

From : Carol Fossick – 6 Mallard Road Royston SG8 5DG

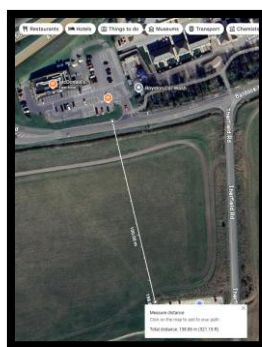
Dear Planning Control

26/00739/FP: McDonalds Restaurants Ltd , Baldock Road, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9NT
OBJECTION

I write in objection to this application. I agree with the objection of Mr Nash – this is a problem in need of a solution. Rather than make a bad situation worse it is the duty of NHC and its planning staff to step up and take action as other district councils are clearly able, and willing, to do. This is not a problem that NHC cannot address – it is simply one that NHC to date has failed to see and failed to address. I hope this time NHC will be guided by the voices of local residents and the evidence we are supplying to NHC in support of what we say.

I regularly walk the area around this restaurant; I am shocked by the litter that I am finding there. Worse litter is often left on the ground and then can be seen blowing around the land opposite which I understand is a SSSI site.

In fact, there is a carpark about 150m away (see screen shot of the car park location) which I visit regularly. I have attached (**see Attachment 2**) some of my own photos of the mainly McDonalds litter which I have seen there in the last few months.



Given the litter problem I think NHC and this Applicant should mitigate the harm being caused by this business operation to local residents and the nearby SSSI site.

(1) Need for a litter Management Plan

It is clear that one method of mitigation would be by way of a litter management plan as Mr Nash, another objector, has suggested. These litter management plans exist in other places: I am not a planning expert but I could easily find examples set up, and signed off in, for example :
Prudhoe ; Shaw Cross Dewsbury and Emerson Green.



It would be disappointing, and somewhat dismissive of NHC ¹ stated environmental goals if its planning staff did not take this step to protect both :

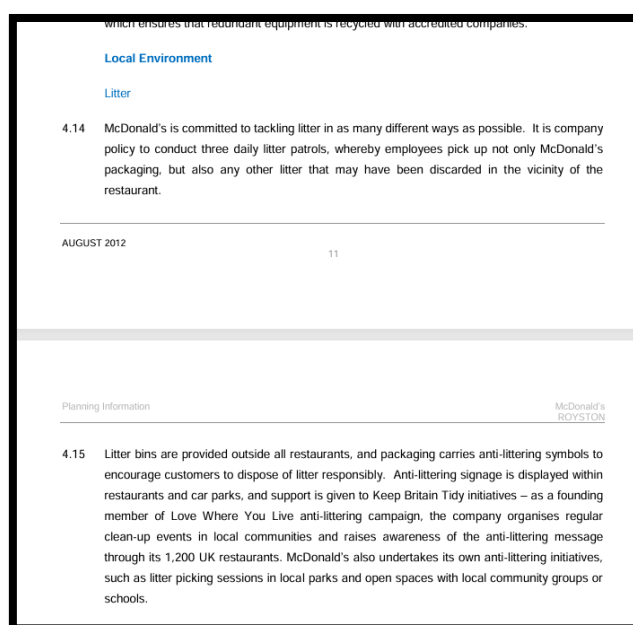
- (a) the green spaces used by and near to local residents ; and
- (b) a nationally important SSSI site.

If Prudhoe, Dewsbury and Emerson Green are worth protecting (and I am sure they are !) I would hope Therfield Heath SSSI was equally worthy to NHC. I think NHC should accept that the use of a litter mitigation plan is therefore quite standard, and here is necessary, and indeed aligns with the current DEFRA advice for 'Food on the go'. ² I shall be referring to this useful DEFRA advice the contents of which I am sure are well known to planners.

Like Mr Nash I too have read the original 2012 planning permission for this fast-food restaurant outlet and I hope NHC staff and councillors re-read it too. Information available at the time of that 2012 application included the following points :-

- It was McDonalds' company policy to conduct 3 daily litter patrols whereby employees have to pick up not only McDonald's packaging but also litter that may be discarded in the vicinity of the restaurant
- McDonalds undertake regular clean ups in the local community
- McDonalds supports litter picking in local parks and open spaces with community groups or schools.

A fellow objector has made these points and here is the material where all these promises can be found.



¹ Given its stated desire to work against the climate and ecological emergencies it itself has identified and declared

² [Microsoft Word - Food on the Go - Final to litho.doc](#)

Have McDonalds shared within its application the written proof of the 3 daily visits that it promised in 2012 on the public portal - along with the times when these occur and how over time it has adapted and responded to littering issues. I could not see them. Will McDonalds Royston share with NHC and councillors the **regular clean ups** it has organised in the local community and the **litter picking it does in local parks**. I am a keen litter picker, having liaised with NHC to 'adopt' various areas in Royston, I am not aware of any such events and I am a member of several local litter picking groups and organisations.

I suggest NHC have a look at the photos being shown to it regarding litter. Mr Nash has sent in some – I attach some from my own personal stash as Attachment 2.

I would seem as if the promised thrice daily picks are not sufficient for this highly popular fast-food outlet. If parking is reduced - and take away opportunities increased- perhaps more than 3 litter picks will be needed before these planning changes should be passed? This seems to be a sensible step – the measures promised in 2012 are not working and so more, not less, must be done.

However, it is not just the promise of litter picking which is needed. It is important to monitor and adapt how litter is distributed and where the 'hot spots' are located. Mitigation **and** monitoring and measurement are all required. In my own quick internet search I could find examples of the proactive measures which other councils are putting into place to ensure that their streets, towns and open spaces are kept litter free.

Working in three pilot locations – Sheffield, Maidstone and Taunton Deane – McDonald's Restaurants Ltd and the local authorities developed new ways of working together to tackle littering associated with fast food outlets ³. Is this something that NHC feels it could do? I am sure it could. Local environmental groups and local councillors I am sure would be happy to help NHC staff work out where litter control measures are needed or a new bin could help.

I think NHC could learn a lot from Maidstone Borough Council who seem to have really engaged with this joint working approach: This is the wording that they shared online in the DEFRA booklet at page 61:

“A comparison of the results of BV199 Cleanliness surveys before and towards the end of the trial showed a marked improvement. There has been a 65% improvement in levels of litter in the Town Centre area. This can be attributed to improved litter bin location; shared cleaning schedules between those outlets carrying out litter picking to avoid duplication; and the publicity campaign. As the campaign is ongoing and sustainable, it is hoped that further improvements can be made.” ⁴

The DEFRA code of conduct booklet at page 65 supplies useful tips on how these measures, and indeed perhaps **the 65% litter reduction** seen in Maidstone, can be replicated elsewhere. I think local residents would be very disappointed if NHC did not try to obtain this sort of result for its residents and council tax payers. I am sure North Hertfordshire Council will read the suggestions promoted by DEFRA with enthusiasm and interest and be minded to use the DEFRA research and information to develop a litter management plan for this area. One is so badly needed and there can be no reason why not to.

I can see from the DEFRA guidance, and the links provided, that such a positive and collaborative approach is offered elsewhere – in places where District Council staff and perhaps planning officers are proactive in putting in place measure which protect the local environment.

³ [Microsoft Word - Food on the Go - Final to litho.doc](#)

⁴ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c7b0eed915d48c241006c/pb10243-fastfoodcop.pdf>

I would think it is right, at the very least, to obtain a formal sign up to the DEFRA code of conduct for drive thrus (see page 19 and Attachment 1) ; surely the work of a key government department like DEFRA is worthy of NHC's attention and respect. Then NHC can ensure that plans are monitored and followed over time - allowing for improvements to be made.

So building on the work I can see that other councils have put in to their DEFRA sign up - and the various other litter management policies - I suggest NHC consider the following in any litter management plan :

(2) Litter Patrols from McDonalds

I think these are needed over a slightly wider 'zone' than a standard 100m/150m given that a lot of litter seems to end up in a local car park on the SSSI which is 158m away from McDonalds. Perhaps a 200m zone is needed. With staff expected to litter pick **3 times or more daily 7 days a week** to the extent of this zone and to pick up, as McDonalds suggested in 2012, all the litter found and for that litter to be correctly disposed of by McDonalds Royston via its own waste management stream.

(3) Bin Placement

Bins form a key part of many of these litter management plans. Surely NHC and HCC can host some additional bins on their land so that these new bins can be incorporated into a litter management plan. I think these could become almost cost neutral if sponsorship is obtained. DEFRA guidance is very positive here.

"Sponsoring litter bins is a good way for businesses to advertise locally, and create a good impression of their approach to litter and waste. Businesses operating as part of a chain could consider working with nearby branches to provide more bins in the area between their premises, to increase advertising potential"

(4) Branding & Signage

Prominent "anti-litter" logos on packaging and signs in drive-thrus seems to nudge customers toward responsible disposal. I think McDonalds as a company does this on the packaging – I am not sure I have seen much, if any, major signage on the site and perhaps some could be added to the new seating area and at each drive through bay now that work may be done to the building exterior.

(5) SSSI Signage

I believe I wrote to NHC on 20th February 2026 (Ms Fossick – EIR - IRCM-00000275) following a rather disappointing visit to see the SSSI signs.

I am most concerned that these signs are nowhere to be seen on this new site layout. Remind me – were they not to be maintained in perpetuity as per condition 5 of the 2012 permission? Let us hope that perhaps the vision is for new signs and new locations to be agreed within this new site design (in perpetuity – or perhaps for longer than 14 years) as a condition to this new planning permission.

Perhaps this time McDonalds or NHC staff could consider children- and those in wheelchairs or with limited vision - who may struggle to see the current raised sign, facing in the sun, where the words are in about font 12 and you have to read the sign from 2m away, standing behind a hedge and just in front of a car park bay as cars pass by.

As the planning permission said, the signs are there to “*enhance the general public's understanding of and appreciation for the **outstanding countryside in the locality of the development***” (my emphasis).

Would you be surprised if I said that standing in car park being beeped at for blocking the route of exiting cars and being unable to read a dirty and ill positioned sign did little to enhance my understanding of the outstanding countryside.

(6) More visible anti littering messaging

I think it is really valuable to try to push for much more visible anti littering messaging – bearing in mind that every discarded item of food wrapping is in effect an ‘anti’ advertisement for the supplying company. This really brings home how important it is to reduce the litter in this area. I turn again to the wonderful work that DEFRA have done here and page 58 of the booklet ⁵ where it says :

“Discarded food and its wrappings was identified by the public as one of the top two worst litter items. Fast food litter is seen as messy, dirty, linked with vermin and difficult to pick up, therefore more offensive than other types of littering.”

Source : Public Behavioural Study into Littering 2001: ENCAMS 2001. www.encams.org

(7) Monitoring

Clearly these measures need to be agreed by NHC’s qualified and proactive planning department ; put into place by McDonalds, then monitored and adapted by NHC and McDonalds to take account of the changing habits of people. In time it may be that the litter issue may start to self-resolve by better messaging to customers and a change in society. But until then it is critical that NHC step up to the same extent, if not more, that other councils have done.

NHC must be the linchpin in :

- a collaborative and engaging litter management plan that demands the highest standards from a fast-food restaurant that it permitted to be built opposite a nationally important SSSI site;
- setting standards which draws on current guidance;
- responding to the current litter problem now to demonstrate that NHC’s ecological and climate emergency is not just words on paper but is action on the ground.

I look forward to seeing a strong and robust Litter Management Plan ; sufficient planning conditions and controls on signs (including the SSSI signs) which NHC know is needed here.

Your sincerely,

Carol Fossick

See overleaf for Attachment 1- the DEFRA code of conduct

See Attachment 2 for photos of litter which I have personally seen and photographed.

⁵ [Microsoft Word - Food on the Go - Final to litho.doc](#)

Voluntary Code of Practice – Primary Outlets (Drive Thrus)

Primary Outlet: *An outlet whose main or sole purpose is to sell food on the go to customers, e.g. pizzeria, chip shop, burger bar.*

Drive Thrus: *Dominated by international franchises of burger and chicken providers, but there are also smaller local and regional drive thrus.*

Agreed Actions:

	Business	Supporting Agency/Agencies
Public Education		
Packaging		
Waste		
Litter		

Recommendations:

See
section:

Changing Public Behaviour

- Display anti-littering posters and messages inside stores, on bins and at drive thru exits E1
- Support local community improvement and regeneration activities E2

Packaging

- Minimise packaging in production P1
- Consider segregation of waste trials P2
- Display the (minimum size) Tidyman symbol P3

Waste

- Comply with the Duty of Care on Waste Regulations W1

Litter

- Complete a litter management checklist annually L1
- In agreement with supporting agencies, carry out and record an appropriate number of litter picks per day within 100 metres of shop frontage L3
- Share litter pick charts with Local Authority or Supporting Agency L4
- Liaise with the Local Authority to identify hotspot areas for drive thru litter and carry out cleansing in these areas on a frequency to be negotiated. L5
- Consider the sponsorship of litter bins in areas where drive thru litter is proved to be deposited L6
- Negotiate the provision of litter bins with local authorities if appropriate L6

Signed
(on behalf of Business)

Date

Signed
(on behalf of Supporting Agency/Agencies)

Date

Attachment 2

Just a few examples of some litter I have photographed.

November 2025 ⇓



8th February 2026 ⇓



March 2026 ⇓



December 2025 ⇓



22nd February 2026 ⇓



February 2026 ⇓



February 2026 ⇓



March 2026 ⇓



February 2026 ⇓ just one visit and I collected a whole bag of litter

