

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EIA Version	Date	Author	Changes
1	22 Jan 2021	Brian Strachan	

Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity (“activity” is an umbrella term covering policies, procedures, guidance and decisions including those that affect services the council delivers).	
Service	Infrastructure
Section	Roads & Landscape Services
Title of the activity etc.	Burial Grounds – Increase fees 10% (Above inflation)
Aims and desired outcomes of the activity	To increase overall income from Burials by circa £250k in order to reduce overall Council deficit.
Author(s) & Title(s)	Brian Strachan, Roads & Landscape Manager

Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment and explain what it means in relation to the activity you are assessing.		
Evidence	What does it say?	What does it mean?
Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).	Reputation Tracker – The Council produces a monthly summary of statistics and information on Council performance. 150 Aberdeenshire residents are contacted each month and asked to provide feedback. Customer complaints and compliments/satisfaction reports	
Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.	None, however this increase will help ensure that all our internal costs are accounted for without subsidising the service from our own budget	
External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).	The review of burial charges has previously been raised at the Undertaker’s biennial forum.	

External data (census, available statistics).	<p>Benchmarking – Scottish average burial fees table.</p> <p>We are already one of the highest charging Councils in Scotland for this Service</p>	
Other (general information as appropriate).	<p>Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016</p> <p>98 Guidance on funeral costs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (1) The Scottish Ministers may publish guidance on the costs associated with making arrangements for a funeral. 2. (2) The guidance may in particular cover the desirability of such costs being affordable. 3. (3) Before issuing such guidance, the Scottish Ministers must consult— 4. (a)burial authorities, 5. (b)cremation authorities, 6. (c)funeral directors, 7. (d)any other persons they consider appropriate. 8. (4) The Scottish Ministers must lay a copy of any guidance published under this section before the Scottish Parliament. 	

Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.

Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?	<p>Inflation currently projected at 1.2% for 2021 so increase of 11.2%. Current lair cost is £1008 for a resident £1762 for a non-resident. Current interment fee is £881 for a resident and £1760 for a non-resident.</p>
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Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.

What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form.	Measures:	Timescale:

Stage 5: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups/areas?

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<p>These should be included in the action plan.</p>	<p>Notice of revised charges will be published on our website as customers (mainly Funeral Directors) tend to have internet access.</p>
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<p>Stage 6: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?</p>
<p>This is a budgetary decision which would be across the customer base and would not create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity.</p>

<p>Stage 7a: Are there potential impacts on protected groups?</p> <p>The protected groups covered by the equality duty are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.</p> <p>Who is affected by the activity or who is intended to benefit from the proposed activity and how? Complete the table below for each protected group by inserting "yes" in the applicable box/boxes below.</p>
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	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger		Yes		
Age - Older		Yes		
Disability		Yes		
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)		Yes		
Religion or Belief		Yes		
Sex		Yes		
Pregnancy and maternity		Yes		
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)		Yes		
Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)		Yes		

Marriage and Civil Partnership		Yes		
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Stage 7b: Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy, activity etc. will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?

This is about trying to be fair to everyone. Part of that is realising that not everyone may be starting at the same place. Some individuals and families may have low income, may have very little or no savings which means they are living from month to month therefore changes to council policies/services may have a greater adverse impact on them.

On this basis you should consider potential impacts on individuals/families by:

- Place: on specific vulnerable areas or communities (SIMD, regeneration, rural) e.g. housing, transport.
- Pockets: household resources, (Income, benefits, outgoings) ability to access a service
- Prospects: peoples life chances e.g., Access to, or ability to access employment, training, services (such as council or health) or support.

Groups of people who may be impacted include, but not limited to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed • Single parents and vulnerable families • People on benefits • Those involved in the criminal justice system • People in the most deprived communities • People who live in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pensioners • Looked after children • Carers including young carers • Veterans • Students • Single adult households • People who have experienced the asylum system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness • Homeless people • People with low literacy/numeracy • People with lower educational qualifications • People in low paid work • People with one or more protected characteristic
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Please complete by inserting “yes” in the applicable box/boxes below.

Socio-economic disadvantage	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
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Pockets: Low income/income poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing		yes		
Pockets: Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future		yes		
Pockets: Material deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies			yes	
Place: Area deprivation – where you live, where you work			yes	
Prospects: Socioeconomic background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income, educational achievement.			yes	

Stage 8: What are the positive and negative impacts?		
Impacts.	Positive	Negative
Please detail the potential positive		Increase of fees will affect all groups using this service.

and/or negative impacts you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.		Increasing charges well above inflation could result in potential increase in funeral poverty and indigent deaths.

Stage 9: Have any of the affected groups/areas been involved, engaged with or consulted?

If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?	No
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Stage 10: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?

	Mitigating Steps	Timescale
These should be included in any action plan at the back of this form.	Reduces the amount the authority subsidises the actual costs of a burial.	Immediate
	Communication of revised fees through website.	Immediate

Stage 11: What monitoring arrangements will be put in place? How the EIA will be used to monitor the proposal

These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).	The Service will continue to make use of the citizen panel and the reputation tracker.
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Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?

Please complete the appropriate box/boxes	1	No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.

	2	Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.
	Option to pay in instalment, recently introduced in response to COVID will be continued.	
	3	The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen
	Option to pay in instalment, recently introduced in response to COVID will be continued.	

* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.

Justification is to contribute towards reducing Council deficit.

Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.

Sign off and authorisation.	1) Service and Team	Roads, Landscape & Waste Services	
	2) Title of Policy/Activity	Burial Fees – Increase fees 10% (Above inflation)	
	3) Authors: I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Brian Strachan Position: Roads & Landscape Manager Date: 25/01/21 Signature:	Name: Derek Murray Position: Roads & Landscape Manager Date: 25/01/21 Signature:
		Name: Philip Leiper Position: Roads & Landscape Manager Date: 25/01/21 Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:
	4) Consultation with Service Manager	Name: Date:	

	<p>5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service</p>	<p>Name: Philip D McKay Position: Head of Service Date: 01/03/2021</p>	<p>Name: Position: Date:</p>
	<p>6) If the EIA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee.</p>		<p>Date:</p>
	<p>7) EIA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: equalities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</p>		<p>Date:</p>

