

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. The Council’s Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the Council to better understand the potential impact of proposals and consider mitigating action.

Name or Brief Description of Proposal	Bereavement Services – Income Targets
Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)	
<p>Southampton City Council manages and maintains 5 cemeteries and Southampton Crematorium to a high standard. This includes ensuring that the grounds are well kept and maintained for the bereaved to visit and reflect.</p> <p>The burial service is benchmarked against burial authorities and the Institute of Ceremony and Crematorium Management Charter criteria for the bereaved and in 2020 received a silver quality award. One of 28 burial authorities to achieve this standard of service delivery nationally. In 2020/21, 468 burials took place within the city. Funerals are undertaken in accordance with the Local Authorities’ Cemeteries Order 1977.</p> <p>The crematorium service is benchmarked against the Institute of Ceremony and Crematorium Management Charter criteria for the bereaved and in 2020 received a gold quality award. One of only 67 cremation authorities to achieve this standard of service delivery nationally. There were 1,772 cremations undertaken in 2020/21.</p> <p>The use of cemeteries and the crematorium is determined by the death rate, funeral preference type and choice. There are two privately managed crematoria within travelling distance of the city boundaries.</p> <p>COVID 19 has not only impacted financially on the bereaved but also government restrictions have changed the way in which families have been able to hold their funeral services to pay their respects, with reduced attendance numbers resulting in families selecting to have a direct cremation service.</p>	

Summary of Impact and Issues

By increasing cremation fees unrealistically, we risk losing custom altogether to our competitors. Burial fees can be increased as there is little competition in respect of this, however we need to continue to ensure that the upkeep of our cemeteries is maintained to a respectful standard that our customers should expect.

Increasing fees should not occur with regards to crematorium fees until after the refurbishments have been completed, after which time an increase of 10% could be introduced for some cremation services.

Further, there is a marketing plan in place to increase the number of cremations undertaken at the Crematorium. This will involve visiting Funeral Directors to discuss the selling of additional cremations to them at the crematorium and incorporating more attractive commercial deals.

Potential Positive Impacts

A price increase will enable services to remain at a suitable level of provision and meet the needs of the local community. Burial and cremation fees remain comparable to other local service providers.

Good quality crematorium and cemeteries for cremations and burials are available for residents/communities.

Burials and Cremations will continue to meet the criteria expected by the burial authorities and the Institute of Ceremony and Crematorium Management Charter

Responsible Service Manager	Heather White
Date	20/10/2021
Approved by Senior Manager	Rosie Zambra
Date	

Potential Impact

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Age	No identified impact.	n/a
Disability	No identified impact.	n/a
Gender Reassignment	No identified impact.	n/a
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No identified impact.	n/a

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Pregnancy and Maternity	No identified impact.	n/a
Race	No identified impact.	n/a
Religion or Belief	Some religions have a preference for burials. Some religions have a preference for cremation.	The pricing structure is consistent across all groups regardless of religion.
Sex	No identified impact.	n/a
Sexual Orientation	No identified impact.	n/a
Community Safety	No identified impact.	n/a
Poverty	Those on low income could be impacted by price increases and be unable to meet the costs of burial/cremation.	In accordance with the Public Health Act 1984, funerals are provided for those unable/unwilling to make funeral arrangements when a death occurs within the city.
Health & Wellbeing	No identified impact.	n/a
Other Significant Impacts	None identified.	n/a