

**Written replies to questions
under standing order 12
at the Council meeting held on
17 July 2013**



This document sets out the written replies to questions asked at the Council meeting on 17 July 2013.

Q2 Question from Councillor Judy Roberts to Councillor Elaine Ware:

Supplementary question:

'To what extent is any increase in the four market areas attributable to the introduction of 2 hours free car parking and/or the implementation of the £100k Portas money at the start of 2013?'

Councillor Elaine Ware's response:

'Thank you for raising the supplementary question about car parking and Portas funding.

The introduction of two hours free parking and the implementation of the Portas High Street Innovation Funding/Town Team funding have positively contributed to improving the viability and attractiveness of Abingdon, Botley, Faringdon, and Wantage.

In December 2012, the economic development team carried out a business survey to understand what impact the free two hours parking has had on businesses in these areas. Almost 70 per cent of businesses reported that the free two hours car parking had a positive impact on their business, with 52 per cent reporting an increase in visitors to their premises.

The Portas funding has allowed the economic development team to deliver a range of projects and promotions across the four areas increasing their vitality. The funding has attracted additional investment to the area, including match funding and in-kind contributions from town councils, businesses, and community groups.

The measurement of any increase in the use of market towns or district centres is a complex matter, but from the responses gained, I believe that the free parking, injection of Portas money and other associated investment we have been able to attract, have had a positive impact on the local economies in each of these areas. There are still challenges ahead but we remain focussed on supporting our local economy to see positive impact now and for the long term future of the Vale.'