

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL – EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

TITLE: Cemeteries strategy consultation 2022

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Version	Author	Description of Changes
26/08/22	1.0	PB	Initiated
27/7/23	1.1	PB	Amended
2/8/23	1.2	PB	Amended
4/8/23	1.2	PB	Final draft

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL –EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1 Description: Fact finding (about your policy / service / service users)

Department	Place Directorate
Service	Environmental Services
Lead officer responsible for assessment	Paul Brightwell
Other members of team undertaking assessment	NA
Date	26/08/22
Version	1.2
Type of document	Strategy
Is this a new/ existing/ revision of an existing document	Revision

<p>Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation)</p> <p>Please attach a copy of the strategy/ plan/ function/ policy/ procedure/ service</p>	<p>Review of strategy documentation aiming to update policy needs following recommendations from cemeteries Members Advisory Panel (MAP). This will define the framework of the proposed strategy update in conjunction with consulting with the broader community and key stakeholders ahead of commissioning the updated strategy document for approval by the Environment and Communities Committee.</p> <p>The draft Members Advisory Panel strategy document provides the basis from which the revised strategy will be drafted and includes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims / objectives • Opportunities and challenges • Priority actions • Next steps <p>The aim of the associated consultation was to ensure that prior to recommending for committee for approval that there is adequate engagement with the broader community to help understand what is important to them as</p>
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	<p>customers, visitors and neighbours of Cheshire East councils cemeteries and to ensure relevant feedback is reflected in the revised strategy.</p> <p>This process will also jointly seek feedback on the cemetery regulations to help ensure public consensus is sought as to how the regulation should implemented.</p>
<p>Who are the main stakeholders and have they been engaged with? (e.g. general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences, residents)</p>	<p>The main stakeholders have been identified as follows:</p> <p>General Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General residents - Media release • General residents - Social media • General residents - Council consultation webpages • General residents - Digital Influence Panel • Funeral directors (x30) – Direct mail • CEC Place Environment/Cemeteries Portfolio Holder • Orbitas/Cheshire East Bereavement Services • Cheshire East Council Committee Chairs • The council’s Corporate Leadership Team • Cheshire East Members of Parliament • All Parish and Town Councils • All Council ward Members - Direct email – CEC held mailing list • The Archdeacon of Macclesfield - The Venerable Ian Bishop • Church Ministers • Cemetery Friends Groups • Adjoining residents of cemeteries facilities • Commonwealth War Graves Commission • Chairperson of the Friends of Sandbach Cemetery - ann.nevitt@btinternet.com • Paper versions of the survey - Library distribution <p>EqIA outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith community groups

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity community groups • Protected characteristic charities / steering groups – e.g. Cheshire Centre for Independent living, Eye society, Body Positive <p>The engagement with the above stakeholder lists took place as part of the consultation process undertaken December 2022.</p>
Consultation/ involvement carried out.	Undertaken with support of Cheshire East R&C department and the Cheshire East Communities team for the face-to-face outreach to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community sites December 2022.
What consultation method(s) did you use?	The consultation was undertaken in December 2022 by Cheshire East Council R&C department and involved a combination of email contact / hard copy mail outs / printed posters with QR codes, easy read materials and face to face meetings with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community contact team.

Stage 2 Initial Screening

<p>Who is affected and what evidence have you considered to arrive at this analysis? (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)</p>	<p>The consultation feedback suggested the locational aspect of the two main facilities in the previous strategy was a concern and the transition away from the previous aim of using two core facilities suggests people were concerned about the travel distances and/or associated costs.</p> <p>This alludes to possible impacts to mourners who utilise public transport either from disadvantaged socio-economic or age stratified groupings who experience difficulties funding such travel, or those mourners who experience physical impediments to engaging with certain modes of public transport.</p> <p>There was also feedback suggesting some ethnicity groups felt they might be impacted in terms of any visual, written or spoken engagement and also in relation to how the cemeteries regulations were formulated and enforced with regards certain cultural grieving practices.</p>
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	The evidence base from the consultation will be factored into the production of the strategy document and associated cemeteries regulations to ensure any equalities based aspects are given the necessary consideration.
Who is intended to benefit and how	It is understood that the strategy will benefit the entire community in terms of ensuring a robust and equitable approach to provisioning the boroughs broader burial and cremation needs.
Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?	<p>The consultation feedback showed the previous strategy focussed upon the use of only two core facilities in Crewe and Macclesfield raised concerns from respondents of perceived impacts relating to travel distances / times and how this may present difficulties in accessing the bereavement facilities with regards to either elderly or disabled users who suffer from mobility issues.</p> <p>There were also concerns raised within the consultation as to how the cemeteries regulations would be defined and enforced highlighting sensitivities with regards the cultural mourning practices of some sectors of the community grounds on ethnicity and religious beliefs.</p>
Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?	<p>A review of the current strategy to utilise only two core facilities in Crewe and Macclesfield that proposes to use a broader range of facilities that will equate to reduced overall travel distances and times that should alleviate concerns raised in the consultation concerning elderly and/or disabled users who suffer from mobility issues and to whom the previous policy may have proven to be restrictive.</p> <p>The cemeteries strategy consultation feedback identified concerns raised in relation to the cultural grieving practices of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. These concerns will be taken into consideration in relation to how the cemeteries regulations are updated in terms of the presence of the kinds of memorials that can be placed on individual grave plots and for how long.</p>
Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (e.g. will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)	No – this is not anticipated.

<p>Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?</p>	<p>The comments from the Dec 2022 consultation will be taken into consideration to ensure the cemeteries strategy regulations are updated in a balanced and equitable manner.</p> <p>There is no known evidence base to either prove or disprove any history of unequal outcomes.</p>
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<p>Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics</p>	<p>Yes/ No</p>
<p>Age</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Marriage & civil partnership</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Pregnancy & maternity</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Race</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Religion & belief</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Sex</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>No</p>

Stage 3 Evidence

Characteristic	What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts	Level of Risk (High, Medium or Low)
Age	<p>Concerns were raised in the consultation regarding the location of the cemeteries, with 74% of respondents who felt future burial provision should be made at all cemeteries across Cheshire East, by extending them where possible and 9% who felt future burial provision should only be available at the two principal cemeteries at Crewe and Macclesfield.</p> <p>Respondents preferred burial provision to be provided locally because they felt people should have a right to be buried in the town they lived in, that burial sites should be easily accessible to friends and family.</p> <p>One respondent suggested that drive time in excess of 30-minutes are not local and are too far to travel to from some places, especially for the elderly, disabled or those with ill health and that public transport is not good enough to access just the two principal cemeteries.</p> <p>It seems plausible that the current travel and access requirements associated with the two core facility approach at Crewe and Macclesfield could negatively impact older members of the community who suffer from impaired mobility.</p>	Low
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No supporting evidence offered to suggest a disproportionate or negative impact to individuals within this protected category grouping.	NA
Religion	No supporting evidence offered to suggest a disproportionate or negative impact to individuals within this protected category grouping.	NA
Disability	In relation concerns raised in the consultation regarding the location of the cemeteries 74% of respondents felt future burial provision should be made at all cemeteries across Cheshire East, by extending them where possible with just 9% felt future burial provision should only be available at the two principal cemeteries at Crewe and Macclesfield.	NA

	<p>Respondents preferred burial provision to be provided locally because they felt people should have a right to be buried in the town they lived in, that burial sites should be easily accessible to friends and family.</p> <p>One respondent suggested, that drive time in excess of 30-minutes are not local and are too far to travel to from some places, especially for the elderly, disabled or those with ill health and that public transport is not good enough to access just the two principal cemeteries.</p> <p>It seems plausible that the current travel and access requirements associated with the two core facility approach at Crewe and Macclesfield could negatively impact members of the community with certain disabilities that impact mobility.</p>	
Pregnancy and Maternity	No supporting evidence offered to suggest a disproportionate or negative impact to individuals within this protected category grouping.	NA
Sex	No supporting evidence offered to suggest a disproportionate or negative impact to individuals within this protected category grouping.	NA
Gender Reassignment	No supporting evidence offered to suggest a disproportionate or negative impact to individuals within this protected category grouping.	NA
Race	<p>Efforts have been made to engage with the borough diverse community structure, with consultation outreach targeted to a number of community groups to ensure diversity of opinion and feedback.</p> <p>The consultation highlighted that the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community expressed views that their cultural mourning practices are given adequate consideration in respect of a majority preference for burial instead of cremation and that memorabilia and gifts on graves is an aspect of their grieving culture and that Gypsy Travellers should not be victimised over how they choose to bury their deceased.</p>	Low
Sexual Orientation	No supporting evidence offered to suggest a disproportionate or negative impact to individuals within this protected category grouping.	NA

Stage 4 Mitigation

Protected characteristics	Mitigating action <i>Once you have assessed the impact of a policy/service, it is important to identify options and alternatives to reduce or eliminate any negative impact. Options considered could be adapting the policy or service, changing the way in which it is implemented or introducing balancing measures to reduce any negative impact. When considering each option you should think about how it will reduce any negative impact, how it might impact on other groups and how it might impact on relationships between groups and overall issues around community cohesion. You should clearly demonstrate how you have considered various options and the impact of these. You must have a detailed rationale behind decisions and a justification for those alternatives that have not been accepted.</i>	How will this be monitored?	Officer responsible	Target date
Age	It is proposed to revise the current strategic approach to utilise only two core cemetery facilities at Crewe and Macclesfield in an effort to alleviate concerns identified in the consultation about the perception of excessive travel distances/ times can were suggested by one respondent that were suggested could impact elderly service users with mobility issues.	Reduction of travel distances from using a broader array of facilities will be self-evident	Paul Brightwell	Feb 2024
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No anticipated disproportionate impact	NA	NA	NA
Religion	No anticipated disproportionate impact	NA	NA	NA
Disability	It is proposed to revise the current strategic approach to utilise only two core cemetery facilities at Crewe and Macclesfield in an effort to alleviate concerns identified in the consultation about the perception of excessive travel distances/ times can were suggested by one	Reduction of travel distances from using a broader array of	Paul Brightwell	Feb 2024

	respondent that were suggested could impact disabled service users with mobility issues.	facilities will be self-evident		
Pregnancy and Maternity	No anticipated disproportionate impact	NA	NA	NA
Sex	No anticipated disproportionate impact	NA	NA	NA
Gender Reassignment	No anticipated disproportionate impact	NA	NA	NA
Race	There will be consideration of the cultural aspects of grieving for all communities in updating the existing cemeteries regulations.	Consultation feedback to be incorporated into the revised cemeteries regulations pending E&C Committee approval Feb 2024	Paul Brightwell	Feb 2024
Sexual Orientation	No anticipated disproportionate impact	NA	NA	NA

5. Review and Conclusion

Summary: The core impacts that have been identified are associated with perceived difficulties for elderly and disabled service users who have mobility issues along with perceived impact to cultural grieving practices. These will be respectively addressed by a proposed amendment to the current policy that utilises two core facilities in Crewe and Macclesfield to offer a broader range of burial sites to help alleviate concerns associated with excessive travel time / distance and secondarily through factoring the concerns of any cultural discrimination in the proposed updated of the exiting cemeteries regulations.

No further knowledge gaps or requirement for additional data has been identified at this time.

Specific actions to be taken to reduce, justify or remove any adverse impacts	How will this be monitored?	Officer responsible	Target date
Review of current policy that utilises two core facilities in Macclesfield and Crewe to help reduce travel times/ distances that will benefit disabled and elderly service users who suffer from mobility issues.	The proposed revision to utilise additional burial facilities would offer shorter travel distances.	Paul Brightwell	Feb 2024

Review of current cemeteries regulations to ensure they do not disproportionately impact any community, ethnic or religious groups subject to protections under the Equalities Act.	Cross referencing the feedback received in the 2022 consultation would help determine if this had been successfully implemented.	Paul Brightwell	Feb 2024
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Please provide details and link to full action plan for actions	NA
When will this assessment be reviewed?	Feb 2024 as part of Environment and Communities Committee review process.
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?	No

Lead officer sign off	Paul Brightwell
Date	4/8/23
Head of service sign off	Ralph Kemp
Date	06/12/2023

Please publish this completed EIA form on the relevant section of the Cheshire East website