

Subject:	STAN (Services To A Neighbourhood)	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	18 th September 2013
Report of:	Head of Customer Services & I.C.T.	Portfolio Holder:	Customers, Legal & Licensing
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	That members support the extension of the STAN service for a further 12 months until September 2014.
1.2	That members note that there is no secured funding in place after September 2014 to enable STAN services to continue. This means that further external funding and/or additional council funding/budget allocation will be need to be sought should members determine the service should continue to be supported.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To provide an update on achievements/progress of the STAN Service.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:

- **Regenerating Rossendale:** This priority focuses on regeneration in its broadest sense, so it means supporting communities that get on well together, attracting sustainable investment, promoting Rossendale, as well as working as an enabler to promote the physical regeneration of Rossendale.
- **Responsive Value for Money Services:** This priority is about the Council working collaboratively, being a provider, procurer and a commissioner of services that are efficient and that meet the needs of local people.
- **Clean Green Rossendale:** This priority focuses on clean streets and town centres and well managed open spaces, whilst recognising that the Council has to work with communities and as a partner to deliver this ambition.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

Help Direct, provided by Calico Housing; help to support the STAN service. The Help Direct service will shortly be up for re-tender. They have to re tender to LCC for delivery of the Help Direct service across East Lancashire. Having spoken to representatives of Help Direct they stated that they anticipate a decision late on in this financial year.

Member's attention is drawn to the possible risk in relation to the ability to provide the STAN service in the long term. Whilst the Council is able to commit to the STAN project for a further 12 months, there is a risk that we will be unable to identify funding to continue with the project after September 2014.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 5.1 STAN has been out and about, in East Lancashire, since October 2010. The project was set up with funding from the North West Improvement & Efficiency Partnership's (NWIEP) and set to run for three years. Partners in the project are Rossendale, Pendle and Ribble Valley Councils and LCC's Help Direct, Rossendale being the lead in relation to the project.
- 5.2 Having satisfied all of the NWIEP's reporting conditions and met all of their targets, in 2011, they handed over responsibility of the STAN vehicle to Rossendale Borough Council as we were the applicant/lead in relation to the project.
- 5.3 STAN has quickly become a familiar face and known for giving great help and advice. The overall customer satisfaction rate for the service for 2012/13 was 97.84%. This demonstrates the added value of the STAN service. Comments from STAN customers include:
- "I can't thank everyone on the van enough. Caroline is a GEM, she was patient and helpful. A very satisfactory outcome and I have recommended STAN to everyone."*
- "I don't know what I would have done without STAN the van, Thank you."*
- "Staff were very, very helpful, polite and interested. It seemed more than a job. (Staff were keen to help more to the point!)"*
- "Would recommend STAN to anyone, excellent service. I have visited STAN a few times and was very impressed. The staff have very good knowledge and explain things so you leave knowing it was well worth visiting. If I ever need help again STAN will be the place I visit. Outstanding."*
- 5.4 Footfall continues to increase and statistics in relation to footfall, issues and advice given and customer satisfaction can be seen in the attached appendices.
- 5.5 STAN is a qualitative service, provided to and accessed by our more vulnerable customers/residents that are also often isolated and harder to reach with mainstream access via the One Stop Shop. Staff on STAN are able to spend time with people, listening to their issues and provide advice, assistance, sign-posting referral and support where possible. Many customers accessing STAN present with numerous issues and staff aim to address them all in an holistic manner, where possible at a single point of contact. There has been a large increase in people visiting STAN asking for help due to the various Welfare reforms. The assistance staff on STAN have given, with the sometimes complex welfare benefit forms has also increased massively, and can take up to an hour to complete. The CAB and other Agencies routinely refer people to the STAN service. Customers appreciate being seen straight away instead of having to wait for an appointment in an often more accessible location, for some. This avoids the stress and anxiety that some people may experience if they have to wait for a number of weeks for their issue to be resolved.
- 5.6 Colleagues from Pendle Borough Council have confirmed that they will not be continuing with the project once the initial three year period ends, at the end of September 2013. Ribble Valley Borough Council have confirmed that it is their intention to commit to the project for a further 12 months, until September 2014.

5.7 It is also the intention of Rossendale Borough Council to commit to the STAN project for a further 12 months. It is our aim to:

- continue to provide help and support to residents in relation to the various welfare reforms.
- mitigate, as far as reasonably possible, any disadvantage to residents due to OSS moves to Futures Park.
- continue to provide accessible help/advice in relation to any issue our residents may have in various locations throughout the Borough.
- provide a service to residents when they need it without the need to wait for an appointment.

5.8 From October to September 2014 all costs associated with the STAN service will be shared equally between Rossendale and Ribble Valley Borough Councils. In Rossendale the STAN service is funded from previous earmarked resources and there will be no additional costs to the Council Tax payer. Moving forward we hope to be able to identify funding streams in order to continue with the service beyond September 2014. However, it should be noted that if we are unable to secure funding through external funding streams, or secure council funding /budget allocation to support this shortfall, it is possible that this service will have to cease. A further report will be brought back to Cabinet/Council at a later date in relation to this for a member decision.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

6.1 Funding can be contained within previously earmarked resources originally received, in the main, from the Department for Work and pensions (DWP).

6.2 The approximate costs of the STAN service for a further 12 months are as follows:

	£
STAN staffing costs (including Employer Pension)	36,290
Vehicle Expenses	7,760
Other Costs	2,130
Subtotal	46,180
Less 50% contribution from Ribble Valley	(23,090)
Cost to Rossendale Borough Council	23,090

6.3 The ownership of the STAN vehicle resides with Rossendale Borough Council.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

7.1 No additional comments to add.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

8.1 In the compilation of this progress report consultation has been undertaken with the Portfolio Holder.

8.2 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard in the exercising of its

functions in relation to the three aims of the Equality Duty, for the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advanced equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The amount of regard that is “due” is set out in the Act and will depend on the circumstances of the case. Under the general equality duty there is a requirement to engage with people with protected characteristics and to have an adequate evidence base for Council decision making. Further, the duty to inform, consult or involve requires that the council must involve communities and those directly affected at the most appropriate and proportionate level in ‘routine functions, in addition to one-off decisions.’

- 8.3 This report is not proposing new service or significant changes to or reviews of them at this stage. It does not propose decisions about budget cuts or service changes/reductions. It is determined therefore, that this report is unlikely to have any adverse impacts under the Council's Equality Policy or associated equality duties, and has not been assessed for equalities impacts on this occasion.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Pendle Borough Council will cease to be a partner in the STAN project after September 2013 when the initial three year partnership comes to an end. Rossendale in partnership with Ribble Valley and with support from Help Direct will continue with the STAN service for a further 12 months. (October 2013 to September 2014). The costs will be shared equally between the two Authorities. Previously identified funding is in place to support STAN in Rossendale for a further 12 months but there is currently no funding in place to support the service after September 2014.

No background papers