

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: LOCHABER AREA COMMITTEE

Date: 30 August 2018

Report Title: Support for Fairtrade Town Status for Fort William

Report By: Head of Policy and Reform

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report provides detail of a local campaign to achieve Fairtrade Town status for Fort William and which requests support from Highland Council.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider:
- i. Supporting the principles of Fairtrade by promoting awareness of the Fort William Fairtrade Town initiative when appropriate; by serving Fairtrade tea and coffee at its meetings; and by nominating a Council officer to liaise with the Fort William Fairtrade Team.

3. Information

- 3.1 In 2003, Highland Council passed a motion supporting the principle of Fairtrade and sustainable production and agreed that all tea and coffee that was provided at official meetings was bought under a recognised Fairtrade label or equivalent. In 2012 the Highlands were awarded Fairtrade Zone status by the Fairtrade Foundation which was renewed in 2013.
- 3.2 In May 2018, an approach was received from the newly formed “Fort William Fairtrade

Team Steering Group” (FWFTSG) requesting that Lochaber Councillors support their campaign to achieve Fairtrade Town status for Fort William.

- 3.3** Fairtrade Towns “make a commitment to supporting Fairtrade and using licensed products with the FAIRTRADE Mark.” A Fairtrade Town is one in which the community actively supports the reduction of global poverty by empowering disadvantaged producers through the provision of fair, sustainable income and safe working conditions.
- 3.4** In order to achieve Fairtrade status, a town must fulfil five goals, summarised as follows:
1. Local council passes a resolution supporting Fairtrade - the resolution should include a commitment to serve Fairtrade tea and coffee at its meetings and in its offices and canteens wherever hot drinks are served.
 2. At least four Fairtrade product ranges are readily available in the area’s shops and retail outlets, and two Fairtrade products served in local cafés/catering establishments
 3. Fairtrade products are used by an appropriate number of local work places (offices, shops, B&Bs etc.) and community organisations (faith communities, schools, universities etc).
 4. Attract media coverage and popular support for the campaign - this will also enable local businesses and organisations to benefit from their involvement.
 5. A local steering group is convened to ensure progress and continued commitment to the campaign. This should ideally include a council representative, campaigners, and people representing the area’s schools, churches and businesses.

Full information is available at <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/Get-Involved/In-your-community/Towns>

Benefits

- 4.**
- 4.1** It is expected that the achievement of Fairtrade Town status for Fort William would raise the awareness of Fairtrade with consumers and make them more likely to choose Fairtrade products. The FWFTSG, made up of volunteers, has committed to supporting the status on an ongoing basis, and will both hold and support local events each year to ensure that awareness of both Fairtrade and fair trade is encouraged, including during Fairtrade Fortnight, Fashion Revolution Week, and World Fair Trade Organization International Fairtrade Day, all of which support fair trade in various ways.
- 4.2** This activity will promote equality and fair working practices in the community, in addition to raising awareness of environmental issues such as the overuse of plastics, due to the direct links of fair trade with sustainable development. It will promote Fort William as a progressive town to both visitors and locals, and it will create the opportunity for numerous events and initiatives that could involve a broad spectrum of the community supporting a global cause that has direct links to many local issues,

including gender equality/equal pay, zero hours contracts, the living wage, etc.

- 4.3** A number of businesses in the local area are already supportive of fair trade, stocking either products that are FAIRTRADE marked or which have even shorter, more clearly defined, ethical supply chains. The FWFTSG has contacted over 25 organisations to ascertain which FAIRTRADE Mark items they use or serve, and seven have confirmed that they currently serve or sell FAIRTRADE Mark products. The FWFTSG will continue to contact businesses, schools, and other organisations in an effort to garner further support.

5. Request from Fort William Fairtrade Team Steering Group

- 5.1** The Fort William Fairtrade Team Steering Group requests that the Lochaber Committee supports the improvement of the economic and social conditions of impoverished workers and farmers in developing nations, who often work for poor wages in unsuitable conditions in order to provide our community with items that we consume on a regular basis. This support would be demonstrated by the following actions:

- i) Supporting the principles of Fairtrade by promoting awareness of the Fort William Fairtrade Town initiative when appropriate;
- ii) by serving Fairtrade tea and coffee at its meetings and;
- iii) by nominating a Council officer to liaise with the Fort William Fairtrade Team.

6. Implications

- 6.1** Resource – there may be a very small increase in costs as typically Fairtrade product costs can be higher. As supermarket ‘own brand’ teas and coffees have been used to date, the differential will be marginally greater than if branded goods had been used. With regard to staffing implications re liaison with the FWFTSG, this can be accommodated within the ward management role.

Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural); - this initiative is likely to have a positive impact by raising awareness of Fairtrade, potentially increasing sales and thereby helping to reduce global poverty.

Climate Change/Carbon Clever – organisations which produce Fairtrade products maximise the use of raw materials from sustainably managed sources, where possible use renewable technologies and minimise their impact on the environment. These actions will help to mitigate against climate change.

Legal or Risk implications – there are no legal or risk implications

Designation: Head of Policy and Reform

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Background Papers: None