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Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Communities Scrutiny Committee Tuesday 8 July 2025 6.00 pm

Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

Democratic Services:		Paige Starkey	01952 380110			
Media Enquiries:		Corporate Communications 01952 382406				
Comi	mittee Members:	Councillors E Davies F Doran, S Handley, G Lu		ice-Chair), mas		
		Agenda		Page		
1.0	Apologies for A	bsence				
2.0	Declarations of	Interest				
3.0	Minutes of the F		3 - 8			
	To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March 2025.					
4.0	Terms of Refere		9 - 16			
	To review and reconfirm the Terms of Reference for the Communities Scrutiny Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.					
5.0	Communities Scrutiny Work Programme 2025/25					
	To approve the work programme for the 2025/26 municipal year.					
6.0	Traffic Regulation	rekin	To Follow			
	To review the process and procedure for developing and delivering Traffic Regulation Orders.					
7.0	Chair's Update					

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COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 12 March 2025 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

Present: Councillors E Davies (Chair), E Aston, S Handley,

P J Scott and G Thomas

In Attendance: R Phillips (Registrars, Public Protection, Legal &

Democracy Service Delivery Manager), Phull (Housing Strategy & Regeneration Service Delivery Manager) and

P Starkey (Senior Democracy Officer (Scrutiny))

COMSC19 Declarations of Interest

None.

COMSC20 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2025 be agreed and signed by the Chair.

COMSC21 Affordable Warmth

The Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Housing & Regeneration presented an update to the Committee on the Council's Affordable Warmth Strategy for 2021 – 2026.

Adopted in April 2021, the Affordable Warmth Strategy covers the current period up until 2026 and aims to reduce fuel poverty through identifying and supporting households that struggle to afford adequate heating, improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable residents by ensuring homes are energy efficient and reducing the number of fuel-poor households.

As part of the Strategy, an action plan was developed focusing on three key areas which include:-

- Raising energy awareness & support by educating residents about energy efficiency and providing support through initiatives such as the Telford Energy Advice (TEA) hotline.
- Improving energy efficiency & raising standards by attracting grants to retrofit homes to ensure properties meet the minimum energy performance standards and promoting green construction practices.
- Maximising household income & benefitting from the local economy by providing financial assistance through schemes such as the Household Support Fund and supporting local business owners through retrofit contracts.

Members heard that Central Government had changed the definition of fuel poverty which had led to an increase in the number of households classified as fuel-poor, thus posing a greater challenge since the strategy was first adopted by the Council. Additionally, the cost of living crisis and energy price hikes had exacerbated the situation in recent years.

The Council had worked with the Marches Energy Agency to provide a full-time 'one stop shop' hotline through match funding, known as the Telford Energy Advice (TEA) service. Since the initial set-up of the hotline, support was provided to 7,000 fuel-poor households in Telford and Wrekin, including 347 home visits. The hotline provided residents with various types of energy efficiency advice and also provided for a number of small measures such as heated throws to offer immediate support for elderly or vulnerable residents who had limited mobility. The service had also provided flyers to households, offering money-saving tips, an energy calculator app and assistance with switching energy tariffs and price caps. For some households, TEA had advocated with suppliers to secure better tariffs and helped register for priority services. An expression of interest form had recently been introduced to make it easier for residents to access support when needed.

As part of the Strategy, the Council had attracted a surplus of grant funding from various streams, including a £4m grant to retrofit homes, improving 400 households with insulation, heating, and solar panels. Other Council grants, such as the Emergency Boiler Fund had assisted 14 households in making habit changes to heat properties more efficiently and cost-effectively. The Council's Warm and Well Telford scheme had targeted low-income households, addressing the gap in the market for households with combined incomes of up to £50,000 who were still defined as 'fuel-poor'. Climate Change funding was used to upgrade temporary accommodation properties and supply thousands of energy-saving lightbulbs, ensuring vulnerable residents had adequate ratings. The Private Sector Housing service ensured legal compliance with minimum EPC ratings, whilst Nuplace raised standards through green construction. Examples included the installation of smart-controlled radiator bots to maintain heat levels and avoid dampness and condensation.

Members heard that in line with the emerging Future Homes legislation, the Station Quarter housing development due to be delivered by 2026 would include a range of Nuplace Homes which would be fully electric with no gas supply. Heating for these homes would be provided through a mixture of electric panel heaters and storage heaters with heat loss minimised through a fabric first approach to build and the use of PV solar panels to minimise energy costs for residents.

The TEA service had worked with key services such as Citizens Advice and the Wrekin Housing Group to support residents struggling with energy debt and the Better Homes for All scheme provided loans in collaboration with the local credit union to residents who did not qualify for grants. Since 2021, approximately £3.1m had been allocated per year to the Household Support Fund, a scheme which would continue until March 2026. Additionally, an

annual Emergency Welfare Assistance (Crisis Assistance) Fund of £111,000 had been allocated and had increased to £182,000 for the 2024/25 financial period. The Strategy had emphasised the efforts that had been made to keep spending local to support businesses and suppliers as well as how the Council had continued to tender capital works contracts to maximize social impact for vulnerable clients. The Retrofit Homes Project had been carried out in partnership with the Marches Energy Agency and Dodd Group to demonstrate the benefits of retrofitting a home to improve energy by using a property supplied by the Wrekin Housing Group as a show home and to set an example for developers and landlords alike to follow. The project had also provided apprenticeships through the Retrofit Academy for college students to help bridge the skills gap in the local workforce.

The next steps for the Affordable Warmth Strategy include the launch of the Warm Homes Local Grant programme, which would look to cater to both on and off gas properties in consortium with Shropshire and Herefordshire. Additionally, the Future Ready Homes Programme would be launched and would look to assist residents in navigating the complex retrofit market. The Council would also be continuing its work to reach digitally excluded individuals and overcome language barriers through targeted outreach at places of worship and community hubs to ensure that all residents have access to the support and resources needed to improve their home's energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty.

Following the presentation, Members posed several questions:-

What was the Council doing to proactively help people who had been struggling, specifically residents who had reached pension age and had lived in the same houses for several years? There have been community groups delivered at Admaston House, and Wrockwardine Village Hall to help residents who needed to keep warm.

The Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Housing & Regeneration advised that the Council was actively working on how to further support residents who had reached pension age. The first series of communication campaigns was designed to reach people who were able to contact the Council, however the Council's focus would now be on reaching those residents who couldn't. The TEA service had also undertaken a lot of community work such as setting up stands and visiting schools.

How confident were you that you were reaching the right people who needed to hear these messages, especially poorer individuals and residents of pension age who might not have known about the scheme? What messages were you using?

The Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Housing & Regeneration advised that the Council had been confident in terms of numbers received TEA referrals and being able to reach out to residents who were in need. However, there had been general concern about whether some residents knew about the scheme and support available and if the service had reached those

residents who were generally in need. Another huge challenge for the Council was the private rented sector and ensuring the scheme reached tenants, with some fearing retribution from their landlords. Data sources provided information on household income, income deprivation, and types of households likely to be fuel-poor.

How did you get those messages out?

The Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Housing & Regeneration advised that a variety of methods had been used to reach residents, especially those may not be active on social media. This included physical leaflet drops and setting up stands at local community centres. The service had also visited GPs and supermarkets. Ongoing work was being undertaken with the Telford & Wrekin Interfaith Council to identify places of worship. The Council had also engaged with partner agencies such as Telford Crisis Support and Age UK as it was recognised that there may be vulnerable individuals who may not be aware of the offer.

How can we address the challenges faced by families who have moved in from out of the area and are living in poorly maintained hotels, especially considering the fear of retribution from landlords and the involvement of health professionals?

The Director: Housing, Employment & Infrastructure commented that private rented housing continued to be a challenge for the Council and the Private Sector Housing Team had continued to be proactive in undertaking checks and addressing issues reported back to the service as well as enforcing energy efficiency standards. The Council had however recognised that some landlords may face costs which would prevent them from maintaining properties but could access support through credit union loans.

What about social housing landlords? They had their own programs but might not have been up to standard. How did that work with the council?

The Director: Housing, Employment & Infrastructure confirmed that when referrals are received, they are handled in the same way as referrals for the Private Housing Sector. The Council utilised nation funding programmes such as the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. Issues that had been raised with social housing had been lower and landlords had been generally receptive. In addition, the Social Housing Ombudsman, which had been established in the last 12 months, had been instrumental in overseeing matters.

Regarding rented accommodation, what percentage of people who owned homes fell into this category compared to renters?

The Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Housing & Regeneration advised that approximately 95% of properties were owner-occupied. Whilst the offer was open to private renters, landlords would be required to pay a contribution.

Have you spoken to any schools in the area?

The Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Housing & Regeneration advised that at a recent Safer Stronger Board meeting, a presentation had been delivered by school heads regarding various areas of concern in relation to pupils home life. One of the key issues highlighted was in relation to excess cold which affected 30-50% of rented properties. A request had since been made for the Team to speak to school heads about concerns around repeated absenteeism and to provide support around the resources available for families who are struggling such as the TEA service and private sector housing support.

Were we trying to capture and prevent people on the cusp of falling into fuel poverty and are there any strategies available to support them?

The Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Housing & Regeneration commented that the Telford Warm & Well initiative had raised its income threshold to ensure that people who fall out of central funding were still eligible to receive support. The TEA service was a service which was open to all residents, not just those who were vulnerable and could also assist with residents who were on the cusp of being classed as fuel-poor.

Was there anything else we as Councillors could have done to support you in getting the message out?

The Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Housing & Regeneration advised that as elected Members regularly speak to residents and conduct wards of the ward, they would be in the best position to help identify specific neighbourhoods or areas that would benefit from the offer. An example was provided of a Councillor who had recently identified a household which appeared to need assistance and the Team were able to support by undertaking a door knocking activity in the ward area.

COMSC22 Work Programme Review

The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy presented the updated work programme to the Committee. Members were advised that there were no further meetings scheduled to take place for the 2024/25 municipal year and any remaining items on the work programme would be carried forward into the next year.

Members discussed items for the 2025/26 work programme and it was suggested that an item on the process surrounding Traffic Regulation Orders could be put forward.

COMSC23 Chair's Update

The Chair thanked Members for their contributions over the municipal year and for their involvement in the elections review and fly-tipping workshops.

The meeting	ended at 6.52 pm
Chairman:	
Date:	Tuesday 8 July 2025



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Communities Scrutiny Committee Tuesday 8 July 2025

Terms of Reference 2025/26

Cabinet Member: Cllr Zona Hannington - Cabinet Member: Finance,

Governance & Customer Services

Lead Director: Anthea Lowe - Director: Policy & Governance

Service Area: Policy & Governance

Report Author: Ashley Hickman – Democracy & Scrutiny Assistant

Officer Contact

Details:

Tel: 01952 382589 **Email:** ashley.hickman1@telford.gov.uk

Wards Affected: All Wards

Key Decision: Not Key Decision

Forward Plan: Not Applicable

Report considered by: Communities Scrutiny Committee – 8 July 2025

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that the Communities Scrutiny Committee:

1.1 Agree and reconfirm the Terms of Reference set out at Appendix A.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To set out for review and agreement the Terms of Reference for the Communities Scrutiny Committee outlined at Appendix A of the report.

3.0 Background

3.1 The Constitution requires that Full Council should agree at its Annual Meeting the Terms of Reference for each of its Committees to enable the Council to efficiently conduct its business.

- 3.2 At the Annual Meeting of the Council on 15 May 2025, Full Council delegated authority to each Committee to review its own Terms of Reference.
- 3.3 The Terms of Reference forms part of the Consitution and approved by Full Council in that context on 15 May 2025.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

4.1 For the Communities Scrutiny Committee to review its Terms of Reference as set out in appendix A.

5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 There are no alternative options arising from this report.

6.0 Key Risks

6.1 There are no key risks arising from this report.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 A community-focused, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 The Constitution requires that the Committee's Terms of Reference should be reviewed annually. This report provides the basis for that review. There are no HR implications arising from this report.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 There are no ward implications arising from this report.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 There are no Health, Social and Economic Implications arising from this report.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

13.0 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

13.1 There are no Climate Change, Biodiversity or Environmental implications arising from this report.

14.0 Background Papers

1 Council Constitution

15.0 Appendices

A Communities Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference 2025/26

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal Services	17/06/2025	25/06/2025	EH
Finance	17/06/2025	18/06/2025	MLB



COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Membership

- 1. The Committee will be made up of elected members from the Scrutiny Assembly, appointed at Annual Council in line with the political balance of the Council, and co-opted scrutiny members.
- 2. The number of co-opted members must not exceed 50% of the number of elected members.
- 3. In addition to standing co-optees, the Committee may appoint additional co-optees for one-off reviews to supplement the skills, knowledge and experience of members of the Committee on that particular issue (subject to the rule on total number of co-optees above).
- 4. The Chair is appointed at the Annual General Meeting of full Council. A Vice-Chair may be appointed by majority decision of the Committee.
- 5. The quorum for a meeting is three elected members.

Functions

- 6. The Committee will be the main mechanism by which Scrutiny members will scrutinise and monitor issues relating to the following key areas:
 - Customer Experience
 - Voluntary sector and community groups
 - Community engagement and development
 - Community hubs and centres
 - Library services and archives
 - Heritage Services
 - Preventing and reducing crime
 - Tackling domestic abuse
 - > Reducing anti-social behaviour
 - > Fire and rescue and emergency response
 - Public Protection
 - > Enforcement
 - Civil resilience and emergency planning
 - Road safety
 - Registration, celebratory and coroner's services
 - Benefits and welfare reform
 - > Sport, leisure, entertainment and culture facilities
 - Diversity and Equality
 - > Armed Services and Veterans
 - ➤ Interfaith Issues
 - Housing including affordable housing, HMOs, homelessness and housing needs

- 7. The Community Scrutiny Committee will be the designated body for scrutiny of the Safer, Stronger Communities Partnership as set out in section 19 of the Police & Justice Act (2006). The work programme will make provision for scrutiny of this item.
- 8. The Committee will consider matters referred by the Scrutiny Management Board, and will exercise discretion as to whether a suggestion falls within the remit of the Committee to scrutinise.
- 9. The Committee will set its own work programme in accordance with the areas set out above and may look at any issue deemed by the Committee to fall within its remit.

Meeting Administration and Proceedings

- 10. The Committee procedure rules as set out in the Council's Constitution apply to this Committee.
- 11. The meetings will follow the principles of scrutiny ie no party whip will be applied and a constructive, evidence based approach will be used.
- 12. If the Chair or Vice-Chair (if appointed) are unable to attend a meeting the Members present will elect a Chair for the meeting.
- 13. All Scrutiny Committee meetings will be held in public, unless exempt information is being considered or discussed. Scrutiny Committees may appoint sub-groups to carry out investigative work as part of a review and these sub-groups may hold informal meetings but will report back their findings to the Scrutiny Committee.
- 14. The meetings will be administered by Scrutiny Services and Democratic Services. Frequency of meetings will be agreed by the Committee as necessary to carry out the work programme.
- 15. Relevant Cabinet Members, Executive Directors, Directors and Service Delivery Managers will attend the Committee at the request of the Chair. Representatives from other organisations may be invited to attend.

Sensitive and Confidential Information

16. From time to time members may become privy to information of a confidential nature. If this happens, members must maintain this confidence. Members are unable to request personal/confidential information from Officers about an individual or family.

Reporting Arrangements

Appendix A

17. The Chair will provide regular updates to meetings of the Scrutiny Management Board to inform the other Scrutiny Chairs of performance and budget issues relating to the remit of their Committees.

The Chair of the Committee, or his/her representative, will provide and present reports and recommendations of the Committee to the Council's Cabinet, Fully Council or other relevant organisations when necessary.

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Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Communities Scrutiny Committee Tuesday 8 July 2025

Communities Scrutiny Work Programme 2025/26

Cabinet Member: Cllr Zona Hannington – Cabinet Member: Finance,

Governance & Customer Services

Lead Director: Anthea Lowe – Director: Policy & Governance

Service Area: Policy & Governance

Report Author: Paige Starkey – Senior Democracy Officer (Scrutiny)

Officer Contact

Details:

Tel: 01952 380110 **Email:** Paige.Starkey@telford.gov.uk

Wards Affected: All Wards

Key Decision: Not Key Decision **Forward Plan:** Not Applicable

Report considered by: Communities Scrutiny Committee – 8 July 2025

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Communities Scrutiny Committee:
 - a) Review and agree the work programme as outlined at Appendix A.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To set the work programme for the Communities Scrutiny Committee as outlined at Appendix A.

3.0 Background

3.1 Scrutiny now operates a two-year work programme to allow for Committees to undertake in-depth work over a longer period of time.

Communities Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

- 3.2 Work programmes for Scrutiny committees are reviewed annually, with a period of consultation taking place in the months running up to a new municipal year. The public, key stakeholders, and Council officers are asked to put forward scrutiny suggestions for inclusion on the coming year's work programme.
- 3.3 Following the consultation period, a draft work programme is taken to Scrutiny Management Board for comment before being sent onto individual committees for final approval.
- 3.4 The Constitution states that Scrutiny committees are to set and undertake their own programme of work, meeting as required to deliver the work programme.
- 3.5 Work programmes can be amended throughout the year if the Committee or Scrutiny Assembly deem it necessary.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

4.1 For the Communities Scrutiny Commmittee to review and approve the draft work programme as outlined at Appendix A.

5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 There are no alternative options arising from this report.

6.0 Key Risks

6.1 There are no key risks arising from this report.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 9.1 The Local Government Association state that the role of scrutiny is to achieve positive outcomes for local people by undertaking a thorough, targeted examination of the Council's service provision and procedures. Therefore, it is important to undertake work programming which can be done at the beginning of each year.
- 9.2 In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference, the Committee will set its own work programme for the municipal year, will consider matters referred to it by

Communities Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

- the Scrutiny Management Board, and may make recommendations to Cabinet and Full Council following scrutiny.
- 9.3 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The proposals contained in this report can be delivered using existing resources.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 There are no ward implications arising from this report.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 There are no health, social and economic implications arising from this report.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

13.0 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

13.1 There are no climate change, biodiversity and environmental implications arising from this report.

14.0 Background Papers

1 Council Constitution

15.0 Appendices

A Communities Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025/26

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal Services	02/06/2025	20/06/2025	SH
Finance	17/06/2025	18/06/2025	MLB



Communities Scrutiny Work Programme 2025/26

Issue / Topic	Brief Description	Directorate	Council Values/Priorities	Format	Meeting Comments		
8 July 2025 – Comr	l mittee Meeting						
Terms of Reference	For the Committee to agree the Terms of Reference for 2025/26.	Policy & Governance	A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.	Committee Agenda Item	Constitutional Function.		
	Outcomes:						
Work Programme Page	For the Committee to agree the proposed work programme for 2025/26.	Policy & Governance	A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.	Committee Agenda Item	Draft work programme delegated to each scrutiny committee by SMB on 19 June 2025.		
ige 21	Outcomes:						
Traffic Regulation Orders	For the Committee to review the process undertaken for the management and implementation of Traffic Regulation Orders including the legislative processes.	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services Policy & Governance	A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services	Committee Agenda Item	New suggestion received for the work programme.		
	Outcomes:						

Communities Scrutiny Work Programme 2025/26

Issue / Topic	Brief Description	Directorate	Council Values/Priorities	Format	Meeting Comments
2 October 2025 – C	Committee Meeting				
Domestic Abuse Strategy – Violence Against Women & Girls	For the Committee to receive an update on the Domestic Abuse Strategy to encompass the Violence Against Women & Girls prevention agenda and proposed actions.	Public Health	All neighbourhoods are a great place to live. Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community. A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.	Committee Agenda Item /Workshop	New suggestion received for the work programme following update presented to Committee on Domestic Abuse grants in 2024/25.
Page 22	Outcomes:				

Issue / Topic	Brief Description	Directorate	Council Values/Priorities	Format	Meeting Comments			
12 February 2026 -	12 February 2026 – Committee Meeting							
Community Action Team Programme (CAT)	For the Committee to review the effectiveness of the Community Action Team Programme including accessibility and funding.	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services. Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community.	Committee Agenda Item	New suggestion received for the work programme.			
	Outcomes:							
Telford & Wrekin	For the Committee to monitor the effectiveness of the strategy against the five key principles and its impact on improving skill levels.	Education & Skills	Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community. A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.	Committee Agenda Item	New suggestion received for the work programme. Cross-cutting to include members from CYP Scrutiny.			
	Outcomes:		1	1				

Issue / Topic	Brief Description	Directorate	Council Values/Priorities	Format	Meeting Comments			
23 April 2026 – Committee Meeting								
To be determined.								
	Outcomes:							

Issue / Topic	Brief Description	Directorate	Council Values/Priorities	Format	Meeting Comments		
To be scheduled							
Littering Strategy	For the Committee to review the measures taken by the Council to reduce the amount of litter in the Borough including processes for street cleansing and prevention.	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Our natural environment is protected, and the Council is taking a leading role in tackling the climate emergency. A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services. All neighbourhoods are a great place to live.	Committee Agenda Item/Task and Finish Group	New suggestion received for the work programme.		
Page	Outcomes:						
Social Value in Contracts	For the Committee to review the Social Value in Contracts scheme, with a focus on corporate social responsibility, and consideration of the development of a social value impact fund and if this would be beneficial for the community.	Policy & Governance	Everyone benefits from a thriving economy. A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.	Workshop	Carried forward from 2024/25.		
	Outcomes:	1	-	1	,		

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