

# Local authorities and Fairtrade

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## All you need to know

Welcome to your one stop guide to Fairtrade and local authorities, including top tips, inspirational case studies, links to other useful resources and practical information about Fairtrade and public procurement guidelines. We hope you find it helpful!

### In This Guide...

#### Why support Fairtrade?

How local authorities benefit by supporting Fairtrade.



#### So what can you do?

Ways in which any local authority can take action to support Fairtrade – from Fairtrade tea and coffee at council meetings to being an active part of a Fairtrade Town campaign!



#### What about...?

- Answers to common questions
- Find out more
- Useful links and further reading



# Local authorities and Fairtrade

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## Why support Fairtrade?

**Fairtrade products are now sold in 22 countries across five continents and with recent switches to Fairtrade by iconic companies such as Cadbury and Tate & Lyle, Fairtrade is increasingly becoming part of how we shop and do business.**

In the UK over 4,500 products have been licensed to carry the FAIRTRADE Mark and market sales are growing at over 40% a year. According to a 2009 TNS Omnibus Study, 72% of British adults now recognise the FAIRTRADE Mark. Driving this growth is a unique movement involving producer groups in developing countries, non-governmental organisations, businesses, shoppers, supporters, community groups and local authorities.

### Think global, act local

Driving the movement and making international development a local issue are over 450 Fairtrade Towns (including cities, boroughs, counties, villages, islands and zones) in the UK and more than 700 across 18 countries worldwide.

### A Fairtrade Town is any community that:

- supports Fairtrade and deepens understanding of the benefits Fairtrade brings
- takes action by choosing Fairtrade products whenever possible and encourages others to do likewise
- achieves and continues to take action on the five Fairtrade Town goals set by the Fairtrade Foundation

*I think a Fairtrade town is like a stick of rock with Fairtrade running right through it. Fairtrade should automatically be a part of everything, a natural and integral ingredient of every event, every newsletter and every shopping basket.*

Joanne Golton  
Garstang Market  
Town Initiative

A Fairtrade Town campaign involves all sectors of the community. Goal 1 relates specifically to the council as the community leader and asks that the:

Local Council passes a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and agrees to serve Fairtrade products (for example, in meetings, offices and canteens).

Your local authority can be a part of this rapidly growing movement, take practical action on commitments around sustainable development and work in partnership with the local community by doing its bit to support Fairtrade. This guide explains how!



### What is Fairtrade?

**Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in the South.**

### Fairtrade in the UK

Fair Trade has been supported in Britain by organizations such as Oxfam and Traidcraft for over 60 years. The Fairtrade Foundation was founded in 1994 as the UK national labelling organisation responsible for licensing use of the FAIRTRADE Mark and promoting Fairtrade and the FAIRTRADE Mark in this country. The FAIRTRADE Mark is an international certification label awarded to products that meet specific independent standards set by the international Fairtrade Labelling Organization (FLO).



## Why support Fairtrade?

*Developing the Fairtrade Campaign in Sunderland has provided the opportunity to further develop our community network. Starting with existing contacts we quickly found that we had created an entirely new network involving schools, faith groups, businesses, academia and the wider public sector, talking to people who had never been involved in such community activity before.*

*Peter Chapman,  
Assistant Chief Executive  
Sunderland City Council*



### Why have over 450 local authorities already chosen to support Fairtrade?

- **To demonstrate a commitment to sustainable development**

Every Local Authority in the UK has a commitment to promote sustainable development in their area. Supporting Fairtrade is one, simple way to take action towards more sustainable developmental patterns, giving producers in developing countries the trade terms they need to create a more sustainable future through our everyday procurement choices. The 'Best Value and Sustainability Checklist', devised by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives<sup>1</sup> (SOLACE) to test the sustainability of local councils, includes the use of Fairtrade products by the council as one of the points under 'Sending the Right Signals'.

- **To create opportunities to work with and engage the community**

With over 450 Fairtrade Towns in the UK by the end of 2009 and 200 campaign groups working towards Fairtrade status, more and more people are becoming involved in Fairtrade. Fairtrade provides an opportunity for the local authority to work in genuine partnership with a range of community organisations and representatives, opening new channels of communication and creating real community engagement.

- **To demonstrate effective citizenship and real leadership**

Responding to local support for Fairtrade and joining the community as a partner towards a common goal shows that the council is in touch with the community and shares their priorities. If Fairtrade supporters across the community haven't already come together, the council can demonstrate leadership by getting the ball rolling and bringing them together.

<sup>1</sup> [www.solace.org.uk](http://www.solace.org.uk)



## Why support Fairtrade?

### • To promote civic pride

Working towards, and becoming a Fairtrade Town can provide a positive increase in civic pride and opportunities for shared action and celebration. With over 700 Fairtrade Towns worldwide, including cities such as London, Rome, Brussels, Copenhagen and San Francisco, how can you afford not to get involved?

### • To benefit the local community

By linking Fairtrade to other issues and creating opportunities for active citizenship, a Fairtrade Town campaign often brings wider benefits locally. Many Fairtrade Town groups have linked the aim of a better deal for farmers in developing countries with a better deal for local farmers. Fairtrade encourages people to think about where their food comes from, the people behind the product, and this awareness can bring about benefits for local producers too. A Fairtrade campaign also celebrates the actions of local businesses, promotes local traders and creates a focus on the Town Centre. Beyond benefits to local businesses, Melton Mowbray Town Council backed the local Fairtrade group to reopen a disused building as a Fairtrade Café which now offers work placements to young people with learning difficulties.

### • To provide a positive impact on recruitment and motivation of employees

Many organisations that switch to Fairtrade report the move being popular with staff, visitors and other stakeholders<sup>2</sup>. With great tasting Fairtrade products, more and more people welcome the opportunity to make a difference to communities overseas simply through their morning coffee or afternoon tea.

### • To make a real difference to the lives of producers

The public sector is the single largest purchaser in the UK with an annual procurement budget of £160bn<sup>3</sup>. By choosing Fairtrade options when possible the public sector can make a significant difference to the lives of producers and their families overseas through their procurement policies alone. Over 450 local authorities have already ensured that their purchase power leads to real benefits for producers overseas. This has contributed to an estimated 7.5 million people – farmers, workers and their families – across 58 developing countries currently benefitting from international sales of Fairtrade products. Imagine the difference it would make if **all** public sector procurement was Fairtrade!



## TOP TIP

*Why not hold a cheese and wine party using local cheeses and Fairtrade wines? Perhaps you could arrange a meeting between a local cheese maker and a Fairtrade wine producer. You may be surprised at how much they have in common!*

*Promoting Fairtrade in the borough gives local people the opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of over seven million people in the developing world. It's a great way to make a big difference through simple gestures like buying a banana or enjoying a bar of chocolate.*

*Cllr. Peter Thompson  
Leader of Hounslow Council  
February 2008*



<sup>2</sup>Buying into Fairtrade. Procurement in the private and public sector [www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources/reports\\_and\\_briefing\\_papers](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources/reports_and_briefing_papers)

<sup>3</sup>Buying a better world: sustainable public procurement [www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/files](http://www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/files) .

## What can your authority do?

**Using Fairtrade products is a good start but there is so much more visionary local authorities can do. The council is well placed to use its position, influence, contacts and imagination to take Fairtrade from strength to strength in the area.**

### Start simply by:

- Using Fairtrade tea and coffee at council meetings (and for staff in offices canteens where applicable) is a simple, positive action that any local authority can take. These days Fairtrade hot drinks are readily available from most national suppliers, often at no extra cost.

### Work with the community on a Fairtrade Town campaign by:

- Passing a resolution making a formal commitment to serve Fairtrade products whenever possible and stating their support for Fairtrade.
- Nominating at least one council representative (member or officer) to join the Fairtrade Town steering group to ensure there is good ongoing communication between the campaign and the local authority.

### Go the extra Fairtrade mile by:

- Promoting awareness of Fairtrade across the constituency through council publications and website.
- Promoting awareness of Fairtrade to staff and partners (internally) through posters, emails, tastings and events during Fairtrade Fortnight and throughout the year.
- Extending the range of Fairtrade products used, for example biscuits, fresh fruit, wine and flowers at presentation ceremonies and even Fairtrade cotton uniforms.
- Supporting the work of the steering group through funding, providing rooms for meetings or officer time. Bristol City Council has appointed a part time Fairtrade coordinator to support the campaign.
- Working with other public bodies (schools, hospitals, police) to encourage them to switch to Fairtrade. Many councils have hosted competitions for a Fairtrade-themed poster with local schools as a way to get young people and teachers involved.
- Erecting street signs declaring Fairtrade Town status.
- Working with the Fairtrade steering group to develop an action plan to achieve Fairtrade Town and develop activity thereon.
- Working with other local authorities in the area to develop a joint Fairtrade procurement strategy.



## TOP TIP

*Leeds City Council developed a regional contract framework through which all local authorities in Yorkshire and the Humberside could incorporate Fairtrade into a joint purchasing policy. This made it cheaper and easier for all authorities in the region to switch to Fairtrade. See [www.fairtradeyorkshire.org](http://www.fairtradeyorkshire.org)*



## Best practice

### Brampton Parish Council

As well as passing a resolution that included a commitment to use Fairtrade products at meetings, functions and events, the Parish Council have supported the Brampton Fairtrade Town campaign in the following ways:

- Two Parish Councillors have joined the Fairtrade Town Group.
- The Parish Council provides free use of the Moot Hall and all other groups hiring the Moot Hall are asked to use/serve Fairtrade refreshments.
- Articles about Fairtrade appear in the Parish Council News, which is delivered to all Brampton households.
- For Brampton in Bloom 2007 a circular bed was planted with flowers representing Fairtrade, by children from Brampton Junior and Brampton Infant School and assisted by Fairtrade Town Group members. Following this success the bed continues to be planted with summer and winter bedding; the design and colour scheme reflecting the FAIRTRADE Mark. The flower bed has even been commended by Brampton in Bloom. The Chair of Brampton Parish Council invited the Fairtrade Town Group to work with the local community to produce something which would celebrate Brampton as a Fairtrade Town. A local artist was commissioned, by the Fairtrade Town Group, to work with junior school children to design and produce a mosaic which depicts the children's vision of the meaning of Fairtrade. The Parish Council paid for all materials and artist costs. The mosaic still hangs in the Brampton Moot Hall where it was first unveiled by Dr Daleep Mukarji, Director of Christian Aid in October 2007.
- The council also erected road signs highlighting Brampton's status as a Fairtrade Town at two entrances to the town. The project was supported by the Mayor of Brampton and Carlisle, the appointed Fairtrade Champion for Carlisle City Council and a Brampton Councillor.
- The Brampton Community Website features Brampton Fairtrade Group information and activities.



## TOP TIP

*Waltham Forest Borough Council worked with the steering group to create a Fairtrade Action Plan to ensure the good work continued after declaring Fairtrade Borough status. The plan details how the council can support progress around each of the five goals, in addition to developing internal procurement and promotion strategies, ranging from how council officers could help engage more businesses and faith groups to how Waltham Forest can promote Fairtrade on the council website.*

[www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/environment/fairtrade](http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/environment/fairtrade)



## Answers to common questions

### Is it legal for a local authority to support Fairtrade?

Yes! Nottingham County Council was the first Local Authority in the UK to pass a resolution in support of Fairtrade in October 1993 committing to using Fairtrade tea and coffee. Since then hundreds of Town, Parish, Borough, City and County Councils have all passed a similar resolution. Care should be taken when wording any invitations to tender or contracts and comprehensive advice is available from the European Observatory on Fair Trade Public Procurement (see useful links). Many local authorities in other European countries avoid specifying one trademark, yet clearly define what they consider to be a fairly traded product by referring to the definition of Fair Trade adopted by the European Parliament (A6-0207/2006)<sup>4</sup>.

*Sustainable procurement – in short using procurement to support wider social, economic and environmental objectives, in ways that offer real long-term benefits, is how the public sector should be spending taxpayers' money. Anything less means that today's taxpayer and the future citizen are both being short-changed.*

*Sir Neville Simms  
Foreword to governmental report, Procuring for the Future*

### Will it cost more to use Fairtrade products and support a campaign?

Not necessarily! Research by one London council reported that they could actually save £6,200 a year by switching to Fairtrade tea and coffee in vending machines. As availability and volume of Fairtrade increases, costs are increasingly comparative with conventional products – in some cases, cheaper.

It's also possible for a local authority to support a Fairtrade Town campaign without incurring any costs. While some councils do choose to dedicate significant officer support to support the Fairtrade campaign, this is not a requirement and a great deal can be achieved through innovation, partnership and creativity. Other councils back their commitment with resource as part of their sustainable development or local community and economic development programmes. When the council in the Fairtrade Borough of Hounslow passed their resolution they not only agreed that an officers time be allocated to the Fairtrade campaign, but also approved annual funding of £3,000 per annum to cover the cost of publicity, free samples, meetings and events.

<sup>4</sup>Resolution on Fair Trade and Development endorsing Fair Trade principles as defined by key Fair Trade organisations and asking the European Commission (EC) and European Union Member States to support Fair Trade in a wide number of policy areas. [www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?objRefId=124435&language=MT](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?objRefId=124435&language=MT)

## TOP TIP



**Good support does not have to cost anything.**

Newcastle City Council put the following message on the back of their parking tickets:

**Do you sell Fairtrade goods in Newcastle?**

*If you are interested in advertising your shop please contact (the council) for more information.*



## Answers to common questions

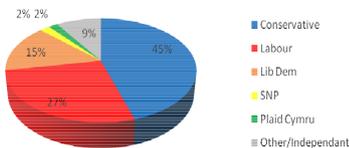
### Does my party support Fairtrade?

Yes! Fairtrade is not party political and has the support of all major political parties, at all levels. Fairtrade Town status has been awarded to places with every possible variation of political composition. Take a look at the figures for the proportion of political parties holding the majority in local authorities when a resolution supporting Fairtrade has been passed (see inset). They pretty much reflect the political make up of local authorities throughout the UK. As you can see everyone's doing it!

*Fairtrade in the UK demonstrates the power of communities at its best. Ordinary citizens are achieving extraordinary change for people working hard in developing countries, and I pay tribute to their sense of justice and their vision of a fairer world.*

*Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown  
Prime Minister*

Political parties that hold the local authority majority at the time a Fairtrade Resolution is passed



*As Conservatives, we believe in using our purchasing power to send a signal to the market. In the Mitchell family, for example, we only buy free-range eggs. And by buying fair trade goods, people can send a clear signal to producers about the conditions in which they want their food and other goods to be produced.*

*Andrew Mitchell MP Shadow Secretary of State for International Development*

*The Fairtrade movement has a hugely important role to play. As Liberal Democrats we understand that powerful movements for social change come from the bottom up. The choices that people and communities make in their everyday lives can send a powerful signal of their determination to see a fairer, more just and sustainable world.*

*Simon Hughes MP Liberal Democrat MP for North Southwark and Bermondsey*

### Does Fairtrade distort the free market?

No! Fairtrade is not about offering a fixed price, but a fair minimum price that covers the cost of production and provides a sustainable livelihood. The Fairtrade price will fluctuate in line with the world market price, but will never fall below a level that provides a living income.

Giving a fair price does not make the farmer produce more. Logic and experience suggest that the opposite is true – low prices push poorer farming communities into producing more simply to make ends meet. Most small farmers just want to do what they do best, which is to grow small amounts of good quality produce, but they need a fair deal from trade in order to be able to do this.

A reliable income and the additional social premium mean that farmers can also invest in their business and even diversify into other products, building a better future for themselves and their families.

*Why are we always asked to produce cheap cocoa in large quantities which then forces the price down further? Is quality and method of production not important to them (the buyers)?*

*Staff member  
Kwadaso Agricultural College, Ghana  
July 2001*

## Answers to common questions

### Is it the job of a local authority to support Fairtrade?

Yes! The general public and the public sector has the right to choose and Fairtrade Towns are about giving them the choice to buy and consume Fairtrade products in their local stores and cafés. Fairtrade Towns require community involvement and no local authority can achieve Fairtrade Town status on their own. A local Fairtrade campaign does give authorities an opportunity to take the lead on an accessible, cross-sector initiative that contributes to wider action towards more sustainable development.

Fairtrade is not a commercial enterprise, nor does it support one commercial enterprise above another. It is a concept that aims to make trade work for development and is open to any company that wants to become a Fairtrade licensee.



*Support for Fairtrade by us in Thanet is recognition that we are willing to assist and help others who are in need.*

*We know we have our own issues with deprivation but people here have still recognised there are others worse off than themselves and have shown they have the capacity to do something about it to help.*

*Local traders have also supported the campaign and it is also good for business to back Fairtrade. That has not been the prime motivation for the business community but they have reaped the benefits.*

*Cllr. Sandy Ezekiel  
Leader of Thanet Council  
February 2009*

### Charity begins at home, doesn't it?

Yes, of course we should look after people close to home, but that does not have to be at the expense of caring for others further afield. In an increasingly inter-connected world there is growing awareness of how our choices impact on others and Fairtrade is one way everyone can bring about positive change through everyday choices. Empowering organisations and individuals and bringing a variety of groups together can also bring local benefits especially when linked with issues such as local produce, or by promoting local businesses, or combining Fairtrade with youth projects to bring studies around global citizenship to life.

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## Useful links and further support

### Fairtrade and Fairtrade Towns

**Fairtrade Foundation** [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)

**Products and suppliers** [www.fairtrade.org.uk/products](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/products)

**Fairtrade Towns** [www.fairtrade.org.uk/towns](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/towns) (includes the Fairtrade Town Action Guide, council resolution example and a guide to Fairtrade in public and private sector procurement)

**International Fairtrade Towns** [www.fairtradetowns.org](http://www.fairtradetowns.org)

### Fairtrade and public sector procurement

**Buy Fair** [www.buyfair.org](http://www.buyfair.org)

**European Observatory on Fair Trade Public Sector Procurement**  
[www.european-fair-trade-association.org/observatory](http://www.european-fair-trade-association.org/observatory)

### Contact us

For general enquires contact the Fairtrade Foundation at:

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For support and information on Fairtrade Town campaigns contact:

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