

Cross-Party Group on Fair Trade

7 December 7pm online

Minute

Present

MSPs

Colin Smyth MSP

John Mason MSP

Invited guests

Ross Isdale

Non-MSP Group Members

Sandra Burt

Andy Ashcroft, Koolskools and Scottish Fair Trade Forum

Martin Rhodes, Scottish Fair Trade Forum

Liz Manson, Dumfries and Galloway Fair Trade Group

Richard McCready, Co-operative Party

Sally Romilly, Dundee Fair Trade Group

Sion Pickering, University of Edinburgh

Ian Fowell, Linlithgow Fair Trade Group

Jeanette McIvor, Queensferry Fair Trade Group

Charles Sim, East Ayrshire Fair Trade Group and Scottish Fair Trade Forum

Kiera Williams, Scottish Fair Trade Forum

Apologies

Russel Salton, City of Edinburgh Fair Trade Steering Group

Shirley Brown

Agenda item 1

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2022 were approved.

Agenda item 2

A presentation was given by Martin Rhodes, Chief Executive of the Scottish Fair Trade Forum on its research report: "Report on Fair Trade Expenditure and Policy Commitments in the Public Sector in Scotland".

He talked about the importance of public procurement because of the scale of the expenditure and its potential to contribute to the commitment to being a Fair Trade Nation and other sustainability commitments.

He set out the scope of the report. It covers the policies and expenditure on Fair Trade over the last three financial years of public bodies in Scotland. He pointed out some of the issues in collecting and collating the data. This included that the data was reported in different ways by public bodies and that some struggled to collate the data requested because their systems did not record the data in ways that made it easy to extract. It was also clear that public bodies were defining Fair Trade differently in their recording and collating of the data.

He highlighted the report's recommendations that a clear definition of Fair Trade is needed in legislation or guidance until it can be agreed in legislation; that there needs to be better mechanisms for recording and collating data on expenditure; and there should be learning from best practice in relation to policies.

There was a discussion that covered 'non-traditional/non-food' Fair Trade products such as IT equipment, mobile phones, textiles and wine. This led to a discussion about getting the definition of Fair Trade right so that it is robust but also able to recognise new products that might not have traditional Fair Trade verification. It was also noted that only a few suppliers provide a large proportion of contracts.

Agenda item 3

Any other business – it was noted that a parliamentary reception was being organised to mark 10 years of Scotland being a Fair Trade Nation in 2023

The meeting closed at 8.05pm