

## FAIRTRADE STATUS

### PROGRAMME AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY: HUMAN RESOURCES AND CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES

CABINET

28TH APRIL, 2005

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#### Wards Affected

County-wide

#### Purpose

To support the community initiative to secure Fairtrade Foundation status for the county.

#### Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

#### Recommendation

- THAT
- (a) the Council be recommended to pass a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and serve Fairtrade coffee and tea at its meetings and in offices and canteens;
  - (b) the Council seek to attract popular support for the campaign across Herefordshire to ensure that:
    - Fairtrade products are used by a number of local work places and community organisations; and
    - Fairtrade produce is readily available in local shops and served in local cafes and catering establishments.
  - (c) the local Fairtrade Steering Group be supported; and
  - (d) the Council's Procurement Strategy be revised to reflect a commitment to Fairtrade.

#### Reasons

To demonstrate a commitment as part of an overall Procurement Strategy to improving the environment and social justice by preferentially purchasing products which are organically and/or ethically produced.

## Considerations

### Notice of Motion

1. At its meeting on 12th November, 2004, Councillor Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes and Councillor W.L.S. Bowen submitted the following notice of motion:

"That HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL, as an important consumer and opinion leader, gives support to facilitate the promotion and purchase of foods with the FAIRTRADE Mark.

That HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL supports a fairer deal to marginalized producers by promoting FAIRTRADE products throughout the Council via its many establishments such as Leisure and Sports Centres, offices, Info Centres and encourages partner agencies such as Jarvis Catering to use FAIRTRADE products wherever possible.

The initiative involves a commitment to Agenda 21 and sustainable development by :

- widely offer FAIRTRADE Marked food and drink options internally and make them available for internal meetings.
- promote the FAIRTRADE Mark using FAIRTRADE Foundation materials in refreshment areas.
- promote the FAIRTRADE initiative on internal communications and external newsletters
- allow staff to purchase FAIRTRADE products internally
- attract media coverage and popular support for the campaign
- allocate responsibility for progression of the FAIRTRADE initiative to a member of staff from Agenda 21 to liaise with the already existing steering group."

### Background

2. Fairtrade status complements the work the Council is doing in supporting the local economy through its economic regeneration policy.
3. From a Herefordshire perspective the support of small scale farmers in the developing world through fair trade has synergy with the support of local farmers in terms of promoting local produce in niche markets (e.g. farmers' markets) and not being at the mercy of the powerful multinational retailers.
4. There is also a community benefit in the sense that this would be seen as the Council being supportive of many local groups that are linked to communities in the developing world. This does help bring an economic benefit to the area, e.g. the UK One World Linking Association recently held a conference on Uganda at the Leadership Trust in Ross-on-Wye.
5. To become a Fairtrade Town or County recognised by the Fairtrade Foundation, 5 goals must be achieved:-
  - (1) The Council must pass a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and serve Fairtrade coffee and tea at its meetings and in offices and canteens.
  - (2) The Council must attract popular support for the campaign.

- (3) Fairtrade products must be used by a number of local work places (estate agents, hairdressers etc) and community organisations (churches, schools etc).
  - (4) A range of Fairtrade products must be readily available in the area's shops and served in local cafés and catering establishments (targets are set in relation to population<sup>1</sup>).
  - (5) A local Fairtrade steering group must be convened to ensure continued commitment to Fairtrade Town status.
6. Currently Flintshire and Swansea have achieved Fairtrade Status for countywide areas. A number of English counties are working towards becoming the first to achieve Fairtrade status, including Shropshire, Wiltshire and Somerset.
  7. If Herefordshire Council decide to bid for Fairtrade Status it would need to demonstrate compliance with points (1) and (2) above. However, the bid for Fairtrade status for the county will only succeed with the active involvement of the wider community, who would need to lead on points (3) & (4) re supply in shops, workplaces, cafes etc and contribute strongly to building local support (point 2).

### **Fairtrade Goods**

8. The most relevant goods for Council catering are tea, coffee sugar and snacks. However there are now over 350 Fairtrade certified retail products. The Fairtrade Foundation website contains considerable information on products and suppliers to enable switching of supplies.
9. Fair Thee Well, a social enterprise shop specialising in Fairtrade goods, has opened recently in St Owens Street. It is supported by Learning Disability Day Services as some of their clients are involved in staffing it. The shop offers a delivery service to main Council premises in Hereford. All Saints is another example of a social business supporting Fairtrade in the county.

### **Herefordshire Jarvis Services Limited (HJS)**

10. HJS provide the Council's catering requirements. HJS can source Fairtrade coffee from their current supplier and have already provided Fairtrade tea and coffee at a recent Managers' Forum. They run the canteen at Blackfriars, so could also provide Fairtrade drinks there. Fairtrade coffee costs £5 per box of 60 sachets more than ordinary coffee, but the HJS Catering Manager has stated that they will absorb this within current prices. HJS could also be asked to use Fairtrade products in their general catering.
11. Custodians at Brockington, Shire Hall and Town Hall can transfer to providing Fairtrade coffee and tea for Council meetings with negligible impact on costs.
12. Castle Green could investigate whether the Fairtrade goods could be provided via the current vending machine. The current supplier Nestle are considering providing Fairtrade options.

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<sup>1</sup> Target level is one retail establishment and one catering establishment per 5000 population - about 30 cafes and 30 shops across the county.

13. The canteen at Plough Lane could be asked to serve Fairtrade goods but as the Council does not run the facility the decision is with its managers.
14. Council staff can be informed of the Council's support and encouraged to buy Fairtrade goods for their own refreshments. Several work place teams already buy Fairtrade coffee.

### **Building Popular Support**

15. This is an area where the Council can contribute, but it should be made clear to other partners that the bid will only succeed with their active support for this strand of the work. The five market towns' councils have been recently contacted and asked to support the Council in achieving Foundation Status.
  - Hereford City Council, Bromyard, Leominster and Ledbury Town Councils have all now passed motions supporting Fairtrade. Ross-on-Wye Town Council supports the initiative and Kington Town Council are due to consider the matter shortly. Hereford City Council has now achieved Fairtrade City Status.
  - There is already a broadly based and active Fairtrade steering group in Hereford keen to work with the Council. There has also been a recent meeting in Leominster. These groups have contacts involved/interested in Fairtrade in other areas of the county, so there is an existing support base to build on.
  - The Environmental Sustainability Unit (ESU) in the Environment Directorate could cover the cost of an annual directory of Fairtrade outlets from existing resources.
  - The ESU could help with internal information and publicity for staff and Council offices (such as Info in Herefordshire), press releases and help to organise meetings with representatives from across the county
  - The Project Development Team (Policy & Community) could advise the Steering Group on possible funding routes.
16. The Hereford Fairtrade Steering Group has compiled a Directory and held a successful launch meeting in autumn 2004.
17. The second Fairtrade Directory for Hereford already lists thirteen shops/supermarkets and six cafes and these are also featured on a dedicated website. Many local churches already sell Traidcraft products. The Hereford Fair Trade Steering Group undertook successful promotions in Fairtrade fortnight in March 2005.
18. A recent Managers' Forum had a blind tasting of Fairtrade tea and coffee against conventional alternatives. A show of hands put the Fairtrade versions well in front!

### **Links to Procurement Strategy and Local Economy**

19. Work is well advanced to review the Council's Procurement Strategy and a consultative draft will be available shortly. This will deal with the Council's ability to source local products and services and to promote Fairtrade status.

## **Alternative Options**

There are no alternative options recommended.

## **Risk Management**

There is a reputation risk to the Council should it decide not to participate in a campaign supported locally by consumers to buy fairtrade, ethical and environmentally friendly products which can lead to business growth opportunities which some businesses in the county are benefiting from.

## **Consultees**

City and Market Town Councils

## **Background Papers**

None identified.