to provide sufficient human resources and funding. Both are preventing effective progress in essential work packages: quality-led Data Collection for comprehensive Evidence Base & Analysis (*What Do We Have? Is It Health and Diverse, Fit-for-Purpose? Where Is Plant Most Needed?*), Tree Care Management and substantial Planting Programmes. Also constrained is C.P.D/Training and Awareness-raising at corporate level and among key external stakeholders. dlr 'TREES' saw these work packages as central to the Tree Officer's portfolio as a county's Tree Champion. This critical deficit should be rectified by establishing a small, dedicated Tree Team, led by a county Tree Officer. This would overcome sub-optimal Risk Management and Tree Planting operations, taking full advantage of the proven Ecosystems Services so vital to the Health & Well-being of the county's people. This would also meet relevant Corporate Plan goals.

3.   CONCLUSIONS

➢ A shift of emphasis from Arboriculture to the **Urban Forestry** will better serve proven needs and demands for sustainable *Ecosystem Services* and *Placemaking*.

➢ **Lead responsibility should continue to reside within dlr Parks & Landscape Services. However, advancing a new strategy will require close in-house collaboration across service departments, and the development of partnerships with private and institutional owners of trees**. The recent relocation of dlr Parks & Landscape Services to the Community, Cultural Development & Well-being department provides opportunities to enhance and establish relationships with local community groups, that can play key roles in tree care and tree planting.

➢ **Critical to success will be an consistent commitment to investments in adequate human resources, funding, and ITC,** enabling the local authority – in collaboration with private owners and other partners - to meet Climate obligations*.

➢ Current challenges are not insurmountable, but require cross-disciplinary collaboration and an openness to innovation in both tree care and planting

biodiversity
treecharter climateadaptation
collaboration capacity
placemaking crossdisciplinary healthwellbeing
treestewards treeofficer cooperate
citizenscience naturebasedsolutions
evidencebase expertise
treecanopycover treecare constructionimpacts
treepreservation livingorganisms
greeninfrastructure
ecosystemservices

Word Cloud of key tree strategy topics