

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 13 December 2005

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

Preliminary Scoping Report for a proposed review of Council Tax Income/Expenditure by Ward in Derby

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Scrutiny Management Commission consider the attached preliminary scoping report for a proposed review of Council Tax Income/Expenditure by Ward in Derby and the resource implications for the Commission of conducting such a review.
- 1.2 That the Commission agree whether or not they wish to undertake a review of the type outlined in the preliminary scoping report.
- 1.3 If it is decided to proceed with the review that the Commission confirm:
 - a) when they wish to commence the review
 - b) whether the review will be conducted by the whole Commission or a smaller working group. In the latter case it would be helpful if the Commission could identify the members of the working group.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its meeting on 1 November 2005 Scrutiny Management Commission members expressed an interest in conducting a review that would compare the Council's income from Council Tax in each of the City's Wards with the Council Tax expenditure in each of the Wards.
- 2.2 The Co-ordination Officer was asked to prepare a report setting out the scope of such a review for consideration at the Commission's meeting on 13 December 2005.
- 2.3 The preliminary scoping report contained in Appendix 2 has been provided in response to the Commission's request. The report draws heavily on the experience of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council who in 2002/03 carried out a similar resource mapping exercise to examine the destination and impact of their expenditure.

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Background papers: Appendix 1 – Implications

List of appendices: Appendix 2 - Preliminary Scoping Report for a proposed Review of

Council Tax Income/Expenditure by Ward in Derby

Appendix 1

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

 None arising from this report. If the Commission decides to proceed with the review there will be financial implications. These cannot be quantified at this time but will have to be contained within the Commission's research budget.

Legal

2. None arising from this report.

Personnel

3. If the Commission decides to proceed with the review there will be financial implications. These cannot be quantified at this time as the final form of the review has not yet been agreed. It is however anticipated that a review of this nature would place heavy demands on the Co-ordination Team. It would also require a high level of member commitment

Equalities impact

4. Depending on the objectives selected by the Commission a review of this nature could have significant equalities impact.

Corporate Objectives, Values and Priorities

5. This report has the potential to link with all of the Council's Corporate Objectives, Values and Priorities:

smc CTAX scope

Scrutiny Management Commission

Draft Preliminary Scoping Report for a proposed Review of Council Tax Income/Expenditure by Ward in Derby

1. Introduction

- 1 At its meeting on 1 November 2005 Scrutiny Management Commission members expressed an interest in conducting a review that would compare the Council's income from Council Tax in each of the City's Wards with the Council Tax expenditure in each of the Wards.
- 2 The Co-ordination Officer was asked to prepare a report setting out the scope of such a review for consideration at the Commission's meeting on 13 December 2005.
- 3 This report has been provided in response to the Commission's request. The report draws heavily on the experience of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council who in 2002/03 carried out a similar resource mapping exercise to examine the destination and impact of their expenditure.

2. Background Information

- 4 Following the Scrutiny Management Commission's meeting on 1 November 2005, Councillor Richard Smalley provided the Co-ordination Officer with some suggestions as to how he thought the review might be conducted. These suggestions are contained in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 5 Before preparing the scoping report the Co-ordination Officer contacted the Director of Finance to discuss the possible shape of review and the level of Finance Directorate input that would be required. The Director of Finance expressed interest in the idea and confirmed that the outcome of such a review could well be of value to the Council. However he pointed out that the proposed review would have significant resource implications and he said that owing to other commitments his Directorate would not be able to provide input to the review before April 2006.
- The Director of Finance did however inform the Co-ordination Officer of the resource mapping exercise that had been conducted by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, and he suggested that the approach followed by Blackburn might be of interest to the Commission.

- 7 The objectives, anticipated outputs, methodology and outcomes of the Blackburn resource mapping exercise are described in more detail in Appendix 2 of this report. In summary the aims and objectives of the resource mapping exercise were to:
 - Inform future policy and resource allocation
 - Understand the links between resources and areas of deprivation, linked to ethnicity
- 8 The project was broken down into three stages which were to establish for the financial year 2002/03:
 - A global figure for all public spending in the local authority
 - How this spending was apportioned to each of the seven themes in Blackburn's Community Strategy
 - How the spending on each of the themes was apportioned to each of the wards of the local authority
- 9 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council engaged the Cambridge based economic development consultants SQW Limited to carry out the review which was completed in six months.
- 10 SQW were given access to the Council's budget books and apportioned the budget to the seven key themes. They sent out questionnaires to a range of key stakeholders and used the feedback from these, as well as telephone and face-to-face interviews to apportion monies to wards. It is perhaps of note that SQW found it necessary to use a minimum expenditure level of £1 million, and made no apportionments below this level.
- The results of the exercise enabled Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council to demonstrate that there was a close linkage between allocation of resources and need based on deprivation. This enabled them to counter the perception of some local residents that too much funding was being directed to particular ethnic groups. The exercise also enabled the Council to demonstrate increased public sector funding and to show where and on what the money was spent.
- The proposals for the scope of the review that are set out in the following sections of this report are based largely on the approach taken by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. The reports on the Blackburn resource mapping exercise can be viewed via the following link

http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=398214

3. Objectives of the Proposed Review

- 13 No specific objectives for the proposed review were identified by the Commission when the matter was discussed at the meeting on 1 November 2005.
- 14 Experience with other reviews has shown that it is very difficult to bring them to a worthwhile and satisfactory conclusion unless the objectives have been specified at the outset. Therefore, if it is decided to proceed with this review, it is suggested that the Commission considers and defines the objectives before undertaking any evidence gathering work. It is also suggested that in defining the objectives the Commission should give full consideration to the purpose of the review and that this should be reflected in the objective(s)
- 15 For the purpose of preparing this scoping report the following 'working objectives' have been adopted:

16 Working Objectives of the proposed review:

- 1. To quantify and categorise the City Council's income from Council Tax for a selected financial year.
- 2. To conduct a geographical comparison of the distribution of Council Tax on a ward-by-ward basis
- 3. To identify inequalities in service provision and unmet service needs whilst having regard to enhanced service demands occasioned by social deprivation and other relevant factors.
- 4. To complete the review within a timescale that ensures the findings of the review are relevant to the work of the Council
- 5. To make any appropriate recommendations based on the findings of the review

4. Terms of Reference of the proposed Review

17 The suggested Terms of Reference of the proposed review are set out in the following table:

Terms of Reference

	Issue	Action(s)
1.	Must:	 Meetings with relevant Officers of City Council Presentation by representatives of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council if can be arranged
2.	Need to determine income Council receives from Council Tax	Meetings with relevant Officers of City Council
3.	Need to map the Council's expenditure ward-by-ward	Meetings with stakeholders and relevant Officers of the City Council
4.	Have to compare Council Tax Income with expenditure on ward-by-ward basis	Comparison of the outputs of (2) and (3) above will achieve this.
5.	Need to develop recommendations to address any inequalities in provision and unmet service needs	Basis of the recommendations will be contained in (4) above

5. Stakeholders in the proposed Review

- 18 The stakeholders in this review will be:
 - a) the relevant officers and Council cabinet members
 - b) The public in general as the contributors and recipients of the Council Tax.
- 19 The Commission or its working group will need to consider how the views of the public as stakeholders can be considered through the review

6. Proposed Methodology for the Review

- 20 There would appear to be a number of distinct parts to this review. These can at this stage be broadly categorised as:
- 21 Part 1 Agree the Brief for the review. It is suggested that to do this it will firstly be necessary to define the Objectives of the review. Once this has been done the Commission will need to agree the overall format and the detailed methodology of the review. At this stage members will need to agree on any necessary limitations, such as any assumptions that will be made and the minimum expenditure level that will be considered.

- At this stage of the review the Commission will also need to decide how the review will identify relevant 'expenditure' within the wards. Blackburn did this by allocating expenditure to the seven themes contained in its Community Plan. At the end of the exercise they were then able to show the level of expenditure on each of the themes in each of their wards. In the report on their resource mapping exercise Blackburn recognise that this approach did present some problems. However it seems clear that it will be very difficult to conduct this exercise without some means of categorising and sorting the expenditure within the wards.
- The Brief for the review will need to set out precisely how Council tax income and expenditure will be mapped on a ward-by-ward basis.
- 24 Part 2 Determine the income that the Council receives from Council Tax
- a) on a city-wide basis
 - b) ward-by-ward
- Then on a ward-by-ward basis identify the factors that affect the income from Council Tax.
- This should in theory be relatively simple to do, but it will be dependent on the support that can be provided by the Finance Directorate. The precise manner in which the ward-by-ward income is mapped will need to be considered in detail and agreed by the Commission during Part 1 of the review.
- 28 Part 3 Map the Council's expenditure ward-by-ward.
- The concept of this is very simple but in practice it is likely to be both complex and time consuming. If the process is made too simplistic, for example by setting minimum expenditure levels too high or by too much 'rounding off, too much detail will be lost and the results will not be sufficiently representative of the actual situation. Conversely if the process is made too detailed the review will demand more resources than can reasonably be provided or may take too long to complete.
- The precise manner in which the ward-by-ward expenditure is mapped will need to be considered in detail and agreed by the Commission during Part 1 of the review.

- 31 **Part 4** If outputs have been obtained from Parts 2 and 3 of the review, the comparison of Council Tax income with expenditure on a ward-by-ward basis will not present any problems. Any enhanced service demands occasioned by social deprivation and other relevant factors can be considered at this stage.
- The comparison will help the Commission to identify any inequalities in service provision and any unmet service needs.
- 33 **Part 5** Develop recommendations based on the outcomes of Parts 2 and 3 of the review and the comparative data from Part 4.
- 34 If the Commission decide to proceed with the review, it is suggested that this outline methodology is adopted. A detailed methodology could then be developed by the Commission as the first part of the review.
- Members are reminded that the financial resources available to the Commission are limited. The Commission's research budget for 2005/06 is £8000, but in 2006/07 this will be reduced to £3000. It is considered unlikely that this level of funding will be sufficient to involve consultants in any worthwhile manner in the review. The possibility of engaging consultants to assist the Commission in the review can however be investigated if this is the wish of members.

7. Provisional Timetable for the Review

- 36 It is anticipated that this will be a big and complex and time consuming review.
- 37 The development of a detailed timetable will not be possible until Part 1 of the review has been completed and the provisional timetable for the review consequently contains many assumptions about the time that will be required to complete the different elements.
- A primary objective in preparing the timetable it has been the need to complete the review within a timescale that ensures the findings of the review are relevant to the work of the Council. Blackburn with Darwen Council completed its resource mapping review in six months, but in order to do this they had to engage consultants.
- 39 The Director of Finance has advised the Co-ordination Officer that if the review were started in April 2006 it should to be possible for his Directorate to support it. It is also of note that the Commission will be engaged in the annual budget review in January/February 2006, and would in any case be unable to do much work on the review before mid February. If the Commission were so minded some of the initial preparation work could however be carried out in March 2006.

- 40 Depending on the start date, which in turn determines the level of support that the Finance Directorate can commit to the review, it is at present considered that if the review were started in April 2006, it would be possible to complete it by December of that year. The review could then look at the Council's Council Tax income/expenditure in the financial year 2005/06.
- 41 If the review was completed in December 2006, its findings could be considered as part of the 2007/08 budget round.
- 42 A possible outline timetable for the review based on an April 2006 start is set out below.

Outline Timetable

		Date		
1.	Part 1	Agree review Brief and detailed arrangements for the review	Will involve members, OSCers and FD staff in up to 6 meetings	April –May 2006
2.	Part 2	Determine the income that the Council receives from Council Tax	Majority of done work by OSCers and FD staff. Will involve members in up to 3 meetings	May-July 2006
3.	Part 3	Map the Council's expenditure ward-by-ward	Depending on the degree of detail required by the Commission may involve members, OSCers and FD staff in up to 6 meetings	July- September 2006
4.	Part 4	Comparison of Council Tax income with expenditure on a ward-by-ward basis	The majority of this work will be done by the OSCers. Members will probably need to attend 2 meetings To agree format/presentation of results etc	October 2006
5.	Part 5	Develop recommendations and prepare report	The OSCers will prepare the draft report and the Commission will then need to meet to discuss the report and agree their recommendations	October- November 2006

On the basis of this timetable, the review is likely to involve the Commission or its working group in up to 18 extra meetings each of about two hours duration. These meetings will be spread over the eight month period April-November 2006.

DRR 17 November 2005

Appendix 1

Suggested outline of the Review Provided by Councillor Richard Smalley – 3 November 2005.

Income per ward should be fairly easy to ascertain. DCC must have CT bills for every address in the city. To break this down into wards shouldn't be difficult. This will give you CT income quite easily. You could further break that down into which households actually pay their bills themselves either in full or part and those which receive CT benefit.

Council expenditure per ward, now that's a little more tricky to substantiate, but.

We could calculate the amount of SS budget is spent in communities. This could easily be distorted by the number of elderly residents in one ward as versus another if seen in isolation, but a valuable marker on the way to an overall picture if used as part of that picture. SS spending will also include aspects of children's care, some conjunctive education spending. Transport provided etc etc

Leisure spending. This will be distorted by each wards differing leisure provision. However it will also highlight where the city has deficiencies in leisure provision. Also where DCC supports community groups, i.e youth groups can also be a focus of any ward deficiencies of such support.

Education provision, this will of course have broadly similar parameters and possible outcomes as Leisure spending.

Spending on things like grass cutting, refuse collection/recycling. Subsidising public transport and the routes of that transport, all of these issues can easily be quantified and the wards in which these activities take place identified. The amount of money DCC spends on Social housing for example is another easily identifiable source of ward based expenditure.

One very interesting use of Council expenditure is the amount of, number of and location of grants given to community groups and other organisations across Derby from many DCC departments. Each department must have records of grants paid and to whom so to identify the recipients of the grants by ward location will be easy.

One further suggestion, as CT represents approx 25% of DCC income it is sensible to show the figures suggested above @ 25% of monies actually spent. Although that will not give an accurate actual expenditure figure, it won't alter the percentage of expenditure per ward.

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN BOROUGH COUNCIL RESOURCE MAPPING EXERCISE

(information extracted from the final report)

1. Objectives

In broad terms the objectives of the resource mapping exercise were: first to work with the majority of the partners in the Strategic Partnership who have a substantial public sector resources role within the Borough of Blackburn with Darwen; and second to launch a wider process, led by the Council, of getting all the partners in the Strategic Partnership to better understand their own and others public sector expenditure in the Borough. Through speaking with these partners the intention was essentially to find out:

"what is being spent, where this money is going and on what key themes".

More specifically, the Brief stated that various elements of the Exercise would:

- establish an overall picture of what is happening with regard to regeneration based activities and initiatives provided by organisations within the Strategic Partnership
- provide a geographical comparison of the distribution of these resources for each of the 22 wards belonging to Blackburn with Darwen and for each of the five identified neighbourhoods across the Borough (See Annex A – Terms of Reference)
- highlight inequalities in service provision and any overlapping of activities, as well as identify services needs – specifically between the level of resources going into the wards that fall within the top 10% of deprived wards at national level and the 'non-deprived' wards in the Borough
- design a monitoring and evaluation framework, which will lead to the efficient collection of data and allow comparison of the distribution of resources at regular intervals.

2. Anticipated Outputs

The following outputs were anticipated from this piece of work:

- data and analysis to inform future decision making across the Strategic Partnership and amongst it partners
- an improved understanding of the quantity and quality of local resources being used to fund regeneration under topics such as the community, health, transport, education, business support, leisure etc
- whether resources were being used effectively to achieve the Strategic Partnership's objectives, including the priorities outlined in the Community Plan.

3. Methodology

The work was split into three stages:

Stage 1 – Establishing the Headline Position: obtaining data from a list of identified organisations on the overall level of expenditure being spent by them in the Borough and on which particular priority themes

Stage 2 – Disaggregation & Allocation: mapping expenditure against wards and themes for one particular financial year (2002/03)

Stage 3 – Analysis, Calibration & Reporting: validating and analysing the data, and then reporting the results.

Stage 1 – Establishing the Headline Position

The first task involved identifying those funding organisations who should be consulted to ensure that the resource mapping exercise included expenditure on both mainstream public sector activities (e.g. Education, Health and Housing) and special programmes or initiatives (e.g. Single Regeneration Budget and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund). An initial list was drawn up on the basis of the public sector members of the Strategic Partnership – additional organisations were then progressively added to cover the remaining 'major' areas of public sector expenditure in the Borough. Table 1 shows the full list of organisations that were contacted as part of the exercise. The table is split according to organisations that were able to contribute data to the exercise, organisations that could not supply data and those that did not respond to the questionnaire for whatever reason.

Table 1 – List of Organisations contacted

Organisations able to provide data				
Members of the Strategic Partnership	Other organisations			
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Lottery F	und		
Blackburn with Darwen Primary Care Trust	Lancashi	Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service		
Lancashire Constabulary	North Bri	th British HA (Places for People)		
Business Link East Lancashire	Northern	Northern Counties HA		
North West Development Agency (NWDA)	Elevate E	East Lancashire		
Blackburn College DWP (Tr		he Department for Work and Pensions)		
Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service (BwD CVS)	Department for Trade & Industry (DTI) – Regional Selection Assistance (RSA)			
Connexions	Environm	nent Agency		
Blackburn Partnership Lancashi		ire Magistrates Court		
Lancashire Learning & Skills Council	National	Probation Service		
Twin Valley Homes				
Organ	nisations	unable to provide data		
Members of the Strategic Partnership		Other organisations		
East Lancs Partnership		Government Office for the North West (GO-NW)		
East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce				
Organisations that did not respond				
Members of the Strategic Part	nership	Other organisations		
Job Centre Plus		Portico Housing Group		

The size and scope of the Council's activities in Borough meant that a large number of individuals were contacted within the Council covering both:

Anchor HA Ashiana HA

Space New Living

- the Council's own main budget areas Citizens' & Consumer Rights, Education & Lifelong Learning, Regeneration, Housing & Neighbourhood Services, Culture, Leisure & Sport, Corporate Resources, and Social Services
- and external funding managed by the Council Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Education Action Zones (EAZ) & Excellence in Cities (EiC), Neighbourhood Nurseries, Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) and Surestart.

If organisations had multiple funding streams, they were asked to complete questionnaires in respect of each of these streams. The core of the questionnaire asked organisations to specify their total expenditure, and the capital and revenue split, in the Borough for the three most recent financial years (2000/01, 2001/02 and 2002/03). Organisations were asked to state which policy area the funding stream was primarily directed at.

Stage 2 – Disaggregation and Allocation

Stage 1 provided the headline aggregates over three years for public sector expenditure coming in to the Borough. The Stage 2 questionnaire (Annex D) focused on one particular financial year, 2002/03. The purpose was to take each funding stream specified by organisations in Stage 1 and understand on a ward by ward and thematic basis where this money was being spent in Blackburn with Darwen. Following discussions in Stage 1 it became quickly apparent that the availability of ward level data for the organisations was questionable and the quality and reliability of this information would vary considerably. In practice the data ranged from organisations that collected ward data on a regular basis, which was stored in spreadsheet format, to organisations that simply did not have the ability to 'drill down' to anything below the aggregate 'borough wide' level.

Stage 3 – Data calibration and Validation

Given the complexity of the data and the assumptions that were taken into account when collecting the information, it was important to return to the organisations post completion of the Stage 2 survey in order to check that the consultant's interpretation of their data had been accurately reflected. Prior to undertaking a full-scale analysis of the data, each organisation was emailed two tables displaying their expenditure data for the year 2002/03 – in these tables the funding was broken down at ward level and also mapped against the priorities of the Community Plan.

The process of validating the overall data to ensure its robustness involved:

- identification and allowance for budget double counting this was a particular issue for expenditure by the Borough Council
- checking that appropriate and reliable proxies had been used to pro rata borough wide expenditure – this was undertaken with the organisations themselves and rechecked by the Corporate Research department at the Council.

Where expenditure was Borough wide the exercise found considerable difficulty in obtaining data at ward level. Of the 518 'budget lines' which were generated from discussions with the organisations, 280 (54%)

budget lines were assigned to wards within Blackburn with Darwen. On the face of it this is a satisfactory result given the initial scepticism in obtaining ward level data. However, these 280 budgets represented only 29% (£209m) of the total expenditure in the Borough in 2002/03. Therefore the use of appropriate proxies to apportion a significant amount of the expenditure (i.e. £505m) was key to the later analysis and presentation of the data.

Some organisations were able to map their expenditure to ward level for the following reasons:

- a) ward specific
 - either, actual recorded data that an organisation has collected/stored in electronic format
 - or the individual interviewed used his/her own knowledge to specify where the funding was being spent
- b) housing benefits database displaying payments recorded by postcode
- c) use of service by ward recorded data displaying the ultimate beneficiaries/users of a particular service i.e. leisure centres and libraries.

A number of organisations were able to identify the wards where the money was being spent but unfortunately were unsure of the actual split between these wards. Therefore appropriate proxies such as the population of those wards were used to apportion the expenditure.

4. Results

Drawing on the data provided by the organisations participating in the Stage 1 Survey, the exercise showed that over the three year period from 2000/01 to 2002/03 public sector expenditure in the Borough rose from £632m to £714m – an increase of 13%. Upon a more detailed interrogation of the data this increase was confined to a small number of prime recipients. The Borough Council accounted for 47% of this increase – £38.6m out of the £82.8m – and occurred principally within the departments of Rights, Advice and Entitlements, Education and Lifelong Learning, and Social Services. The other areas of Council funding were relatively constant in comparison to these three budgets.

Table 2 below presents data for public sector expenditure in 2002/03 mapped against the priorities of the Borough's Community Plan. It is clear from the chart that one main area of expenditure dominates, namely Improving Health & Social Well-Being, which received 61% (£435m) of the overall total of £714m. The main components of this block of expenditure included the BwD PCT, the DWP (Pensions and Job Centre Plus related benefits), and the Borough Council's own Social

Services department.

The next largest block of expenditure was accounted for by the Priority Theme of Improving & Promoting Learning Opportunities & Achievements, which received a 19% share (£138m) of the total pot. This was dominated almost entirely by expenditure on primary and secondary schools by the Borough Council's department for Education & Lifelong Learning with an expenditure of £106m in 2002/03.

The remaining four priorities of the Community Plan between them accounted for around one fifth of the total public sector expenditure.

Table 2 - Public Sector Expenditure (£m) by the Priorities of the Community Plan 2002/03

Plan Priority	Expenditure (£m)	Percentage
Decreasing Crime and Improving Community	26	4
Safety		
Improving Health and Social Well-Being	435	61
Improving and Promoting Learning	138	19
Opportunities and Achievements		
Improving the Local Economy	29	4
Building Stronger and More Involved	24	3
Communities		
Improving the Neighbourhood and	63	9
Environment		

Table 3 below shows the distribution of public sector expenditure per capita by ward in Blackburn with Darwen.

Wards	Total Resources (£m)	Population	Spend £'000 Per Capita of Ward Population
Earcroft	31.2	4,253	7.34
Wensley Fold	45.6	6,421	7.10
Queen's Park	38.6	5,683	6.80
Little Harwood	39.1	6,182	6.34
Mill Hill	37.5	6,350	5.91
Shear Brow	43.0	7,402	5.81
Beardwood with Lammack	31.9	5,485	5.81
Shadsworth with Whitebirk	44.3	7,651	5.80
Audley	43.9	8,504	5.17
Higher Croft	35.8	6,962	5.14
Sudell	34.9	6,806	5.13
Roe Lee	29.7	5,948	4.99
Livesey with Pleasington	33.9	6,804	4.98
Meadowhead	28.7	5,887	4.88
East Rural	8.98	1,923	4.67
Corporation Park	30.6	6,644	4.61
Sunnyhurst	28.6	6,343	4.52
Bastwell	31.1	7,390	4.21
Marsh House	24.5	6,023	4.08
Whitehall	16.4	4,070	4.03
North Turton with Tockholes	16.0	4,190	3.81
Ewood & Fernhurst	39.9	10,549	3.79
Total	714	137,470	5.20

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