



Joint Local Plan Growth Workshop

Draft Feedback Report

v1 | Nov 2024

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1 Introduction

- 1 North Devon Council and Torridge District Council held a Joint Member Workshop at Caddsdown Business Support Centre on 8 November 2024 which provided an opportunity for Members to discuss their ideas for growth. The workshop was held as part of the early stage work ongoing since North Devon and Torridge committed to embark on the preparation of a new local plan. At the current time there remains uncertainty as to the shape of the new plan-making system, introduced through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, with the Councils' waiting for secondary legislation and changes to national planning policies to be introduced.
- 2 The workshop was attended by 37 Members split into five mixed groups to encourage a focus on northern Devon rather than looking at each local planning authority area separately and in isolation. Three activities were facilitated by Officers on the day and examined what successful places look like, discussed options for growth, and explored a map to plan locations for growth.

2 Activity One - What Makes a Successful Place?

- 3 For activity one, Members were asked to consider what makes a successful place and provide examples of such a place. The aim was to understand what makes a successful place and to discuss the metrics of success, asking whether it is more nuanced or subjective. With challenges ahead of us regarding possible increases to housing targets, the development of more comprehensive places gives us the opportunity to plan more widely for the success of a place. In order to deliver this we must understand what makes a successful place and why.
- 4 Common themes resulting from activity one were housing, community, transport, infrastructure, employment and education. Each group came up with their ideas separately and these have been grouped together into the common themes.

5 Housing:

- Good housing is key to a successful place and high quality housing, designed to meet local needs, makes somewhere a success.
- Housing should be suitable for communities with a mixture of affordable housing and different tenures.
- Where appropriate the affordable housing should be incorporated into developments using pepper potting.
- Affordable house prices have had a positive impact on communities and helped support schools and businesses.
- Registered providers from housing associations taking on more homes would be beneficial and more social housing would be good although it is recognised that money may be an issue.
- Planned settlements with great architecture supported success.
- The phasing of strategic sites as a positive move.
- It is important to put the right homes in the right places.
- Planning for the future by providing opportunities to expand should be considered.
- Terraced streets were suggested as an option to make a successful place as they help with the issue of density and could provide more housing while leaving space for other community benefits.
- Equal opportunities to access housing
- Consider places which encourage inter-generational cooperation and understanding.
- Should be creating homes which reduce carbon emissions
- Should provide housing in the right locations to sustain future growth.
- Address second homes and recognised a balance, being mindful that these can benefit and help businesses.

6 Community:

- Sense of place and belonging to a cohesive community with strong connections made places successful.
- Provision of spaces for people to meet is important and community facilities should be located near to other local amenities.
- Community centres and central green spaces were suggested as the kind of areas which could encourage meetings or events.
- Mixed communities which are multi-cultural and with a balance of age groups were considered successful
- Young people in particular need more places to spend their time.
- Designing out crime is key as a successful community is a safe one. Being safe could relate to several things including well-lit spaces, good design and safe footpaths.
- Communities in successful places feel rewarded by the area they are in and can be part of a place which gives back to the communities.
- Concerns were raised around isolation, therefore being able to walk to nearby services is good and this benefits the community in several ways by tackling isolation and encouraging healthy lifestyles.
- Happiness is an important factor, both for those living in a place but also those who may visit.
- Encouraging self builds was seen as a positive as this could mean people are more likely to stay in their communities.
- Community Land Trusts (CLTs) were also seen as a positive as the
 communities have an opportunity to develop a space which benefits the
 people living there while protecting community assets. Successful CLTs can
 help people to make a difference to their own area and provide appropriate
 housing types and this means that a place is likely to be considered a success
 by the community.

7 Infrastructure:

- Infrastructure is an important factor in a successful place, especially in terms of travel and transport.
- Successful places should have good supporting infrastructure with easy access to services and facilities.
- Making a place walkable and accessible with excellent pedestrian links is good because it encourages healthy communities and reduces reliance on cars.
- Transport integration and good transport links are important and a successful place should have good bus, cycle, and pedestrian links.
- Access to reliable public transport is especially important in smaller, more rural, villages where many people rely on the buses and these links should be sustainable.

- Services and facilities, which are right for the space they exist in, support success and there should be sufficient medical and dental services available as well as good schools.
- Get the right facilities in the right places and legislation to direct infrastructure could be helpful.
- Successful places usually have facilities which cater to a range of age groups and provide spaces for different people within communities.
- Green infrastructure supports a successful place by making it somewhere you would want to live.
- Accessible spaces for nature alongside green open spaces are good if they are in a location where people can enjoy them.
- Public open space is also key and this should be accessible for all people.
- Larger play areas which will get used by communities are important and these are most successful when they meet community needs and are not just a small developer obligation.
- Places with good mobile and internet infrastructure are a success as this supports local businesses and allows people greater choices for work as they have the option to work at home.
- 8 Employment, education, and retail:
- Successful places should have good employment opportunities with good wages to attract skilled workers and to retain local people who want to stay in a place.
- Good education can help create and keep the skilled workers so a range of levels is helpful.
- When people in a place are happy with a good work life balance they then sustain a successful place by being able to support the local economy and grow strong retail uses within town centres.
- Places where free enterprise is celebrated are successful as there is more freedom for private businesses to compete with one another.

9 The places in the table below were recognised as examples of successful places. Many examples did come from within North Devon and Torridge with some as far away as Australia. All examples are listed, in no particular order, alongside the reasons which make each a success.

Place	Reasons
Westward Ho! and Appledore	Mixed housing tenure, amenities, employment, size and type of dwelling, community involvement.
Wooda Road, Appledore	Mixed tenure/housing type, green, well designed.
Great Torrington	Community spirit, facilities, culture, forward thinking, Tarka Trail, bus services, The Plough, The Common, doctors, church, pubs and bars, shops, connectivity (highways).
Warren Lane, Torrington	Can walk to a range of services, well connected.
Barnstaple	Town centre thrives on Saturday night, mix of housing/tenure/ affordability, mix of uses/employment.
Fremington	Good connection to the countryside.
Bridgerule	Housing mix, local needs, self-build, shared equity, village hall, community shop, retain young people.
Merton	The Malt Scoop Inn, services, new development has helped schools, type of housing makes it more affordable, well designed.
Bickington	Bus stop with regular services, Tarka Trail.
Bradworthy	Services locally, social, not just homes but communities.
Newton	
Tracey	
Exeter	Good schools and pubs, growth, age balance.
St Just	Affordable, culture is a theme in the town.
Dartmoor	Tranquility, ecological diversity, green spaces, limited housing.
Milton Keynes	Green Infrastructure, employment opportunities, multiple centres based on historic villages.
Margate Old	Improved sense of place, previously deprived but improved through
Town	artistic investment, improved sense of place for communities.
Bristol	Multi-ethnic, diversity, multi-skilled, accessible facilities, terraced streets.
Bournville,	Green space.
Birmingham	·
Denmark	Aesthetically pleasing design.
Ravensburg,	Traffic free, pedestrian priority, excellent public transport, transport
Germany	hub, greenspaces, bike racks everywhere, beautiful buildings (new).
Spain	High density developments (flats) leave space for more community facilities.

Place	Reasons
Hastings, Australia	Vibrant, good housing mix.
New York	Free enterprise, optimism, opportunities, good attitude, nice place to be.

3 Activity Two - Options for Growth

10 Activity two aimed to explore what Members thought would deliver the required growth and asked which options are preferable. The focus was on what growth might look like, not where growth might happen. Five different options were discussed with Members encourage to look at the pros and cons of each option; tables below show pros in the green tables and cons in the red tables. The five potential options were New Town(s), New Village(s), Growing the Towns (including strategic urban extensions), Growing the Villages, and Dispersed Growth.

11 New towns:

Infrastructure: New towns force the delivery of infrastructure and allow for further infrastructure to be implemented. This can be plan-led and, if connected well, provide good transport links. The Tarka line is key to locating a new town and there could be links to stations. Must look beyond boundaries when considering connectivity.

Housing: Opportunities to deliver social and council housing. New towns can help accommodate large houses and may help take the pressure off development in other countryside areas. Could also use brownfield sites for new housing.

Communities: A new town could help achieve a good balance of places to live and work while drawing more money into an area. They could avoid disruption to existing communities and may see limited local opposition and reduced NIMBYism.

Design: New towns can be good if they are properly master planned so that the development is focused and well designed. Having the ability to start from scratch and plan something new could be great and the new towns can allow for natural expansion. Opportunities for green towns which have innovative design and incorporate pedestrianised areas.

Facilities: Opportunities for a range of new facilities including cultural facilities. Would need to provide good facilities for communities.

Community: It may be difficult to ensure that a new town fits in with existing local features or culture and you risk a loss of identity in the new areas. There is also a risk that house providers will not provide what the community needs and that new towns will not be suitable for locals. Challenges come with creating culture and community when a whole new town is created and it is necessary to build a community to sustain facilities.

Environment: There is a chance that a new town will mean a significant loss of environment and could also contribute to a loss of agricultural land.

Land/infrastructure/cost: Availability of land could be an issue and there could be problems if infrastructure comes second. How practical is creating a master plan and implementing it properly. Need mechanisms to deliver that require investment and government intervention. How do you find the skills and workforce to complete a new town, it may be that the cost is just too high.

Housing: Having new towns just solves housing numbers but does not offer much to the area. It is important to allow smaller developments as well.

Existing settlements: With a new town being created there may be less focus or investment in existing areas and while adding to these too much is not good, you also don't want them to be left out. New towns will probably not transform existing places but we do have thew opportunity to focus on improving and growing the existing places.

12 New villages:

Communities: New villages could mean opportunities to provide for or cater to specific needs such as a retirement village or a smaller area with plenty of one bedroom housing. Smaller areas of housing are likely to be met with more acceptance than a larger area. New villages could be located between existing villages to help support and sustain the existing communities.

Facilities: New facilities could support nearby existing villages by encouraging people to use them and new villages should plan for facilities to engender the community.

Design: Provide an opportunity for outstanding architecture and landscaping while creating environmentally sustainable villages.

Location: New villages have potential if they are well located and accessible. There is potential near to railway lines and connectivity would be key in terms of highways.

Infrastructure: If new villages are created there needs to be capacity to deliver new infrastructure as they would require more medical services, churches, and village halls. Infrastructure, services, and facilities are often delivered second so there is a lack in these things until later on in development.

Communities: May be difficult to bring these forward and piecemeal development would not support strong communities as it may not be well connected until it is all complete. Villages need community and you are unlikely to see multigenerational communities in new villages, there is also a risk of isolation if not well connected.

Sustainability: New villages are not self-sufficient so they are not sustainable in terms of transport, infrastructure, and health. Should not be creating "anywhere" homes with no character, it is important to make places that people want to live in and encourage them to stay and make the place sustainable.

13 Growing Towns:

Housing: Potential for the council to build more council houses and provide housing which meets the needs of workers such as teachers and NHS staff. Can plan for new modern housing which fits into existing areas.

Existing facilities: There are opportunities within our settlements with greater investment and growing towns could further support this. Existing services and facilities could be supported by attracting more people to an area to sustain what we already have. Historically towns have grown and seen benefits and the main infrastructure is already in place to facilitate growing the towns.

Town centres: Opportunity with increased population to change the use in high streets with the possibility of more homes above shops or in areas with empty buildings. There would also be benefits for town centres as you could increase the number of people living nearby and able to easily access them. Possibility of re-purposing town centres to fit a changing demographic or population and get people using them again.

Economic opportunities: It may be economically more viable to grow the towns and there may be more scope for S106 benefits to be used in existing areas and to deliver what people want to see. There are also opportunities to use more innovative technology.

Location: Use of brownfield sites on the edge of towns could be considered and growing towns is potentially easier to manage from a political point of view.

Infrastructure: Potential infrastructure challenges especially with roads and the amount of traffic. May lack the infrastructure needed but not be able to deliver more to support the growth. There is a risk of overcrowding facilities which are already in towns so it would be important to plan the growth carefully and plan for more facilities where necessary. Dead spots are already a problem which could increase so it may be important to address this and ensure that the broadband connection is suitable for all homes in our settlements.

Design: Can be poorly planned without an appropriate master plan which could lead to unwanted development which does not fit in. There may be challenges around issues such as parking which is already a problem, a lack of joined up thinking would not make growing towns a success.

Landscape: Potential for issues with landscape and other constraints with the geographies of some existing towns posing a challenge in terms of expansion into the surrounding landscape.

Place: Risk of losing the sense of place many existing residents have within their communities and there is a potential that some towns are already at capacity. Can't always just add to towns as this could put a strain on services and even lead to isolation in some strategic extensions.

14 Growing villages:

Housing: More chances to bring forward affordable housing or housing to meet local needs such as allowing space for self build plots. The opportunity to meet local needs is there and must be balanced with second homes. Potential to develop brownfield sites or to allow the diversification of existing buildings, both ways would allow change so villages could adapt for the future and make further use of previously developed land.

Community: Chance to revitalise villages and give young people more opportunities to stay where they have grown up. Growing villages can help support vitality and viability of existing communities and improve a sense of community and place. Isolation could be reduced as multiple villages grow and revitalising facilities such as village halls can support this by ensuring that community hubs are actively used.

Services and facilities: Would support existing services and facilities such as schools, pubs, churches, and village halls. Growth could help retain the population which would support the existing services alongside opportunities to grow these.

Infrastructure: Infrastructure is already there and the growth of villages which have good infrastructure in place would be good. Growth would be especially good in places with good existing transport links. Infrastructure often follows development so more could be sought to further support growth in villages.

Infrastructure: Some smaller villages are lacking infrastructure, especially transport related infrastructure such as road networks and transport options.

Local resistance: Growing the villages may raise the most local objections and be the areas which see the most resistance to growth.

Facilities: Access to facilities may be limited and this could lead to more people relying on cars to reach what they need to.

Housing: Growth on the edge of villages may be too small to bring forward the affordable housing potentially wanted or needed by the communities. Probably small developments and not suitable for bringing forward social housing.

15 Dispersed growth:

Community: If built sensitively there could be an improved sense of community and settlements could support each other as they grow. Good links between places would support good communities and could encourage more multi-use buildings to be shared and become hubs for people.

Existing: The use of existing buildings could be supported to allow for growth which does not require lots of new land to be available.

Policy: Not allocations but a policy to support small areas of growth.

Scale and development: Growth and scale must be balanced and this should be small scale with each area decided on its own merits. There is a possibility that this type of development will not be sustainable and you could end up with lots of ribbon developments which do not fit in with the well planned growth we could be achieving.

Location: Could end up with small sporadic places and risk isolation of people who go to live there. It would depend on the location to avoid these risks.

Infrastructure: Lack of infrastructure if you are not going to be growing existing areas.

Environment: Has the potential to ruin the environment unnecessarily because this could impact open countryside away from settlements.

- 16 Following discussions around the options it was planned for the groups to vote on the ideas they liked and disliked. Ultimately the results were varied with some groups not wishing to vote on the options as they felt all should be considered, and others only deciding on a single option. Many felt as though it is becoming inevitable that we may need to consider some growth in all of the areas discussed. With such mixed results it is not possible to return any figures and it is likely that all the options will be re-visited in more detail in the future as work continues. It may be that a different approach is taken to explore views on which options are preferred for our area, and this may become clearer once the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is published.
- 17 From the votes gathered it appears that growing villages is a popular option but it was noted that this should be proportional. Other options received more mixed opinions and most Members recognised a need for more context around each option, for example some would agree to grow some villages but not all and only proportionally. It is however noted that one group was strongly against the idea of new towns with other groups being more mixed or more supportive of the idea.

4 Activity Three - Exploring Locations for Growth

- 18 Activity three was focused around exploring locations for growth and discussing which areas may provide good opportunities or be best to locate new housing. Maps were provided to give members a good visualisation of the potential new housing numbers. Groups were asked to consider the numbers in terms of existing places, for example 3.2x Bideford or 7.7x South Molton. With figures suggesting a minimum additional supply of 11,724 dwellings it was important to explore a range of options from proportional growth around existing settlements to potential new settlements.
- 19 Each group went about the activity slightly differently so the map below reflects the variety of options by organising them into three main categories based on the discussions from the workshop. The first suggestion was for smaller sites focusing around existing settlements and considering proportional growth. Another suggestion was for larger levels of growth focused around existing settlements and where existing infrastructure is in place. The third suggestion was for growth to be directed to locations where a larger settlement such as a new town or village could be created.

Map showing suggested locations for growth across North Devon Key Growth Areas Smaller/proportional growth areas Larger growth areas New settlement ideas Lynton South Doy The Warren Whitefield Down Halsinger EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK Hutcherton Barnstap Wrick D Northa South Molto Lashing ley Moors Great Torrington Wilson Moor Common Moor Venn Moor North Tawton Credition TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL Scale 1:250000 Date Produced: 27/11/2024 Crown copyright and database rights2024 Ordnance Survey AC0000817998 EUL. You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond tor interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data You are not permitted to copy sub-license, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form northdevon Map data

Map showing suggested locations for growth across Torridge Down Northag **Great Torrington** Stratton Venn Moor Howorthy North Taw Okehampton Shelly Okehampton Throwleigh Common Common nbe Down Burley Down Raddon Brake Key Launceston Longham Smaller/proportional growth areas Larger growth areas New settlement ideas TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL Scale 1:250000 Date Produced: 27/11/2024 O Crown copyright and database rights2024 Ordnance Survey AC0000817998 EUL. You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond for interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data You are not permitted to copy sub-license, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form northdevon Map data

5 Themes for Working Groups

As a result of the detailed discussion on the day of the workshop, there were several themes found within this report. Several key points may be of use to working groups as we progress; the key points are grouped into four relevant themes below. The resulting information from the workshop is very wide ranging and as a result may fit into multiple categories however, all the information in this report can be used a a starting point for future work.

21 Climate and Environment

- Homes designed to reduce carbon emissions.
- Green spaces and public open space for communities.
- Reduced reliance on cars where possible.
- Good public transport links, especially in rural areas.
- Green infrastructure.
- Environmentally sustainable villages.
- Discourage the loss of environment and agricultural land.
- Use brownfield land instead.
- Avoid the impact on open countryside and unnecessary ruin of the environment.

22 Economy, Innovation and Skills

- Good employment opportunities and good wages.
- Want to attract skilled workers to the area.
- Provision of good education at different levels.
- Help locals support the local economy through improved employment/wages.
- Grow strong retail uses within town centres and improve town centres and highstreets.
- Free enterprise to help local businesses.
- New towns could bring more money to the area.
- Must invest in existing settlements alongside new ones.
- Question how to find skills and workforce to create new towns/villages.
- Growing towns may be more economically viable than new towns.
- Diversification of existing buildings.

23 Health and Wellbeing

- Creating healthy communities.
- Walkability in a place and accessible spaces.
- Tackling isolation, especially in rural areas.
- Good pedestrian links to help people walk to access services and facilities.
- Good bus, cycle, and walking links to encourage public transport use and active travel.
- Good work life balance supported by access to open space.
- Provision of medical and dental services.

24 Place and Community

- Good quality housing in the right locations to sustain future growth.
- Housing planned to meet local needs.
- Affordable housing incorporated into developments.
- Housing to meet key worker needs.
- Potential to build more council houses.
- Should be encouraging more self-build plots.
- Should be supportive of Community Land Trusts.
- Terraced housing could be incorporated to help with issues around density.
- Growth and scale must be well balanced.
- Don't want to end up with sporadic places and risk isolation.
- Piecemeal development would not support strong communities.
- Challenges may be faced creating strong new communities in new towns/ villages.
- Designing out crime is important.
- Community meeting spaces and hubs are important.
- Facilities should cater to a range of age groups.

1 Appendix: Presentation Slides

27/11/2024





2





National Context

Previous Government committed to reforming planmaking system

- Primary legislation introduced in late 2023
 Labour Government committed to reforms but reconsidering the detail.
- Previously expected to start in Autumn 2024, but now Summer / Autumn 2025
 Awaiting secondary legislation and shape of new plan-
- making system

 Unable to complete plan under existing system
- Unable to complete plan under existing system Seeking to progress as much as possible in the interim

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Housing Requirements

The state of the state

16

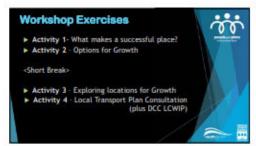
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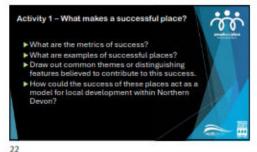
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Time for an exercise!? Activity 2 – Options for Growth



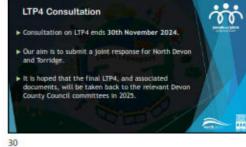




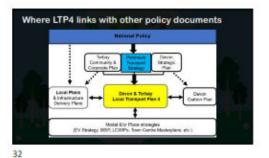












31



Six objectives to achieve the vision

Decarbonitation - reaching net-zero by 2050.

Rehable and resistant - Strategic road and rail their connecting Device to the resit of the country.

Easter Travel - Well integrated, includive, reliable tramport.

Unlock Development - Supporting clean growth.

Greater places for people - Regenerating the public realm.

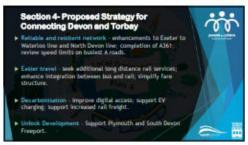
The place to be Nationally Active - active travel, quiet lanes.

33





35





Section 7- Proposed Strategy for Growth Areas

• Unlacking Developments: A39/A361 Improvements: New crossing of reads and firm law is support Active Esrel choice.

• Easier Travel - Increase series frequency of public tramport: half hour train Estimategy to Easier travel shortes from Estimategy to Easier travel and are run Estimategy to Easier, integrated box and rail service (where feasible).

• Greater Places for People - Low traffic zones in Earnstagle.

• Decarbonisation - EV charging topoth, roll out of electric boxet; peer to peer EV charging topothy thydrogen creation at Application.

• The Place to be Naburally Active - Espansion of multi-tive network, Active Travel enhancements through LCWPA.

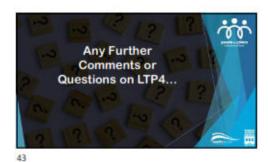


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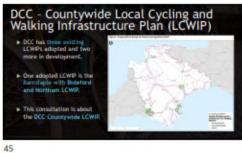


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نؤن **Devon County Council - Countywide** Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Consultation

44



DCC Countywide LCWIP Objectives 46











What's Next... et HELAA Stakeholder Panel (Early February)





2 Appendix: Attendance Sheet

Cllr Graham Bell	NDC
Cllr Frank Biederman	NDC
Cllr Lauren Bright	TDC
Cllr Chris Bright	TDC
Cllr Philip Pennington	TDC
Cllr Glyn Lane	NDC
Cllr Louis Bach	TDC
Cllr Claire Hodson	TDC
Cllr Ricky Knight	NDC
Cllr Peter Leaver	NDC
Cllr Chris Norman	NDC
Cllr Philip Hackett	TDC
Cllr Chris Leather	TDC
Cllr Mark Haworth-Booth	NDC
Cllr Sara Wilson	NDC
Cllr Simon Newton	TDC
Cllr Malcolm Wilkinson	NDC
Cllr Shirleyann Andrews	TDC
Cllr Chris Wheatley	TDC
Cllr Peter Bishop	NDC
Cllr Doug Smith	TDC
Cllr Louisa York	NDC
Cllr Peter Hames	TDC
Cllr Annie Brenton	TDC
Cllr David Brenton	TDC
Cllr Teresa Tinsley	TDC

Cllr Ken James	TDC
Cllr David Clayton	NDC
Cllr Robert Hicks	TDC
Cllr Jane Whittaker	TDC
Cllr Stephen Gibson	TDC
Cllr Helen Walker	NDC
Cllr Malcolm Prowse	NDC
Cllr Simon Maddocks	NDC
Cllr Anna Dart	TDC
Cllr Wendy Lo-Vel	TDC
Cllr Lyndon Piper	TDC

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