

**LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT**  
**EXECUTIVE – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2004**

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

FOR DECISION

NAME OF WARD: ALL

<b>Report Title : SUPPORTING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF FAIRTRADE BOROUGH STATUS FOR BRENT</b>
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Forward Plan Ref. ES-04/05-270

**1.0 SUMMARY**

1.1 This report outlines the Fairtrade Foundation initiative to promote the sale and purchase of fair trade products at a local level. It outlines the work undertaken to date through the voluntary Brent Fairtrade Network and seeks a corporate commitment to support such action, initially by ensuring fair trade tea and coffee products are served at Council and Executive meetings.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 Members of the Executive are recommended to:

- (a) Note the work undertaken to date by the Brent Fairtrade Network in support of achieving Fairtrade Borough status for Brent.
- (b) Agree that at future Council and Executive meetings fair trade tea and coffee products will be served.
- (c) Agree that where appropriate, and within existing resources and relevant legislation, Officers investigate and seek to implement opportunities for taking further action in support of the uptake of fair trade products (as detailed in paragraphs 7.10 - 7.12).

**3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 National data on the price differential between fair trade and non-fair trade tea and coffee has shown that the former are not necessarily more expensive<sup>1</sup>. Any financial implications will depend on the specific products chosen and the volumes purchased. Nevertheless, to supply such products at the limited number of Council and Executive meetings will not entail any significant additional costs and can be contained within existing budgets.

**4.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no staffing implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

## **5.0 DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Whilst there are no direct local diversity implications arising from this report, the Fairtrade Foundation and the purchasing of fair trade products enables “better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. By requiring companies to pay above market prices [to producers], fair trade addresses the injustices of conventional trade, which traditionally discriminates against the poorest, weakest producers”<sup>2</sup>.

## **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Fair trade is aimed at helping producers and workers in developing countries, including helping them achieve a fair price for their products on the international market. The Fairtrade Foundation is the UK body which awards a certified consumer label to identify items which are considered by them to meet agreed standards of fair trade. There are other certified bodies and marks used in other countries (see paragraphs 7.2 – 7.3 below).
- 6.2 In making purchases of goods, including tea and coffee supplies, the Council is subject to a number of statutory requirements, in particular the European Procurement Regulations, the Local Government Act 1999 (Best Value) and section 17 of the Local Government Act 1988 (exclusion of non-commercial considerations in local authority contracts).
- 6.3 The very limited additional cost that may be incurred in implementing the specific proposals in this report concerning coffee and tea supplies for Council and Executive meetings is considered to be de minimus for the purposes of these statutory requirements, although officers should ensure that cost and quality issues are properly taken into account when purchasing these products. However, it will be important that in developing any further initiatives in this area the implications of the statutory requirements are carefully considered by officers with support from Legal Services.

## **7.0 DETAIL**

### Introduction

- 7.1 Fair trade is trade which promotes sustainable development by improving market access for disadvantaged producers. It seeks to overcome poverty and provide decent livelihoods for producers through a partnership between all those involved in the trading process; producers/workers, traders and consumers.
- 7.2 To enable consumers to make informed decisions on a range of products a number of certified ‘marks’ or ‘labels’ have emerged which producers can use under license providing they sign a legal agreement committing them to certain fair trade standards. To this end, the Fairtrade Foundation’s ‘Fairtrade Mark’ is the label used in the UK to denote fair trade goods.
- 7.3 Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International (FLO) is the umbrella organisation uniting the national initiatives including the Fairtrade Foundation. FLO acts as a certification body, setting fair trade standards, and monitoring the producers to ensure that they meet the standards and that individual producers are benefiting from the fair trade arrangements.

### Fairtrade Towns Initiative

- 7.4 In addition to product certification, the Fairtrade Foundation, through its 'Fairtrade Towns Initiative', encourages local action to promote the sale and purchase of fair trade goods at a local level<sup>3</sup>. This initiative began in 1999 and in the UK there are now over 70 authority areas confirmed as having Fairtrade Town/Borough/City status, with a further 200 or more working towards meeting the necessary criteria laid down. In London, the boroughs of Croydon, Camden and Lambeth have achieved Fairtrade Borough status whilst most other boroughs are in the process of taking the initial steps necessary to reach this grade<sup>4</sup>.
- 7.5 To achieve Fairtrade Borough status the area must realise five goals set down by the Fairtrade Foundation. These are:
- The local council resolves to support Fairtrade, and agrees to serve Fairtrade coffee and tea 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 cafés/catering establishments.
  - Fairtrade products are used by a number of local work places and community organisations (estate agents, hairdressers, 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 Town status.
- 7.6 Target numbers of retail outlets are based on the local population size. Other voluntary actions are also detailed as being recommended but not required to achieve a declaration.
- 7.7 Furthermore, in March 2003, the Mayor of London launched the Fairtrade London campaign to make London a Fairtrade City, primarily by encouraging boroughs to take action themselves. A steering group comprising representatives of the GLA, Association of London Government, key London businesses, Borough representatives, community organisations and campaigners has now been established to monitor and sustain this move towards achieving Fairtrade City status for London.

### Brent Fairtrade Network

- 7.8 At the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2003, the then new mayor Cllr Peter Lemmon expressed a desire as part of his mayoral term to progress Fairtrade issues in Brent. To that end a voluntary grouping was established and in April 2004 the Brent Fairtrade Network (BFN) was launched to work towards achieving Fairtrade Borough status for Brent.
- 7.9 The BFN has subsequently become constituted as a local community group and has formed sub-groups to promote action in areas such as schools, churches, shops and at community events. Council officers attend BFN meetings where appropriate to inform the group on internal Council action and keep abreast of external community-based action.

### Brent Council and Fairtrade

- 7.10 To support the work of the BFN and to meet the first goal set out in paragraph 7.5 above it is proposed that the Executive agrees to serve Fairtrade coffee and tea at future Council and Executive meetings. This has been agreed in principle by the Corporate Support service unit who will also investigate providing such products as options on the refreshments ordering list for Town Hall meeting room users and in the Town Hall canteen area.

- 7.11 Other Council buildings will be encouraged to adopt a similar approach for their own meeting room refreshments services and Environment Services has already committed itself to phasing this preference in over the next few months.
- 7.12 As the availability and cost of these and other Fairtrade products improves it is also suggested that, where possible and appropriate, including taking account of legislative requirements, Officers investigate further opportunities for supporting and integrating Fairtrade issues within:
- Staff 'tea clubs' through awareness raising and promotional initiatives
  - Other Committees and Council-led meetings e.g. ACFs,
  - Other service areas e.g. schools, sports centres, libraries etc through both promotional work and integration within new procurement arrangements
- 7.13 Annually, progress can be reported and celebrated as part of any Brent contributions towards Fairtrade Fortnight, which next year runs from 1-13 March 2005.
- 7.14 Although it will be dependent on the success of the BFN in meeting the remaining goals of the Fairtrade Borough initiative it is hoped such an accreditation status can be achieved towards the end of 2005.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Details of Documents:

1. Fairtrade Foundation  
[www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)
2. Fairtrade and Local Authorities: An Oxfam Handbook  
[www.fairtrade.org.uk/downloads/pdf/local\\_authority\\_guide.pdf](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/downloads/pdf/local_authority_guide.pdf)
3. Fairtrade Towns Initiative: Goals and Action Guide  
[www.fairtrade.org.uk/downloads/pdf/fairtrade-towns.pdf](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/downloads/pdf/fairtrade-towns.pdf)
4. London Fairtrade Boroughs:  
[www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/community-and-living/your-local-community/camden-fairtrade-network](http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/community-and-living/your-local-community/camden-fairtrade-network)  
[www.croydon.gov.uk/environment/NRQP/Food/Fairtrade/FairtradeNetwork](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/environment/NRQP/Food/Fairtrade/FairtradeNetwork)

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