

Equality impact Assessment

Project Information	
Project Name <i>This should clearly explain what service / policy / strategy / change you are assessing</i>	Cemetery Rules and Regulations update
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	11.8.26
ID number <i>This will be added by the Strategy and Partnerships Team</i>	EP007

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 - eg: '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 proposed update to Three Rivers District Council's Cemetery Rules and Regulations. The Rules and Regulations set out how the Council's cemeteries are managed and how burials, interments, memorials, graves, tributes and other activities within the cemeteries are carried out. The purpose of the update is to ensure that the Rules and Regulations are clear, consistent, up to date and reflect current cemetery practice, operational requirements, health and safety considerations, environmental responsibilities and the respectful use of cemetery facilities. The proposed changes include: - Changing the latest routine interment time from 3.30pm to 1.00pm, reflecting the current operational arrangements. - Removing the section relating to the construction of new below grounds vaults and clarifying that families wishing to arrange a vault should make their own arrangements with an appropriate contractor. - Prohibiting amplified music within the cemetery unless specifically authorised. - Prohibiting the release of living creatures, balloons, Chinese lanterns and similar items. - Clarifying requirements relating to memorials, including the approval, size, safety and condition of memorials. - Clarifying restrictions on items placed on grave spaces, including personal items, large photographs, lighters, matches, sound-producing items, grave

	blankets and items extending beyond the grave space. • Strengthening requirements relating to planting, digging and unauthorised alterations within woodland burial areas. • Clarifying the management of memorials, benches, trees and other items where they present safety, maintenance or environmental concerns. • Clarifying the Council's approach to maintaining safe and accessible cemetery grounds. The Rules apply to people who use or visit the Council's cemeteries, including bereaved families, grave owners, funeral directors, memorial masons, visitors and people attending burials and interments. The Council's cemeteries include traditional burial areas, woodland areas, children's sections, the Garden of Remembrance and dedicated Muslim burial areas. <i>The proposed change to the latest routine interment time has the potential to affect some people more than others. For example, people with disabilities, older people, carers, people with work or caring commitments, or families travelling from outside the area may have less flexibility when arranging a funeral. Religious or cultural practices may also require consideration when arranging a burial or interment. The Council will continue to consider individual circumstances and any appropriate arrangements in accordance with its cemetery procedures and available operational capacity.</i> <i>The Rules and Regulations will be applied consistently and proportionately. Where appropriate, staff will provide information and guidance to bereaved families and funeral directors to help them understand the requirements and make suitable arrangements.</i> <i>The Council will continue to review the operation of the Rules and Regulations and consider any feedback or evidence suggesting that a provision is having an unintended or disproportionate impact on a particular group.</i>
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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 people may be more likely to have mobility difficulties or require additional time and support when attending cemetery services. The change to the latest routine interment time of 1.00pm may also	Cemetery information will be provided clearly and in an accessible format, including digital, printed and large print formats Officers will consider individual circumstances when arranging interments and provide appropriate assistance or guidance

	have an impact on older relatives or family members who rely on others for transport or support.	where possible. Cemetery access and pathways will continue to be maintained to support safe access.
Disability	Some disabled people may experience difficulties accessing cemetery grounds, attending services or understanding and complying with certain requirements. Changes to interment times may create additional difficulties for people who rely on carers, accessible transport or other support. People with disabilities or long-term health conditions who rely on assistance dogs may also be affected by restrictions relating to dogs within the cemeteries.	Accessibility requirements will be considered when arranging services. Officers will provide clear information and discuss individual requirements where appropriate. Cemetery paths and facilities will be maintained to support accessibility. Rule 6.6.1 has been amended to allow the Council to remove items where necessary to maintain accessibility to the cemetery for other users. Rule 6.13 has also been amended to confirm that assistance dogs are permitted within the cemetery and are exempt from any restrictions where required to support a person with a disability or long-term health condition.
Gender reassignment (or affirmation)	No specific negative impact has been identified. The Rules and Regulations apply equally to all cemetery users regardless of gender reassignment.	Officers will apply the Rules and Regulations consistently and respectfully. Any concerns or complaints relating to discriminatory treatment will be investigated in accordance with Council procedures.
Pregnancy or maternity	No significant specific impact has been identified. Some cemetery users who are pregnant or have recently given birth may experience mobility difficulties or require additional consideration when attending a burial or visiting a cemetery.	Officers will consider individual accessibility requirements. Safe access to cemetery grounds will be maintained and information about arrangements will be provided clearly in advance.
Race	The Council's cemeteries serve people from a range of racial and cultural backgrounds. Some burial practices may have cultural requirements that need to be considered when applying the Rules and Regulations. The timing and arrangements for interments may particularly affect families whose cultural practices require burial within a particular timeframe.	The Council will continue to consider cultural requirements when arranging burials and interments. Officers will communicate with families and funeral directors to understand relevant requirements and identify appropriate arrangements. The Rules have been amended to recognise cultural and traditional forms of grave decoration. Requests for such decorations will be considered by the Council and, where appropriate, may be permitted with prior Council permission, subject to health and safety, accessibility, maintenance and other cemetery requirements.
Religion or belief	Burial and mourning practices can form an important part of religious observance. Requirements relating to interment times, memorials, music, items placed on graves and the use of cemetery areas may affect some religious or faith communities differently. In particular, arrangements	Religious requirements will be considered when applying the Rules and Regulations. The Council will continue to work with families, funeral directors and relevant representatives where appropriate. The dedicated Muslim burial area will continue to be managed in accordance with the

	for Muslim and Orthodox Jewish burials may require consideration of specific religious practices and timescales.	arrangements applicable to that section. Any potential conflict between a cemetery requirement and a religious practice will be considered carefully before arrangements are finalised. The Rules have been amended to recognise religious traditions relating to floral tributes and grave decoration. Where appropriate, requests will be considered on an individual basis and may be permitted with prior Council permission, subject to the Cemetery Rules and Regulations.
Sex	No specific negative impact has been identified. The Rules and Regulations apply equally regardless of sex.	The Rules and Regulations will be applied consistently and without discrimination. Any concerns regarding unequal treatment will be considered through the Council's normal procedures.
Sexual Orientation	No specific negative impact has been identified. Same-sex partners and families may use cemetery services and should receive the same level of service and respect as other bereaved families.	Officers will apply the Rules and Regulations equally to all users and will communicate respectfully with bereaved families and partners.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No specific negative impact has been identified. The Rules and Regulations do not distinguish between people who are married, in a civil partnership or, neither.	Bereavement services will be provided consistently and without discrimination based on marital or civil partnership status. Officers will deal with the bereaved person's nominated family members or representatives in accordance with the relevant legal and cemetery requirements.
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.	No specific or disproportionate impact has been identified from the proposed changes. However, some individuals within these groups may have additional practical, emotional or support needs when accessing cemetery services or making funeral arrangements.	The Council will apply the Rules and Regulations consistently and sensitively, provide clear information and consider individual circumstances where appropriate. Cultural, religious and other relevant needs will be considered where these may affect funeral or cemetery arrangements.

Actions Planned

In this section you can add information on additional or proactive steps you are taking that enhance equity, engagement or equality of access to services, as well as those mitigating actions identified in the section above that will be undertaken.

The Equality Duty is an ongoing duty: policies must be kept under review, continuing to give 'due regard'

to the duty. If an assessment of a broad proposal leads to more specific proposals, then further equality assessment and consultation are needed.

The updated Rules and Regulations will be communicated clearly and made available to members of the public. Plain and accessible language will be used wherever possible.

The Council will:

- Ensure the revised Rules and Regulations are publicly available.
- Provide clear information to bereaved families and funeral directors about any changes that affect funeral arrangements.
- Consider individual circumstances where a person or family may be disproportionately affected by the application of a rule.
- Take account of religious and cultural requirements when arranging burials and interments.
- Consider accessibility requirements for disabled people and older people using cemetery facilities.
- Continue to maintain safe and accessible routes within cemetery grounds.
- Monitor feedback and complaints relating to the implementation of the revised Rules and Regulations.
- Review the Rules and Regulations periodically to ensure that they remain appropriate and do not create unintended barriers to accessing cemetery services.

The Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty will continue to be considered as the Rules and Regulations are implemented and reviewed. If further changes are proposed that may have a specific or greater impact on a protected group, a further equality assessment and, where appropriate, consultation will be undertaken.

Additional Information

Space to provide any additional information in relation to protected characteristics or equity, diversity, equality and inclusion.

The Cemetery Rules and Regulations are intended to provide a consistent framework for the respectful, safe and sustainable management of the Council's cemeteries.

The proposed changes are generally neutral in their application and are intended to apply equally to all cemetery users. However, the Council continue to consider religious and cultural requirements when applying the Rules and Regulations. The dedicated Muslim burial area is subject to its own arrangements where applicable.

Disability and age are also relevant considerations because some cemetery users may have mobility, accessibility or communication needs. The Council will continue to consider reasonable accessibility requirements and maintain cemetery facilities and routes where practicable.

The restrictions relating to items, memorials, music, planting and environmental management are intended to maintain safety, accessibility, the appearance and condition of cemetery grounds and the interests of all cemetery users. These requirements will be applied consistently and communicated clearly.

The impact of the revised Rules and Regulations will be kept under review. Any evidence of disproportionate impact, complaints or concerns raised by cemetery users will be considered and may lead to further review of the Rules and Regulations or additional equality assessment.

Sign off:

Equalities Lead Officer	Date
Shivani Davé	24/08/2026

