

# APPENDIX E

## WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13 SEPTEMBER 2010

#### REPORT TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 12 OCTOBER 2010

This report details the work undertaken by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the municipal year 2009/10.

The Committee met five times, in June, September and November 2009, and January and March 2010. The membership was as follows: -

Cllr Victor Duckett (Chairman)	Cllr Julian Hubble
Cllr Mrs Nerissa Warner-O'Neill (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr Simon Inchbald
Cllr Mrs Elizabeth Cable	Cllr Dr Nicky Lee
Cllr Mike Causey	Cllr Stephen O'Grady
Cllr Stuart Connolly	Cllr Mrs Celia Savage
Cllr James Edwards	Cllr Ross Welland
Cllr Mrs Patricia Ellis	Cllr Mrs Liz Wheatley
Cllr Stephen Hill	Cllr Andrew Wilson
Cllr Nicholas Holder	

There were two members of the Tenants' Panel co-opted to this Committee:  
Mr Harold Fuller and Mrs Jane Rawlings.

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for performing the overview and scrutiny role in relation to the following main functions:-

##### Community Safety:

- Police & Justices Act: Neighbourhood Policing
- Safer Waverley Partnership
- Community Safety Strategy 2005-2008

##### Community Services:

- Meals on Wheels
- Day Centres for the Elderly
- Careline Service
- Citizens Advice Waverley
- Work with the voluntary sector and grants
- Community Transport
- Concessionary Fares

##### Housing Landlord Function:

- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan
- Tenant Participation
- Housing Management
- Sheltered housing and Community Supporting People Service
- Day-to-Day Repairs
- Decent Homes Standard

Planned Maintenance  
Disabled Adaptations  
Rent Collection and Rent Arrears

Housing Strategy, Enabling and Housing in the Private Sector:

Housing Strategy Statement  
Homelessness Strategy  
Housing Market and Housing Needs Assessment  
Homelessness  
Housing Advice  
Choice Based Lettings  
Working with Housing Associations  
Enabling additional affordable homes  
Private Sector Stock Condition  
Disabled Adaptations in the Private Sector  
Empty Homes

Liaison with Health and Social Services

Rural Issues

Rural Housing  
Rural Economy

Town and Village Liaison

**2. IN-DEPTH REVIEWS**

The Committee undertook two major in-depth reviews during 2009/10.

2.1 *Review of Waverley's Decent Homes*

New Membership and updated terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group were agreed by the Committee, and that the Chairman of the Tenants Panel remained as a co-opted member and an invitation to attend be extended to the Vice-Chairman of the Tenants Panel.

The Task and Finish Group had visited both decent and non-decent void properties and had hoped to visit other local authorities that had both achieved and not achieved decent homes standards to enable comparison of properties. However, it did not prove possible for arrangements to be made and the review paused awaiting clarity regarding the new funding regime for local authority housing.

2.2 *Working with the Voluntary Sector – Scoping Report*

2.3 *9 November 2009*

The Committee received and agreed the outline of the scoping report, the key questions to be addressed and that the review be conducted in accordance with the outline timetable.

Cllrs Mrs Elizabeth Cable, Victor Duckett, Mrs Patricia Ellis, Dr Nicky Lee, Bryn Morgan and Mrs Celia Savage were appointed to the Task and Finish Group.

## 2.4 8 March 2010

The Committee received a verbal update from the lead officer and Chairman of the Voluntary Sector Task Group on the work of Group so far.

The first two meetings of the Task Group had resulted in the identification of the issues surrounding the funding criteria, application criteria and the need for organisations applying for funds to have security of funding and further encouragement and advice to seek alternative sources of funding.

The Task Group had also agreed to look at how to allocate limited funding in a time when organisations were faced with increasing needs, and whether this might be achieved in part by a tightening of the application criteria to ensure Waverley's objectives could be met.

The Task Group would meet once more to finalise their report and formulate questions to partner organisations at a Select Committee meeting to be held on 18 May 2010. The main committee would then receive the outcome of the Select Committee and decide on observations and recommendations to pass to the Executive.

[This review is ongoing]

## 3. **REVIEW OF ITEMS CONSIDERED BY THE COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2009/10**

- 3.1 Items considered by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the course of the municipal year 2009/10 (May 2009 to April 2010) are set out below.

### **Overview Items**

- 3.2 *New Powers for Overview & Scrutiny Committees – Introduction of a Protocol for Dealing with a Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) and Other Developments (15 June 2009)*

The Committee considered proposals for the introduction of a protocol for Councillor Calls for Action and the new powers relating to scrutiny of partnership arrangements.

The Committee engaged in considerable discussion on the proposed protocol for operating a CCfA, including the process for initiating a Call for Action in the event an issue covered more than one ward. Members were advised that the new powers were limited to issues affecting single wards but members of adjacent wards affected by the same issue could both initiate the same Call for Action.

In considering Step 3 of the proposed protocol, the Committee agreed to propose that both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the relevant committee should undertake the consideration of the Call for Action form unless they had a personal interest in the issue raised.

The Committee RESOLVED that their observations be passed to the Executive for their consideration.

**At its meeting on 7 July 2009 the Executive endorsed the comments and recommendations of the Committee.**

3.3 Review of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 – Home Office Consultation (15 June 2009)

The Committee considered a report that informed members of the detail of the Home Office's consultation paper in respect of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ("RIPA"), and updated them on the Council's use of the covert investigatory techniques.

Although the Committee endorsed an oversight by elected members, members did not agree that a senior elected member should be involved in the authorisation of RIPA investigations.

The Committee requested an oversight of the policy during the consultation period and an annual report to review decisions taken during that 12-month period.

The Committee RESOLVED that their observations be passed to the Executive for their consideration.

**At its meeting on 7 July 2009 the Executive endorsed the comments and recommendations of the Committee.**

3.4 Introductory Tenancies (15 June 2009)

The Committee received a report that considered the advantages and disadvantages of Introductory Tenancies in housing management and considered whether the Council should implement Introductory Tenancies for new tenants in Waverley's housing stock.

The Committee concluded that, after due consideration, it was not necessary for the Council to adopt Introductory Tenancies and RESOLVED that

1. the observations of the Committee be passed to the Executive for their consideration; and
2. the issue of Introductory Tenancies be reviewed every three years, or earlier if, in the opinion of the Housing Portfolio Holder circumstances had changed sufficiently to warrant consideration again.

**At its meeting on 7 July 2009 the Executive endorsed the comments and recommendations of the Committee.**

3.5 Revising Waverley's Tenancy Agreement (15 June 2009)

The Committee considered a report that advised Members about the need to undertake revisions to the current Tenancy Agreement and proposed changes to the Tenancy Agreement.

The Committee endorsed the draft Revised Tenancy Agreement with their suggested additions and RESOLVED that their observations be passed to the Executive for consideration prior to a formal consultation exercise with tenants.

**At its meeting on 7 July 2009 the Executive endorsed the comments and recommendations of the Committee.**

3.6 WBC Older Persons Housing Strategy 2009-2012 (7 September 2009)

The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee congratulated officers on the work undertaken to identify the issues facing older people in the community.

The Committee asked officers to encapsulate their comments on the clarification of the definition of older people, the need to support elderly and frail people who wished to remain in their own homes, and their concern for elderly residents who lived in sparsely populated communities not served by frequent of regular public and community transport.

The Committee commended the document to the Executive.

3.7 The Blackwater Valley Housing Market (7 September 2009)

The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed the fact that this could offer the opportunity of greater access to more affordable housing for Waverley residents.

The Committee RESOLVED that the principle of the proposed nomination sharing arrangements for larger sites in the Blackwater Valley, as detailed in the committee report, be endorsed and the proposal commended to the Executive.

**At its meeting on 29 September 2009 the Executive endorsed the proposal.**

3.8 Developing and Widening Tenant Participation and Involvement (7 September 2009)

The Committee received the report that outlined the work that was beginning to strengthen the Council's approach to tenant/resident participation and involvement. Members' noted and commended the progress being made on the widening tenant involvement agenda and the activity being undertaken by TPAS. The Committee asked that the employment of a dedicated Tenant Participation Office be actively explored, and welcomed the formation of the Weybourne and Heath End Tenant Association.

3.9 Energy Efficiency, Climate Change & Housing Stock Improvements (9 November 2009)

The Committee welcomed and noted the work undertaken on Energy Efficiency by the Council's landlord service. It was noted that the assessment of alternative power options was conducted by an expert company on behalf

of Waverley Borough Council. The Committee asked officers to mention where expert advice had been sought in future reports.

3.10 *Affordable Housing Programme in Waverley (9 November 2009)*

The Committee noted the report on affordable housing and that officers were undertaking work on projects that were scheduled to come online later in the year.

3.11 *Waverley Community Partnership 2009/10 Interim Performance Monitoring Report (9 November 2009)*

The Committee welcomed the achievements of each of the organisations funded by the Waverley Community Partnership in the first 6 months of 2009/10. The Committee strongly encouraged the Executive to enhance their support to those organisations in view of their valuable work working with the most vulnerable members of the community.

3.12 *Review of the Community Supporting People (9 November 2009)*

The Committee received a presentation on Waverley's Community Supporting People Service. This was a service for elderly, disabled and 'vulnerable' tenants living in housing owned by Waverley Council in the towns and villages of the Borough. As a landlord Waverley would be affected by budget reductions starting in 2010. A further report would be provided to a future meeting.

3.13 *Implementation of New Powers for Overview and Scrutiny Committees (9 November 2009)*

Members discussed the work currently being undertaken by the Surrey Scrutiny Officers Group and how best the Committee might involve the Police Authority in its new role scrutinising crime and disorder and community safety issues at a local level.

It was agreed that a standing invitation be made to the Police Authority for one of its members to attend the meetings of the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee for appropriate community safety issues, and that the first meeting of the council year should be designated for the discussion of crime and disorder issues (see Item 5).

The Committee also recommended that Waverley participate in the proposed Surrey-wide framework for collaborative scrutiny, and explore the possibilities of working with one or more individual boroughs and districts in Surrey on the scrutiny of performance against the LAA targets, and that the new arrangements be reviewed in two years time.

**At its meeting on 1 December 2009 the Executive endorsed the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees that appropriate changes are drafted to the Overview and Scrutiny Article and Procedure Rules in the Constitution and submitted to the next cycle of meetings.**

3.14 Waverley Community Partnership - Applications For Revenue Funding 2010/11 (11 January 2010)

The Committee received a report to consider the applications to the Waverley Community Partnership for revenue funding in 2010/11.

The Committee made the following observations to be passed to the Executive:

1. an exercise should be undertaken to present the full extent of Waverley's support of its Community Partners, particularly day centres, so as to quantify all concessions, relief and waiving of fees/rents etc. This would help to produce a more transparent picture of the circumstances of individual Partners; and
2. officers should be asked to inform members how Waverley was supporting its Partners in terms of negotiations with Hoppa and other transport contractors.

**At its meeting on 2 February 2010 the Executive received and noted the comments.**

3.15 Report on the Package of Changes to the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) Programme (11 January 2010)

The Committee received a report that covered the five main changes to the DFG programme. The Committee noted the report and endorsed the recommendations.

3.16 Housing Services Compensation Policy (11 January 2010)

The Committee received a report that identified the Audit Commission's recommendation that Waverley introduce a Compensation Policy. A draft policy had been compiled to best practice standards. Compensation claims at Waverley had never been high and were expected to remain modest. The Committee commended the Policy to the Executive for adoption.

**At its meeting on 2 February the Executive agreed that the Compensation Policy be adopted, subject to clarification that compensation would not be payable if a tenant exercises their right to buy.**

3.17 Revising the Council's Social Housing Tenancy Agreement (11 January 2010)

The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the revised draft Tenancy Agreement, which had been through a consultation period with tenants and considered by the Tenants' Panel. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Executive that:

1. The new tenancy agreement be approved for implementation with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 with suitable amendments made to Section 7, paragraphs (1) and (2); and

2. A meeting take place between the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Weybourne & Heath End Tenants' Association and Housing Officers to examine the local issues.

**At its meeting on 2 February 2010 the Executive agreed that the new tenancy agreement be approved for implementation effective from 1 April 2010 and the Head of Housing be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to make final detailed changes to the document.**

3.18 *Draft Rural Strategy (11 January 2010)*

The Committee received a report that set out the main issues in Surrey Rural Partnership's new Rural Strategy and sought views on whether there were any observations that should be made from a Waverley perspective. The Committee were of the view that the draft Rural Strategy is lacking an effective approach to addressing rural transportation issues in Surrey and from this point of view does not take account of the realities of rural living; and the Rural Surrey Partnership membership should include a greater number of effective advocates for older people who have direct links to local Age Concern groups in the County.

3.19 *A Review of Waverley's Preferred Partnering Arrangements with Registered Social Landlords (11 January 2010)*

The Committee received a report that gave an overview of the Council's working relationship with affordable housing providers. The Council had worked with 10 social landlords to develop 379 new affordable homes since 2001. These registered social landlords were known as 'Preferred Partners'. Officers had undertaken an internal review on the arrangements to determine whether the Council would wish them to continue.

The Committee agreed on the preferred partners list for the period 2009-2015 with the exception that Raglan's status be withdrawn. That preferred partners work on the affordable housing schemes that are negotiated on the larger development sites that come forward between 2009 and 2015, and that there is an annual review of their performance. Also that housing associations not selected will still have a role to play in the development of affordable housing in the district.

**At its meeting on 2 February the Executive endorsed the recommendations of the Committee.**

3.20 *Rent Accounts Service (8 March 2010)*

The Committee had previously requested a brief update on the work of the Rent Accounts Service following a previous verbal report to the Committee. The report outlined some of the difficulties being faced by tenants in the economic downturn, the work being undertaken by the Rent Accounts Team and actions planned for 2010/11.

The Committee commended the work of the Rent Accounts Team in maintaining income collection.



## 4. **FINANCIAL ISSUES**

### 4.1 Housing Revenue Account Subsidy Review – Update (7 September 2009)

The Committee considered a report that set out important proposed changes to the financial management arrangements for councils' Housing Revenue Accounts, and provided an update on the progress of Waverley's Campaign for Fair and Local Housing Finance. The fact that the government was not currently intending to cancel the historic housing debt held by some councils but redistribute it to other local authorities was considered by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be unjust and members wished to strongly object to the proposal.

The Committee commended officers and tenants for the work undertaken on this issue and RESOLVED that the observations of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee be commended to the Executive, and Waverley continue to make the case nationally that the government should take on the burden of the historic national housing debt.

**At its meeting on 29 September 2009 the Executive endorsed the comments and recommendations of the Committee.**

### 4.2 Financial Strategy 2009/2010 – 2112/2013 (11 January 2010)

The Community O&S Performance Sub-Committee had considered the budget papers in advance of the meeting and reported their comments to the main meeting of the Committee. The Committee considered their observations as follows:-

#### Draft Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2010/2011

1. for reasons of clarity all expenditure be explained on a more detailed, transparent level, in particular accounting for the £12M HRA Summary. A layman-level of explanation was required;
2. the depreciation from council dwellings be described as Major Repairs Reserve with explanatory cross-referencing between revenue and capital budgets;
3. the Capital Programme also list works that were desirable to undertake, but were without resources. These works to be valued as zero on the budget; and
4. an Annual Report be produced setting out what has been achieved by way of major works in the previous year.

#### Draft Housing Revenue Account Budget 2010/11

1. it be clarified whether the Government guideline level of 3.1% was considered high;
2. 'Contract Inflation' be clarified as the Responsive Repairs Contract;
3. the 'Tenants Redecorating Scheme' be discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and officers would produce figures to illustrate how many properties could be either redecorated or bought up to DHS using this fund; and
4. the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss if the staff recharge time for corporate services was a fair pro-rata share.

### General Fund Revenue Estimates 2010/11

1. budget report reference to Community Care 'proposed activity' be clarified to the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee;
2. budget report reference to tourism 'levering in resources' be clarified to the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee;
3. budget report reference to Homelessness 'Net saving to property rents' be reworded more suitably;
4. Central Communications recharges should be explained to the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee;
5. the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee discuss the benefits of the merger of Tourism into Economic Development;
6. the levels of use of each Locality Office be explained to the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee;
7. level of 'Hired and contracted service' or the Farmers markets profit to be explained to the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee
8. regular budget monitoring should come before the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well as the Executive.

### Draft Capital Programme 2010/11

The Sub-Committee made no observations that they wished to be passed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee accepted the clarification of the budget papers provided by officers, endorsed the comments of the Performance Sub-Committee and recommended them to the Executive.

**At its meeting on 2 February 2010 the Executive received and noted the comments and recommendations of the Committee.**

## **5. CRIME & DISORDER ISSUES**

- 5.1 A briefing to all members of the Council and representatives from Towns & Parish Councils by the Surrey Police Chief Constable and Chairman of the Surrey Police Authority had taken place immediately prior to the commencement of the meeting on 8 March 2010.

At the meeting on 8 March 2010 it was suggested that it would be advantageous to both Surrey Police and residents if Ward Members could work with the Police to identify community safety issues in their areas. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety offered to summarise outside of the meeting the details of a previous training session run by the Safer Waverley Partnership on the role of the Safer Neighbourhood Partnership and its interaction with Ward Councillors.

## **6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

- 6.1 *Performance Management Report, Quarter 4 (January - March) 2008/09 & Annual Performance Report 2008/09 (15 June 2009)*

The Committee endorsed the comments and recommendations of the Performance Sub-Committee that had met on 1 June 2009 and RESOLVED that these should be forwarded to the Executive.

**At its meeting on 7 July 2009 the Executive endorsed the comments and recommendations of the Committee.**

6.2 *Performance Management Report, Quarter 1 (April-June) 2009/10 (7 September 2009)*

The Committee received the report from the Performance Sub-Committee and had no further observations to make other than noting that most areas had performed well in the current financial climate and the possibility of introducing additional new aids and adaptation performance indicators. The Committee RESOLVED that the recommendations and comments of the Performance Sub-Committee be forwarded to the Executive.

**At its meeting on 29 September 2009 the Executive endorsed the comments and recommendations of the Committee.**

6.3 *Performance Management Report, Quarter 2 (Jul-Sept) 2009/10 (9 November 2009)*

The Committee endorsed the comments and recommendations of the Performance Sub-Committee and RESOLVED that these should be forwarded to the Executive.

**At its meeting on 1 December 2009 the Executive endorsed the comments and recommendations of the Committee.**

6.4 *Performance Management Report, Quarter 3 (Oct-Dec) 2009/10 (8 March 2010)*

The Committee received the report and the Minutes from the Performance Sub-Committee. The Acting Chairman of the Performance Sub-Committee reported that overall the figures were a good result and the Sub-Committee was content with the outcomes. The Committee endorsed the comments and recommendations of the Performance Sub-Committee and RESOLVED that these should be forwarded to the Executive.

**At its meeting on 13 April 2010 the Executive endorsed the comments and recommendations of the Committee.**

## **7. PROGRESS REPORTS**

7.1 *Social Inclusion Strategy Plan – Progress Report (15 June 2009)*

The Committee considered a report that detailed progress against the objectives set out in the Strategy and which identified areas of work still to be completed.

The Committee RESOLVED that the progress made against the objectives set out in the Social Inclusion Strategy Action Plan be noted and a further progress report be brought to the Committee in six months time.

7.2 *Audit Commission Recommendations – Progress Report (15 June 2009)*

The Committee considered a report that provided members with a three-month update of the work completed by the housing staff following the Audit Commission inspection report on 15 January 2009 and RESOLVED that

1. officers continue to implement the Audit Commission recommendations; and
2. officers provide a six-month review in July.

7.3 Landlord Services Audit Commission Inspection (7 September 2009)

The Committee welcomed the progress being made on implementing the Audit Commission's recommendations and RESOLVED that the contents of the report be endorsed and officers continue to implement the Audit Commission recommendations.

7.4 Social Inclusion Strategy 2008 – Progress and Action Plan Including Financial Inclusion Approach (9 November 2009)

The Committee noted that for the first time the report included a financial inclusion approach in response to the economic downturn and the Audit Commission's recommendation from last year.

The Committee recommended to the Executive that the Financial Inclusion Approach and Action Plan be adopted as an essential component of the Social Inclusion Strategy.

**At its meeting on 1 December 2009 the Executive agreed to adopt the draft Financial Inclusion Approach and Action Plan as an essential component of the Social Inclusion Strategy.**

7.5 Audit Commission Recommendations – Progress Report (9 November 2009)

The Committee noted the report and asked officers to continue implementing the Audit Commission recommendations and provide a 12-month review in January 2010.

7.6 Review of Supporting People Service (11 January 2010)

The Committee noted the report updating them on the ongoing review of Supporting People Services and that further reports would be made available.

7.7 Ockford Ridge – Investing in the Future (8 March 2010)

The Committee had asked for an update on progress being made at Ockford Ridge. The Committee welcomed the progress to date and noted the double-glazing programme had been the start of a larger programme. During the coming year work would be undertaken to develop a longer-term strategy for the Ockford Ridge area to improve the housing stock and identify the level of investment required and how this might be secured.

7.8 Waverley's Community Alarm Careline Service Review – An Update (8 March 2010)

The Committee received the report that followed up on changes to the Careline Service operated by Waverley Borough Council following a review undertaken during 2008/09. Members noted that the Review and its recommendations had been followed through seamlessly, and despite some delays as a result of the phased retirement of staff the service was now going from strength to strength.

Officers responded to the concern expressed over the future of the service after Surrey County Council funding ended in March 2011. They advised that funding was part of the Supporting People Review and at the moment there had been no indication of the level of funding that would be allocated. It was suggested that the enhanced service could potentially develop as a shared service over a wider area.

Following a suggestion from the Portfolio Holder for Housing, officers undertook to introduce a local performance indicator for annual checks of the equipment.

**8. MONITORING REPORTS**

8.1 End Of Year Voids Monitoring Report  
Reported annually to the Committee

8.2 Rent Arrears Monitoring Report  
Reported to every meeting of the Committee

8.3 Day Centres (six-monthly review)  
The Committee was concerned to ensure that the recommendations from the in-depth review continued to be progressed, and following a thorough discussion members suggested that the two main issues of providing care and funding might be usefully discussed by the Healthcare Special Interest Group and the Voluntary Sector Task Group. The observations from those Groups could then be debated by the Select Committee on the Voluntary Sector In-depth Review and any recommendations passed to the Executive. Any issues could also be raised with the relevant Portfolio Holders to highlight the work of the Committee.

**9. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES**

Performance Sub-Committee for 2009/10

Cllr Victor Duckett	Cllr Mrs Nerissa Warner-O'Neill
Cllr Nicholas Holder	Cllr Andrew Wilson
Cllr Stephen O'Grady	

Co-opted Members: Mrs Jane Rawlings (Chair Tenants' Panel)  
Mr Harold Fuller (Vice-Chair Tenants' Panel)

**10. CALL-IN**

There were no items called-in for scrutiny in the municipal year 2009/10.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the work carried out by the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee in 2009/10 be noted.

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## **Background Papers (CEx)**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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