



WORKING WITH
YOU FOR A BETTER
ROYSTON



Royston First
Business Improvement District

Business Plan

2024 - 2029

roystonfirst.com

What is a BID?

Contents

- 3 What is a BID and Additional Income
- 4 Introduction
- 5 Why Vote 'Yes'
- 6 Investment in Five Key Areas
- 7 Welcome and Security
- 8 Our Events
- 10 Marketing and Promotion
- 11 Business Support
- 12 Town Investment
- 14 The BID Area
- 16 Budget Forecast
- 17 Management and Governance
- 18 BID Levy
- 19 Timetable
- 20 BID Ballot Key Facts
- 21 BID Rules
- 22 FAQs
- 23 What a 'Yes' Vote Means, What a 'No' Vote Means

Royston First Business Improvement District

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a formal arrangement between businesses and other organisations in a designated area that come together to fund, manage and ultimately enhance the local trading environment for all businesses and other organisations within that area.

The business plan outlines our ambitions for Royston over the next five years and will be voted on by businesses and other organisations within the area and are in addition to the services already provided by the council.

All businesses and other organisations with a ratable value of £7,000 or more will be entitled to vote.

Additional Income

Although the vast majority of the BID income originates from levy payments from members, the organisation will continue to work hard to generate additional funds from other sources, including voluntary membership and sponsorship income.

Additional income allows the BID to deliver over and above the projects outlined in the business plan and add extra value for businesses and other organisations that can provide more return at no extra cost to them.

Voluntary Contributions

The BID, in its fourth term, will continue to encourage businesses and other organisations to become a BID member and take advantage of the membership benefits that are available. The minimum cost is £100 per annum, but the ratable value will be taken into consideration in arriving at an annual fee for each voluntary member.

BID Membership

Any mandatory BID levy payee or equivalent financial contributor can become a member of Royston First BID. This enables them to take part in the decision-making process as well as stand for and vote during Board of Director Elections.

Introduction

from the Chairman

David Smyth
Chairman of Royston First BID



As I reflect on the last five years of our third term, I feel immensely proud of what the BID has achieved and how we have continued to work with businesses and other organisations and local stakeholders to ensure Royston remains a vibrant environment for all to enjoy.

Like all towns and cities across the UK, Royston has experienced unparalleled challenges with the impact of the pandemic, the growth of online shopping, and now the cost-of-living crisis.

Covid-19 exemplified the value the BID offers in responding quickly to dramatic changes in our trading landscape. Our readiness to provide support during times of economic uncertainty hopefully gives you confidence.

The BID levy fund has allowed tangible support for a vast array of projects, and recently, we took the steps to employ a new BID Manager, Paul Brown, to engage with businesses and other organisations and our partners to ensure Royston continues to thrive.

As we look forward, there are many planned exciting projects to come. We have consulted with Royston First BID members, and developed a robust proposal and business plan for the next five years, ensuring that business owners' priorities and key challenges are addressed, and needs are met.

Throughout this document, we have identified several projects and initiatives that will remain in our next five-year term, as well as introducing new areas of support for businesses and other organisations.

It is important to be clear: **only a 'YES' vote by 30 November 2023 will ensure that we can continue projects and further improve Royston** through a vote to deliver a fourth five-year term. Without the BID, all the services provided will cease to exist.

I hope you will give the proposal your full support in November and allow Royston First BID to commit to another five years working with you for a better Royston.

Why Vote 'Yes'

Since starting as the new BID Manager, I have been really struck by the positive mindset of businesses and other organisations throughout the town. Royston has so much potential, and this new Business Plan is both bold and ambitious and exactly what the town needs to thrive over the next five years.



Paul Brown
BID Manager | Royston First BID

Royston First goes out of their way to support the town centre and as an independent shop, this is vital. The town trails, Christmas lights, and other events all help to showcase Royston as the amazing town it is.



Laura Whitford
Manager | No. 3



As a small local business that has recently moved from an 'at home business' to a shop, we have really appreciated the support of Royston First.



As we are not located on the high street, we have felt the benefit of being involved in the Town Trails to encourage families to find our shop. We also thought Independents Week was a fantastic initiative to help residents find out more about businesses and other organisations that are run by local people.

Thank you so much to Royston First for the warm welcome, we look forward to working with you more in the future!



Kelly Da Silva Fernandes
Owner | Kelly's Kitchen

Investment in Five Key Areas

A renewal of Royston First BID for a further five years will mean:

300 + businesses and other organisations will be supported and serviced by the BID

Over £1 million of investment for Royston

The continuation of existing popular projects, events, and promotions, and the introduction of new initiatives, as appropriate, to improve trading for our members.

What will we do in the fourth term of the BID, in addition to our current projects?

Town Investment

- Smart Radios - to help businesses secure workspaces
- New Industrial Estate Signage - to help deliveries
- Youth Employment Initiative to tackle anti-social behaviour and support youths

Events

- Royston First BID Business Awards

Welcome & Security

- ShopSafe App - to protect employees and customers
- Summer Decorations - to help make our town more vibrant

Business Support

- Fire Extinguisher and First Aid Training - to protect businesses and their employees
- Quarterly Networking Events - to increase networking opportunities

Marketing

- Digital Signage - to provide free advertising space



Welcome and Security

What we will continue to provide...

It is important that the town presents an attractive and positive first impression.

Royston First BID will continue to support several projects designed to achieve this, namely:

- 

Free After 3pm Parking and Parking Scratch Cards
- 

Hanging Baskets
- 

Enhanced Christmas Lights
- 

Christmas Lights Switch On
- 

Deep Street Cleaning and Pigeon Proofing
- 

Police Partnership

What will be new...

- 

Summer Decorations
- 

Digital Signage
- 

Shop Safe App
- 

Smart Radios



An example of how The Umbrella Trail could look in our High Street.

Our Events

Royston First BID Events

What we've achieved...

Royston First BID has delivered a number of first-class events and trails this term. Highlights include The Coronation of His Majesty The King, Independents Week, and Christmas Lights Switch On, along with the regular children's town trails. We will continue to work hard to ensure that events are both relevant and value-adding for our members.

What will be new...

We will be introducing The Royston First BID Business Awards to celebrate the achievements of businesses and other organisations in the town.

Some of the events we've delivered:



Coronation Celebration Day

To celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen Consort, Royston First BID held a celebratory day in Priory Memorial Gardens in May 2023.



Christmas Window Decorations

Each year, we commission an artist to decorate shopfront windows with colourful Christmassy designs to help make our town more vibrant.



Independents Week

We celebrated Royston's growing independent business community with our week-long campaign to highlight our town's premises-based independent businesses and other organisations.



Christmas Lights Switch On

For two years, we have organised the town's Christmas Lights Switch On event, and it's growing year after year!



Creative Royston Arts Festival

We are proud to support partner events, such as the annual Royston Arts Festival.



Children's Town Trails

Each quarter, we organise the popular themed children's trails in the town centre. A great opportunity to encourage the community to shop local while they are participating.



Royston Museum Events

We are proud to sponsor and work with Royston Museum so they can organise wonderful events for our town.



Royston Kite Festival

We sponsor the Royston Kite Festival, so that the Rotary Club's flagship event of the year can help to bring in thousands of visitors to the town.

Marketing and Promotion

What we will continue to provide...

Royston First BID will continue to showcase businesses and other organisations through both traditional and digital advertising.

This includes promotion through:



Royston Business Directory



Email Marketing



Royston Town and Royston First websites



1,300 Likes
1,500 Followers



434 Followers

Social Media

- Subsidised advertising in **The Listing Magazine** and **Royston Crow**.
- **Royston Information Centre**, with booklet resources such as the Town Trail, Clubs and Societies, the Accommodation Guide, and the Town Maps.
- **Large poster sites** in the town.
- **Facebook and WhatsApp** groups.

What will be new...

Advertising opportunities through new digital signage.



Business Support

What we will continue to provide...

Royston First BID will continue to act as a facilitator between our members and key stakeholders including the Town, District, and County Councils, along with the British BIDs network.

What will be new...

- First Aid and Fire Extinguisher Training
- Quarterly Networking Events



Town Investment

Town Centre

Digital Signage

Royston First BID will invest in relevant and enhanced signage to help visitors better navigate their way around the town, aimed at making the visitor experience more aesthetically pleasing.

In our fourth term, we are introducing new digital signage in the town, giving free marketing space to ALL businesses and improve visitor navigation

To introduce new digital signage in the town, giving all members access to free advertising to promote their goods and services.



Proposed new digital signage

Industrial Estate

While developing a successful Royston town centre is crucial to our local business economy, there are more relevant projects that are also beneficial to businesses on the industrial estate.

These are:

- Free After Three Parking
- Parking scratch cards for employees and customers
- Quarterly networking events
- Fire extinguisher and first aid training courses
- New signage in the form of lamppost banners to improve deliveries
- Police liaison on town matters
- Youth Employment initiative
- Job Vacancies website page
- Smart Radios to secure business premises



The BID Area

2024 - 2029

The map shows the new Royston First BID area that will contribute and benefit from the projects laid out in this business plan.

- BID Boundary

General Building

School

Sport & Leisure

Market Place

Industrial Estate
- Cemetery

Railway Station

Bus Station

Car Park

Toilets

Place of Interest

Underpass

BID Area Map

Businesses and other organisations located on the streets (part and whole) shown and listed are included in the BID. If you are unsure as to whether you are included and therefore will pay the BID levy, please contact a member of the BID Team.

The streets included are:

- Angel Pavement

• Baldock Road (North side)

• Baldock Street

• Barnack Grove

• Beverley Close

• Braeburn Walk

• Briary Lane

• Cedar Crescent

• Chilcourt

• Church Lane

• Copperfields

• Coronation Avenue

• Days Close

• Downlands

• Durham Way

• Evans Close

• Farrier Court

• Fish Hill

• George Lane

• Grantham Close

• Green Drift

• Greenfield

• Heath Avenue

• Heathfield

• High Street

• Jarman Way

• Jepps Lane

• John Street

• Kiln House Yard

• King Walk

• Kneesworth Street

• London Road (part)

• Lower King Street
- Mackerel Hall

• Mallard Road

• Market Hill

• Melbourn Street

• Middle Drift

• Minster Road

• Newark Close

• North Close

• Old North Road

• Orchard Road

• Ostler Court

• Palace Gardens

• Phillips Avenue

• Pightle Close

• Pippin Grove

• Princes Mews

• Priory Lane

• Rock Road

• South Close

• Stamford Court

• St Mary's Park

• Stuart Drive

• Sun Hill

• Tannery Close

• Tannery Drift

• The Green

• Upper King Street

• Weston Avenue

• Willowside Way

• York Way

• All roads associated with the Royston Gateway
- District can change between now and up to 42 days before ballot papers are sent out.

Budget Forecast

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Income from Levy	£229,000	£229,000	£229,000	£229,000	£229,000	£1,145,000
Additional Income	£5,000	£6,000	£7,000	£8,000	£9,000	£35,000
	£234,000	£235,000	£236,000	£237,000	£238,000	£1,180,000

Expenditure Project and Services

Welcome and Security	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£400,000
Marketing and Promotion	£20,000	£22,250	£23,500	£24,000	£25,000	£114,750
Business Support	£13,000	£13,000	£13,000	£13,000	£13,000	£65,000
Town Investment	£25,000	£19,900	£16,300	£13,450	£9,600	£84,250
Events	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£200,000
Contingency	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£100,000

Overheads

Staff and Training	£20,100	£22,100	£23,600	£25,100	£27,100	£118,000
Office and IT	£5,000	£6,000	£7,000	£8,000	£9,000	£35,000
Insurance	£2,500	£2,750	£3,000	£3,250	£3,500	£15,000
Professional fees	£5,000	£5,500	£6,000	£6,500	£7,000	£30,000
Contingency	£3,400	£3,500	£3,600	£3,700	£3,800	£18,000
	£234,000	£235,000	£236,000	£237,000	£238,000	£1,180,000

Surplus / Deficit	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
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The majority of BID levy income will seek to maintain management and overhead beneath the industry benchmark of 20% and aim to leverage voluntary income to enable 100% of BID member contributions to be allocated to work programmes which directly benefit business and the local area in general.

Management and Governance

Royston First BID is a private, not for profit company and since its inception in 2009, has been governed by a board of unpaid and voluntary directors, together with other key stakeholders.

The majority of the board and Chair will come from private-sector organisations to ensure the BID retains its strong business focus. The company will continue to be Limited by Guarantee, thus limiting the liability of Directors and businesses and other organisations.

The Board of Directors will be fully accountable to BID levy payers and would consist entirely of representatives from BID levy paying organisations who are senior figures within their parent organisations. The board will meet at least four times per year and receive both management and financial reports at each meeting. They will communicate regularly with levy-payers on key issues, particularly reporting progress against this Business Plan.

All BID levy payers will be entitled to attend BID board meetings by arrangement to raise any matter and can be nominated to fill vacant positions on the board. Royston First BID will follow the BID industry best practice in the following respects:

- Being subject to independent, accredited and external scrutiny to the production and submission of an annual report, annual accounts and submission of statutory financial and tax returns.
- Produce regular updates to BID levy payers
- Hold an Annual General Meeting

Proposed board composition

There are 10 directors as follows:

- 2 x Independent Town Centre
- 1 x National Town Centre
- 2 x Industrial Estate
- 1 x Professional Services
- 1 x Council
- 1 x Food, Drink, and Public Houses
- 1 x Community
- 1 x Entertainment, Leisure, and Accommodation



BID Levy

The cost of the levy for each business is a percentage of its Rateable Value and so is based on the size and location of the business premises'. Businesses and other organisations are encouraged to consider the levy as an investment of a relatively small sum which, when pooled, will provide over a £1 million investment to be spent entirely on Royston over the next five years.

What will you pay?

The percentage of RV will be set at 1.75% for those with an RV of 15k or more*. For businesses and organisations with an RV between £7,000 and £14,999 they will pay £100 per annum. This means that the BID would only cost businesses and other organisations a minimal amount per year. For example:

Business Size	Rateable Value	Levy
Micro	£7,000 - £14,999	£100
Small	£17,500	£306.25
Medium	£40,000	£700
Large	£100,000	£1,750

Contributions from a single hereditament with an RV of £1M+ will be capped at £17,500.
To calculate your proposed annual levy, simply multiply your Rateable Value by 0.0175.
If you are unsure about your Rateable Value, please contact the Valuation Office on **03000 501 501** or visit www.gov.uk/find-business-rates.

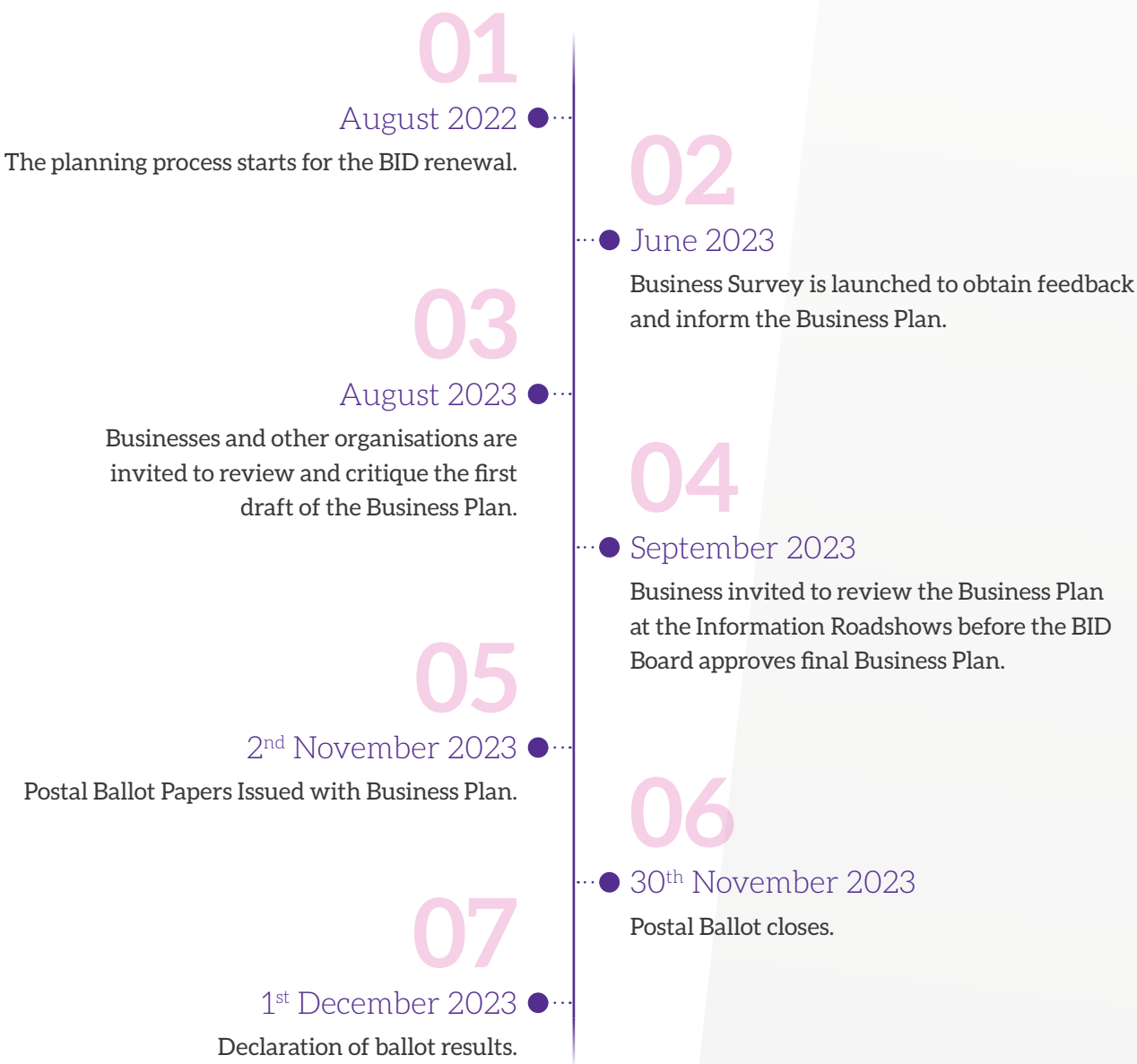
Timetable

Over a year in the making

Planning for the BID's renewal began in August 2022, and in June 2023, the Business Survey was launched to capture feedback from businesses and other organisations.

This information is being used to inform the first draft Business Plan.

The process is as follows:



BID Ballot

Key Facts

- All eligible businesses and other organisations can vote.
- The ballot will be conducted through an independent, confidential postal vote by Civica Election Services on behalf of North Herts Council, which is the responsible body as determined by the BID legislation.
- Each eligible business ratepayer will have one vote in respect of each hereditament within the BID area, provided they are listed on the National Non-Domestic Rates list for the defined area, as provided by North Herts Council.
- A proxy vote is available, and details will be sent out by Civica Election Services.
- Ballot papers will be posted no later than 2nd November 2023 and are to be returned no later than 5pm on 30th November 2023.
- For the BID to continue, two conditions **MUST** be met:
 - More than 50% of businesses and other organisations that vote must vote in favour of the BID.
 - Of the businesses and other organisations that vote, the 'yes' votes must represent more than 50% of the total rateable values of all votes cast.
- The results of the ballot will be declared on 1st December 2023.

Under the legislation, if the BID is approved, all the businesses and other organisations regardless of how or if they voted will be legally obliged to pay the levy amount as outlined on page 18, per annum, for five years.

Get in Touch

For more information, please contact us using the following details:

BID Manager | Paul Brown
t 01763 878242 m 07300 214860
manager@roystonfirst.com

BID Office
c/o Royston Town Hall
Melbourn Street
Royston
SG8 7DA

roystonfirst.com



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BID Rules

for BID Renewal

Levy Rules

The Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 as approved by the Government, sets out the legal framework within which BIDs have to operate, including the BID rules which define the way in which the levy is charged and collected.

- The renewal BID term will be five years from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2029.
- The BID levy will be applied to all eligible business ratepayers within the defined area of Royston First BID with a rateable value of £7,000 or more.
- The BID levy rate is fixed as outlined on the BID Levy page, using the business rating list as at 1st April 2024.
- The liability for the daily BID levy will fall on the eligible ratepayer.
- The BID levy will be paid by any new ratepayer occupying any existing hereditaments within the BID area.
- New hereditaments will be charged from the point of occupation based on the rateable value at the time it enters the rating list.
- Empty properties will be liable for the BID levy with no void period, for as long as the hereditament remains on the NNDR list.
- Where the rateable value for individual hereditaments (rated properties) results in a lower BID levy, it will only come into effect from the start of the financial year in which the change is made. No refunds of the BID levy will be made for previous years.
- The BID levy will not be affected by the small business rate relief scheme, service charges paid to landlords, exemptions, relief or discounts prescribed in the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Local Lists) Regulations 1989 made under Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- There will be no VAT charged on the BID levy.
- Refunds will be at the discretion of the BID.
- The BID would deliver services in addition to any public or private sector organisation.
- In the event of any queries regarding any BID levy, the BID Board would make the decision.
- The Rateable Value list, as of the 1st September 2023, will be used for the calculation of the annual BID levy for the duration of this proposal.
- The BID Board may exercise the ability to raise the BID levy on an annual basis for the duration of the BID, with such increases limited to the increase in the Consumer Price Index of the preceding year.
- Voluntary BID contributors would be welcomed, although will not be entitled to vote in the BID ballot. Such voluntary contributions would be paid by separate agreement with the BID Company.
- None of the costs of developing this BID proposal would be recovered from levy receipts from this business plan.

Collection and enforcement arrangements will be similar to those for collection and enforcement of non-domestic business rates with the BID Company responsible for any debt write off. Details can be found in the Operating Agreement between the BID and Council (see website).

The BID area and BID rules cannot be altered without a re-ballot of members.

FAQs

The BID has been running for 15 years, why can't it just continue?

BIDs last for a maximum of five years and once that term is over, the BID is required to re-ballot. It reviews its projects, produces a new Business Plan stating its objectives for the next five years and this plan is then voted by BID businesses and other organisations that will be required to pay the levy. This is known as a renewal ballot.

How much will I pay?

On behalf of Royston First BID, North Herts Council will collect a levy from each BID business that will be transferred to the BID company and used to implement the projects laid out in this plan. All eligible BID businesses and other organisations will pay an annual levy as outlined on page 18, based on their rateable value.

My business isn't part of Royston First BID, can I still be a part of it?

Yes, any businesses and other organisations that are exempt from paying the BID levy can contribute voluntarily. If you join the BID in this way, you have the same rights to the governance and management of the company as any other business. To discuss voluntary membership, please contact the BID Team (see page 20).

When will the fourth mandate's projects start being delivered?

The third term of the BID is due to end on the 31st of March 2024. The fourth term will then start to be rolled out from 1st April 2024 and levy bills will be issued. If the renewal ballot is unsuccessful, all BID services will cease on 31st March 2024.

Is this just another tax and will it substitute those services that North Herts Council already provide?

A BID cannot replace or substitute local authority statutory services i.e., those covered by your business rates. These are a level of street cleansing and maintenance, highways and roads, and emergency services. Royston First BID can choose to enhance and add to these services using BID levy income. North Herts Council has provided baseline statements as part of the BID renewal for both its statutory and discretionary services.

What a 'Yes' vote means...

Over 50% of businesses and other organisations that vote must vote in favour of Royston First BID

+

Of the businesses and other organisations that vote yes, their combined rateable value must be greater than 50% of the total rateable value of voters

=

YES!

What would a 'No' vote mean?

A 'NO' vote will mean Royston will lose a great number of benefits that the BID currently brings to its members and the town.

We would lose:

- ✗ Parking Scratch Cards
- ✗ Events such as the Christmas Light Switch On
- ✗ Supporting projects such as Royston Picture Palace
- ✗ Planned projects e.g. summer decorations, Business Awards, Shop Safe App and digital signage
- ✗ Christmas-painted windows
- ✗ Historic Town Trail and Children's Trails
- ✗ BID Manager, engaging with and supporting our local businesses and other organisations
- ✗ Royston Information Centre
- ✗ Business Directory – print and online
- ✗ Town communications via social media, emails and WhatsApp

- ✗ Royston Town Website
- ✗ Free Advertising and Marketing Support for businesses and other organisations
- ✗ Hanging Baskets
- ✗ Pavement Deep Cleans

We could also lose:

- ✗ Free After 3pm Parking, subsidised by Royston First
- ✗ Christmas Lights, subsidised by Royston First



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BID Manager | Paul Brown

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Royston SG8 7DA

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