

# Applying a 40% Premium for Purchasing a Grave Intended for Future Use

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

### Questionnaire

<b>1. Budget Proposal being assessed?</b>	
Title: Applying a 40% premium for purchasing a grave intended for future use	
Is it a function, policy, procedure or service?: Service	
What is the purpose of the proposal? Burial space at Hendon cemetery is a finite resource and is now becoming scarce. To recognise this scarcity it is intended to apply a premium charge of 40% to those wanting to buy an exclusive right of burial (grave) but not intending to use it for immediate burial.	
Is evidence available to assess the impact on equality strands? Please give detail and source at Question 4. Yes	
<b>2. Who is doing the Assessment? Names and roles of officers:</b>	
Lead officer	Michael Nottage (Cemetery and Crematorium Manager)
Stakeholder groups	Regional Enterprise
Representative from internal stakeholders	Declan Hoare - Lead Commissioner
HR rep (for employment related issues)	N/A
<b>3. Background</b>	
What proportion of the budget does the saving represent?	
This is a business case and is not presented as a saving.	
Is this a continuing saving? It is a continuing fee.	
Has an EIA been carried out previously? Does this need updating? - NO.	
<p><b>Why is it needed?</b></p> <p>Hendon Cemetery and Crematorium (HCC) is a 40 acre site located in Mill Hill (NW7) and has been open since 1899. During this time Hendon has completed approximately 97,000 interments in to 65,000 graves. As the remaining land is developed and prepared for burial, less space remains and so space is now at a premium. The intention of this guaranteed business case is to recognise the scarcity of burial space by applying a premium charge to all pre-purchased graves into remaining virgin land.</p> <p>Currently Hendon cemetery permits the pre-purchase of a right of burial (grave) where an individual wishes to reserve a space whilst planning for their own funeral or where they wish to reserve a space next to or as close to an existing grave as possible. Approximately 100 graves are pre-purchased every year and no additional payment is currently charged for this service over and above the grave purchase fee for that grave. There is a demand for pre-purchased graves in virgin land within the Muslim section of the cemetery, (<i>although the demand is not restricted to this group</i>) where traditionally a grave is purchased and prepared to a depth for one person/burial only. As a result, new (virgin) burial space is becoming more difficult to</p>	

identify within the cemetery (as well as elsewhere in London) and so managing the availability of existing burial space is now a necessity at Hendon.

Hendon Cemetery and Crematorium is a fully outsourced service and is part of the Regional Enterprise joint venture. The contract features a guaranteed business case to apply a 40% premium where a grave is not intended for immediate use.

#### **What are the expected outcomes to be achieved?**

- The current option to buy the exclusive right of burial for future use will continue. However those wishing to purchase a grave in this way will pay a premium to reflect that doing so will contribute to the reduction in the choice of available space for immediate burial over time.
- There is a possibility that applying this additional fee may help preserve burial space for citizens into the future in the event that the increased fee deters pre-purchase.
- The additional charge is likely to have a greater effect on non-residents of the Council as the fee for a grave for non-residents is already greater than for residents.

#### **Who is it aimed at?**

- Citizens/residents of the London Borough of Barnet befitting through increased income and/or through preserved burial space for the future.

#### **How have needs on the protected characteristics been taken account of?**

- As well as recognising the limited on-going supply of burial space, the application of the pre-purchase premium will also provide additional income to the Council to support delivery of services and increase the availability of burial space in the future for residents preferring burial and is therefore, for the benefit of all residents/citizens regardless of protected characteristics.
- The pre-purchase premium will impact those preferring to purchase graves for the purpose of a single burial adjacent to graves of other family members as opposed to those purchasing a family grave in which up to 4 persons may be interred. This is the preference of the Muslim community.

#### **4. How is the equality strands affected? Please detail the effects on each equality strand, and any mitigating action you have taken so far**

<b>Equality Strand</b>	<b>Affected?</b>	<b>Data source</b>	<b>Explain how affected</b>
Age	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge and experience of Hendon cemetery management.	This predominately affects those, generally of middle age (45 – 60), wishing to plan their own funeral and securing (pre-purchasing) a grave plot next to an existing family owned grave. Applying the 40% premium will have an effect on this section of the community.
Disability	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	No identified differential impact based on disability	n/a
Gender	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	. No identified differential impact based on gender	n/a

Gender reassignment	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	No identified differential impact based on Gender reassignment	n/a
Marriage/Civil Partnership	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge and experience of Hendon cemetery management.	This may affect Married couples and those in Civil Partnerships, especially those also affected by Religious belief, Race, Ethnicity and those on low to moderate incomes.
Sexual orientation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	No identified differential impact based on sexual orientation	n/a
Religion or belief	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	Research: Gardens-of-peace.org.uk Hendonmosque.co.uk	Strict followers of Islam require a grave to be prepared to accept one person only. In order for the partner, other family member to be buried next to the deceased requires pre-purchasing a grave. So applying the 40% premium/additional cost will have an effect on this section of the community.
Pregnancy/maternity (including teenage parents)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	No identified differential impact based on pregnancy/maternity including teenage parents.	n/a
Race/Ethnicity	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	Research: Gardens-of-peace.org.uk Hendonmosque.co.uk	Strict followers of Islam require a grave to be prepared to accept one person only. In order for the partner, other family member to be buried next to the deceased requires pre-purchasing a grave. So applying the 40% premium/additional cost will have an effect on this section of the community.
Those on low incomes	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	Understanding/view held by Hendon Cemetery management.  The additional 40% is likely to have an impact on those on low incomes including the elderly.	There will be an additional cost of £863.30 or £1,771.20 for a resident of Barnet, depending on class of grave and £1,787.60 or £3,390.80 for a non-resident, depending on class of grave.

Vulnerable groups	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	No identified differential impact for vulnerable groups	n/a
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#### 5. Have you considered ways to mitigate any adverse impact? Please give detail

Detrimental impact could be avoided by the introduction of a sliding scale of charges which take account of the impact. However this would be difficult to communicate as it appears directly contrary to the council's strategic equalities objective of equal treatment for all and could bring criticism of the council if it is perceived as better treatment for some race or religious groups than others.

Benchmarking of proposed fees with regional competitors, including 4 cemeteries in L B Barnet which Barnet Residents have access to. This shows the following charges for pre-purchased graves:

<b>Hendon/Regional Enterprise</b>	<b>40% (proposed)</b>
<b>Islington &amp; St Pancras</b>	<b>No additional charge</b>
<b>New Southgate</b>	<b>£2,000</b>
<b>St Marylebone</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Enfield</b>	<b>No response to request</b>
<b>City of London</b>	<b>No additional charge</b>
<b>Westminster</b>	<b>50%</b>

Although not all cemeteries charge a pre-purchase premium, there is already a precedent for this premium and at least 2 cemeteries charge 50% rather than the proposed Barnet charge of 40%.

The overall costs of grave purchase and interments for immediate use has also been benchmarked and Barnet current fees are in the mid-range of our competitors' prices, providing residents with a number of alternatives, some of which are cheaper, should they decide not to use the Hendon facility.

In view of the above mitigation, it is proposed to tolerate the affected equality strands.

#### 6. Cumulative Impact

Are the equality strands impacted in this proposal affected by other budget saving proposals or policy changes? Yes

- Strict followers of Islam require a grave to be prepared to accept one person only. In order for the partner or other family member to be buried next to the deceased requires pre-purchasing a grave. So applying the premium may have an effect on this section of the community.
- The proposal will also affect married couples and those in civil partnerships as well as

those on low and moderate incomes, generally of middle age (45 – 60), wishing to plan their own funeral and secure (pre-purchase) a family plot next to an existing family owned grave where stretched resources are already detrimentally impacted by cost of living increases (including those on incidental funeral costs) and welfare reform. So applying the premium may have an effect on these sections of the community.

**7. Will any wards within Barnet be particularly affected by this proposal?**

No

**8. Have residents/service users who will be affected by the proposal been consulted? How have any comments influenced the final proposal?** *Please include information about any prior consultation on the proposal been undertaken, and any dissatisfaction with it from a particular section of the community.*

Yes- consultation was carried out for 28 days, ending on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2014. No comments were received regarding the proposal.

**9. Decision:**

As no significant issues were identified during the consultation period and the other mitigating factors described above, it is intended to proceed with the proposal.

**10. Community Engagement**

**Will the impact on satisfaction ratings amongst different groups of residents be affected**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

**Will members of Barnet's diverse communities feel more confident about the council and the manner in which it conducts its business?**

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☒

**Will the proposal enhance Barnet's reputation as a good place to work and live?**

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☒

**Will the new proposals enable the council to promote good relations between different communities?**

Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

## 11. Equality Improvement Plan

Please list all the equality objectives, actions and targets that result from the Equality Impact Assessment (continue on separate sheets as necessary). These now need to be included in the relevant service plan for mainstreaming and performance management purposes.

Equality Objective	Action	Target	Officer responsible	By when
Improve understanding potential of the potential impact on Muslim community	Carry out consultation exercise and update EIA	Complete by February 2014	Assistant Director - Regulation	28 February 2014