

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
06/02/25	1.3	PB	Revised following adoption of recommendations

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	06/02/25
Version	1.3
Type of document	Strategy
Is this a new/ existing/ revision of an existing document	Revision

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)	Review following adoption of strategy documentation to update policy needs following recommendations from cemeteries Members Advisory Panel (MAP). This document defines the framework of the strategy update undertaken 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. The draft Members Advisory Panel strategy document provided the basis from which the revised strategy was produced to includes; • Aims / objectives • Opportunities and challenges • Priority actions
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Please attach a copy of the strategy/ plan/ function/ policy/ procedure/ service	• Next steps The Strategy is underpinned by a consultation exercise to ensure adequate engagement with the broader community to help understand their needs as customers, visitors and neighbours of Cheshire East councils cemeteries and to ensure relevant feedback was reflected in the revised strategy. This process also sought feedback on the cemetery regulations to ensure public consensus as to how the regulation should implemented. This latest Impact Assessment covers the Committee approval of the Cemetery Strategy and Regulations
Who are the main stakeholders and have they been engaged with? (e.g. general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences, residents)	The main stakeholders who were contacted as part of the original outreach have been identified as follows: General Stakeholders • 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

	EqlA outreach • Faith community groups • Ethnicity community groups • Protected characteristic charities / steering groups – e.g. Cheshire Centre for Independent living, Eye society, Body Positive The engagement with the above stakeholder lists took place as part of the consultation process undertaken December 2022.
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

Who is affected and what evidence have you considered to arrive at this analysis? (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)	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. 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.
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	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. 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. This document is refreshed following adoption of the Cemeteries Strategy at the February 2024 Environment and Communities Committee. This update reflects the further adoption of the Cemeteries portfolio Design Guide, along with the series of site specific Management plans and the associated Capital Investment plan that were detailed in the original Strategy document.
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?	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. 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.
Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?	The current strategy proposes use of a broader range of facilities to reduce 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. The cemeteries strategy consultation feedback identified concerns raised in relation to the cultural grieving practices of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. These concerns have been taken into consideration in relation to how the cemeteries regulations were updated in terms of the presence of the kinds of memorials that can be placed on individual grave plots and for how long.

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.
Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?	is updated assessment document reflects the adoption of the Design Guide, Site Management plans and Capital Investment plan as recommended in the adopted Cemeteries Strategy. Comments from the Dec 2022 consultation were be taken into consideration to ensure the cemeteries strategy regulations were updated in a balanced and equitable manner. There is no known evidence base to either prove or disprove any history of unequal outcomes.

Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics	Yes/ No
Age	Yes
Disability	Yes
Gender reassignment	No
Marriage & civil partnership	No
Pregnancy & maternity	No
Race	Yes
Religion & belief	No

Sex	No
Sexual orientation	No

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	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. 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. 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. 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.	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. 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. 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. 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.	NA
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	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. 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	Low

	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.	
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 respondent that were suggested could impact disabled service users with mobility issues.	Reduction of travel distances from using a broader array of facilities will be self-evident	Paul Brightwell	Feb 2024
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	Paul Brightwell	Feb 2024

		regulations as adopted in the Feb 2024 E&C Committee		
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 have been respectively addressed by an amendment to the previous policy that utilised 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 update of the previous cemeteries regulations.

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

Following adoption of the strategy at the Environment and Communities Committee in Feb 2024, this assessment document has been refreshed to factor the adoption of the cemeteries portfolio Design Guide, the site specific Management plans and the associated Capital Investment plan. Due consideration will be given to further needs throughout the Council's cemeteries sites as and will be addressed in subsequent iterations of the Cemeteries Strategy with adoption of any approved amendments by the Environment & Communities Committee.

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

Please provide details and link to full action plan for actions	NA
When will this assessment be reviewed?	Original Cemeteries Strategy adoption in Feb 2024, with proposed adoption of Deign Guide, Site Management plan template & outline Capital Investment plan in March 2025 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
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Lead officer sign off	Paul Brightwell
Date	4/8/23
Head of service sign off	Ralph Kemp
Date	7/12/2023

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