

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Renewal of the city's Fairtrade City status
Committee: Cabinet
Date: 16 October 2012
Cabinet Member: Councillor Penberthy
CMT Member: Anthony Payne (Director for Place)
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Ref: Fairtrade City Status/JYSept2012
Key Decision: No
Part: I

Purpose of the report:

Plymouth was granted Fairtrade City status in 2004 under the previous Labour Council and has maintained a steady interest in the promotion of Fairtrade products ever since. In 2011 the Fairtrade Foundation, who oversee this status, introduced a new renewals process; suggesting that the Council should be considering renewing its commitment.

The new process requires the production of an Action Plan and the successful renewal will rely on the extent to which five set goals can be met. The five goals include (1) Council commitment, (2) retail and catering, (3) workplace and community links, (4) media links and (5) 'making it happen' through the establishment of a citywide Steering Group. The city's Draft Fairtrade Action Plan has been in development in partnership with the city's Fairtrade Plymouth Network since March 2012 and is now being promoted for final comment before it is included in our renewal application.

Goal I of the renewals process requires the Council to adopt a Cabinet Agreement that :

- a. Supports the promotion and use of Fairtrade products wherever possible in the Council.
- b. Supports the renewal of the Fairtrade City status.

Although there is no requirement for a formal 'pledge' in support of the city's commitment to Fairtrade, the adoption process is strongly supported by the manifesto of the new Labour Administration which states (on page 4) " we also wish to see Plymouth retain and develop its Fairtrade City status. Plymouth was one of the earliest to achieve this and the co-operative and faith communities played a huge part in making it happen."

The renewed commitment to the principles of Fairtrade is considered to be fundamental to the Council's broader aspirations for co-operative action; with local opportunity and global implications underpinning much of the delivery of its agenda for change.

This report accompanies the proposed wording of a Cabinet Agreement recommended by the Fairtrade Plymouth Steering Group. It seeks formal approval and adoption of the Cabinet Agreement in support of Goal I and the requirements for renewal of the Fairtrade City status.

Corporate Plan 2012-2015: <http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/corporateplan.htm>

The Council's commitment to Fairtrade is just one expression of how the co-operative principles set out in the manifesto can be easily embedded throughout the Council's responsibilities. Although not specifically listed in the Corporate Plan 2011 to 2014, renewal of the city's Fairtrade City status is clearly set out as a commitment in the recent manifesto (page 4) and is considered to underpin many of the Council's aspirations for governance, economic growth and community wellbeing. In particular, the commitment made, and the principles shared, support the delivery of sustainable solutions that benefit local and global communities alike.

**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:
Including finance, human, IT and land**

Limited revenue funds for promotional activities may be required to maintain the Council's profile with particular requirements being identified for events during the annual Fairtrade Fortnight celebrations. Funding options will be reviewed and will include the opportunity for Network members to make voluntary donations to support the planned events.

The renewal process requires the identification of a Council representative (Councillor or Officer) for the city's Fairtrade Steering Group. Councillor Penberthy has accepted this role.

Administrative and co-ordination responsibilities are currently provided by the Council's Sustainable Development Co-ordinator. This role will be reviewed to establish the most cost effective way of maintaining the Council's leading role in the initiative.

The administrative process currently requires limited use of IT (document processing and email networking). It is planned to ensure that links with the independent SW Fairtrade website, and the establishment of Fairtrade Plymouth's own website, will support the networking and promotional requirements in due course.

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion:

No community safety, health and safety or risk management implications can be identified.

The principles of Fairtrade advocate the elimination of discrimination, equal opportunities and economic equity. By ensuring producers receive a fair price for the products they provide, Fairtrade also encourages the application of workers rights and investment in community services such as health, clean water, education and maternity care. By investing in Fairtrade products in Plymouth, local communities are investing in globally sustainable solutions and supporting local retailers and social enterprises. The Fairtrade Mark (the green/blue yin/yang symbol) has become easily identifiable as a brand that can be trusted to provide this internationally co-operative approach; a link identified in research undertaken by local CoOp Stores that revealed a surprising level of understanding and solidarity with the global producers amongst some of Plymouth's most deprived neighbourhoods. Globally Fairtrade has a significant impact on child poverty – with projects supporting health, education and maternity care supported by many of the co-operative initiatives established by local workers. Fairtrade therefore plays an important role in direct improvement and in raising international awareness of the impact child poverty has on life choices; giving consumers the option of making a definite choice in favour of positive change.

To date, an EIA has not been undertaken to date but will be completed following agreement on the Action Plan. Work has begun to compile the information required for this appraisal.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

It is recommended that Cabinet :

- I. Adopts the Fairtrade Agreement.

Reason :

Adoption of this Agreement is required to guarantee the renewal of Plymouth's Fairtrade City status. The clear commitment from the Council is considered to be essential to the renewal process and the successful delivery of local actions to promote Fairtrade.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

Few alternative options can be identified as the adoption of a Council 'commitment' is a stated requirement within Goal 1 of the renewal process established by the Fairtrade Foundation.

(1) Consider adoption of the Cabinet Agreement at a later date – it is hoped to secure the renewal by Feb 2013 in time for significant celebrations during Fairtrade Fortnight (25.02.13 to 10.04.13). To ensure the completion of this process the latest date for formal consideration would be November 2012.

(2) Submitting the renewal application without approval of the Cabinet Agreement – is a possibility but formal adoption would still need to be listed as an intention in the renewal action plan. Failure to do so would jeopardise the renewals process.

Background papers:

(Appendix 1) The wording of the Cabinet Agreement recommended by the Fairtrade Plymouth Steering Group and supported by the Fairtrade Foundation.

(Appendix 2) The recommended draft of the Fairtrade Plymouth Action Plan (for information) – available at :

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/environmentandplanning/sustainableplymouth/fairtradeplymouth.htm>

Sign off:

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Originating SMT Member : Paul Barnard, Assistant Director for Planning											
Have you consulted the Cabinet Member(s) named on the report? Yes											

1.0 The Background to Fairtrade in Plymouth

1.1 Fairtrade has been supported in the UK for over 60 years and shares many of the principles of both co-operative and sustainable development with the Council's aspirations for change. Over the last few years, and with the support of the Fairtrade Foundation, the promotion of Fairtrade has developed beyond its traditional NGO support to provide over 4600 different products on the UK's high streets and supermarket shelves. Fairtrade products are sold in 22 countries across the world and are sold by leading brands and its growth, at over 40% year on year, is noted as one of the sectoral success stories despite the impact of the recession.

1.2 Across the World, Fairtrade is commonly delivered through co-operatives or collaborations; supporting the rights and interests of women, young people, vulnerable communities and marginalised producers, promoting fair prices and eliminating the restrictive practices applied by some marketing corporations. Its commitment to equity has encouraged a sense of solidarity and local communities in Plymouth have highlighted their support for the opportunity Fairtrade offers to the provision of health, water, educational and housing services in the countries where the investment in community infrastructure would otherwise be limited.

1.3 Politically, this commitment is also closely reflected in Plymouth's historic commitment to co-operative working and the promotion of equity, workers rights and equal opportunities and the emphasis places on the renewal of the city's Fairtrade status in the manifesto has met with considerable support regionally and nationally.

1.4 The 'Fairtrade City status', granted to Plymouth in 2004, was introduced by the Fairtrade Foundation in the early 2000s as part of the national Fairtrade Cities and Towns campaign¹. Over 500 cities and towns have now achieved this status in the UK but Plymouth remains one of the first to do so and will be celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2014.

2.0 Recognising and Promoting Fairtrade



2.1 The Fairtrade Foundation (See : <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>) was founded in 1994 as the association responsible for national labelling in the UK. It manages the use of the Fairtrade Mark and the promotion of Fairtrade and the Mark itself is an international certification label awarded to the products that meet specific independent standards set by the Fairtrade Labelling Organisation (FLO). It is now recognised by 72% of British adults.

2.2 In the UK, 450 local authorities support Fairtrade with specific commitments in their local procurement, environmental or sustainability policies² The Fairtrade Foundation supports this commitment; stating that the commitment of the local authority :

- Demonstrates a commitment to sustainable development.
- Creates opportunities to work with and engage the community.
- Demonstrates effective citizenship and real leadership.
- Promotes civic pride.
- Benefits the local community.
- Provides a positive impact on the recruitment and motivation of employees.
- Makes a real difference to the lives of the producers.

¹ See http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get_involved/campaigns/fairtrade_towns/default.aspx

² See http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2010/ll/local_authorities_guide_final_2010.pdf

2.3 In Plymouth support for Fairtrade emphasises the Council's support for co-operative principles by recognising the role Fairtrade plays in boosting local and global sustainable development, equity and the local economy and in the provision of choice. These choices are reflected in the actions already taken to introduce Fairtrade options in the Council's 17 vending machines, the refreshments offered at high profile meetings and the choice of Fairtrade food items in 79% of our local schools; a figure way above the recommended target of 30%.

2.4 The commitment to Fairtrade is shared across Plymouth. Changes in supply and the availability of recognised produce now means that many of the Fairtrade options, from chocolate to cosmetics and clothing, are available in the city. Although a further survey of retailers will be required, the number of recognised retailers in Plymouth has risen from 39 in 2009 to 111 in 2012; with over 50 catering outlets offering the choice. Once again this meets the required targets of 36 and 18 outlets respectively.

2.5 In addition Plymouth University, City College and the University College of St Mark and St John (Marjons) have all achieved Fairtrade College status and are closely involved in the current renewal process.

3.0 Renewing the Status.

3.1 The formal renewal process has changed considerably since Plymouth first became a Fairtrade City in 2004. For a number of reasons, support for Fairtrade has varied over the years and our renewal of the formal status is now well overdue.

3.2 The renewal process now requires the production of an 'Action Plan'³ which, in turn, is driven by five 'goals'. Goal 1⁴ is specifically related to local authority support and action and is seen as crucial to the renewal process. It requires that the "Local council passes a 'resolution' supporting Fairtrade, and agrees to serve Fairtrade products (for example, in meetings, offices and canteens)".

3.3 The adoption of a Cabinet Agreement supporting the promotion of Fairtrade by the Council and the renewal of the Fairtrade City status is required as part of our commitment to Goal 1.

3.4 The Action Plan should cover at least two years. The city's renewed status will be reviewed after one year and, then, on a regular basis every two years giving the option of a regular 'updating' process for the Action Plan and a delivery role that the Council can support through its continued commitment to co-operative leadership.

4.0 Progress To Date.

4.1 Plymouth was made aware of the new renewals process in late 2011 and took action in March 2012 to convene a 'scoping meeting' to review how the five goals might be met. The outcome of this meeting was encouraging as positive actions could be identified in all five categories.

4.2 Suggested actions have been brought together over the summer and the Recommended Draft Action Plan⁵ is currently being promoted for final comments. The draft has been reviewed by the

³ See http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2009/a/action_guide_final_1208.pdf

⁴ See http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get_involved/campaigns/fairtrade_towns/the_5_goals.aspx

⁵ See to be inserted
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regional Fairtrade Foundation representative and we have been advised that it is already an example of the type of publication that would support a successful renewal application.

5.0 What's Expected of Plymouth City Council ?

5.1 : The Adoption of a Cabinet Agreement Confirming Plymouth City Council's Support.

The most significant outcome of the scoping meeting was the identified need for Plymouth City Council to reaffirm its commitment to Fairtrade City status with the formal adoption of an Agreement supporting Fairtrade. Guidance on the wording was provided by the Fairtrade Foundation and was also sought from the SW regional Fairtrade representative who supplied examples from other Fairtrade cities. The guidance suggests that the wording of the Agreement must include:

- A statement of support for Fairtrade
- A commitment to use Fairtrade products whenever possible (in meetings, offices and canteens for example).

5.2 : Practical Action and Representation

The renewal process requires the Council to :

- To adopt the suggested Cabinet Agreement,
- To continue to promote Fairtrade choices at meetings and events, in offices and canteens and, where possible, schools and other Council facilities (see section 2.3).
- To nominate a Council representative (Councillor or Officer) as a Steering Group member.

5.3 Although the commitment to Fairtrade in the City Council's corporate Environmental Policy and Forward Plan 2009 to 2012 is still valid⁶ it is not considered to be strong enough to support the partnership actions required by the renewal process. The commitment to the renewal process, identified in the Labour Group's 2012 election manifesto⁷, is therefore welcomed as it provides the support needed to review levels of commitment and partnership and the process required to secure renewal.

5.4 This report focuses on the adoption of the recommended Cabinet Agreement attached in Appendix I.

5.5 Once adopted, the Cabinet Agreement will provide the mandate required for the Council to develop its role in promoting and encouraging Fairtrade as a positive choice. Building on a very proactive base, options for future action will be followed up and currently include :

- The promotion of Fairtrade as a choice for meetings and events.

⁶ Under Section SPI " The Council will continue to work with local networks to support events and initiatives and to maintain Plymouth's Fairtrade City status". This was to be delivered by "Promoting wider sustainable development through the city's continued contribution to Plymouth's Fairtrade City status." (Policy commitment SP4).

⁷ We also wish to see Plymouth retain and develop its Fairtrade City status. Plymouth was one of the earliest to achieve this and the cooperative and faith communities played a huge part in making it happen. Labour Group Manifesto May 2012.

- Working with the Procurement Team to instruct those ordering supplies to choose Fairtrade products, to promote Fairtrade choice wherever possible and, where possible, to include the choice of Fairtrade as a contractual requirement.⁸
- Using interactive events to change the perception of Fairtrade products through tasting sessions and easier access to choice.

5.6 As the role of the Steering Group is developed, the Council will benefit from the collaborative partnership approach based on the co-operative principles it exemplifies, and a clear remit for its administrative responsibilities. Actions identified to support this process include :

- Working with Corporate Resources, the identification of a new lead officer for Fairtrade.
- Agreeing a handover timetable that allows for the adoption of the suggested resolution, the completion of the Action Plan and the completion of the renewal process (estimated to be October 2012).
- Agreement on the Council's representation on the Steering Group.
- The provision of ongoing support to enable the Steering Group to establish its independence.

Appendix I : The Recommended Cabinet Agreement

“ Working in partnership with the city's Fairtrade Steering Group and our local communities, Plymouth City Council recognizes the value of Fairtrade to global and local sustainability and reconfirms its support for the city's Fairtrade City status.

In doing so, the City Council agrees to boost Plymouth's role in actively promoting and supporting the production, supply, sale and consumption of Fairtrade Marked goods and services within the local community, with businesses and suppliers, with employees and with other local authorities.

Plymouth City Council agrees to contribute to the increased availability of fairly traded products by recognizing the Fairtrade Mark and by renewing Fairtrade City status for Plymouth as detailed in the Fairtrade Foundation's Fairtrade Towns Initiative. This Agreement includes a commitment to :

- Widely offer Fairtrade Marked food and drink options wherever possible and, in doing so, ensure that these options are available for internal meetings and as a choice within Council vending machines.
- The promotion of the Fairtrade Mark (using Fairtrade Foundation materials) in refreshment areas, in appropriate publications, amongst employees, in internal communications, in external newsletters and within the schools supported by the Local Education Authority.

⁸ Subject to procurement and contractual law.
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- The provision of collective support for Plymouth's Fairtrade City Steering Group in the development, adoption and delivery of Plymouth's Fairtrade Action Plan.
- Use our influence to urge local businesses and retailers to provide Fairtrade options for their customers and to offer Fairtrade options to their staff and clients, leading by example through our own actions and commitments.
- Engage the media in publicising the Fairtrade Towns Initiative and the international benefits of co-operative working the scheme supports.
- Allocating responsibility for the delivery of the Council's role in the Fairtrade City Action Plan to a member or group of staff and, where possible, an elected member.
- Nominating a council representative (member or officer) to sit on the city's Fairtrade Steering Group supporting ongoing work to promote Fairtrade and the Fairtrade Mark.
- Supporting and co-coordinating corporate and networked events and their associated publicity for Fairtrade Fortnight and other celebrations; acting wherever possible to encourage the use of Fairtrade Marked products in refreshments and event catering.”

Appendix 2 : Recommended Draft Action Plan (for information only)

This document can be viewed at :

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/environmentandplanning/sustainableplymouth/fairtradeplymouth.htm>