

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Regeneration, Culture and Environment**  
**Overview And Scrutiny Committee**

**Thursday, 16 August 2018**

**6.30pm to 9.00pm**

**Record of the meeting**

**Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee**

- Present:** Councillors: Bhutia (Vice-Chairman), Carr, Etheridge (Chairman), Griffin, Hicks, Osborne, Saroy, Shaw, Tejan and Williams
- Substitutes:** Councillors:  
Steve Iles (Substitute for Mrs Josie Iles)  
Johnson (Substitute for Paterson)  
Maple (Substitute for Stamp)
- In Attendance:** Richard Hicks, Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive  
Laura Caiels, Legal Advisor  
Jean-Paul Collet - Operational Wastewater Network Manager - Southern Water  
Michael Edwards, Head of Integrated Transport  
Priscilla Haselhurst, Flood Drainage and Special Projects Officer  
Jason Molloy, Senior Engineer  
Simon Swift, Head of Highways and Parking Services  
Sarah Valdus, Head of Waste Services  
Ellen Wright, Democratic Services Officer

**270 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Josie Iles, Paterson and Stamp.

**271 Record of Meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 14 June 2018 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

A Member referred to Minute 84 (Work Programme) and commented that at the meeting on 14 June 2018, he had asked for the National Highways and Transport (NHT) Survey results to be attached as an appendix to the Highways Network Investment Report and yet information on the NHT Survey had been circulated as a briefing note.

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The Democratic Services Officer advised that she would check her notes and respond to the Member direct.

**272 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances**

There were none.

**273 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests**

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

The Chairman, Councillor Etheridge referred to item 5 – Member's item: Flooding in Luton, Chatham and informed the Committee that he was one of the Council's representatives on the North Kent Marshes Drainage Board.

**274 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed Jean-Paul Collet from Southern Water to the meeting for the Member's Item on Flooding in Luton, Chatham.

The Chairman also reminded the Committee that Tomasz Kozlowski, Assistant Director Physical and Cultural Regeneration had left the employment of Medway Council on 10 August 2018 to take up a post at Basildon Borough Council. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman wished Tomasz all the best in his new job and thanked him for the work he had undertaken at Medway.

**275 Member's item: Flooding in Luton, Chatham**

**Discussion:**

The Committee received a report setting out a response to a Member's item from Councillor Osborne concerning surface water flooding in Luton, Chatham after a period of heavy rainfall on 29 May 2018. It was noted that the flooding incident was currently the subject of an investigation, the results of which were awaited.

Jean-Paul Collet, Operational Wastewater Network Manager from Southern Water was in attendance to respond to Members' questions.

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The Committee was informed that gully clearance formed part of the Highways Annual Maintenance Programme and a schedule detailing the regularity of gully clearance in Luton in 2018 was submitted. It was noted that where gullies had not been cleansed, this had been due to parked vehicles preventing access.

In addition to regular gully clearance, Highways Inspectors had inspected Nelson Terrace, Queens Road, Beacon Hill and Capstone Road on 17 April 2018 and no defects had been found in the gullies at that time. There was also no evidence of sedimentation or leaf collection that would impede water discharging through the gully system. Further inspections had been carried out following the flooding incident on 29 May and no defects had been found.

Southern Water advised that they had not received reports of flooding or blockages in Capstone Road that would have identified a requirement for cleaning. Following the flooding on 29 May, Southern Water had undertaken a survey of the sewer. The survey concluded that the flood had been a result of sewer overloading and overland surface water flow. The survey had also identified the need for a lining repair to part of the sewer and, as these works would require a traffic management system to be put in place, the necessary permits were being progressed with the Council and it was hoped that this work would be undertaken within 4 – 6 weeks.

It was confirmed that in response to reports of flooding at sites across Medway on 29 May, the Council instigated its Emergency Plan Procedures and Strood Leisure Centre had been put on standby to receive emergency evacuees. Officers attended all sites in Medway where there had been reports of flooding. In Luton, all residents at Nelson Terrace had either been rehoused, placed in emergency accommodation or were staying with relatives and neither Housing Association in Nelson Terrace had requested support from the Council.

The Committee discussed the report and expressed appreciation to Southern Water for attending the meeting to listen to Members' concerns and answer questions.

The following issues were discussed:

- **Frequency of gully clearance**

It was reported that the frequency of gully clearance was dependent upon the area and whilst some areas had an annual cleanse, two cycles of gully clearance were undertaken per annum in the Luton area. As a result of the recent flash flood in Luton, the area would be revisited to establish if extra cleansing would be beneficial.

- **Inability to clear gullies owing to parked vehicles**

Councillor Osborne expressed concern that a number of gullies not cleansed in Luton were located in roads where there were double yellow lines. Therefore, he considered it unlikely that access would be prevented by parked vehicles. The Head of Highways and Parking Services agreed to investigate this further.

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- **Flood Mapping**

The Flood, Drainage and Special Projects Officer advised that officers were in the process of gathering information to verify flood mapping to build up an evidence based map of areas at risk of flooding and the levels of risk.

- **Liaison with the two Housing Associations in Nelson Terrace**

Whilst thanking the Committee for the appreciation extended to officers and various agencies for their response to the flooding across various areas of Medway, the Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive acknowledged Councillor Osborne's comment that the two Housing Associations in Nelson Terrace had advised him that they had tried to contact the Council without success. He agreed to investigate this further.

- **Design capability of the sewage system**

Jean-Paul Collet advised upon the capacity of the sewers and confirmed that when surveyed following the flooding incident on 29 May, a small amount of debris had been found. It was unclear whether this had built up before the storm or had been flushed down during the storm, but the level of debris was insignificant and had not caused or contributed to the flooding.

- **Future investment in the sewer system by Southern Water**

Jean-Paul Collet advised that Southern Water's funding was directed to areas with a history of flooding. Whilst Southern Water recognised that the impact of the flooding in the Luton area was unfortunate, based on the current information available, the prospect for investment to upgrade the network in the near to medium term was low. However, in light of the incident on 29 May, this would be recorded and would be taken into account when areas were ranked for possible future investment.

The Committee acknowledged that existing sewer systems were being placed under increasing pressure from new build developments and the detrimental effect created by a build up of fats, oils and non-biodegradable items being deposited into the drainage system. However, it was noted that this was not unique to Medway and was a country-wide problem.

- **Planning for future responses to floods in Medway**

It was acknowledged that Medway had an excellent record of responding to tidal flooding owing to its riverside location but it was suggested that in the light of the recent flash floods in Luton, Strood and Gillingham due to heavy rainfall, the Council review its response to unpredictable flooding. The Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive agreed that this would be taken forward.

In response to a question as to whether the Council regularly met with partner agencies in planning for emergencies, the Director

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Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive reminded the Committee that the Council had been commended for its partnership working by the recent Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2017 and confirmed that officers regularly met with partner agencies.

- **Letter to residents informing them of work undertaken and future obligations**

It was suggested that Southern Water consider sending a letter to local residents explaining the work that had been carried out in surveying the sewer and the repair works due to be carried out in the near future and setting out the obligations of Southern Water. It was also suggested that there could be a benefit in such a letter being a joint collaboration between Southern Water and the Council. In response, Jean-Paul Collet advised the Committee that he was happy to take this suggestion away for consideration and he advised that the Chief Executive of Southern Water had already committed to visit the area with the local MP.

### **Decisions:**

The Committee:

- a) noted that the Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive will investigate the issue of contact between the Council and the two Housing Associations in Nelson Terrace on the day of the flood.
- b) noted that the Head of Highways and Parking Services will investigate the claim that a number of uncleaned gullies had been located in areas where there were double yellow lines and therefore could not be blocked by parked vehicles.
- c) noted that the Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive will instigate a review of the Council's Emergency Procedures to ensure that it covers unpredictable flooding.
- d) noted that Southern Water will consider sending local residents a letter explaining the work that has been carried out in surveying the sewer in Luton and the repair works due to be carried out in the near future and setting out the obligations of Southern Water. Such a letter to be a possible joint collaboration with the Council.
- e) agreed that the Assistant Director Front Line Services be requested to consider providing a monthly gully cleansing schedule to all Members of the Council.

## **276 Petitions**

### **Discussion:**

The Committee received a report advising of petitions received by the Council which fell within the remit of this Committee.

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The Committee was advised that the following petition had been referred to this Committee by the lead petitioner as he had been dissatisfied with the response received from the Director:

### Petition against the removal of secure motorcycle parking from Commercial Road (Strood)

The Committee welcomed Stephen Mallett to the meeting and invited him to address the Committee on his concerns.

Mr Mallett outlined the basis of his petition and referred to two plans attached to the report which he had provided to support his suggested revised layout of the car park in Commercial Road, Strood which would provide secure and adequate motorcycle parking and safe entry and exits for cars.

The Committee acknowledged the concerns expressed by Mr Mallett, taking into account the increasing level of motorcycle theft nationally. It was suggested that if officers were minded to meet with Mr Mallett to discuss this issue, a timescale should be specified for any agreed work.

The Head of Integrated Transport advised that any feedback from users of the facility was welcome and he confirmed that a site visit with Mr Mallett and the Design Engineer would be arranged for a suitable date in September. Once proposals had been formalised, they would be programmed into other works taking place in Strood Town Centre.

Mr Mallett thanked officers for arranging the site visit and permitting him to address the Committee.

### Petition to install CCTV cameras in Strood

Although this petition had not been referred for discussion by the lead petitioner, a Member referred to the comprehensive review of all fixed CCTV cameras and requested information as to the likely timescale of this review.

The Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive informed the Committee that the review of fixed CCTV cameras was a joint undertaking between Medway Council and Medway Commercial Group. He agreed to circulate a briefing note to all Members on this review.

### **Decision:**

The Committee:

- a) noted the petition response and appropriate officer action set out in paragraph 3 of the report.
- b) noted the petition referral request and the Director's comments at paragraph 4 of the report.

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- c) noted that a site visit will be arranged for a date in September to assess the requirements for secure motorcycle parking provision at Commercial Road Car Park in Strood and that the lead petitioner will be invited to attend the site visit.
- d) agreed that Ward Councillors be notified of the date of the site visit referred to at c) above and invited to attend.
- e) agreed that a verbal update be provided on the outcome of the site visit referred to at c) above to the next meeting of the Committee on 18 October 2018.
- f) agreed that a briefing note on the review of fixed CCTV cameras be circulated to all Members of the Council.

### 277 Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services

#### Discussion:

Members received an overview of progress on the areas within the terms of reference of this Committee and covered by the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services as set out below:

- Highways
- Parking
- Public Transport
- Street Cleaning and Waste Collection/Recycling/Waste Disposal
- Street Lighting
- Traffic Management
- Transport Strategy
- Travel Safety.

The Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer responded to Members' questions and comments as follows:

- **Pothole funding**

A Member questioned whether the level of funding in the Highways Budget for repairing potholes at £406,000 was considered sufficient. In response, the Portfolio Holder advised that there was always a requirement for an increased level of funding to repair potholes, especially taking into account the effect of the weather through the winter of 2017/18. He confirmed that Highways had secured a Band 3 Award through The Highway Incentive Fund which had secured £430,000 funding for the current financial year to be invested in carriageway works. This was the highest Band Level available through this funding programme.

The Portfolio Holder suggested that if a Member had any concerns relating to potholes in their Ward, they should send details through to officers asking for an assessment.

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- **Medway Tunnel**

A Member requested an update on funding for the Medway Tunnel.

The Portfolio Holder advised that funding was available to undertake maintenance to the Tunnel. However, he was continually trying to obtain increased funding from the Government for Tunnel maintenance and a meeting with the Transport Minister had recently taken place to discuss this issue.

- **Use of RinGO cashless parking**

A Member sought information on the use of RinGO, a cashless parking solution which levied a 12p charge on each payment. In response, the Portfolio Holder advised that parking systems were being investigated as part of the Council's Transformation Programme. He confirmed that whilst some individuals were willing to use the RinGO cashless parking scheme, some preferred to continue to pay cash for parking. Therefore, it was not intended to go completely digital at this stage.

- **Flytipping**

A Member asked the Portfolio Holder what action was being taken to proactively reduce fly-tipping.

In response, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that fly-tipping was a national problem and that a proportion of fly-tipped rubbish in Medway came from outside of the area. He advised that following the re-opening of the household waste site at Pepper Hill, Gravesend it was hoped that this may reduce the level of fly-tipping in Medway.

The Portfolio Holder advised that during the closure of the Pepper Hill site additional pressure had been placed on staff at Medway's sites and he commended the staff for the way in which they had coped with the increased usage of the sites.

The Portfolio Holder also confirmed that income received from bulky waste collections helped the Council to continue to provide a weekly collection of household waste, recycling and garden waste. He felt that Medway offered the best refuse collection service in the country and was the envy of many other local authorities.

- **The cost of train and bus fares**

A Member referred to the increasing cost of train and bus fares and asked the Portfolio Holder whether representations had been made to service providers.

In response, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that officers had regular meetings with Arriva and the Council continued to subsidise the provision of late night bus services.



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He referred to the results of the recent National Highways and Transport Survey and confirmed that bus and train fares was an issue highlighted as a concern by many survey respondents.

- **Provision of combined bus and train tickets**

A Member expressed concern that the bus station in Chatham does not sell bus tickets and that it was still not possible to obtain a combined bus and train ticket in Medway. In response, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that he would ask officers to check how this was progressing.

- **Parking Hotline**

It was suggested that the parking hotline should be one of the elements available on the 333333 telephone number as opposed to a mobile number. The Portfolio Holder agreed to ask officers to investigate this.

- **Strood Market**

A Member expressed concern as to the sustainability of Strood Market. In response, the Portfolio Holder advised that as part of the Strood Town Centre works, officers were currently investigating the possible provision of a stage for events rather than solely the addition of extra market stalls.

- **Provision of waste collection contract by Medway Norse**

In response to a query as to the operation of the Waste Collection Contract once it transferred from Veolia to Medway Norse, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that there were high levels of satisfaction with the current Waste Collection Service in Medway and as Veolia staff would transfer and work under the new Medway Norse contract, transition from one contract to the other should be smooth. In addition, the same staff would be overseeing the contract.

He was aware that there had been issues with the Grass Cutting Contract operated by Medway Norse in recent months but these issues were being experienced by all local authorities in the light of the recent hot, dry weather.

- **Starling crossings**

A Member suggested that consideration be given to the introduction of starling crossings in Medway at a future date. Such crossings provided lighting on the road increasing awareness for pedestrians using mobile phones, cyclists and drivers.

- **Resurfacing of carriageways**

A Member sought information as to the criteria and eligibility for the schedule of planned resurfacing of carriageways.

In response, the Portfolio Holder advised that a schedule of carriageway repairs was published in January/February each year. However, on occasions, it was not possible to keep to the schedule e.g. in inclement weather.

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The Member requested that a briefing note be supplied to all Members of the Council setting out the criteria and process for determining the schedule of carriageway resurfacing and identifying the process by which a Member could highlight problems in their Ward. The Head of Highways and Parking Services offered to meet with the Member concerned to discuss this further.

- **Repairs to Green Street Footbridge**

A Member commented that the Green Street Bridge was a main pedestrian route from Balmoral Car Park to Gillingham Town Centre and was in need of repair. Despite being advised that the repairs would be carried out, this work had not yet been undertaken. He sought information as to why this work could not be undertaken when the railway line was closed for engineering works. The Portfolio Holder stated that this may be an issue with Network Rail but agreed to ask officers to investigate this.

- **Parking in Gillingham North and South Wards and parking schemes**

A Member thanked the Committee for setting up the Working Group to investigate the issue of parking in Gillingham North and South Wards but advised that there had been slippage in the timescale for this Working Group to report back to Committee. He referred to parking schemes identified but yet to be progressed and sought information as to progress. In response, the Portfolio Holder stated that there had been some delays with parking schemes due to staff holidays but that it was hoped that this would be on track soon.

The Portfolio Holder also confirmed that issues with the residents' parking permits had now been overcome with the provision of Extended Carers Permits. It was suggested that the Extended Carers Permits be publicised in Medway Matters.

- **European Parking Collection (EPC) Contract**

In response to a question as to the length of the EPC Contract, the Portfolio Holder agreed to respond to the Member direct. However, he confirmed that income received in the current financial year, exceeded that collected in the last financial year.

- **Repainting of road markings after re-surfacing**

A Member commented that when roads are resurfaced, there is a delay between the completion of the work and re-painting of road markings. In response, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that funding was available for painting of road markings in the current financial year.

- **Strand Car Park – Charges**

A Member asked whether attendance at the Strand Leisure Park had been reduced through the Summer as a result of the introduction of the parking charges. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that income from the

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car park had achieved target level and that the Strand Leisure Park had been very busy through the Summer.

- **E-Petition on parking in Walderslade Village**

A Member referred to a current e-petition objecting to the increased level of parking enforcement in Walderslade Village. He explained that there was currently one hour free parking and the petition was requesting that this be increased to two hours to enable individuals to visit the hairdressers or funeral directors without incurring a parking ticket. He requested that the Portfolio Holder give this consideration.

### **Decision:**

The Committee:

- a) thanked Councillor Filmer for attending the meeting and answering Member's questions.
- b) noted that the Portfolio Holder in consultation with officers will:
  - pursue the possible sale of bus tickets at the bus station.
  - Investigate the possibility of the parking hotline being incorporated as an option on the 333333 telephone number.
  - Along with Kent County Council, continue to investigate possible options available as an alternative to the Oyster Card Scheme.
  - Investigate the possibility of increasing the period of free parking at Walderslade village from one hour to two hours.
  - Respond direct to the Member concerned to advise upon the length of the European Parking Collection (EPC) Contract.
- c) requested that the Assistant Director Front Line Services undertake further discussions with Network Rail on the possibility of repair works being undertaken to Green Street Bridge in Gillingham.
- d) requested that an article be placed in Medway Matters advertising the introduction of the Extended Carers Parking Permits.
- e) agreed that a Briefing Note be circulated to all Members of the Council setting out the criteria and process for determining the schedule of resurfacing of carriageways and it be noted that the Head of Highways and Parking Services has offered to undertake a site visit with the Member concerned to discuss carriageway repairs.
- f) requested that the gully clearance programme incorporate a risk-based approach to support the prioritisation within the programme.

## **278 Highway Network Investment to maintain the current levels of technical performance**

### **Discussion:**

The Committee received a detailed report outlining the levels of Highway Network Investment to maintain the current levels of technical performance.

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It was reported that Highway Network Investment was principally funded through four main funding streams:

- Council funding
- Department of Transport
- External Funding
- Highway Adoptions.

‘Our approach to Lifecycle Planning’ on Highway Asset Management was attached as an appendix to the report which set out medium to long-term financial plans for managing the Highway Asset and focused on the following key highway asset groups:

- Carriageway
- Footway
- Structures
- Street Lighting
- Drainage (Gullies).

The Highway Lifecycle Planning was reviewed every two years.

The Committee discussed the report and in particular the following:

- **The conversion of street lighting to LED**  
It was noted that the possible conversion of street lighting to LED was currently under investigation. However, there were other possible options available for street columns including provision of electric charging points, notification of nearby parking availability and wi-fi.
- **Parking on the footway**  
The Head of Highways and Parking Services acknowledged that parking on the footway not only obstructed access for wheelchair users and parents with prams but could also cause damage to services under the footway. He confirmed that this issue was frequently raised by Ward Councillors and officers were investigating the introduction of a ban on footway parking. However, it was recognised that in certain areas of Medway parking on the footway was a necessity owing to the narrowness of the highway.
- **Requirement for increased funding to maintain the highway asset**  
Concern was expressed that there was insufficient funding available to maintain the highway asset and that strong representations should be made to the Government for an increased level of funding to be made available.
- **Clarification on Table 3 – Highways Budget**  
A Member sought clarification as to how the Highways Budget for 2018-19 correlated to the Lifecycle Planning Report. The Head of Highways

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and Parking Services advised that not all of the Highways Budget was captured in the Lifecycle Planning report and he offered to circulate a briefing note clarifying this issue.

In response to the concerns raised by the Committee on the level of funding required to maintain the technical performance of the highways network, the Committee requested that a letter be sent to the Government outlining concerns, with such a letter to include:

- Recognition that investment in the highways is a national issue
- An acknowledgement that Medway's position is outperforming the national average
- Encouraging the Government to provide an increased level of funding to be made available to local authorities for the maintenance of highways assets nationally.

### **Decision:**

The Committee:

- a) noted the increased levels of Highway Network Investment required to maintain the current levels of technical performance and requested that the Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive write to the Roads Minister along the lines suggested above and requesting that the Government provide an increased level of funding available to local authorities for the maintenance of highways assets nationally.
- b) agreed that further Lifecycle Reports for Highways Network Investment be added to the Committee's Work Programme.
- c) noted that the Head of Highways and Parking Services will circulate a briefing note clarifying how the Highways Budget for 2018-19 correlated to the Lifecycle Planning Report.

## **279 Work Programme**

### **Discussion:**

The Committee considered its work programme for the remainder of 2018/19, noting a number of suggested variations from the pre-agenda meeting on 27 July 2018 and a recommendation from the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee that all Overview and Scrutiny Committees receive a report on Transformation as it relates to their individual terms of reference.

A Member requested that a briefing note be provided on the reasons why the recent Castle Concerts made a loss.

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**Decision:**

The Committee:

- a) noted the current work programme.
- b) agreed the following changes in line with the suggestions from the Pre-agenda meeting:
  - The further 6 month update from the Dementia Task Group be provided as a briefing note in line with the request of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
  - The 6 month update on the recommendations from the Task Group on Employment Opportunities for Young People in Medway be deferred until October 2018 on the basis that the post holder who will be undertaking this work only recently took up post and in line with the decision of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
  - A briefing note be produced on the Cultural Activities Programme in 2019.
  - The Annual Action Plan reviewing the progress of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy be produced as a briefing note in 2019
- c) agreed that a report on Transformation be added to the Committee's work programme for the December meeting.
- d) agreed to receive further Lifecycle reports for Highways Network Investment.
- e) agreed that a briefing note be circulated on the recent loss from the Castle Concerts.

**Chairman**

**Date:**

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