

Land at Common Road, Merthyr Tydfil

Community Consultation Statement

McDonald's Restaurants Limited

07 October 2025

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of McDonald's Restaurant Limited ('the applicant'). It accompanies a full planning and advertisement consent application in relation to the proposed development of land at Common Road, Penygarnddu Business Park, Merthyr Tydfil.

1.2 The application seeks full planning permission for:

"Demolition of existing buildings and development of a restaurant with drive-thru facility (Use Class A3) including access and cycle/footpath, servicing, car parking, hard and soft landscaping, advertisement and other associated works."

1.3 A more detailed summary of the application site and surrounding area, as well as a description of the proposed development, is provided in the accompanying Planning Statement.

Scope of Report

1.4 There is a requirement in Wales for 'major developments' to be subject to a statutory pre-application consultation under the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act). The proposed development does not fall within the definition of a major development as defined in Article 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (DMPWO) and because of this, there is no statutory requirement for consultation to be held ahead of the submission of this planning application.

1.5 However, the benefits of engaging with the public throughout the planning process is recognised by Welsh Government. Planning Policy Wales (PPW), the national policy guidance for planning, notes at page 17 that effective engagement with those affected by or that have an interest in the development concerned is the best way of delivering developments which promote mental and physical wellbeing and contribute to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) objectives.

1.6 McDonald's is keen to ensure that the Welsh Government's objectives for community consultation are embraced in respect of its current proposals. This Statement therefore sets out the pre-application consultation that has been undertaken in relation to the proposal, together with the feedback received, and the response to this feedback.

1.7 This Statement should be read alongside the full suite of planning application documents, as identified in the Planning Statement.

2.0 **Process of engagement**

Pre-application discussions

- 2.1 The applicant submitted a request for pre-application advice from the Council (ref: PA/24/0020), with a meeting held on 4 September 2024.
- 2.2 The pre-application submission was informed by a feasibility site layout (ref: 13888_AWE_2685_Foo2B); pre-application traffic note (ADL Traffic and Highways Engineering); and a detailed planning cover letter.

Figure 2.1 Pre App Feasibility Plan



- 2.3 Formal written advice was received on 13 September 2024. Officer feedback on the proposal is summarised below:
- a The Council confirmed that the proposed development is located within the settlement boundary, and as such, the principle of development is acceptable subject to compliance with relevant planning policies and material considerations. However, given the site's location outside designated town and local centres, the proposal will need to be supported by a robust sequential assessment. While the 'need' test does not apply to A3 uses, it must be demonstrated that the development would not harm the vitality or viability of existing centres.
 - b In terms of design and visual impact, the Council agreed that site is situated within a mixed-use commercial area, where buildings vary in scale and appearance. Although no elevational drawings were submitted at the pre-application stage, the

Council acknowledged that McDonald's restaurants typically follow a standardised design. Nonetheless, detailed drawings, including sections, will be required to assess the relationship with adjacent buildings, particularly the Lidl store located at a higher level. Boundary treatments will also need careful consideration to minimise visual impacts and ensure compatibility with neighbouring uses, including the Council depot. The accompanying Landscape and Visual Appraisal in tandem with the elevational drawings provides this detail.

- c The Council noted that while the site is predominantly commercial, there are residential properties to the east and north east. The proposed drive-thru use may intensify activity compared to the site's previous industrial use, particularly if operating hours extend into the night. Potential impacts from noise, light, and cooking odours will need to be addressed and appropriate mitigation measures should be incorporated. The application is supported by a ventilation and extraction report which addresses these amenity concerns and confirms there will be no unacceptable impact on the adjacent residential properties.
- d Highway access is proposed via Common Road, an existing adopted road. The Council's Engineering and Highways Department reviewed the pre-application traffic note and raised several issues that will need to be addressed in the application submission. These include modifications to the access to accommodate delivery vehicles and ensuring safe circulation for customers. These are fully addressed in the Transport Assessment that accompanies this application.
- e Ecological matters were also highlighted. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Green Infrastructure Statement, and Lighting Strategy accompany this application. These documents demonstrate that the proposal accords with Planning Policy Wales Chapter 6 and the Local Development Plan.

Engagement with Merthyr Council and Councillors

- 2.4 Prior to the formal engagement process commencing, a meeting was held with two Councillors that represent the Dowlais and Pant ward, David Hughes and Declan Sammon. The proposal was met with a positive response from both councillors, who expressed strong support for its potential to generate employment and attract investment to the local area. They noted that the proposed use would complement the existing retail offering at this location and acknowledged its capacity to alleviate pressure on the two existing McDonald's restaurants in Merthyr Tydfil. While concerns were raised regarding anti-social behaviour and littering, these were addressed following a review of McDonald's operational policies designed to mitigate such issues.
- 2.5 A further invitation to meet with Councillors within the Dowlais and Pant Ward was issued ahead of launching the consultation website. The invitations were also sent to Members in the neighbouring ward of Twyn Carno, and relevant Leaders and Cabinet Members at Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council. Invitations were also shared with appropriate MPs and MS'. A full list of invites is included in Appendix 1.
- 2.6 Councillors David Hughes and Carl Cuss and Dawn Bowden MS and Natasha Asghar MS acknowledged the notification of consultation. Councillor Declan Sammon responded and

did not raise any major concerns with the proposal but requested some extension to the litter picking area.

Online Consultation Event

- 2.7 A consultation website was hosted to provide members of the public with details of the proposals and provide an opportunity to make comments.
- 2.8 A newsletter was distributed to 1,148 addresses within the local area (identified by Figure 2.2 below), advertising the consultation.

Figure 2.2 Consultation Mailing Area



- 2.9 The newsletter included details of the scheme and proposals, as well as inviting recipients to leave their feedback via a dedicated phone number or email address. Feedback forms were also made available on the website. A copy of the newsletter is provided in Appendix 2.
- 2.10 The consultation website launched on 1 September 2025 and ran for a two-week period until 15 September 2025. This allowed a period of 14 days for people to access the survey on the consultation website.
- 2.11 This website (<https://mcdonaldsconsultation.co.uk/merthyr/>) provided further information on the site context for the development, including the site location, details of the proposals and a summary of the benefits that would result from the development.

Press release

- 2.12 A press release was prepared to further advertise the proposals and the consultation to local residents. A copy is included at Appendix 3.
- 2.13 This received coverage in the South Wales Argus on 2nd September and Wales Online on 4th September.

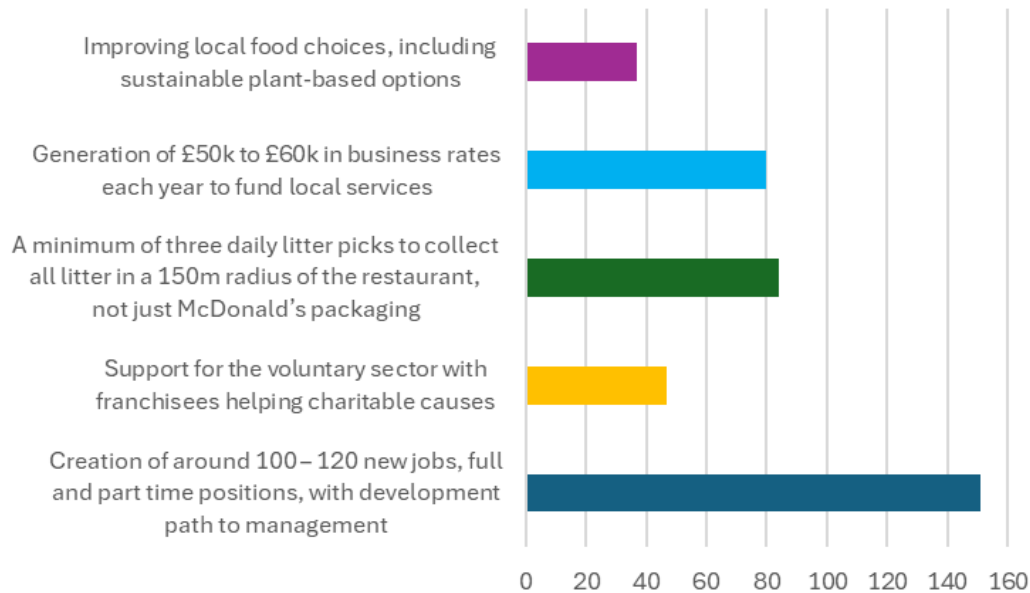
Advertisements

- 2.14 Paid advertisements notified residents within the wider community, outside of the newsletter distribution area, of the plans and the opportunity to provide feedback.
- 2.15 These advertisements on Meta platforms, Facebook and Instagram, were geographically targeted to reach an audience within 8km of the proposed development site.
- 2.16 The advertisement ran for the duration of the consultation period. The advertisement received a 'reach' (number of people viewing the post) of 22,960 users, with 1,508 users clicking on the link to the dedicated consultation survey.

3.0 Findings from the Public Consultation

- 3.1 The feedback survey included four questions which provided opportunity to leave a quantitative response and a further two 'open' question allowing respondents to leave more detailed comments.
- 3.2 A total of 222 responses were received during the consultation period, as follows:
- The online consultation website (13 forms);
 - Consultation survey portal (206 forms); and,
 - Email (3 responses).
- 3.3 Question 1 asked respondents whether they support the McDonald's proposals at this location. 220 responses were received to this question, of which:
- 67.3% of respondents indicated their support for the proposal in principle;
 - A further 10.5% indicated support with reservations;
 - 19.1% of respondents were not in support; and,
 - 3.2% were unsure.
- 3.4 This represents a very level of support for the principle of the use.
- 3.5 Question 2 asked respondents if they considered a new McDonald's would deliver benefits for the local area. 218 responses were received to this question, of which:
- 70.2% of respondents considered that the proposal would deliver benefits for the local area;
 - 21.6% did not agree with this; and,
 - 8.3% were unsure.
- 3.6 The third question asked respondents to rank the local benefits set to be delivered by this development. Multiple choice responses were provided with respondents able to give more than one answer. As demonstrated in Figure 3.3, the job opportunities were considered to be the most welcome benefit whilst benefits such as improving local food choices and charitable donations were less highly regarded.

Figure 3.1 Q.3: The proposed McDonald's will deliver a number of local benefits. Which of the following do you welcome the most?



3.7 In respect of design:

- 62.7% of respondents agreed that the proposal would be well designed;
- 21.4% of respondents were unsure; and,
- Just 15.9% of respondents did not consider the proposed development to be well designed.

3.8 Respondents were also provided with an opportunity to leave further comments on the design proposals, under Question 5. A total of ten comments were left, though three of these did not relate to design.

- Two of the responses agreed that the design was well considered, particularly in respect of the drive-thru lane and landscaping.
- The remaining responses made suggestions regarding higher provision of disabled parking, introducing a separate parking area for delivery drivers, introducing pavement access from the cycle path running adjacent to the A465 slip road, and clarification on how access to the site will work in respect of proximity to the existing furniture store, The ComfortZone.

3.9 Finally, respondents were asked to provide further 'open' responses, in addition to the set questions. A total of 105 additional comments were left.

- Reservations expressed in the comments were largely related to a perceived oversaturation of McDonald's in Merthyr Tydfil, environmental degradation due to litter, and to negative health implications of fast food.
- Concerns were also raised regarding the site's proximity to a nearby meat factory and landfill, and the associated odours.

- However, many respondents countered these concerns and stated that they welcomed the convenience of a new drive-thru, particularly highlighting the potential for job creation.

4.0 **Responding to feedback**

- 4.1 This section provides a response to the comments of support, specific requests and areas of concern raised by respondents.

Support: Job Creation

- 4.2 Respondents recognised the potential of the scheme to create jobs for younger people, in particular.

“Fully support. Jobs and additional income to the area.”

“Good to see new jobs created in the town.”

- 4.3 As set out in the Economic Operator Statement submitted with the application, the proposal will create over 80 direct FTE jobs when operational and an additional 105 direct FTE jobs during construction.

- 4.4 Jobs at McDonald’s are particularly well suited to younger people and those looking to return to work.

Oversaturation of McDonalds

- 4.5 A number of respondents questioned whether the new restaurant would lead to an over saturation of McDonalds in Merthyr Tydfil, as follows:

“I think for a town of this average size, a further restaurant is not required.”

“There is no need for a 3rd McDonald’s in Merthyr. The proposed site does not have the footfall that would warrant an additional site and the closest restaurant is less than 10 minutes away by car.”

- 4.6 McDonald’s wishes to ensure that all restaurants within its portfolio offer a high level of service and has identified that there is capacity in the area for a new drive thru restaurant in Merthyr Tydfil.

- 4.7 As set out in the Economic Operator Statement, the eastern suburbs of Merthyr Tydfil are underserved whilst the two existing McDonalds drive thru restaurants in the western suburbs are trading strongly, despite having sub-optimal layouts and parking provision. Therefore, McDonald’s do not agree that a new restaurant in this location will create an over saturation. In any event, this is not considered to be a material planning consideration given that an assessment of need is not required for the proposed development.

Litter

- 4.8 A number of respondents identified potential issues relating to littering, as follows:

“I also have grave concerns on the amount of litter I already experience in my local area. My area is one mile from both current premises, how will you ensure that litter from your restaurants will not further impact the environment.”

“As a volunteer litter picker I’m dismayed by the amount of litter from McDonald’s in a lane near me which is 10 miles from the nearest outlet.”

- 4.9 McDonald's considers littering an offence and does not condone customers who choose to dispose of its packaging irresponsibly. Litter bins are provided outside all restaurants and all McDonald's packaging carries anti-littering symbols to encourage customers to dispose of litter responsibly. Anti-littering signage is displayed within restaurants and car parks, and support is given to Keep Wales Tidy.
- 4.10 Furthermore, McDonald's is committed to tackling litter in as many different ways as possible. It is company policy to conduct a minimum of three daily litter patrols, whereby employees pick up not only McDonald's packaging, but also any other litter that may have been discarded in a 150m vicinity of a restaurant. This may be expanded to suit local needs and McDonald's will be pleased to discuss this further during the course of the application.

Healthy Eating

- 4.11 A number of respondents raised the relationship between the proposals, and the promotion of healthy eating as follows:
- "Merthyr already has the highest rates of childhood obesity in Wales, as well as alarming levels of type 2 diabetes—conditions strongly linked to poor nutrition and limited access to healthy, affordable food. The area is already saturated with fast-food outlets, including an existing McDonald's and numerous takeaways, offering very few genuinely healthy alternatives for local residents."*
- "We already have an obesity crisis and this will compound the issue."*
- 4.12 McDonald's has a diverse menu and offers a range of healthier alternatives, including main meals under 600kcal and main meals and breakfast items under 400kcal. Healthier meals are publicised on the instore menu and via delivery providers including Deliveroo and Uber Eats. Calory values are shown next to all menu items to allow customers to make an informed decision. McDonald's has introduced more salad options, as well as fruit and vegetable bags, orange juice, mineral water and organic semi-skimmed milk.
- 4.13 McDonald's nutrition strategy in the UK has been in place for over 15 years. During this time, McDonald's has reformulated over 200 of its ingredients and invested heavily in broadening its menu of balanced healthy options. Currently, 92% of the core food and drink menu is under 500 calories. Around 70% of items in the McDonald's Happy Meal menu is non-high in fat, salt and sugar (non-HFSS), according to the UK Government's Nutrient Profiling Model.
- 4.14 McDonald's also seeks to encourage young people to have active lifestyles and has supported community football through their longstanding partnerships with the four UK football associations. McDonald's now has over 600 Fun Football Centres that provide hundreds of free football sessions designed with their UKFA partners and delivered by a team of fully qualified coaches across the UK.
- 4.15 McDonald's operates a wide-ranging menu and provides customers with information on nutrition and calories to help customers make an informed choice, as part of a balanced diet.

Other matters

- i Some comments mentioned the proximity to the nearby meat factory and landfill, raising issue with the smell from the meat factory, in particular.

The applicant is satisfied that there is sufficient distance between the application site and the meat factory such that odours will not affect the proposed restaurant.

- ii One respondent suggested that picnic benches are introduced at Top Pond for customers to enjoy their food there.

Unfortunately, Top Pond is not within the site boundary and so the applicant will not be in a position to introduce seating in that location.

- iii An operator of the furniture retail store (ComfortZone) on the opposite side of Valley Road provided comments. Overall, the operator supports the proposal due to its potential to bring business to the area. However, concerns were raised regarding the likelihood of customers using the ComfortZone car park if there is no space at McDonald's (and for customers to eat in their car in this area), and the potential for this to affect parking for its own customers and to increase litter at the site. The operator also queried how access to the site would work given its proximity to the store on the opposite side of Valley Road.

McDonald's welcomes ComfortZone's comments and would be pleased to discuss the proposals further. In respect of parking, the proposal includes appropriate signage that clearly indicates the parking area available to McDonald's customers. The Transport Statement provides appropriate analysis on the likely demand for parking based on equivalent restaurants, and concludes that the proposed provision is acceptable.

Matters of litter are covered in detail above.

The proposed access point is suitably distanced from the ComfortZone store access such that no issues are anticipated in this respect. The Transport Statement deals with access into the site in further detail.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 This report has summarised the consultation undertaken in relation to the proposed development of a McDonald's drive-thru restaurant at land at Common Road, Penygarnddu Business Park, Merthyr Tydfil.
- 5.2 To inform the local community of the proposals and to invite feedback, an online consultation was launched, as advertised through the distribution of a newsletter and through a press release. The newsletter, website and engagement event provided information on the proposals and allowed people to make comments via an online comment form.
- 5.3 Newsletters were distributed to over 1,000 local addresses to inform the wider community of the development proposals and direct them towards the consultation website.
- 5.4 From a total of 222 feedback forms, 78% of respondents were in support of the proposal and 70% of respondents recognised that it would deliver benefits to the local community.
- 5.5 Comments on specific issues related to concerns surrounding over saturation, littering and healthy eating – each of which has been addressed above. However, a large number of positive comments were received – particularly in relation to the need for a McDonald's restaurant and the employment benefits arising from the scheme.

Appendix 1 Cllrs invited to discuss the proposals

	Name	Title / Role
Merthyr Tydfil Council	Brent Carter	Leader of the Council
	David Jones	Deputy Leader of the Council with Portfolio for Climate Change and Communities
	Jamie Scriven	Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration, Leisure & Tourism
	David Hughes	Ward Member for Dowlais and Pant
	Paula Layton	Ward Member for Dowlais and Pant
	Declan Sammon	Ward Member for Dowlais and Pant
Caerphilly County Borough Council	Carl Cuss	Neighbouring Ward Member for Twyn Carno
Member of Parliament	Gerald Jones	Member of Parliament for Merthyr and Aberdare
Member of the Senedd	Dawn Bowden	Member of the Senedd for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney
	Delyth Jewell	Regional Member of Senedd South Wales East
	Laura Anne Jones	Regional Member of Senedd South Wales East
	Natasha Asghar	Regional Member of Senedd South Wales East
	Peredur Owen Griffiths	Regional Member of Senedd South Wales East

Appendix 2 Community newsletter

A new McDonald's restaurant for Merthyr Tydfil



An indicative CGI of the proposals

Welcome

McDonald's is excited to announce plans to transform a currently underused site in Penygarnddu Business Park, Merthyr Tydfil, into a new restaurant and drive-thru, revitalising this convenient location.

A modern restaurant would improve local food options, as well as provide a boost to the local economy, whilst complementing the other businesses located within the industrial estate. The layout of the site has been carefully designed for the operation of a restaurant and drive-thru.

We are pleased to launch a 14-day community consultation on these plans to provide local residents with the opportunity to have their say on McDonald's proposals for Merthyr Tydfil.

Have your say

McDonald's invites you to have your say on the revised proposals online between **Monday 1st September** and **Monday 15th September**.

You can access our online website to have your say via **McDonaldsConsultation.co.uk/Merthyr**. Alternatively, you can provide feedback via:

 **wales@consultation-online.co.uk**

 **0800 066 8942**

 **McDonald's Merthyr, c/o Cavendish Consulting, WeWork, 55 Colmore Row, Birmingham, B3 2AA**

Our proposals include:



A new McDonald's drive-thru restaurant, including indoor and outdoor seating for customers.



A multi-million-pound investment into the area, creating jobs for local people and supporting economic growth.



32 on-site car parking spaces for customers, including 2 accessible spaces, 2 electric vehicle charging points, and a grill bay, as well as 2 motorcycle bays.



Six cycle spaces to promote sustainable transport options, as well as the delivery of a new cycle path to connect to existing networks.



A carefully planned internal queuing system to regulate traffic within the site.



Recycling and waste facilities across the site to encourage disposal of rubbish and reduce littering.



Attractive landscaping and new tree planting incorporated around the site, enhancing the appearance of this site.



Supporting local community groups by investing in local charities and childrens sports programmes.

Benefits



A new McDonald's in Merthyr Tydfil would create up to **110 new full- and part-time jobs** and bring **major investment to the local economy**, with excellent training and career progression opportunities.



High quality **landscaping and boundary improvements** will be implemented to enhance the appearance of the site and provide visual buffers.



The restaurant would help to **transform an underused site**, enhancing the appearance of the local area.



The site is **well connected**, accessible from the A465, by bus, walking and cycling, with a new cycle path linking to the existing network to boost accessibility.

Design and Layout

The layout of the site has been carefully designed for the operation of a restaurant and drive-thru, minimising the queue lengths where possible. Internally, the design concept is to create a bright, lively, modern and contemporary feel for customers, providing a comfortable dining experience.

Conscious of our proximity to other businesses, a high-quality landscaping plan would be implemented, involving the planting of trees, hedges, and shrubs. The planting of native flora around the site would enhance the site's appearance to neighbours, passersby, and visitors, as well as creating a visual noise buffer for our neighbours and providing habitats for animals.

McDonald's proposals, if approved, would revitalise the site next to Lidl on Penygarnddu Business Park, contributing to the local economy.



Contact Us

Our community engagement team is on hand to answer any of your questions, and they can be contacted by:



Email via wales@consultation-online.co.uk



Freephone via **0800 066 8942** (09:00-17:30 on weekdays)

Please ensure your feedback is submitted by midnight on **Monday 15 September 2025**.

Appendix 4 Extracts of Paid Advertisement



McDonald's

Sponsored · 

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Share your thoughts on the new restaurant and drive-thru proposal for Merthyr Tydfil via our survey below.

Do you want a



>

near you?

mcdonaldsmerthyr.whatmatt...

McDonald's Merthyr Tydfil

Learn more

 Like

 Comment

 Share

Appendix 3 Press release



HAVE YOUR SAY ON PROPOSALS FOR NEW MCDONALD'S

McDonald's has announced plans for a new restaurant in Merthyr Tydfil, conveniently located off the Heads of the Valley Road on land in the Penygarnddu Business Park.

A public consultation has been launched inviting local residents to have their say on the plans prior to submission of a planning application to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. The consultation will run from Tuesday 26th August to Tuesday 9th September.

The proposed development comprises of a modern freestanding single-storey McDonald's restaurant and accompanying drive-thru lane, car parking, and other associated works, including customer order displays. McDonald's proposals would also include 32 parking spaces, with two accessible bays, two electric vehicle charging points, and a grill bay, as well as two motorcycle spaces and six cycle spaces.

The plans would provide a significant economic boost to the local area, creating over 100 new jobs across a range of full and part-time positions, and generating approximately £60,000 in business rates every year to help fund vital local services.

Philip Isherwood, Senior Acquisitions Manager at McDonald's, said:

"Our plans for transforming an underused site in Merthyr Tydfil into a vibrant new McDonald's restaurant and drive-thru promise to bring new opportunities to the area. This redevelopment represents a fantastic opportunity to breathe new life into a convenient location, creating a well-connected destination that serves residents and visitors alike."

"The project will generate up to 110 new jobs for Merthyr Tydfil, offering market-leading career progression and development opportunities. We are eager to hear the views of the community and local businesses to ensure our plans align with their needs. We encourage everyone to visit our online portal and share their feedback; we're very much looking forward to hearing from you."

Recognising the importance of community consultation, McDonald's has launched an online consultation where further detail is available. The views of residents and nearby businesses will be invaluable in informing McDonald's plans for a new store. The website can be accessed at McDonaldsConsultation.co.uk/Merthyr/.

The consultation period will close at midnight on Tuesday 9th September 2025.

—Ends—

Notes to the editor

McDonalds has more than 1,450 restaurants across the UK and Ireland, employing around 170,000 people. Opportunities for progression, training and apprenticeships are at the heart of McDonald's' offer to the local jobs market. With over £43million invested in staff training every year and 700 apprentices currently employed, McDonald's are a market leader for investment in our people.

Birmingham
0121 713 1530
birmingham@lichfields.uk

Edinburgh
0131 285 0670
edinburgh@lichfields.uk

Manchester
0161 837 6130
manchester@lichfields.uk

Bristol
0117 403 1980
bristol@lichfields.uk

Leeds
0113 397 1397
leeds@lichfields.uk

Newcastle
0191 261 5685
newcastle@lichfields.uk

Cardiff
029 2043 5880
cardiff@lichfields.uk

London
020 7837 4477
london@lichfields.uk

Thames Valley
0118 334 1920
thamesvalley@lichfields.uk

@LichfieldsUK

lichfields.uk