

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 12 SEPTEMBER 2013

SUPPORTING FAIR TRADE IN TELFORD AND WREKIN: PROGRESS REPORT

REPORT OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: CLLR KULDIP SAHOTA

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Co-operation is at the heart of fair trade, and two years ago the Council publicly committed to supporting the campaign in the borough. Since then, we have been working with local schools, businesses and organisations and in February 2013 the Telford and Wrekin Fairtrade Alliance was officially launched at Harper Adams University.
- 1.2 The Alliance is working to increase awareness and support of fair trade across the borough with the aim being to achieve Fairtrade borough status from the Fairtrade Foundation by 2014/15.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the Council notes the progress that has been achieved over the last 12 months.**
- 2.2 **That the Council continues supporting the Alliance and working towards its goals for achieving Fairtrade borough status.**
- 2.3 **Members are asked to endorse the Council's renewed Fair Trade Resolution as set out in section 6.2**

3. SUMMARY IMPACT INFORMATION

Community Impact	Yes	The Council is supporting the fair trade campaign borough wide and will encourage residents and visitors to get involved. Although the proposals won't have a significant impact on any specific group of people there is potential for a positive impact across all communities through an increased awareness and availability of fair trade products.
Financial & Value for Money Impact	No	The actions and activities identified for the Council will be funded from within existing Council resources – this includes the provision of secretarial and administrative support to the Telford and Wrekin Fairtrade Alliance, responsibility for their webpages and development of a

		fair trade directory. Any budget variances will be reported through financial monitoring as appropriate. The Fairtrade Alliance itself is primarily funded from fundraising activities and partner donations.
Legal Issues	Yes	<p>The Council can “in principle” give endorsement to the purchase and use of fair trade products, but always expressly subject to the priority of public procurement legal requirements intended to ensure the free movement of goods and services, equal treatment of bidders and transparency.</p> <p>It is therefore the case that the Council can include and welcome bids for fair trade options within contract notices and invitations to tender for the provision of goods, however that fair trade cannot form part of the specifications or be a mandatory requirement which could result in the rejection of a non-fair trade tender. This is because being fair trade, i.e. ensuring fairer prices for producers, safer working conditions, and an end to child labour, does not alter the quality or nature of the product and as such does not relate to the subject matter of the contract.</p>
Other impacts, risks and opportunities	No	By not demonstrating commitment and leadership in this and other areas of sustainability, the Council risks damage to its reputation.
Impact on specific wards	No	

4. **BACKGROUND**

4.1 Fair trade guarantees a better deal for third world producers. Fair trade gives power back to both producers and consumers. Producers get fair wages, good working conditions, help with the development of products and marketing, while consumers are given the choice to make a difference by buying fair trade products whenever they can.

4.2 The Council supports fair trade in two ways:

1. As part of our **corporate social responsibility**, we recognise the importance of fair trade, actively promoting the campaign to staff throughout the year, and making Fairtrade products available for visitors and employees where ever possible. Cllr Veronica Fletcher is our Fair Trade Champion and works with members of the Co-operative Council & Commercial Delivery Team to co-ordinate promotions and events.
2. The Council also works in partnership and is a member of two groups in Shropshire:
 - Working with Shropshire Council, local organisations and individuals, we are part of **Shropshire Fairtrade Coalition**, which was first awarded

Fairtrade Status by the Fairtrade Foundation back in 2007. To achieve this, ongoing activity is required from the Council, and a steering group meets regularly in the County to ensure progress and continued commitment to the campaign. For the Council's part, we passed a Resolution in 2008 agreeing to serve Fairtrade products in Council buildings and in meetings.

- We have more recently become a supporting member of **Telford and Wrekin Fairtrade Alliance**, a group of local schools, businesses and organisations that have agreed to work together to better support and promote fair trade in Telford and Wrekin. The Council is a key member on this group and provides administrative support for it. The aim is to achieve Fairtrade borough status from the Fairtrade Foundation by 2014/15.

5. INFORMATION

Over the past 18 months the Council has been actively involved in supporting the fair trade campaign as an employer and with partner organisations:

5.1 A visit from a Fairtrade Banana Farmer

Last November, local school children were delighted to meet Nicholas Faisal, a Fairtrade banana farmer from St Lucia. Organised by the Fairtrade Foundation and Bridges Global Education Centre in Wellington, the event was due to be hosted at Redhill Primary School in Priorslee, but unfortunately it had to close unexpectedly due to a lack of water supply in the area. At short notice St Peter's C of E Primary School in Bratton stepped in and hosted the event and children from other schools in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin attended. They heard from Nicholas about banana farming in St Lucia, asked him questions, and then made their own presentations. All the children had a great time, and learned a lot about fair trade.

5.2 Fairtrade Fortnight 2013

Fairtrade Fortnight is a national annual event, organised by the Fairtrade Foundation. It brings together consumers, retailers, businesses, producers and campaigners nationwide, to promote awareness and sales of products and to campaign on the issues of trade justice.

The theme this year was to 'Go Further' and as a Council, we did just that. We worked with staff and partner organisations to organise a number of events and activities to help raise awareness in the borough and get even more people involved:

- We started the campaign with the official launch of Telford and Wrekin Fairtrade Alliance at Harper Adams University. This was attended by a range of partners from local schools, businesses and organisations, as well as the Leader and Mayor of Telford and Wrekin Council, and the Mayor of Newport. There was coverage in the local press and on BBC Radio Shropshire.

- During the Fortnight, Shropshire was fortunate enough to have a visit from a Fairtrade farmer, visiting the county, courtesy of the Fairtrade Foundation. Gerardo Arias Camacho is a coffee farmer and a board member of Llano Bonito, his local coffee co-operative in Costa Rica. During his visit we were lucky enough for him to attend a number of events in Telford, including visits to Egnuity in Coalbrookdale (one of the Ironbridge Gorge Museums), Harper Adams University in Edgmond and Redhill Primary School in Priorslee – all of which have Fairtrade status.
- A number of staff gave up time to do bag packing at Tesco in Madeley (a supporting partner) to promote the fair trade campaign and to raise some funds for the Alliance.
- Within the Council we ran lots of internal communications for staff and got apprentices involved, taking fair trade trolleys round some Council buildings to sell products.

All in all it was a very successful Fortnight, including confirmation from the Fairtrade Foundation that Shropshire Fairtrade Coalition had received renewed status as a Fairtrade County. This reflects the hard work and commitment of many supporting partners, including the Council.

For more information on the events that took place during Fairtrade Fortnight, you can visit our Fairtrade webpages at www.telford.gov.uk/fairtrade.

5.3 Telford and Wrekin Fairtrade Alliance

In June 2013, the Alliance met to review its action plan. The meeting was Chaired by two students from Newport Girls High School, in their roles as Fairtrade Ambassadors. They did an impressive job and gained some valuable experience in the process.

The group agreed that the overall aim is to achieve Fairtrade borough status by the end of 2014/15. The group ran through the Fairtrade Foundations criteria for this and agreed a number of key actions to achieve during 2013/14, including:

- Registering with the Fairtrade Foundation to work on achieving Fairtrade borough status;
- Carrying out a fairtrade audit – for all retail and catering outlets in Telford and Wrekin;
- Do some targeted promotion with local businesses;
- Produce a directory of all supporting businesses and catering establishments – to be published on the Council's fair trade webpages;
- Identify a flagship employer for Telford and Wrekin;
- Develop and issue certificates for members of the Alliance;
- Produce some marketing materials to help raise awareness and to use at future events, including Fairtrade Fortnight;
- Use of social media to promote the Alliance;
- Plan, organise and jointly deliver events and activities during Fairtrade Fortnight 2014.

5.4 Beacon Co-operative Learning Day at Charlton School

The Charlton School are a part of a new beacon co-operative trust with membership including, Dothill Primary School, Crudgington Primary School, High Ercall Primary School, Apley Wood Primary School, Keele University, New College and the Shropshire Wildlife Trust;

As part of their partnership working, they held a Cooperative Learning Day on Monday 1st July 2013, to emphasise the Trusts ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

All partner Trust schools took part and they were involved in a number of activities with the aim being for the children to collaboratively work and learn together and make a valuable contribution to their community. The highlight of the day was an evening showcase of everything they had done.

Parents/carers attended along with stalls from some of the Trust partners. This included one for the Alliance who attended to run a fair trade stall. Linking in with the theme of 'social responsibility' we promoted the new partnership, raised awareness of the campaign and gave attendees the opportunity to buy a variety of fair trade products from a local supplier.

NEXT STEPS

6.1 The Council has achieved a lot in the last 18 months, but ongoing activity and support is required. Taking account of the goals the Alliance has set for the coming year (Section 5.2), the Council now needs to renew its Resolution, setting out practical actions it will commit to.

6.2 **Council Resolution:**

Co-operation is at the heart of fair trade and co-operatives are found throughout the fair trade system. As a Co-operative Council, we are committed to doing as much as we can to support and promote fair trade across the borough.

Working with Shropshire Fairtrade Coalition and Telford and Wrekin Fairtrade Alliance, the Council resolves to:

- Continue its support of the principles of Fairtrade status for Shropshire Fairtrade Coalition, granted on 13 July 2007;*
- Work with Telford and Wrekin Fairtrade Alliance to achieve Fairtrade borough status by 2014/15;*
- Ensure that where ever possible, the Council will provide fair trade products for staff and visitors, and at Council events;*
- Promote and encourage fair trade principles and raise awareness of fair trade goods in Council publications;*
- Continue promoting fair trade across the borough through the use of social media, press releases, webpages and at events;*

- *Encourage local employers to utilise fair trade products in their businesses;*
- *Continue organising activities and raising awareness for Fairtrade Fortnight and World Fairtrade Day each year;*
- *Ensure that where appropriate, we will ‘welcome’ fair trade as an option in our tenders;*
- *Working with Bridges and our Fairtrade Ambassadors, we will encourage and support more local schools to educate pupils on the fair trade campaign and work towards them achieving Fairtrade status;*
- *Continue providing administrative support to Telford and Wrekin Fairtrade Alliance, including responsibility for updating web pages and the development of a fair trade directory.*

In passing this motion the Council reaffirms its concern for those millions of people living in poverty in the developing world, and recognises the assistance that fair trade provides to help poor communities in the developing world lift themselves out of poverty.

The Council also reaffirms its longstanding commitment to support our local farming and business community where ever possible in support of local sustainability. In taking this stance we recognise that there is absolutely no conflict or competition between fair trade for the developing world and local sustainability.

7 PREVIOUS MINUTES

- March 2008 – notice of motion, minute 79 (b)
- 28 January 2010 – Fair trade status Progress Report, minute 80
- 27 January 2011 – Fair trade Status Progress report, minute 72
- 12 July 2012 – Fair trade Progress Report, minute 24

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.