

To: Planning and Climate Change Policy Board

On: 27 August 2024

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Renfrewshire Fairtrade Campaign

1. Summary

- 1.1 Fairtrade is an international movement to support the fair, ethical and sustainable production and procurement of goods, predominantly food and drink products but also extending to cotton and other goods. Fairtrade focuses on paying a fair price for products to support low income and disadvantaged farmers, producers and workers in lower income countries.
- 1.2 Fairtrade is often recognised by the Fairtrade mark, which indicates that the production of an item has met agreed standards. Fairtrade certification has become more widespread, particularly over the past 10 years, and many large brands support Fairtrade principles and supply a range of Fairtrade products.
- 1.3 Fairtrade closely aligns with efforts to tackle the climate crisis, with the Fairtrade mark indicating adherence to fundamental principles on sustainable farming. Many Fairtrade producers and farmers are based in the global south, in areas most significantly impacted by the extremes of weather recognised to be caused by climate change.
- 1.4 Renfrewshire has a long and proud history of supporting the Fairtrade movement, with Paisley first becoming a Fairtrade town in 2003. In 2007, Renfrewshire Council agreed a motion to apply for Fairtrade Zone status for the whole Renfrewshire area, and the Council, with cross-party support, has worked with communities across Renfrewshire to continue these efforts.
- 1.5 Over the past year, there has been a refreshed grassroots campaign to support Fairtrade in Renfrewshire, led by community volunteers and stakeholder organisations such as Rainbow Turtle and True Origin, both

based in Renfrewshire. An informal steering group has been established and received appropriate support from Renfrewshire Council.

- 1.6 Renfrewshire's Fairtrade Status is due for renewal this year and Members of the Planning and Climate Change Policy Board are asked to note the recent progress of the Fairtrade movement in Renfrewshire and agree to support the renewal bid. If agreed, a formal letter will be drafted by officers and appended to the application, alongside a link to this Board report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members:
- Note the ongoing work of volunteers, communities and other stakeholders across Renfrewshire to support Fairtrade; and
 - Agree that Renfrewshire Council continues to support the Fairtrade movement in Renfrewshire and formally endorse the renewal of the Fairtrade Zone status.

3. Background

- 3.1 As noted above, Renfrewshire has long been committed to supporting the Fairtrade movement, with many communities, organisations, places of worship, schools and individuals across Renfrewshire playing their part.
- 3.2 Renfrewshire Council, as an anchor institution, has actively supported Renfrewshire's Fairtrade movement for over twenty years, including coordinating the award-winning Fairtrade Zone status campaign in 2007/08. Fairtrade principles have an alignment to the Council's core values, our Council Plan objectives and our commitment to tackling the climate crisis.
- 3.3 Elected Members, past and present and across all political parties, have had a significant role to play as local Fairtrade champions and their contribution to the success of the local movement over the past twenty years has been vital.
- 3.4 Renfrewshire's children and young people in our schools and nurseries have also been champions of the Fairtrade movement and are often the catalysts for changing purchasing habits within their own households. Trinity High School was the first Fairtrade school in Scotland and several Renfrewshire schools continue to support the Fairtrade movement across their school communities. The dedication of teachers and other education colleagues in Renfrewshire is gratefully acknowledged by stakeholders, delivering creative and imaginative approaches to learning about Fairtrade principles.
- 3.5 In 2019, Renfrewshire Council became one of the first local authorities in the UK to formally adopt the International Fairtrade Charter – a non-legally binding commitment to the Fairtrade principles.

- 3.6 The Council's Corporate Procurement Strategy 2023 - 2025 was approved by the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board in November 2023. It continues the Council's commitment to procuring fairly and ethically traded products where possible as well as to promote ethical procurement, working with suppliers to ensure that they do not use exploitative labour.
- 3.7 Over the past year, there has been a renewed approach to supporting Renfrewshire's Fairtrade campaigning based around the pursuit of the renewal of the county's Fairtrade Zone status. There is a changing role for the Council at a strategic level - while formal Council endorsement is a requirement of a successful renewal application, officers recognise that the campaigning works best when it is led and energised from the grassroots, with Council officers supporting, facilitating and enabling where appropriate.
- 3.8 A key focus for the local campaign has been on Fairtrade Fortnight, which for 2024 has been moved to September, to nationally recognise it is the 30 Year Anniversary of Fairtrade products first being available in the UK.
- 3.9 In the run up to Fairtrade Fortnight, Paisley's 10K Road Race took place on 18 August with the Council sponsoring the provision of Fairtrade bananas, as in previous years, and promoting Renfrewshire's Fairtrade campaign. Further partnering opportunities are being explored with OneRen colleagues.
- 3.10 Throughout May and June, local school pupils were working hard producing fantastic artwork to be displayed in an exhibition which will take place on 9 September to formally launch Fairtrade Fortnight in Renfrewshire. The artwork is part of a competition, and the winning artists will be announced on the night. Howard Msukwa, a producer/farmer from Malawi will be the special guest speaker. The exhibition will thereafter be available for touring to any schools, communities or organisations across Renfrewshire who would like to use it. In addition, a collage of all the artwork received by school pupils will be displayed in the 'hoarding' outside the Paisley Museum site.
- 3.11 Finally, the Scottish Fair Trade Forum have selected Renfrewshire to host the Campaigner Conference for Fairtrade Fortnight, which will take place on 14 September in The Wynd Centre, Paisley.
- 3.12 All of these events will complement other activities across Renfrewshire's towns and villages and help to build a picture of local support and activism. The renewal process is being led by the volunteer campaigners, and they require the Council's assistance through:
- a formal statement of support;
 - a continued commitment to use fairly traded products where possible (in line with the Corporate Procurement Strategy); and
 - some practical and small financial contributions to the Renfrewshire-wide activities, such as purchasing prizes for the winning entries into the schools' art competition and paying for venue hire where appropriate.

- 3.13 On the latter point, as noted in the financial implications section below, this will be taken from the existing budget allocated for this purpose following a Council Budget motion in March 2020. This allocated '£0.010m ongoing support to Fairtrade'. This was to cover a period of two years, however due to the covid pandemic and local demand, a balance remains which can be used to support the current activities.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – the Council is contributing minor financial (and other resource) support to the activities outlined in the paper. This has been made available from a previously committed sum of £0.010m as part of a Council Budget motion in March 2020, of which a balance remains.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** –none.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – the core principles around Fairtrade align with the Council and Community Plans, particularly around fairness, tackling poverty and food security, respect for the environment, protection for children and living our values.
4. **Legal** - none
5. **Property/Assets** – none
6. **Information Technology** - none
7. **Equality and Human Rights** - the recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. Within the Fairtrade movement itself, core principles align closely with the fundamentals of equality and human rights, particularly working towards gender equality, fairer working rights, food security and tackling child labour.
8. **Health and Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** – there is clear alignment to Renfrewshire's Procurement Strategy, where there is a commitment to continue to include options for the procurement of fairly and ethically traded goods and services in our tenders.
10. **Risk** – none
11. **Privacy Impact** – none
12. **Climate Risk** – the Fairtrade movement closely aligns with the principles of climate justice, particularly focused on local sustainability and environmental protection.
13. **Children's Rights** – the Fairtrade movement also aligns with the rights of children in standing against child labour globally. At a local level, as outlined in sections 3.4 and 3.10, there has been a particular focus on engaging with children and young people about the Fairtrade movement.
14. **COSLA Policy Position** – none

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