

Corstorphine Town Centre Guidance



January 2025

INTRODUCTION

Development plans guide decisions on applications for planning permission. The statutory development plan comprises the National Planning Framework (adopted February 2023) and the local development plan, namely City Plan 2030 (adopted November 2024).

This guidance sets out the approach to the change of use of shop units within Corstorphine Town Centre and assists the implementation of development plan policy.

Corstorphine is one of Edinburgh's nine town centres (including the City Centre) defined and protected in the City Plan 2030 as a hub for a wide range of activities including shopping, providing local services and as a leisure destination.

The Local Development Plan provides a framework for a tailored approach to assessing proposals for change of use applications in individual town centres. This guidance was originally prepared, as statutory supplementary guidance, in accordance with the superseded 2016 Local Development Plan, prior to the National Planning Framework forming part of the statutory development plan. However, the substance of the planning guidance remains valid in the context of the current statutory development plan, and is unchanged by the update.

The guidance has been updated only to reflect:

- Statutory changes to permitted development rights
- The overarching policy framework of the current statutory development plan, both in terms of:
 - National Planning Framework 4; and
 - City Plan 2030, including Policy Re 4: Alternative Use of Shop Units in the City Centre and Town Centres,
- Revisions to town centre boundaries to accord with the boundaries defined by City Plan 2030.

The updated guidance is no longer statutory supplementary guidance, but will remain as planning guidance and a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This guidance assists the delivery of National Planning Framework 4 objectives and policies, in particular to ensure town centres are vibrant, healthy and resilient places for people to work, enjoy and visit.

This guidance assists the City Plan 2030 aim to support the existing network of city, town and local centres which are an important focal point for people who live and work in Edinburgh, providing shopping, leisure and community facilities in locations which are easily accessible by walking, wheeling and cycling or public transport. They also contribute to local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods.

This guidance is a material consideration for planning applications seeking consent for a change of use of a retail unit where permitted development rights do not apply.

This document will support the vitality of Corstorphine town centre as well as contributing to the success and vision of Edinburgh. The Guidance supports Corstorphine town centre in being inspired, connected, fair and thriving through,

- Creating a thriving town centre through supporting a mix of uses, whilst retaining retailing as the primary function of the town centre
- Consider the contribution of the use of units can make to placemaking
- Providing a flexible approach to change of uses to meet the demands of a growing economy and changing society and
- Contributing to the quality of life of Corstorphine residents and visitors.



CORSTORPHINE TOWN CENTRE

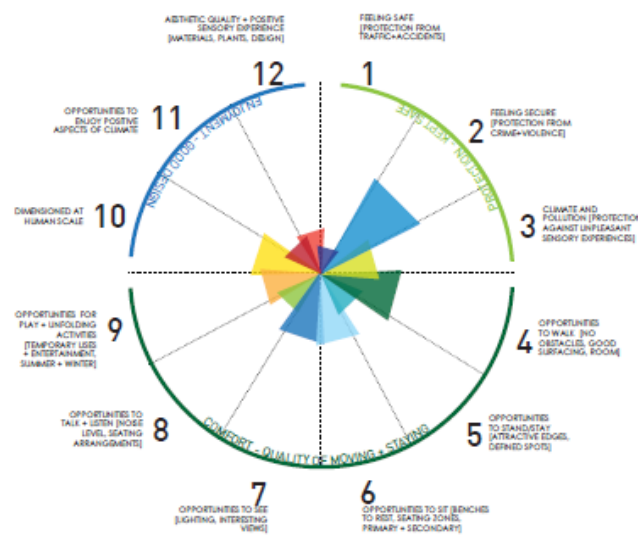
Corstorphine Town Centre area is shown on the map at the back of the document. A mix of uses currently exists within the town centre including shops, cafes and pubs.

Ensuring that Corstorphine Town Centre has a variety of shops is important in maintaining it as a destination for shopping. However, there are also benefits in allowing shops to change to non-shop uses that complement shop uses and make the best of the town centre's accessible location for the local community. Allowing non-shop uses may also help address vacancies that have arisen due to changing behavioural patterns in shopping such as an increase in online shopping. It is therefore felt that, in certain areas, permitting a change of use to an office or café/restaurant would enhance the town centres. To prevent non-shop uses that detract from the streets' liveliness, changes to uses such as residential will not be permitted.

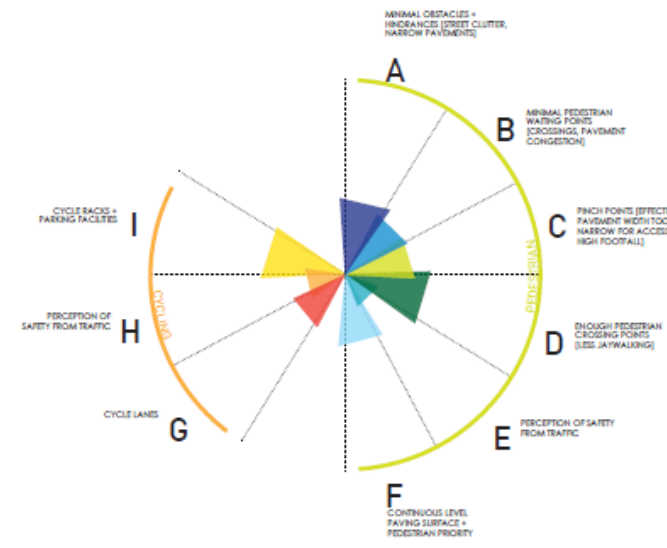
Strengths and weaknesses

The review of the Supplementary Guidance has been informed by a 'public life street assessment' carried out by design consultants for the Council. Some of the findings are shown here:

FINDINGS FROM PUBLIC LIFE STREET ASSESSMENTS



Place Function



Movement Function

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Strong local community
- Well connected bus route
- Varied retail offering
- Perception of safety

Weaknesses

- High pollution levels
- Traffic congestion
- Uneven pavement surfaces
- Historic village separated from centre

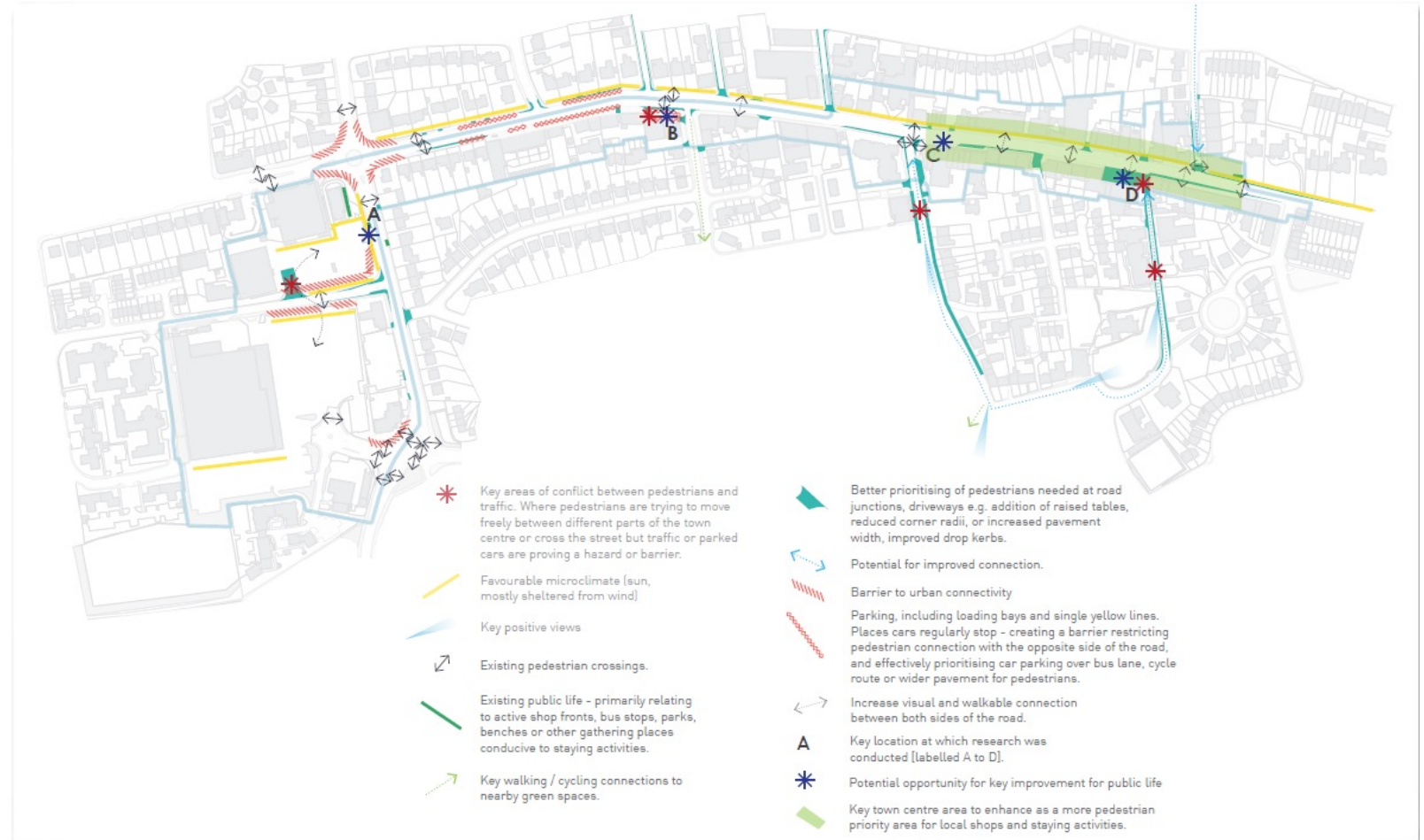
Opportunities

- Re-instatement of community hub
- Improve pedestrian environment
- Increase seating
- Reduce pollution

Threats

- Car dominance
- Lack of places to meet
- Uneven surfaces

Overall Analysis Map



CHANGE OF USE POLICIES

The policies in this guidance apply to shop units.

What is a shop unit? Premises accessed directly from the street and designed primarily for shop use. In some locations the shop unit can be above street level or at basement level but still have direct access and be visible from the street.

What is a shop use? Shop use is now included within the class 1A (shops, financial, professional and other services) as set out in the amended General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992, e.g. charity shops, tattoo parlours, beautician, estate agents etc.

Other uses falling outwith the definition of class 1A include:

Food and drink (class 3) – Use for the sale of food or drink for consumption on the premises e.g. restaurants, café.

Business use (class 4) – general office, light industry or research and development, which can be carried out without detriment to the amenity of any residential area.

Assembly and leisure use (class 11) – e.g. cinema, and gymnasium.

Sui generis uses – e.g. betting shops, pay day loan shops, pubs and hot food takeaways.

Permitted Development Rights

Class 11A of the amended General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992 does allow the change of a use of a building/shop unit within Class 1A to Class 3 (food and drink) without planning permission. However, change of

use is not permitted by this class if it involves a unit directly below a residential dwelling or within 1 metre of a residential dwelling. In the case of Corstorphine Town Centre, Class 1A does not apply to the majority of shop units.

Class 11B of the amended General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992 allows the change of use of a building unit from Class 1A to Class 4 (business) without planning permission if the building or unit is 300sqm or less.

Purpose of the Guidance

The purpose of this town centre guidance is to assist planning officers and applicants in determining whether a change of use of a shop unit would undermine the retail function of the centre. It has been prepared to support the delivery of Policy Re 4 of City Plan 2030.

Policy Re 4: Alternative Use of Shop Units in the City Centre and Town Centres

In the City Centre Retail Core and town centres, changes of use of a shop unit to a non-shop use will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:

- a. *The change would not undermine the retailing function of the centre, and*
- b. *The proposal is for an appropriate commercial, community or business use, which would complement the character of the centre and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.*

The Council's city centre and town centre planning guidance will be used to assess whether the change of use would

undermine the retail function of the centre. These guidelines have been prepared following detailed analysis of each centre and set out detailed advice tailored to identify the appropriate balance of uses within each centre to maintain their vitality, viability and deliver good placemaking.

Planning applications should be assessed against the policies in this guidance. Where a proposal meets the requirements of the policies, a change of use is not expected to undermine the retail function of the centre. Where a proposal is contrary to the policies, there is a risk that a proposal would undermine the retail function of the centre, unless there are other material considerations that outweigh the loss of the retail unit, for example, a significant number of vacant units exist in the same retail frontage.

Guidance Policies

CT1

Planning permission will be granted for the change of use of a unit in shop use to a non-shop use that is an appropriate commercial or community use on the following frontages provided the change will not result in more than one third of the total number of units in the frontage being in non-shop use:

109-163 St John's Road

1-12 Ormiston Terrace & 181-195 St John's Road

243-295B St John's Road

CT2

Elsewhere within the defined Corstorphine Town Centre a change of use from a shop use to a non-shop use will be permitted provided the proposal is:

- a. Class 3 – food and drink uses
- b. An appropriate commercial or community use which would complement the character of the centre and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.



Other Relevant Information

National Planning Framework 4

City Plan 2030

Other relevant policies in Local Development Plan include:

Re 1 Town Centres First Policy

Re 3 Town Centres

Re 9 Entertainment, Leisure and café/restaurant developments – Preferred locations

Re 11 Food and Drink Establishments

Env 13 Shopfronts

Env 9 World Heritage Sites

Env 11 Listed Buildings – Setting

Env 12 Listed Buildings – Alterations and Extensions

Env 13 Conservation Areas – Demolition of Buildings

Env 14 Conservation Areas – Development

Env 15 Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes

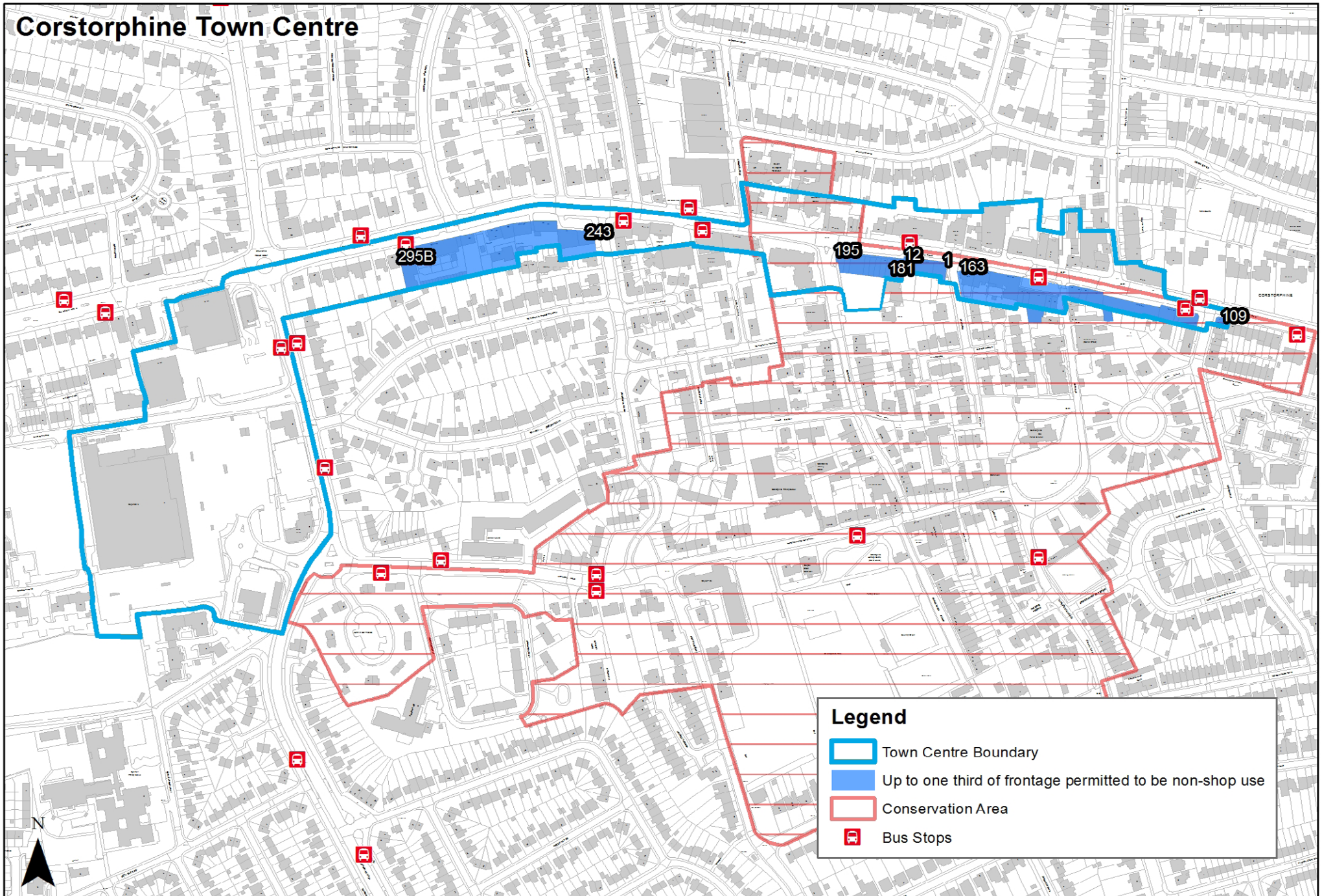
Policy Re 3 generally supports shop uses in town centres. Policy Re 9 supports leisure and entertainment facilities in town centres. Policies Re 11 considers the impact on nearby residents for proposals such as public houses and hot food takeaways. Env 13 supports improvements to shop fronts.

Guidance for Businesses – non-statutory guidance to assist businesses in preparing applications to change the use of a property as well as providing guidance on shopfront design.

Edinburgh Design Guidance – sets out the Council’s expectations for the design of new development in Edinburgh.

Licensing – Food and drink, public house and hot-food takeaway uses will often require other consents and are subject to separate controls by licensing for: alcohol; hours of operation and outdoor pavement seating. For more information on these, see the Council’s web site on [licenses and permits](#).

Corstorphine Town Centre



Legend

- Town Centre Boundary
- Up to one third of frontage permitted to be non-shop use
- Conservation Area
- Bus Stops

Contact us:

Email: cityplan2030@edinburgh.gov.uk

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cityplan2030

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HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/its
email: its@edinburgh.gov.uk
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