



UPDATE



Royston First On Call!

Invitation to an Open Meeting and Prospectus launch - October 21st Royston Fire Station - 6:30pm onwards

We invite Royston's businesses to an open discussion of the BID and to view early copies of the full Prospectus. Topics triggered by the Prospectus are expected to include: how the Propositions have been modified since the original consultations; the structure of the BID company; and the monitoring and reporting of BID operations.

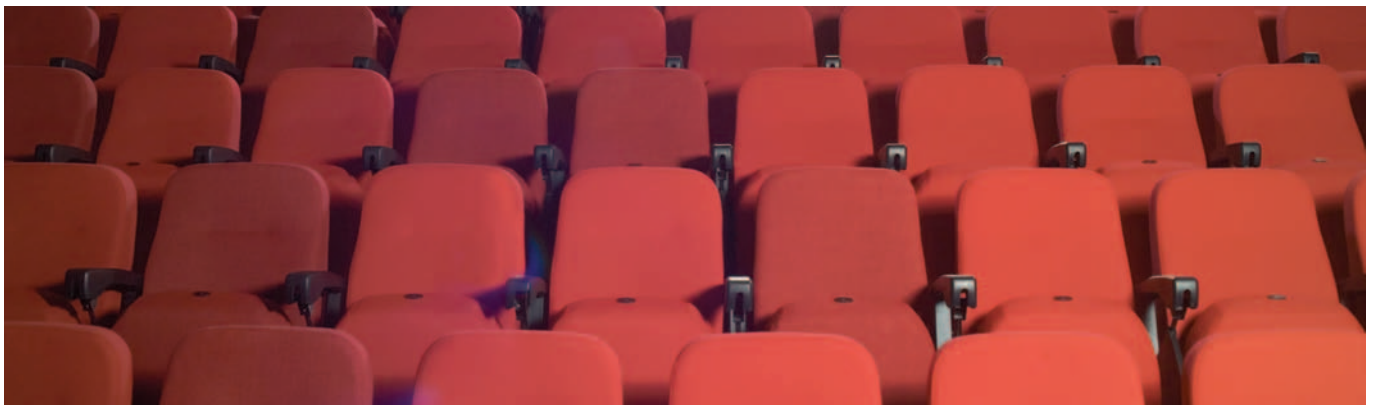
Royston First to purchase policing.

The proposal to sponsor additional policing dedicated to Royston will be one of the items on the agenda for the Open Meeting. This opportunity would in no way replace the resources already available, including Royston's Safer Neighbourhoods Team, but would provide additional resources to enhance further the visible presence on the town's streets. Any agreement entered into would provide businesses with the option of influencing the general framework for the patrols, for example their timing. Chief Inspector Geoff Camp, the senior police officer for North Herts, and Inspector Jason Thorne, Royston's Safer Neighbourhoods Inspector, will be available to answer questions posed.



Community Cinema... What's that about?

As the second largest budget item proposed during the five years of the BID, we will specifically discuss Community Cinema at the Open Meeting - supported by images of at least one suggested model project.



Your **'YES'** vote can fill these seats with happy children, teenagers, friends, colleagues and families!

THE CREDIT CRUNCH... A KEY TIME TO LAUNCH A BID! - THE CREDIT CRUNCH... A KEY TIME TO LAUNCH A

Admittedly we'd rather have been in the position of looking for your **YES** vote two years ago! However, we are where we are, and Royston businesses are all likely to be in need of some cause for optimism during the coming months. Given that the 'Royston Plan' (the vision for the future from NHDC) was

only finalised earlier this year, the resultant projects are currently only in the early stages of discussion. In contrast, most of the other towns around us have agreed programmes either in the pipeline or in the process of being delivered.

If we are about to face tougher economic times, Royston certainly doesn't want to lose out to the competition by not having any initiatives to announce. We want to deliver BID projects to help us **all** over the next 5 years, so a small percentage contribution from every business has to be the way to go.

District Council offers full support to Royston First



At a recent meeting of the NHDC Cabinet, the senior political decision makers, it was confirmed that the Royston First initiative will lead the way for Business Improvement Districts in Hertfordshire. The Royston 'Day of the Ballot' has been announced as the 1st of December. Ballot papers will be dispatched to all Royston Urban Business Ratepayers four weeks before that.

Cabinet also confirmed that Royston First will not be charged for the costs for administering the BID referendum process. In addition, councillors gave authority for the Head of Revenues and Benefits to vote in favour of the BID proposals within the BID boundary. As a result, we won't have to divert any of your money to meet ballot overheads and we have also secured the first 10 yes votes in that ballot!



Shortlisted Propositions

Sorted into those allocated budget (Funded) and a wish list to be financed by any surpluses (Reserve)

Funded Propositions

- 1 Projects to be funded to enhance current youth provision and generate much needed additional activities
- 2 Purchase an additional two-person uniformed police foot patrol for late night duties in the town centre and around the industrial estates
- 3 Introduce a better 'look and feel' to Angel Pavement
- 4 Test the potential for a retail revival by attracting a quality butcher into Royston
- 5 Increase the frequency and variety of visiting attractions. Stage new and more sustainable events.
- 6 Return Community Cinema to Royston
- 7 Buy back parking in the town centre to offer as one-hour free spaces
- 8 Assist retailing with shopping guides, advertising, promotion and e-commerce
- 9 Run a shuttle bus between the industrial estate and the town centre at lunchtime
- 10 Establish an empty shop policy to deliver an improved appearance
- 11 Purchase a mobile CCTV camera and a mobile digital display. Construct power columns at key points throughout the town
- 12 Install advanced ANPR systems at both entrances to the industrial estate to record details of drivers and number plates
- 13 Upgrade signage leading to and within the industrial estates
- 14 Boost the visibility and visitor experience for the Royston Cave. Introduce a tourism function for the town and Heath
- 15 Persuade Royston's pigeons out of areas where they constitute a nuisance

Reserve Propositions

- 16 Enhance the twice-weekly Charter Market
- 17 Secure/create a large footprint store in the town centre to attract a major high street retailer
- 18 Create 'Gateways' to either specific areas or the entire town highlighting features and attractions
- 19 Create a support fund for business initiatives

Who's going to pay and, if it's me, what's it going to cost?

These are your most frequently asked questions and here are our answers:

It seems pretty reasonable that any BID costs should be taken out of existing business rates. Unfortunately ALL your business rates go to the Treasury. They then give councils back a little bit to pay for local services, currently around 13% of total receipts. The rest goes to pay for the NHS, defence, education etc. The money that the District Council receives has to cover all other community activities they are required to provide by law. Needless to say, the budgetary allocation is always tight and there is never enough money for even the basics. Quite simply, if we want more doing for us, we have to find the extra cash ourselves.

The charge is set at 2% of Rateable Value (unless your RV is under £2,500 a year when there is a minimum 'joining fee' of £50 pa). Billing all businesses in town will collectively generate more than £150,000 every year to deliver everything you see listed here - no single company carries an unfair share.

What happens now?

After the Open Meeting on the 21st, we will publish the full and final version of the Prospectus. This document will contain full details of the BID process, the Propositions, operating policies and procedures. Simultaneously a full Business Plan covering the first three years of the BID will be made available on the Royston First website (www.roystonfirst.com).

The Prospectus will then be distributed to all the businesses in Royston prior to NHDC despatching voting papers for the 3rd of November.

In the meantime, anybody wishing to share opinions or ideas with us can contact Royston First on 01763 878242