

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Notice of Meeting

THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 29 March 2005 - 7:00 pm
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Dagenham

Members: Councillor C J Fairbrass (Chair); Councillor C Geddes (Deputy Chair); Councillor J L Alexander, Councillor G J Bramley, Councillor H J Collins, Councillor S Kallar, Councillor M A McCarthy, Councillor M E McKenzie, Councillor L A Smith and Councillor T G W Wade

Declaration of Members Interest: In accordance with Article 1, Paragraph 12 of the Constitution, Members are asked to declare any direct/indirect financial or other interest they may have in any matter which is to be considered at this meeting

18.3.05

Rob Whiteman
Chief Executive

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AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Minutes - To confirm as correct the minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2005 (to follow)**

Business Items

Public Item 3 and Private Item 9 are business items. The Chair will move that these be agreed without discussion, unless any Member asks to raise a specific point.

Any discussion of a Private Business Item will take place after the exclusion of the public and press.

3. **Barking Market and Street Trading: Rent and Licence Charges 2005/06 (Pages 1 - 4)**

Discussion Items

4. Crime, Disorder and Drugs Strategy 2005 - 2008 (Pages 5 - 8)

The Strategy document will be circulated under separate cover and will also be made available on the Internet, in the Members' Rooms and at public libraries.

5. Review of Void Performance 2004/05 and Progress on Plans for 2005/06 (Pages 9 - 23)

6. British Urban Regeneration Association Annual Conference 2005 (Pages 25 - 27)

7. Any other public items which the Chair decides are urgent

8. To consider whether it would be appropriate to pass a resolution to exclude the public and press from the remainder of the meeting due to the nature of the business to be transacted.

Private Business

The public and press have a legal right to attend Council meetings such as the Executive, except where business is confidential or certain other sensitive information is to be discussed. The list below shows why items are in the private part of the agenda, with reference to the relevant legislation (the relevant paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

Discussion Items

None.

Business Items

9. The Automotive Upskilling Training Development Programme, London Riverside Limited (Pages 29 - 34)

Concerns the business affairs of third parties (paragraph 7)

10. Any other confidential or exempt items which the Chair decides are urgent

THE EXECUTIVE**29 MARCH 2005****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT**

BARKING TOWN CENTRE MARKET: FEES AND CHARGES 2005 / 2006	FOR DECISION
<p><i>This reports concerns the setting of fees and charges which is a decision reserved to the Executive by the Scheme of Delegation.</i></p> <p>Summary</p> <p>In July 2001 the Charging Policy Commission set a number of fundamental principles that must be considered when setting charges and this report sets out the current basis on which rental charges are levied on the Traders, and proposes new charges for this service, which reflect those principles.</p> <p>The current charges have been in effect since 1 April 2004, when rates were raised in line with 2003/4 inflation. The previous year (April 2003) increases were substantial at approximately 15% covering increases in costs from the inception of the new market in June 2000 and also some restructuring of the charge bands. For 2004/5 a further rise to cover inflation is required, along with one adjustment to bring the London Road area 'in line' with neighbouring areas in Ripple Road and East Street (an upward adjustment).</p> <p>Additional income from the proposed market charges is ring-fenced and can only be used for market and street trading related purposes.</p> <p>The proposed new charges will still be comparable with those applied by similar local markets</p> <p>Ward Affected - Abbey Ward</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>The Executive is recommended to agree to the increases in the level of charges for trading at the Barking Town Centre Market from 1 April 2005, as set out in paragraph 2.5 of this report.</p> <p>Reason</p> <p>To set Barking Town Centre Market Fees and Charges for the forthcoming year in accordance with the principles of the Charging Policy Commission and to assist in achieving the Council's Community Priorities of <i>Promoting Equal Opportunities and Celebrating Diversity</i> and <i>Regenerating the Local Economy</i>.</p>	

Contact Ralph Cook	Town Centres Manager	Tel: 020 - 8270 6015 Fax: 020 - 8227 3288 Minicom: 020 – 8227 3034 E-mail : ralph.cook@barking-dagenham.gov.uk
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1. Background.

- 1.1 The Assembly on 4 July 2001 accepted the recommendations of the Charging Policy Commission. The fundamental principles of the Council's policy is that there is a starting presumption that charges should be set to recover the full cost of the service, including all overheads and that any subsidy must be transparent and demonstrably support or promote Council priorities and policy objectives in an effective manner.
- 1.2 The original market license fees and charges were set up when the new market opened on 17 June 2000. They were reviewed for the first time in 2003 when the average increase was 15% and again in 2004 when the increase averaged 3.5%.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 Initially we had a number of different 'charge bands' to reflect the projected differences in trading potential within the market area. These have been reduced over time and It is proposed that the Saturday charge in London Road now be brought up to the Old East Street level, justified by increased strength of trading in that area and bearing in mind that this is still a lower rate than that for Station Parade and Ripple Road. This change is both reasonable commercially and will further simplify administration, resulting in a reduction to just two charge bands.
- 2.2 Lower East Street is likely to remain at lower charges, being significantly weaker for trading than the rest of the market. Most customers have a relatively long walk to reach this area. The principle applied throughout the market is to charge as much as is reasonable without incurring a net loss of traders to other markets.
- 2.3 Saturday charges remain at higher levels than week day ones. This is usual in markets, reflecting both higher costs for the operator and higher levels of trade for the traders.
- 2.4 It is proposed that;
- (i) charges are increased from 1 April 2005 by an average of 3.5%. The increase for London Road on Saturdays to be 12%, this will make the rate the same as for East Street and Station Parade.
 - (ii) the previous practice of charging license fees per foot of frontage for individual stalls is continued and that the Charges are rounded up to the nearest 5p or 10p charge point as appropriate, and

- (iii) in order to retain traders, charges for the Old East Street Area should be increased with inflation but continue as a lower charge band.

2.5 The above proposal would produce the following fees and charges (inclusive of VAT.)

	Midweek			Saturday		
	Present 2004/05	Proposed 2005/06	% +	Present 2004/05	Proposed 2005/06	% +
London Road	£2.60	£2.70	3.5	£2.85	£3.20	12.0
Ripple Road	£2.60	£2.70	3.5	£3.60	£3.70	3.5
East Street	£2.60	£2.70	3.5	£3.60	£3.70	3.5
Station Parade	£2.60	£2.70	3.5	£3.60	£3.70	3.5
“Old ” East Street Area	£2.10	£2.15	3.0	£3.10	£3.20	3.5

Note: Mid week and Saturday charging bands correspond with usual practice and reflects the trade position to charge a higher rate on Saturdays. (Barking Town Centre Market operates on Tuesdays, Thursdays all year round and Fridays before Christmas.)

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Council has ‘First Charge’ on the market income with the object of avoiding any liability falling on local residents. The principle of operation of the Market Account is that the Councils’ direct costs, including administration, finance, inspection and rubbish removal, are to be met before any other charges are made to the Account. Beyond this, the Market Operator is paid £10,000 per annum. All remaining income is divided between the Council and the Market Operator.
- 3.2 The original market had roughly 20 stalls. In practice, it is necessary for the operator of the new market to sustain in the region of 65 stalls before any income is generated, and this provides the commercial incentive.
- 3.3 It was originally considered that about 80 stalls would represent a satisfactory level, but this expectation has been far exceeded. Since its opening, the market has averaged over 130 stalls daily, and for this financial year the average is currently 135.
- 3.4 It is expected that the new charges should add an extra £25,000 per annum on current turnover and this will be divided equally between the Council and the Market Operator.
- 3.5 It should be noted that income from market charges is ring-fenced and can only be used for Market and Street Trading related purposes.

4. Future Considerations

- 4.1 The possibility of permanent opening on Friday remains under consideration. This was not considered appropriate in 2003 or 2004, but it will be reviewed again in 2005/6. Although an extra day would bring in additional revenue it could damage the long term viability of the market if trade is not strong enough to fully support all four days
- 4.2 During 2004 we held the first French Markets in Barking and more specialist markets are planned for 2005/6. The possibility of some market activity in Dagenham Heathway is also being considered. This would require separate approval.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The following people have been consulted on this report and are happy with it as it stands.

David Waller, Acting Head of Finance for DRE
Robin Hanton, Corporate Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer, DCS

Background Papers

- Executive Minute 317, 18 March 2004 re: Barking Town Centre Market Charges 2004/05.
- Barking Market Projected Costs and Revenues.

THE EXECUTIVE

29 MARCH 2005

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND HEALTH

SAFER BARKING AND DAGENHAM - CRIME, DISORDER AND DRUGS STRATEGY 2005 - 2008		FOR DECISION
<i>All Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships must produce a three year strategy that is approved by Members</i>		
Summary		
<p>This report describes Barking and Dagenham's draft Crime, Disorder and Drugs Strategy 2005-2008.</p> <p>This strategy, which has been circulated separately to Members, illustrates how the Council and its partners plan to reduce crime, disorder and the harm caused by illegal drugs, over the next three years. It brings together, into an overview, the efforts of each of the partner agencies.</p> <p>The Community Safety Strategic Partnership will coordinate the delivery of the strategy. Each of the partner's actions, currently detailed in their own service plans, will be brought together into detailed action plans.</p>		
Wards Affected -		
All wards.		
Recommendation		
The Executive is asked to:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider and comment on the Council's draft Crime, Disorder and Drugs Strategy 2005-2008 (circulated separately); and 2. Recommend the Assembly to formally adopt the Strategy at its meeting on 6 April 2005. 		
Reason		
<p>This is the Strategy that will lead the Council and its partners' efforts to reduce crime, disorder and the harm caused by illegal drugs and will assist in achieving the Community Priorities of 'Making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener and Safer' and 'Raising General Pride in the Borough'.</p>		
Contact Officer:	Title :	Contact Numbers:
Jeff Elsom	Crime and Anti Social Behaviour Unit Manager	Tel: 020 8227 5669 Fax: 020 8227 5699 E-mail: jeff.elsom@lbbd.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, amended by the 2002 Police Reform Act, placed a statutory obligation on the Council to deal with issues of crime, disorder and drugs within its community in conjunction with partnership agencies.
- 1.2 In the Borough we lead this work through the Community Safety Strategy Partnership which is now in its sixth year of operation.
- 1.3 Our current 3 year strategy expires in March 2005. We have a statutory obligation to produce our new Strategy by April 2005.
- 1.4 The new Strategy has been written by all Partnership agencies, which include the Council, Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade, Victim Support, Racial Equality Council, Transport for London, Barking and Havering Health Authority and the National Probation service. It has been carefully targeted at the most important crime issues for the Borough, following a detailed analysis of crime trends and extensive consultation with the Community.
- 1.5 This is a partnership document and has been produced by all agencies following extensive discussions about prioritising resources and delivery mechanisms.

2. 2004 Crime Audit and Community Consultation

- 2.1 A thorough review of crime, drugs and disorder has been carried out. This comprehensive analysis has been used to identify what are the important issues to Barking and Dagenham and how successful have we been over the last three years in crime reduction.
- 2.2 An extensive consultation exercise has also been carried out with over 4000 residents to find out what their priorities are and how they feel about crime in the Borough.
- 2.3 The audit painted a mixed picture of crime reduction over the last three years. Overall crime has increased by 7.8% and we are now ranked the 43rd highest crime Borough nationally. Nevertheless inside the Metropolitan Police area we have improved two places and are now the 15th safest in London.
- 2.4 Reporting of serious crimes such as domestic violence and distraction burglary have increased following the extensive efforts we have made to increase the confidence of victims to come forward. Other crimes such as street robberies have fallen by 5% but domestic burglary has increased by 2.5%.
- 2.5 The consultation showed us that the overwhelming concern of our residents is anti-social behaviour and the use of illegal drugs. Concerns were also raised about safety in parks after dark and waiting at bus stops, especially in Barking Town Centre. 22% of people told us either they had been or knew a victim of domestic violence.

3. The Strategy Document

3.1 The Strategy document entitled “Safer Barking and Dagenham: Crime, Disorder and Drugs Strategy 2005 – 2008” has been circulated to Members under separate cover.

3.2 The Strategy’s overall aim is to:

- Reduce Overall Crime by 20% over the next three years
- Reduce the fear of crime by 5% each year
- Ensure offenders who commit priority crimes such as domestic violence and hate crime are brought to justice.

3.3 These targets will allow us to reach our Public Service Agreement crime reduction targets, and will improve our overall ranking, but as similar performance is expected from all boroughs it is likely that our overall ranking will show only a small improvement.

3.4 It is important that we prioritise our action so using the information from the audit and consultation, the partnership agreed the following priority action areas:

- Anti-social Behaviour
- Engaging Young People
- Violent Crime
- Property Crime
- Reducing the Harm of Drug and Alcohol Misuse
- Building Stronger, Tolerant and Confident Communities.

3.5 The Strategy sets the scene and gives us a broad vision and performance management framework to track progress. More detailed action plans, currently described in individual partners’ service plans, will be brought together into detailed action plans.

4. Financial Implications:

4.1 It is anticipated that the resources associated with delivering the strategy will be contained within existing budgets although this will be subject to ongoing Government commitment to fund crime reduction activities through the Home Office grant programmes. Indications are that funding, currently being assessed through our Safer and Stronger Communities fund bid, will continue at current levels for at least the 2005-2006 year.

4.2 The action planning process will include an assessment of the resources which will be required from all partners to implement the strategy. This will be completed by the Community Safety Strategic Partnership. As this is a new strategy, a full equalities impact assessment will be undertaken.

5. Consultation

- All members of the Community Safety Strategic Partnership
- Councillor Milton McKenzie, Lead Member for Cleaner Greener Safer
- Colin Rigby - Head of Finance, Housing and Health

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

- 1998 Crime & Disorder Act
- 2002 Police Reform Act
- Barking & Dagenham Audit of Crime, Disorder and Drugs.
- Crime, Disorder & Drugs Questionnaire 2004 – Main Findings.

THE EXECUTIVE

29 MARCH 2005

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND HEALTH

REVIEW OF VOID PERFORMANCE 2004/5 AND PLANS FOR 2005/6 ONWARDS – UPDATE	FOR INFORMATION	
<i>The Executive at the meeting on 3 August 2004 (Minute No: 69) requested that an updated report be submitted to them.</i>		
Summary		
This report reviews the void performance in relation to the Public Sector Agreement (PSA) target. The target turnaround time for minor voids is:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 days by March 2005 • 25 days by March 2006 and beyond 		
Achieving the PSA target will place the Council in top quartile.		
Recommendations		
The Executive is recommended to:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the progress in achieving the Voids PSA target; 2. Consider the proposed Minimum Lettable Standard protocol, which will be subject to consultation via Community Housing Partnerships in accordance with the recommendations of the Best Value Inspection, as set out in Appendix 3; 3. Note the progress against the Void Performance Action Plan agreed by Minute 69 (3 August 2004); and 4. Agree the new Void Performance Action Plan as set out in Appendix 5. 		
Reason		
This report informs the Executive of progress in meeting the Voids PSA target in line with recommendation 5.5 of the report to the Executive of 3 August 2004 "Review of Voids Performance 2004-2005 and Plans for 2005-2006 onwards".		
Contact: Jim Ripley Colin Angel	Head of Landlord Services Voids Control Manager	Tel: 020 8227 2827 Fax: 0208 227 5705 Minicom: 0208 227 5755 E-mail: jim.ripley@lbbd.gov.uk Tel: 020 8227 5722 Fax: 0208 227 5705 Minicom: 0208 227 5755 E-mail: colin.angel@lbbd.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1. The speed at which properties are relet is an important measure of housing management performance as it also affects rental income and the ability to offer housing to those in housing need.
- 1.2. The Council has a PSA target with the Government and target 10 relates to the turnaround times of void properties that have undergone minor repairs.

2. Performance since August

- 2.1. The monthly relet times have been as follows

August	33 days
September	40 days
October	35 days
November	39 days
December	26 days
January	39 days
February	31 days

For December we are inside this year's target and almost achieved the PSA target for next year. Whilst the January figure returned to 39 days, this is unsurprising given the industry's customary 2 week Christmas break. This should not distract from the overall improvement seen since August (43.8 days) in the year to date figure, which is now 39.8 days. The Key Performance Indicator chart is attached as Appendix 1.

- 2.2. The improvement since August means we have been successful in reducing the percentage of rent loss through voids as follows (these are year-to-date figures):

August	2.63%
September	2.63%
October	2.61%
November	2.59%
December	2.55%
January	2.51%

- 2.3. The improvement of 0.12% is equivalent to an annual rent loss saving of £60,000.

3. Analysis of The Problem

- 3.1. The volume of voids has been a serious problem.
 - The contracted figure with Thames Accord was 1200 this year. This had been revised to 1671 but now the projected outturn for the year is 2058.
 - Thames Accord inherited a backlog of 371 voids from the previous year.
 - Thames Accord took over the failed MRA voids programme of 140 voids from other contractors which diverted Thames Accord's resources.

- 3.2. The length of time taken to repair empty homes is key to achieving the PSA target as this normally accounts for the majority of the void period. The contract with Thames Accord gives them a target for completing repairs to minor voids of 21 days. Their performance up until 22 February is 29 days.
- 3.3. We are seeing high numbers of properties becoming void week on week. This puts added pressure on the repairs contractor and the void repairs budget. Actions taking place which will reduce the number of new voids coming through include:
- The current policy of only offering houses to transfer cases will be phased out due to the introduction of More Choice in Lettings. This will mean less transfers and therefore less new voids as every transfer produces at least 1 additional void.
 - A large decant programme commenced in February. The rehousing of decant cases means no subsequent void is produced.
 - The Council's Rents Section have an ethos now to minimise the number of evictions through non payment of rent and to try to manage these cases. This helps reduce new voids.
- 3.4. This year we have currently spent £1.6m (expected £1.8m to £1.9m for full year) on 285 properties which is charged to the Housing Repairs Capital programme. The cost of the works to these properties, which are ostensibly minor repairs, should not exceed £3,000. This is a cost that needs to be managed.
- 3.5. Average relet times has not been a Best Value Performance Indicator for a couple of years, but we have used the old definition of BV 68 as the measure for our PSA target. However from April the Government is introducing a new BVPI 212 to measure relet times. This definition will mean that we will now include in the calculation voids that we previously excluded under major works. For example, houses on the Becontree Estate, which required large amounts of work, will now be included.

4. Progress to date

- 4.1. Thames Accord has appointed a new Voids Manager and this has had a positive affect.

During this year Thames Accord have reduced the number of voids they are working on to 225 from 371. There are currently 92 voids that are in progress under the MRA programme and when these have been completed (60 by April) the labour resources can be redirected. (The MRA programme for this year was 480 properties).

Additionally Thames Accord have halved both the number of minor and major voids in progress over the course of the year. As of week 46 Thames Accord returned minor voids with an average time of 15 days and this has been a consistent time frame for the past four weeks. For voids classified as minor repairs that are currently being worked on, the average time they have been with Thames Accord is only 6 days.

- 4.2. The overall void numbers (excluding those awaiting demolition) has reduced from 480 to 391 in the past 6 months. This is a significant improvement.

- 4.3. Additionally we are now undertaking accompanied viewings as a matter of course (as recommended by the Best Value Inspection). This will be made easier with the staff changes mentioned below.
- 4.4. We have constructed a model to make the best use of the notice period to undertake work whilst rent is still being received.
- 4.5. There is close working between the Void officers and Thames Accord and this has helped with properties identified as “instant relets.” These properties can be turned round quickly and therefore the earlier they are identified and Thames Accord is made aware, the quicker they can be relet.
- 4.6. Pre-allocation continues to have a positive effect and we are also trying to confirm prospective tenants before repair works have been completed. This means as soon as the property is returned from Thames Accord the new tenant is in a position to complete the sign up procedures and move in immediately. For this process to be successful we are reliant on Thames Accord being accurate with their predictive dates on when repairs will be completed. They are striving to improve.
- 4.7. Additionally all tenants on the transfer waiting list have been written to and reminded of their responsibility to leave properties in good order. Hopefully we can then reduce the amount of work that needs to be undertaken to make the property available for reletting.

5. Future Plans

- 5.1. Bearing in mind that the majority of voids will now count in the PSA target, it is critical that we have clear plans to return voids quickly.
- 5.2. We intend to introduce a minimum lettable standard with a view to reducing the number of repairs that are completed whilst void. Other repairs that are required can be done on occupation. Attached at Appendix 3 is the proposed Minimum Lettable Standard protocol that will be issued to prospective tenants. Subject to any comments made by the Executive, this protocol will be presented to the Community Housing Partnerships for their views, in line with the recommendations of the Best Value Inspection.
- 5.3. With a reduced void specification it is proposed to renegotiate the target time for minor voids, with Thames Accord, to 15 days.
- 5.4. The lettable standard should also help manage the excess expenditure we are incurring on voids costing over £3,000. It should also reduce the overall spend on “normal” voids.
- 5.5. There will still be some properties that will cost excessive sums to return to a lettable standard. It is proposed that we should consider disposing of such properties, however that will be subject to a separate report to the Executive.

- 5.6. We anticipate a further reduction in voids over the coming years. The decant of The Lintons and other schemes will have a major effect and should take up a large number of existing voids and future voids that become available during next year.
- 5.7. It is also anticipated that there will be further decant programmes over the next 5 years which will continue to have an effect on reducing the number of void properties.
- 5.8. More Choice in Letting (MCIL) should also have a positive effect in reducing voids with some successful bidders coming from the waiting list rather than the transfer list. (The latter only has the effect of creating another void).
- 5.9. The estimated number of voids for the coming year is 1600. This is based on the 2000 voids this year and that there will be 400 less transfer cases because of the decant process. We are looking to manage down the average cost per void to £3,000 making a total cost for 2005/06 of £4.8m. From this sum £1.6m will be capitalised, leaving £3.2m from revenue. We are testing these assumptions by jointly inspecting with Thames Accord every new void arising over a two week period. The inspection establishes the condition the properties have been left in, how much work is required in each case and how feasible it is to push down costs and still achieve the minimum lettable standard. The exercise will also inform the work we are continuing to do with Thames Accord to achieve an accurate prediction on the number of voids expected next year and the budget forecast.
- 5.10. More Choice in Lettings (MCIL) is scheduled to commence in April. We have taken the opportunity to study other boroughs and hopefully we will be drawing on their areas of best practice. However, it is an established fact that all boroughs that have introduced a choice based letting systems, have suffered with relet times increasing until the system has bedded in.
- 5.11. We intend to minimise this effect of MCIL by:
- Advertising properties as soon as we are notified of them becoming void. The advert will include a viewing date. This will speed up the letting process as the prospective tenant will be aware when they can view the property and allow Estate office staff to plan their work loads.
 - We are also introducing multiple viewings to reduce refusal rates.
 - Undertaking works on occupation where possible.
- 5.12. It is proposed to introduce performance targets between Estate Management and Allocations. These will be around time scales for advice of a void property, initial inspection and the property being advertised.
- 5.13. The Executive agreed a new structure within Landlord Services (Minute 243, 21 December 2004) following the Best Value Inspection in September. This will have the affect of making Estate Officers more generic and will allow greater flexibility for dealing with voids in the Housing Offices. It will also overcome sickness and holiday cover when vital days can be lost.

6. Expected Position and achieving PSA Target

- 6.1. With the progress made this year we should achieve average relet times for February and March of around 30 days with a year-to-date relet time of 39 days.
- 6.2. For 2005/06 there will be an initial increase in relet times because of MCIL and the time required for this to bed in. There may also be an adverse effect from the decant of The Lintons and other schemes where some properties are held for decants. We have a dedicated officer for managing the decant process to keep the disruption to relet times at a minimum.
- 6.3. The effect of the above may see the average relet time rise to 35 days. Our objective will be to improve month on month so that by March 2006 we are consistently achieving the PSA target of 25 days

7. Action Plan and Monitoring

- 7.1. The action plan produced in August has now been completed and is attached at Appendix 4.
- 7.2. A new action plan is attached at Appendix 5.
- 7.3. The Corporate Monitoring Group presently receives monthly performance information on all PSAs, including performance on relet times. This information is also presented to the Executive on a quarterly basis

8 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The cost of the new proposals and the ongoing commitment to spending on voids will be met from within the existing revenue and capital budgets of the Housing Revenue Account.

9. Consultation

The following have been consulted:

Chris Blair – Thames Accord Managing Director
David Woods – Director of Housing & Health
Ken Jones – Head of Strategic Development
Keith Harriss – Head of Construction & Procurement

10. Background Papers

Reports to the Executive 3 August 2004 'Review of Void Performance 2004-2005 and Plans for 2005-2006 onwards' and 21 December 2004 'Developing the Housing Landlord Service'.

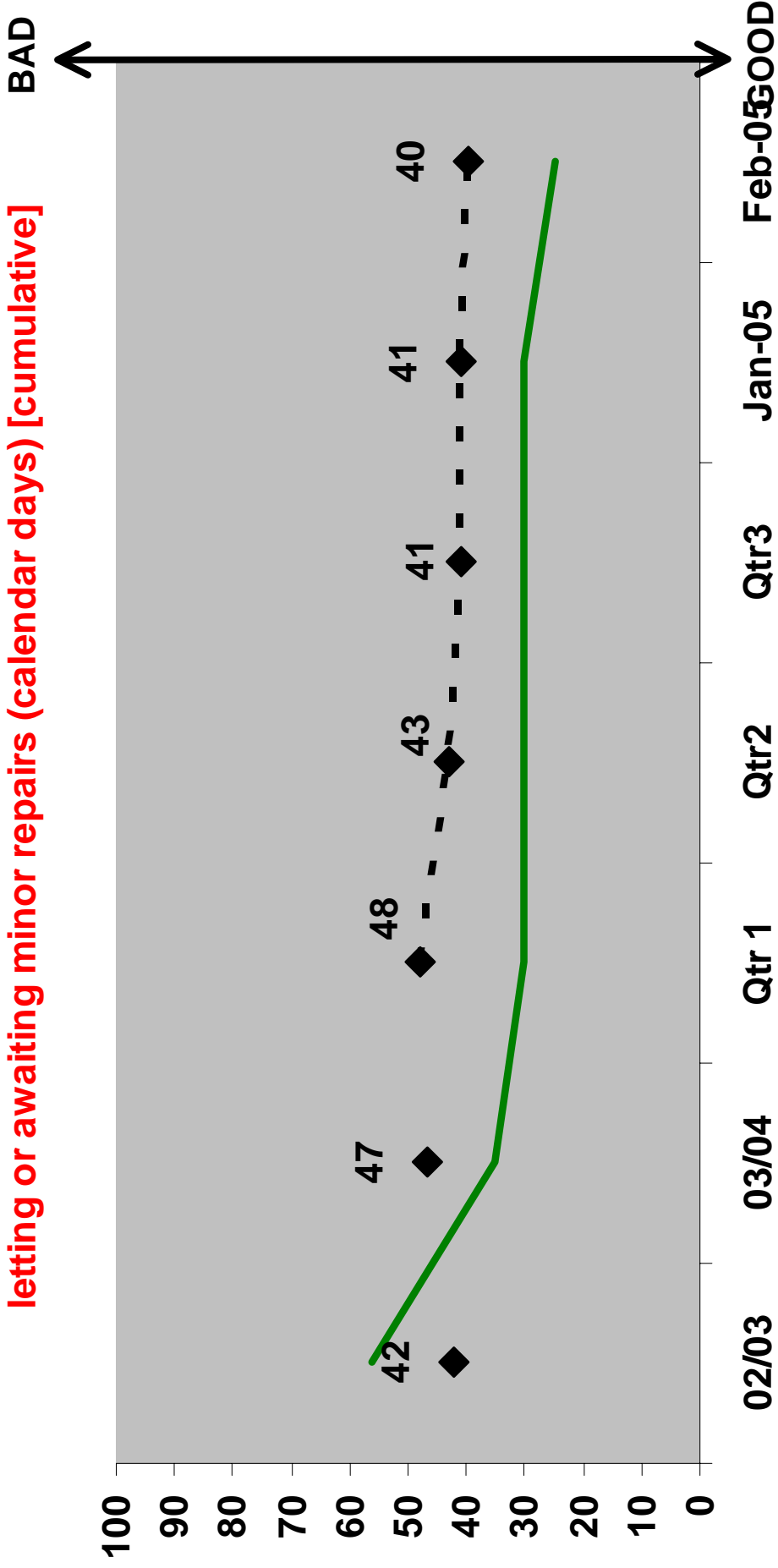
Appx 1 Graph for PSA 10 cumulative (Year To Date)
Appx 2 Graph for PSA 10 individual monthly performance
Appx 3 Proposed Minimum lettable standard
Appx 4 Action plan – August 2004
Appx 5 New Action plan

Appendix 1.



HOUSING & HEALTH - Housing Landlord Services

PSA Target 10 - Average time taken to relet dwellings available for letting or awaiting minor repairs (calendar days) [cumulative]

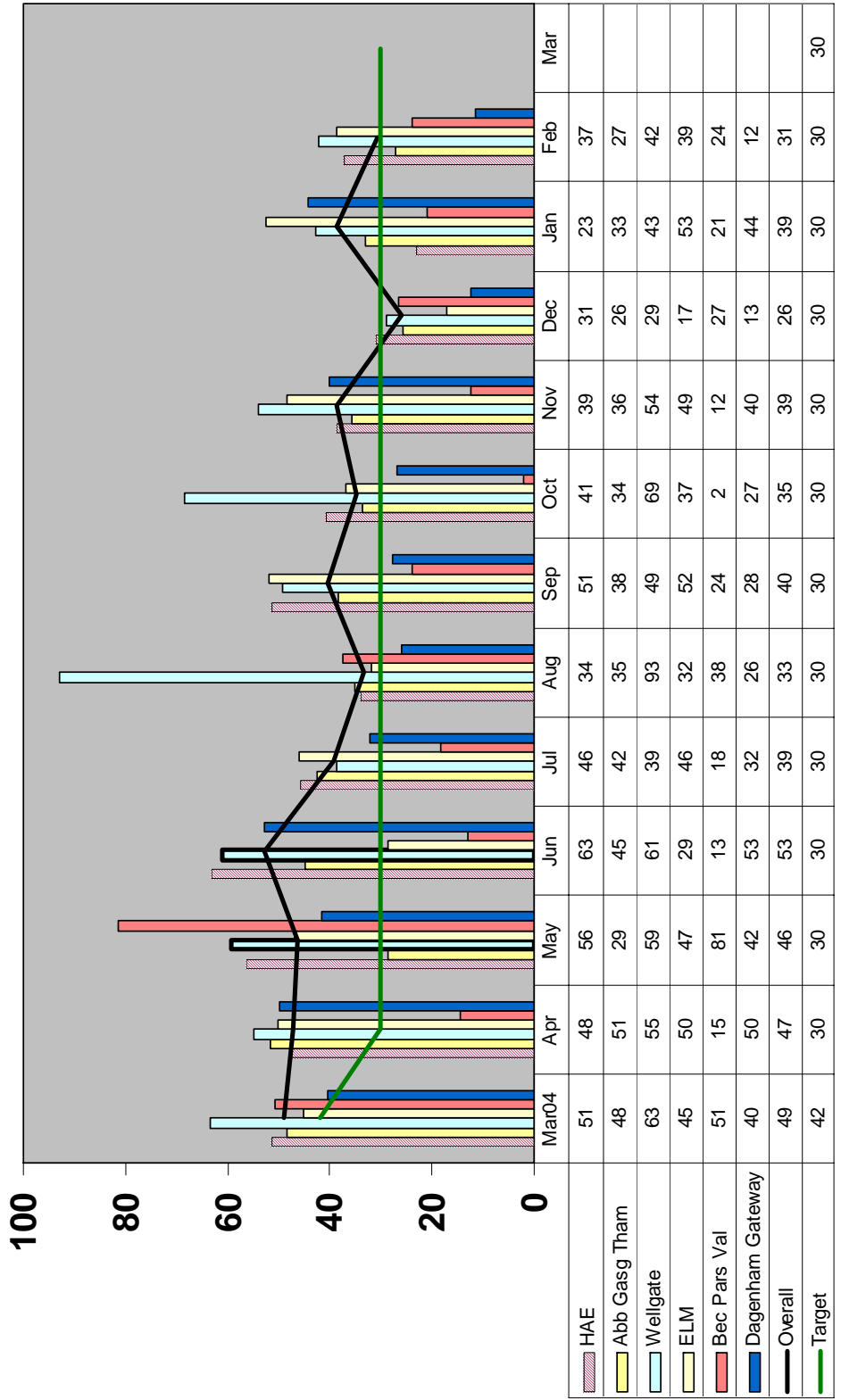
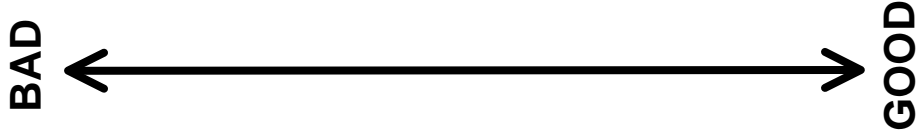




Appendix 2.

HOUSING & HEALTH - Average Relet Times

Average relet times in calendar days - monthly performance



Proposed LBBB Minimum Lettable Standard

About your new home and what you can expect from the Council

This leaflet sets out the standards you can expect from the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham relating to the property you have been offered.

We aim to achieve the highest level of satisfaction when you move into a new home and below are the standards you can expect from us. We hope to complete all the necessary repairs to your property before you take up your tenancy. However, this may not always be possible for various reasons. Any repairs that are outstanding will be explained to you either when you view the property or when you take up your tenancy.

General condition

- The property will be cleaned to an acceptable standard.
- By acceptable standard, we mean;
 - The floors will be swept and clean
 - The kitchen units will be cleaned of any grease or dirt
 - The kitchen worktops will be thoroughly cleaned
 - The bathroom fixtures will be thoroughly cleaned.

Mains Services – Gas and Electric Installations

- Whilst the property has been unoccupied, an electric safety check has been completed to the electric circuits (lights and sockets) in the property.
- Whilst the property has been unoccupied a full gas safety check will have been carried out and you will receive a certificate to confirm this
- It is the tenant's responsibility to arrange the connection of the gas and electric supplies. Your Estate Officer will give you advice on who you can contact to arrange this

Kitchen

- There will be an agreed number of kitchen units (base units, wall units and worktops) in each property type; however, this may vary depending upon the layout of the property and the space available.
- All units will be in a good working condition, although some unit doors and drawers may vary slightly.
- All worktops will be clean and suitable for use.

- The sink top unit will be clean and in good condition.
- The tiled surrounds to the sink will be clean and in good condition.
- Each property will have either a gas or electric cooker facility. (Some properties may have both, whilst others may depend upon the mains services available to the property.)

(It is the tenant's responsibility to arrange the installation of an alternative cooking supply if their preferred choice is not available in the property.)

Bathroom

- Each bathroom will have a bath, wash-hand basin and toilet pot and seat.
- Each fixture will be free of stains and marks
- The tiled surrounds to the bath and wash-hand basin will be clean and in good condition.
- In winter months the water will have been drained down and the stop cock will require opening

Doors

- All internal and external doors will be in good condition. They will not be warped, twisted or damaged.

Glazing

- Any broken windows will be replaced before you move into the property.
- Glazing will be free from cracks both inside and outside the property
- Windows will open and close properly and be wind and weather tight

Floors

- All floors will be free of all coverings i.e. carpets, lino etc.
- All floor tiles will be in place. No tiles will be broken or loose.
- All floorboards will be in a good and safe condition.

External Areas

- The gardens (if applicable) will be free of rubbish.

- Fences, pathways, steps and other means of access will be in a safe condition
- Gutters and rain water pipes will be free from obvious blockages

Decorating

Depending on the property offered and the condition of the decorating, there are a number of options;

- The property may be fully decorated (mainly in the case of designated elderly persons accommodation)
- Certain individual rooms may be decorated or stripped of all coverings ready for re-decoration.
- You may be offered an allowance towards decorating. This is a contribution towards the cost of decorating and is not intended to cover all costs involved.

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APPENDIX 4

Void Performance Action Plan

RESOURCES	Action	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Progress January 2005
1.	TA to increase the number of sub contractors to address high number of voids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in number of voids held with TA 	September 2004	TA	Reduction in voids achieved (approx 50) further reduction required
2.	TA have increased from 2 to 4 the number of staff administering the void process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tighter control of void processing 	May 2004	TA	New manager in Place
3.	Review the impact of Housing Futures and the delivery of Decent Homes on Voids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved delivery of Decent Homes and Better VFM 	April- June 2005	HoLS	Results awaited
MONITORING					
1.	Weekly void monitoring meetings chaired by Head of Landlord Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure actions being met and performance increases 	Ongoing	HoLS	Ongoing
2.	TA to produce a weekly list of properties that are expected to be ready within 7 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for pre allocation 	Ongoing	TA	Predictive dates provided – greater accuracy being sought
3.	Void monitoring reports to be produced weekly not monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of performance 	July 2004	CA	Weekly information available
TRAINING					
1.	Institute of Housing to provide training to estate staff with regards to the scope of works to achieve letting standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estate staff clear about the level / standard of works that will be done in a void 	11 July 2004 29 July 2004 3 Aug 2004	Institute of Housing	Training provided
PROCEDURES					
1.	Write and launch void manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent guide to void management 	Sept 2004	CHM A.Alexander	Void manual launched

2.	TA review and streamline procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in performance Reduce number of voids with TA from 348 to 220 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2004 1 Oct 2004 	TA TA	Number of voids down to 288
3.	TA to introduce a mobile key cutting service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows keys to be retained by local housing office to enable viewing whilst works in progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2004 	TA	Introduced
LETTINGS					
1.	Introduce pre allocation procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property viewed and accepted prior to works completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aug 2004 	CHMs / Project Leader Homelessnes s and Rehousing	Pre-allocation in place
2.	Where appropriate introduction of accompanied viewings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in acceptance level of more difficult to let properties Faster offer results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May 2004 	CHMs	Accompanied viewings in place

APPENDIX 5

Void Performance Action Plan February 2005

RESOURCES	Action	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Progress
1.	Re-alignment of Housing Landlord Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved method of working 	April 05	JR	
MONITORING					
1.	Thames Accord to reduce average repair time to 15 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quicker turnaround of void properties 	April 05	CAA	
2.	Reduce number of MRA voids to 30 by April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources can be reallocated to minor voids 	April 05	CAA	
PROCEDURES					
1.	Introduce MCIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should create less transfer cases 	April 05	AB	
2	Multiple viewings under MCIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced refusal rates 	April 05	Allocations	
3.	Review lettable standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> quicker turnaround less expenditure 	June 05 March 06	CAA	
4.	Policy to be made for voids costing excessive sums to return to lettable standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control expenditure on voids 	May 05	JR	
LETTINGS					
1.	Reduce number of voids through decants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> less new voids being created 	March 06	CHMs	

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THE EXECUTIVE**29 MARCH 2005****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT**

BURA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2005, 11 - 12 OCTOBER	FOR DECISION
<p><i>This report deals with a major promotional opportunity for the Borough that also carries a financial risk to the Council.</i></p>	
<p>Summary</p>	
<p>The British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA) has invited the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham to host its Annual Conference from 11-12 October 2005. The Council would be expected to provide a venue, assist with the organisation and marketing of the Conference and help BURA raise a total sponsorship package of £100,000.</p>	
<p>BURA is the UK's leading association for regeneration professionals. Hosting its Annual Conference would be a major publicity and marketing coup for the Borough, putting Barking and Dagenham firmly on the national regeneration map and enabling us to showcase progress with key projects.</p>	
<p>We believe that the Council should accept the invitation and have identified suitable facilities at The Broadway and in Barking Town Hall. The Department of Regeneration and Environment has committed £50,000 from its 2005-06 Budget and made initial approaches to external regeneration partners to contribute. We believe it is a realistic target to raise most if not all of the remainder from external partners, but there remains nevertheless a risk of a potential financial shortfall in the funding package. We are therefore approaching the Executive for a corporate commitment to meet any potential financial shortfall, up to a maximum of £50,000.</p>	
<p>Wards Affected - Abbey Ward</p>	
<p>Recommendation</p>	
<p>The Executive is asked to agree:</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To host the 2005 BURA Annual Conference on 11th-12th October, using facilities at The Broadway and Barking Town Hall; 2. That DRE should contribute up to £50,000 from its 2005-06 Budget, negotiating with external regeneration partners to contribute the remainder; and 3. Should external sponsorship fail to meet the amount required, to meet corporately any shortfall in the funding package, up to a maximum of £50,000 	
<p>Reason</p>	
<p>To assist the Council achieve its Community Priorities of <i>"Regenerating the Local Economy"</i> and <i>"Raising General Pride in the Borough"</i>.</p>	

Contact Jeremy Grint	Head of Regeneration Implementation	Tel: 020 8227 2443 Fax: 020 8227 5326 E-mail: Jeremy.grint@lbbd.gov.uk
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1. Background

- 1.1 The British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA) is the UK's leading trade association for regeneration professionals. Founded in 1990, it now numbers over 500 members from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. BURA promotes best practice in regeneration through research, publications, information exchange, seminars and annual awards for best practice and community regeneration. The Association holds its annual conference in a different city each year, helping to promote regeneration on the ground.
- 1.2 The BURA Chief Executive, Jon Ladd, wrote to the Council's Director of Regeneration and Environment, Niall Bolger, on 4 February 2005, inviting Barking and Dagenham to host this year's Annual Conference on 11-12 October. The Council would be expected to provide a venue, help with the organisation and marketing of the Conference and help BURA raise a total sponsorship package of £100,000 to cover the costs of the Conference. BURA have asked the Council to secure half the financial package required (ie £50,000) in order to make the definite commitment to hold the Conference in Barking and Dagenham.
- 1.3 Hosting the BURA Annual Conference would clearly be a major undertaking for the Council, demanding significant financial and staff resources. However, it would also be a major publicity and marketing coup for the Borough, putting Barking and Dagenham firmly on the national regeneration map and enabling us to showcase progress with our key projects. It would also help to promote the Broadway as a conference venue. We would be able to set the Conference agenda with BURA and, should the Executive agree, we would want to engage the borough's community and voluntary sector in both the Conference agenda and fringe events, bringing professionals and the local community together to share best practice in community regeneration. For all these reasons we recommend that the Executive accept the invitation.
- 1.4 Since receiving the BURA invitation, we have carried out preliminary enquiries to identify suitable facilities and the financial security required to commit to the event. We have established that suitable facilities are available at The Broadway and in Barking Town Hall on 11-12 October.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 The Department of Regeneration and Environment has identified £50,000 from its 2005-06 Budget, which will enable us to confirm to BURA that we have secured the necessary funding to go ahead with planning and organising the event. Officers have also made preliminary approaches to our regeneration partners, including English Partnerships and the London Development Agency, to raise external funding for the Conference. Although we have not yet secured formal, written commitments to contribute, we are confident from informal indications that

we can raise most, if not all of the remainder of the sponsorship from our borough regeneration partners and other external sponsors.

- 2.2 However, there clearly remains a risk that external sources do not meet the remainder of the £50,000 needed to mount the Conference in the Borough. We are therefore approaching the Executive for a corporate commitment to meet any shortfall required, up to a maximum of £50,000.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The following have been consulted and are content with the recommendations of this report, or have raised no objections.

Members

The Leader, Councillor Fairbrass

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Geddes

The Lead Member for Regeneration, Councillor Kallar,

The Lead Member for Raising General Pride in the Borough, Councillor Wade

Members for Abbey Ward, Councillors Alexander, Bramley and Fani

Chief Executive

Rob Whiteman

Regeneration and Environment

Eileen Keller, Central Support Manager

Finance

David Waller, Interim Head of Finance (DRE)

Joe Chesterton, Head of Financial Services

Education, Arts and Libraries

Roger Luxton, Director of Education, Arts and Libraries

Corporate Strategy

Muhammad Saleem, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer

Jane Bufton, Head of Corporate Communications

Broadway Theatre

Les Miller, Director,

Background Papers

Letter from Jon Ladd, Chief Executive of the British Urban Regeneration Association, to Niall Bolger, Director of Regeneration and Environment, 8th February 2005

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