

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

Project Information	
Project Name <i>This should clearly explain what service / policy / strategy / change you are assessing</i>	Motion report – Review of Burial service provision and faith burial requirements
Service Area <i>Main team responsible for the policy, practice, service or function being assessed</i>	Bereavement Services, within Waste & Environment
EIA Author <i>Name and Job Title</i>	Sarah Holohan, Bereavement Officer Jennie Probert, Environmental Services Manager
Date EIA drafted	11/08/2026
ID number <i>This will be added by the Strategy and Partnerships Team</i>	EP006

Executive summary	
Focus of EIA <i>A member of the public should have a good understanding of the policy or service and any proposals after reading this section.</i> <i>Please use plain English and write any acronyms in full first time - e.g.: 'Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)'</i> <i>This section should explain what you are assessing:</i> <i>If the EIA is attached to a report, summarise the report.</i> <i>Provide information on whether any of the following communities could be affected by the policy, practice, service or function, or by how it is delivered?</i> <i>(age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership) in addition, TRDC recognises other communities may be vulnerable to disadvantage, this includes carers, people experiencing domestic abuse, substance misusers, homeless people, looked after children, (ex) armed forces personnel.</i>	This Equality Impact Assessment considers the review of burial service provision within Three Rivers District Council, particularly whether burials within 24 hours, including same-day, weekend and out-of-hours requests can be provided where requested by faith communities and other communities. The review was requested by Members of the General Public Services and Community Engagement Committee. It considered current burial arrangements, feedback from public engagement, benchmarking with neighbouring authorities, and operational issues such as staffing, cemetery capacity, health and safety requirements and budget implications. Bereavement Services provides burial services across the Council's cemetery sites, including Woodcock Hill Cemetery. The service includes traditional burials, Muslim burials, woodland burials and ashes interments. Some faiths and other communities may seek burial as soon as possible after death, and in some cases within 24 hours. The Council recognises the importance of timely burial provision for these communities and the distress that delays may cause to bereaved families. The review identified that officers already work with funeral directors, faith and community leaders and bereaved families to accommodate burial requests wherever reasonably practicable. However, the Council is not currently able to guarantee burial within 24 hours, including same-day, weekend or out-of-hours burials, due to limited staffing

	resources, existing bookings, operational constraints, cemetery capacity and health and safety requirements. The recommended approach is to continue with the current burial service arrangements, while maintaining flexibility wherever possible and this EIA has been completed for this recommendation. Officers will continue to work with communities, funeral directors and faith representatives to support requests for urgent burials where they can be safely and practically accommodated. The main equality impacts relate to religion or belief, because timely burial may be a particular requirement or expectation for some faith communities. There may also be impacts linked to race, age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, sex, and other vulnerable communities because bereavement services are used by a wide range of residents, including people who may experience additional barriers when arranging a funeral. No changes are proposed to current service provision at this stage. Any future enhancement to burial services, such as routine weekend, same-day or out-of-hours provision, would require additional staffing, revised operational arrangements and budget approval.
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Mitigations		
Protected Characteristic	Potential Issue <i>Against each protected characteristics, make a frank and realistic assessment of what issues may or do occur</i>	Mitigating Actions <i>How can the negative impacts be reduced or avoided by the mitigating measures? Is further engagement with specific communities needed? Is more research or monitoring needed? Does there need to be a change in the proposal itself?</i>
Age	Older residents may be more likely to use bereavement services or to be involved in arranging funerals. They may need clear information and support when making burial arrangements.	Officers will continue to provide clear, accessible information through Bereavement Services Information will be communicated using clear, plain language and, where appropriate, alternative formats such as large print. Printed information will be available for those who may not be able to access information digitally, and officers will respond sensitively to individual needs, explaining available options clearly and providing additional support or clarification where required.
Disability	Disabled people may experience difficulties accessing cemetery grounds, attending services or understanding and complying with certain requirements. Some people may rely on carers, accessible transport or assistance dogs, and	Officers will continue to provide reasonable adjustments where required, consider accessibility when arranging burial services and reviewing cemetery operations. Where possible, provide clear information in accessible formats and

	changes to burial times or arrangements may create additional difficulties.	consider the needs of people who rely on carers, accessible transport or assistance dogs.
Gender reassignment (or affirmation)	No specific negative impact has been identified. However, bereavement services must be delivered respectfully and without discrimination.	Officers will continue to provide services respectfully and sensitively to all residents and families. Any concerns raised will be considered through existing customer feedback or complaints processes.
Pregnancy or maternity	Pregnant people or those who have recently given birth may be affected by bereavement, including baby loss or the death of a family member. Delays or unclear information about burial arrangements may add to distress.	Officers will continue to provide a sensitive and compassionate service. Officers will work with funeral directors to assist families to accommodate burial requests wherever reasonably practicable. Clear communication will be maintained about timescales and available options.
Race	Some racial or ethnic groups may have specific cultural burial requirements. If urgent burial requests cannot be met, this could disproportionately affect some communities.	Officers will continue engagement with faith and community representatives, work with funeral directors and families to understand specific requirements and accommodate requests wherever safely and operationally possible.
Religion or belief	This is the main equality issue identified. Some faith communities may require or strongly prefer burial as soon as possible after death and, in some circumstances, within 24 hours. The Council cannot currently guarantee burial within 24 hours, including same-day, weekend or out-of-hours burials, due to staffing, operational, cemetery capacity and health and safety constraints. This may result in some bereaved families being unable to access burial arrangements that meet their religious or cultural requirements.	Officers will continue to work with funeral directors, faith and community leaders and bereaved families to accommodate urgent burial requests wherever reasonably practicable. Where a request cannot be accommodated, provide a clear explanation of the reasons and, where possible, discuss available alternatives. This may include working with the Grounds Team to consider whether a second burial can be accommodated on the same day, where operationally feasible, or offering the earliest available alternative date and time. Keep the provision under review and consider any future service enhancements through budget and service planning processes.
Sex	No specific negative impact has been identified in relation to sex.	
Sexual Orientation	No specific negative impact has been identified.	Officers will continue to provide services respectfully and without discrimination. Families and partners will be treated sensitively and in line with legal requirements and customer service standards.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Bereaved spouses and civil partners may be directly affected	Officers will continue to provide clear and compassionate communication

	by burial arrangements and any delays in arranging a burial.	with next of kin, spouses and civil partners, ensuring they are kept informed of available burial arrangements and any limitations on requested dates or times.
The council recognises other communities may be vulnerable to disadvantage, this includes carers, people experiencing domestic abuse, substance misusers, homeless people, looked after children and care leavers, (ex) armed forces personnel.	Some residents may have additional vulnerabilities, financial pressures, limited support networks or difficulty navigating burial arrangements.	Officers will continue to signpost residents to relevant support where appropriate. Work sensitively with funeral directors, families and partner services. Ensure communication is clear and that individual circumstances are considered where possible.

Actions Planned	
The Council will continue to operate current burial service arrangements while seeking to accommodate urgent burial requests wherever reasonably practicable. Actions planned include: - Continue working with funeral directors, faith and community leaders and bereaved families to understand and respond to urgent burial requests. - Maintain clear communication with families where same-day, 24-hour, weekend or out-of-hours burial cannot be accommodated. - Continue to explain operational, staffing, cemetery capacity and health and safety constraints clearly and sensitively. - Keep burial service provision under review through the Bereavement Services and Waste and Environment service planning process. - Where urgent burial requests cannot be accommodated, consider whether alternative dates or arrangements can be offered to the bereaved family wherever reasonably practicable. - Consider any future service enhancements, including routine weekend or out-of-hours burial provision, through the Council's budget-setting and service planning arrangements. - Continue to monitor feedback from residents, funeral directors, faith groups and community representatives. - Ensure any future proposals for changes to burial service provision are subject to further equality assessment and consultation where required. - Review customer information to ensure it is clear, accessible and written in plain English. - Continue to consider reasonable adjustments for disabled residents or people with additional communication needs.	

Additional Information

Sign off:

Equalities Lead Officer	Date
Shivani Davé	11/08/2026

