

17 May 2019

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re. Letter of support for McDonald's application to extend trading hours in Leicester Square

Heart of London Business Alliance represents over 600 businesses and property owners across the West End. Our purpose is to support the commercial well-being of our members and ensure their trading environment remains integral to London's offering as a place for people to visit, live, work and do business.

Mr Abi-Gerges, Managing Director, Capital Arches Group Ltd is an approachable, diligent and valuable board member for Heart of London. His contribution as a director demonstrates his commitment to the business district and his advice is always centred on what is best for the wider community.

Heart of London strives for the West End to maintain its vibrant, high-quality and well managed evening and night-time economy and are proud of its Purple Flag status, which has been achieved in partnership with the business community, Westminster City Council and the Metropolitan Police. McDonald's Restaurants, as part of the Capital Arches Group, has been instrumental in this partnership and the success of the area.

Mr Abi-Gerges is integral to our evening and night-time strategy group which supported the introduction the first Best Bar None scheme in Westminster. In 2018, McDonald's entered two restaurants, and both achieved Gold Standard.

The team at McDonald's actively engage with Heart of London and attend all operational meetings, including a monthly Pub Watch which brings together key stakeholders including the Metropolitan Police, Westminster City Council and licenced venues.

Moreover, Mr Abi-Gerges has been at the forefront of community initiatives and has a proven track record of promoting and developing employees. Through our Recruit London scheme, McDonald's has provided jobs for Westminster residents, particularly, the long-term unemployed. It offers quality training programmes enabling social mobility and is widely recognised as a professional and responsible employer.

The company's commitment to addressing homelessness and rough sleeping has resulted in the creation of Homelesswise, a training programme for businesses to better understand the issue and to learn how play a part in tackling it.

On a more practical level, McDonald's is one of only a few premises in the area, selling food and offering toilet facilities throughout the early hours of the morning. Basic, yet essential amenities for serves workers including the blue light services, security staff, cleaning team, carers etc.

Mr Abi-Gerges is a respected member of our business district as a result of his support for the wider community, his operational due diligence and responsible venue management. I am confident he would replicate this success on a 24-hour basis.

Yours faithfully,



Ros Morgan
Chief Executive