

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: FAIRTRADE RESOLUTION
Meeting: ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE COMMITTEE
Date: 19th FEBRUARY 2008
Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Fairtrade is a marketing initiative which aims to ensure that small scale farmers in the developing world get a fair and secure price for their products. It guarantees producers that whatever happens to the global market, they will get a minimum, fair price, along with a contribution to a social development fund for their community. By buying directly from the farmer, a greater percentage of the profit goes to the farmer, with less being taken by intermediaries.
- 1.2 Fairtrade purchases in the UK are increasing at a rate of 40% year on year. This trend is reflected in the Falkirk area with reports of a marked increase in the number of individuals, community groups and local businesses requesting, buying or stocking Fairtrade produce. Where Fairtrade was once a specialist product that was difficult to find, it is now stocked by most UK supermarkets and bulk distributors. Another indication of this growing interest is the increasing number of enquiries about Fairtrade received by Falkirk Council and Falkirk Town Centre Management.
- 1.3 In May 2004, Falkirk Council welcomed existing action on Fairtrade and agreed to support further work. This record of support played a key role in enabling the town of Falkirk to attain Fairtrade status in May 2006. The Fairtrade steering group is now attempting to win “Fairtrade Zone” status to cover the whole of the council area, a prerequisite of which is a more detailed resolution by Falkirk Council.
- 1.4 This paper aims to outline the benefits for the Falkirk area of attaining this status, detail progress to date, additional effort required, examine the implications for the Council and recommends that this committee support a detailed resolution on Fairtrade.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The initiative is driven by the Fairtrade Foundation, which was established in 1992 by CAFOD, Christian Aid, New Consumer, Oxfam, Traidcraft and the World Development Movement. These founding organisations were later joined by Britain's largest women's organisation, the Women's Institute. The Foundation is the UK member of Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International (FLO), which unites 20 national initiatives.
- 2.2 In order to fulfil this aim of achieving Fairtrade status, the Fairtrade Foundation stipulates that five goals must be attained, the most important being that the local authority passes a resolution supporting Fairtrade and agrees to serve Fairtrade tea and coffee at meetings, in its canteens and other outlets (full list of goals in paragraph 5.2). Various services and departments of the Council are already taking action to support Fairtrade.

3. BENEFITS OF FAIRTRADE

- 3.1 Fairtrade asks shoppers to take responsibility for the impact of their actions on a community and its environment a great distance away. It promotes social responsibility and enables Falkirk consumers to give poor farmers in developing countries a 'hand up instead of a hand out'.
- 3.2 By passing a detailed Fairtrade resolution, Falkirk Council will lead in this practice by example, demonstrating that it takes responsibility for the impact of its actions both at home and abroad. As one of the largest purchasers in the Falkirk area, the Council has considerable consumer power and will join the growing ranks of towns, villages, islands and council areas to show their commitment.

4. FAIRTRADE SO FAR

- 4.1 In 2003, Town Centre Management started investigating the Fairtrade movement and has been working with Falkirk Council to stimulate interest and progress. A cross section of Falkirk businesses, community and church groups were invited to take part initially and that group has grown to now include all of the major supermarkets, some local church groups, high street retailers, local cafes and Forth Valley College.
- 4.2 At a meeting of Falkirk Council, on the 5th of May 2004, the Council noted inclusion of a Fairtrade tent at the Big in Falkirk event. It also welcomed a number of additional local actions taken by the Council including; establishment of a Fairtrade Working Group, use of Fairtrade products at Callendar House and use of the Fairtrade products within Municipal Buildings, including the Members' Services area. A growing number of parts of the Council, such as Development Services, have since then resolved to serve Fairtrade tea and coffee at meetings.
- 4.3 Fairtrade Fortnight takes place annually over the first two weeks of March. For the last three years, this has been marked by a series of initiatives across the Council area involving schools, churches, workplaces and community group.
- 4.4 In May 2005, the Fairtrade Foundation supported an application for Fairtrade status for the town of Falkirk. In response to growing interest in Fairtrade by schools and community groups, the steering group agreed to pursue zonal Fairtrade status which would recognise the whole of the Council area's commitment to supporting Fairtrade.

5. THE WAY FORWARD

- 5.1 The Falkirk Fairtrade Working Group agreed that rather than one individual or group leading the Fairtrade initiative in the Falkirk area, a partnership approach be adopted. A Falkirk Fairtrade Steering Group, with Council representation, was established to this end and with the ultimate aim of winning and sustaining Fairtrade accreditation for the Council area.
- 5.2 In order for this to take place, the Steering Group must achieve the following five objectives:
 - ***Local council passes a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and agrees to serve Fairtrade tea and coffee at its meetings and in its offices and canteens.***
 - A range of (at least two) Fairtrade products are readily available in the area's shops. Fairtrade products are served in local cafes/catering establishments.
 - Fairtrade products are used by a number of local work places (estate agents, hairdressers etc), and community organisations (churches, schools etc).

- Attract media coverage and popular support for the campaign.
- A local Fairtrade steering group is convened to ensure continued commitment to its Fairtrade status.

5.3 In addition to fulfilling these criteria, the Fairtrade Foundation stipulates that a set quota of retail and cafes/catering outlets must be present in the town/area. The following table shows the Council area's progress to date:

| Falkirk Council Area | Outlets required | Participating |
|-------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| No. of retail outlets | 30 | 39 |
| No. of cafes/catering outlets | 15 | 21 |

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 **Financial:** over the last 5years, Fairtrade products have become competitive in price with non Fairtrade ones.
- 6.2 **Legal:** No direct implications arising from this report. The phrasing of the resolutions in section 7.1 is required to meet standards set by the Fairtrade Foundation. However, it does include sufficient flexibility to allow the Council to meet its best value obligations.
- 6.3 **Policy:** The resolution supports the implementation of action 7.1 in approved Sustainable Falkirk Action Plan.
- 6.4 **Personnel:** No implications arising from this report.
- 6.5 Services will be made aware of the corporate aims and objectives of the resolution and encouraged to implement these where possible.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 That members agree to support the following resolution in support of Fairtrade:

That Falkirk Council supports the Fairtrade campaign and resolves:

- To promote awareness of Fairtrade issues and opportunities for supporting Fairtrade across the Falkirk Council area. That the Council will concentrate on making Council employees, the public, and local businesses aware of the Council's policy on Fairtrade;
- To use Fairtrade goods, when catering for Council meetings and functions wherever possible;
- To use Fairtrade goods at all other opportunities, including office catering, vending machines and public outlets, wherever possible;
- To support the Falkirk Fairtrade Working Group in its work towards attaining Fairtrade status for the Falkirk Council area and appoint a Council representative to the Fairtrade Steering Group.

- 7.2 That subject to Falkirk Council approving the resolution as per paragraph 7.3, there will be a regular report by the Director of Development Services to the Environment and Heritage Committee on progress of this Fairtrade resolution.
- 7.3 That members agree to refer the resolution to Falkirk Council for approval, subject to future reports on progress to appropriate scrutiny committees.

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Director of Development Services

Date: 22nd January 2008

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Minutes of meeting of Falkirk Council, May 5th, 2004, agenda item (e)
- 'Global Partners – Fairtrade and Local Authorities: How to Support Global Sustainable development in your Locality', Oxfam
- Sustainable Falkirk Action Plan January – December 2006.