

Question from Mr David Webb to the Executive Councillor for Enterprise, Tourism & Economic Development

Question 1

“Do you think the five year plan to spruce up gardens such as Southchurch, Priory Park, Leigh Library Gardens, will attract more visitors? How much will this cost in terms of staff and materials?”

Answer

The delivery of the draft Parks Strategy is intended to lead to further improvement of the much appreciated Borough open spaces and includes ‘sprucing’ up those areas, amongst others, highlighted in your question.

Good quality parks have a positive impact on residents and bring increased visitors and economic benefits to the Borough.

It is difficult to forecast future expenditure as many of the proposals are in principle and yet to be detailed and may be subject to external funding applications. The future funding of Parks will be considered within the ‘Medium Term Financial Plan’ and form part of the Council’s overall budget setting process.

Question 2

“In Southend Leisure buildings which ones are being used by whom and how many advantage cards are being used in each building in 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015? How can the advantage card be more advertised by the Council?”

Answer:

The Advantage Card is not a ‘Smart Card’ and the information requested is not available from all the venues that Advantage Card discounts are offered.

General Advantage Cards use across all Leisure Centres is collected by the Council’s Leisure Operator and totalled 14,274 uses in 2014/15; 15,463 uses in 2013/14*, and following an active campaign to use Advantage Cards through the Summer 2012 Olympics, 27,934 uses were made in 2012/13.

Information about the Advantage Card, the discounts available and details of the venues at which it can be used can be found on the Council’s website.

When the Council promotes specific events on posters and leaflets that benefit from Advantage Card discounts, this will be included on promotional material.

When Officers from the Culture Division are asked to present to community groups and external organisations about services, the Advantage Card will be promoted to encourage use.

Discussions are being undertaken with the Council’s new Leisure Centre operator, “Fusion Lifestyle”, to increase promotion and use of the Advantage Card.

*Closures: Belfairs Swim Centre – Feb 2014 – Aug 2014.