

Undertaking the study

Introduction

- 2.1 This study was undertaken in accordance with PPG17 and its Companion Guide. The key emphasis of PPG17 is the importance of undertaking a local needs assessment, as opposed to following national trends and guidelines.
- 2.2 The Companion Guide indicates that the four guiding principles in undertaking a local assessment are:
- understanding that local needs will vary even within local authority areas according to socio-demographic and cultural characteristics
 - recognising that the provision of good quality and effective open space relies on effective planning but also on creative design, landscape management and maintenance
 - considering that delivering high quality and sustainable open spaces may depend much more on improving and enhancing existing open space rather than new provision
 - taking into account that the value of open space will be greater when local needs are met. It is essential to consider the wider benefits that sites generate for people, wildlife and the environment.
- 2.3 PPG17 recognises that individual approaches appropriate to each local authority will need to be adopted as each area has different structures and characteristics. The process set out in PPG17 has therefore been adopted to ensure that the needs and expectations of residents in the borough of Broxbourne are adequately addressed.

Types of open space

- 2.4 The overall definition of open space within the government planning guidance is:
- “all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity”.*
- 2.5 PPG17 identifies ten typologies including nine types of open space and one category of urban open space. It states that local authorities when preparing assessments of needs and audits of existing open space and recreation facilities should use these typologies, or variations of it. This study adapts the standard classification to include assessments of the following typologies:
- amenity green space
 - parks and gardens
 - natural and semi-natural open space
 - provision for children
 - provision for young people
 - outdoor sports facilities
 - allotments and community gardens
 - green corridors
 - churchyards and cemeteries
 - civic spaces.

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- 2.6 The typology 'Children and young people's facilities' has been split into 'provision for children' and 'teenage facilities'. This change was introduced at the Council's request to recognise the differing needs of young children and teenagers.
- 2.7 In addition, indoor sports and community facilities have been included, in line with PPG17, and are discussed further in Sections 14 and 15 of this report.
- 2.8 The study takes into account open spaces provided, owned and managed by public and private organisations to provide an accurate picture of current provision.
- 2.9 Full details of typologies, their definitions and primary purpose are outlined in Appendix B.

The geographical area

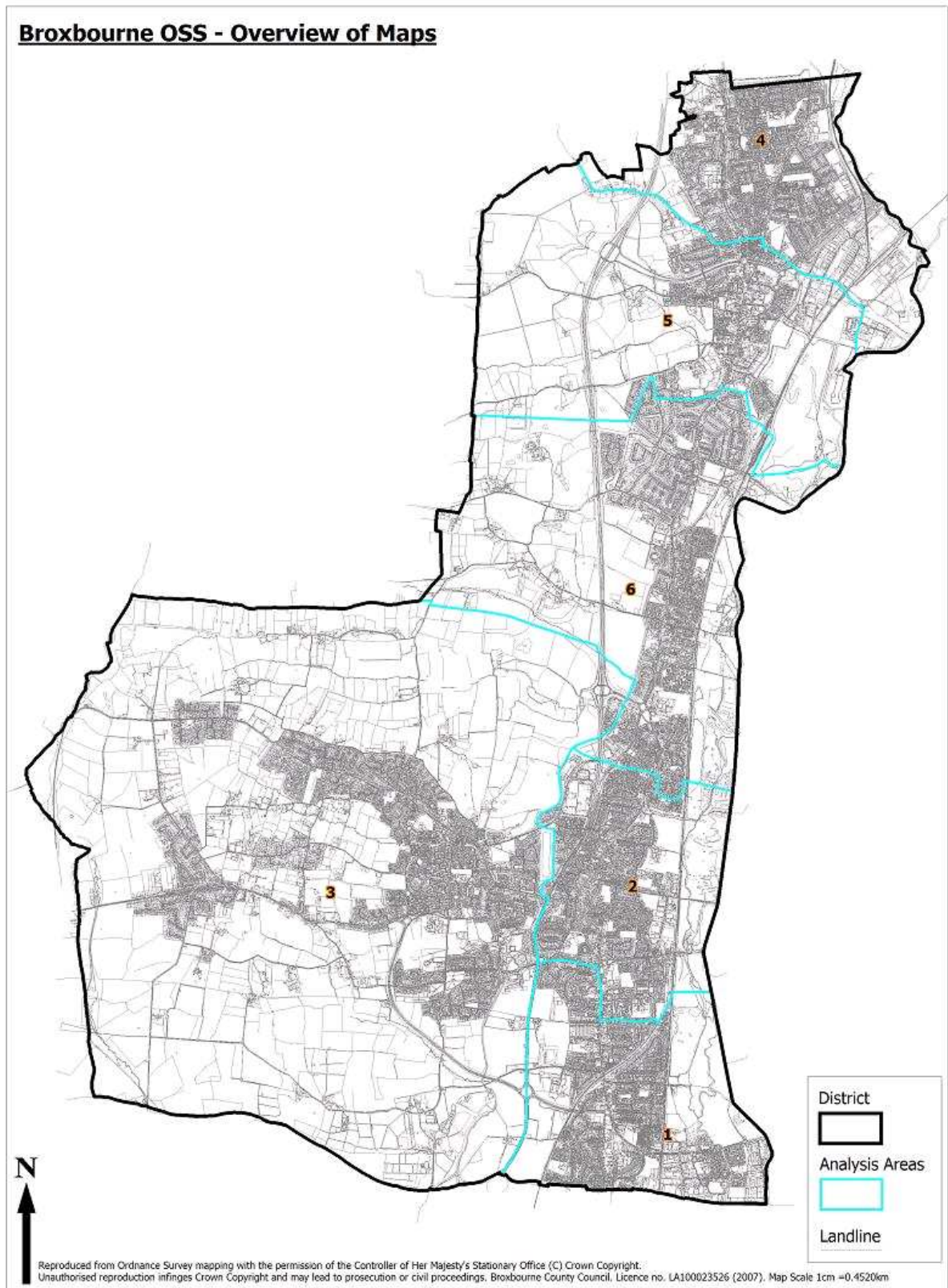
- 2.10 Analysis of the open space, sport and recreation and community facilities across the borough has been undertaken by looking at the supply and demand in six different areas within the local authority boundary (referred to as analysis areas in this report). These areas were discussed and agreed with the Council at the outset.
- 2.11 The use of analysis areas allows examination of data at a more detailed local level, enabling an understanding of the geographical distribution of open spaces and ensuring that differences in perception and opinion across the borough are understood.
- 2.12 These analysis areas have been used to ensure that consultation was undertaken proportionately across the borough and the application of local standards will enable the identification of priorities at neighbourhood level.
- 2.13 Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 provide details on the analysis areas used in this study and the wards within each analysis area.

Table 2.1 The analysis areas of Broxbourne borough

Area name	Population*	Wards included
1	13,171	Waltham Cross and Theobalds
2	14,616	Cheshunt Central and Cheshunt North
3	24,981	Goffs Oak, Bury Green, Rosedale and Flamstead End
4	13,741	Hoddesdon North and Rye Park
5	6,276	Hoddesdon Town
6	14,269	Wormley, Turnford and Broxbourne

**Census 2001 data*

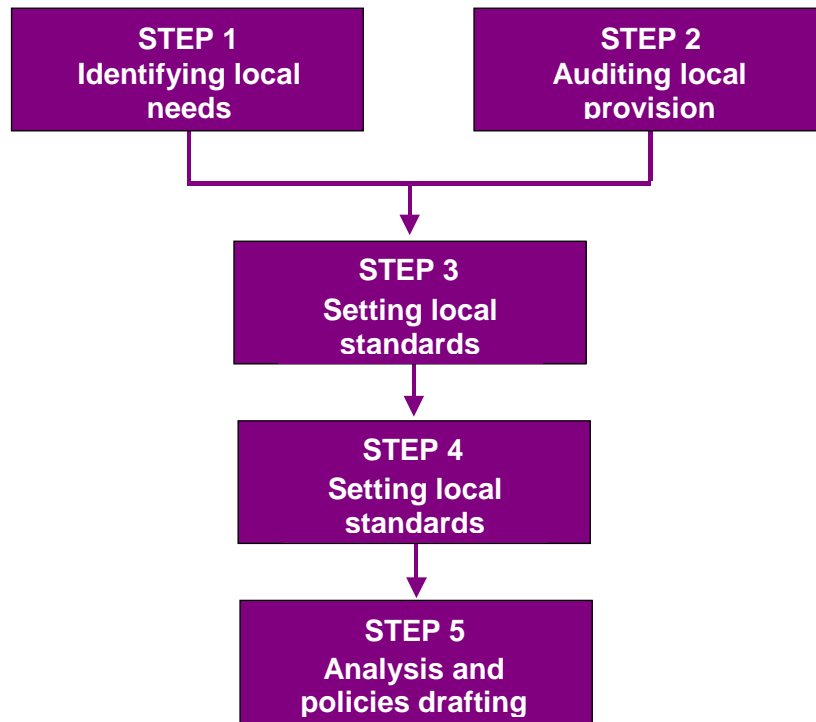
Figure 2.1 Analysis area breakdown



PPG17 – Five step process

- 2.14 The PPG17 Companion Guide sets out a five step logical process for undertaking a local assessment of open space. This process was followed in this study. The five step process is shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 PPG17 Five Step Process



Step 1 - Identifying local needs

- 2.15 PPG17 states that community consultations are essential to identify local attitudes to existing provision and local expectations for additional or improved provision.
- 2.16 The PPG17 guidance relies less on the implementation of national standards and places increased emphasis on local needs. The assessment of needs should result in qualitative visions and quantity and accessibility standards that reflect the type and amount of facilities that local communities want to see. It is essential that the local standards set are directly reflective of local needs and expectations.
- 2.17 In order to identify local needs, a series of consultations were carried out including:
- household survey
 - neighbourhood drop in sessions
 - IT young people survey
 - sports club survey
 - consultation with external agencies
 - internal one-to-one consultations with Council officers.

- 2.18 Background is provided on each of the key elements of the consultation in the paragraphs that follow.

Household survey

- 2.19 The household survey provides an opportunity for randomly selected households to comment on the quality, quantity and accessibility of existing open space, sport, recreation and community provision as well as identifying their aspirations for future provision.
- 2.20 5,000 questionnaires were distributed to households across the borough to capture the views of both users and non-users of open spaces. Residents were randomly selected using the electoral register.
- 2.21 Random distribution of questionnaires to a geographically representative sample (based on the populations living in each of the identified analysis areas) of households ensures that representatives from all age groups and both genders were given the opportunity to participate. In order to promote an even response rate across ages and gender, residents with the next birthday were asked to complete the questionnaire. In addition, to increase the response rate, the Council provided a prize draw with the winner receiving a £50 shopping voucher. A copy of the household survey and accompanying covering letter can be found in Appendix C.
- 2.22 439 postal surveys were returned, providing a statistically sound sample that can be used to assume responses for the remaining population across the borough. Obtaining more than 400 responses means that the results are accurate to +/- 5% at the 95% confidence interval.

Neighbourhood drop in sessions

- 2.23 Neighbourhood drop in sessions were held in three locations across the borough, specifically:

- The Brookfield Shopping Centre, Cheshunt
- Hoddesdon market
- Waltham Cross market.

- 2.24 These sessions provided an informal opportunity to residents to give their views on open space, sport, recreation and community facility issues. The drop in sessions were well attended and the key issues arising from discussions fed directly into the recommended local standards.

IT young people survey

- 2.25 Consultation with young people and children is traditionally difficult but, it is important to understand the views of this large sector of the community. Children are important users of open space, sport, recreation and community facilities.
- 2.26 A questionnaire was therefore posted on the internet and all schools within the Council boundary were notified of the website address and asked to encourage their pupils to complete the questionnaires.

- 2.27 Unfortunately, the level of response to the surveys was limited, with only 50 responses received in total from two different schools, Cranbourne Primary School and Dewhurst St Mary's C of E Primary School. Respondents were for the majority in Grade 4 (25%) and Grade 5 (40%). 15% said to be in Grade 6, with the remaining respondents not providing an answer.
- 2.28 The information obtained through the distribution of these questionnaires is instrumental in the development of the local standards and will supplement the findings of the other consultation techniques. An example of the survey can be found in Appendix D.
- 2.29 Broxbourne Borough Council has consulted widely with young people in recent years over a wide range of issues to assess local needs. The latest Play and Free Time Strategy included a Borough wide youth survey. Details can be found in Section 3 of this report.

Sports club survey

- 2.30 The sports club survey forms part of the information collected to inform standards and recommendations for indoor and outdoor sports facilities. An example of the survey can be found in Appendix E.
- 2.31 Surveys were sent by PMP to 112 sports clubs across the Borough, from which 38 surveys were successfully completed and returned (some of which accounted for multiple clubs/activities). This represents a good response rate of 34%. The results account for the following types of sports clubs (some clubs offering more than one activity):

- football (6)
- netball (2)
- hockey (2)
- cricket (4)
- swimming (1)
- rugby (2)
- bowls (3)
- martial arts (5)
- dance (9)
- tennis (3)
- squash (2)
- rowing (1)
- athletics (3)
- angling
- golf
- sub-aqua (1)
- yoga (3)
- archery (1)
- table tennis (1)
- target shooting (1)
- keep fit (1)
- boxing (1)
- badminton (1)

External agencies questionnaire

- 2.32 Questionnaires were distributed to key regional and local external agencies with the primary purpose of obtaining the viewpoint of key stakeholders and ensuring that the recommended local standards dovetail with local and regional priorities. A list of consultees can be found in Appendix F.

Internal officers

- 2.33 Internal consultations with Council officers were undertaken in order to understand the work, focus and key priorities of the Council and to provide a detailed strategic and practical overview.

Step 2 - Auditing local provision

- 2.34 PPG17 states that audits of provision should encompass all existing open space and sport and recreation irrespective of ownership and the extent of public access. The logic for this is that all forms of provision can contribute to meeting local needs. Audits should also include all primary and secondary schools and other educational institutions. Only those sites located within settlement boundaries are included.
- 2.35 Audits should consider both the quantitative and the qualitative elements of open space, sports, recreation and community facilities. Audits of quality are particularly important as they allow local authorities to identify potential for increased use through better design, management and maintenance.
- 2.36 The multi functionality of some types of open space can present a key challenge in the auditing of open space. In order to address this issue, all spaces are classified by their primary purpose. This ensures that all spaces are counted only once, but does not negate the need to consider the inter-relationships between different types of open space as part of the study.
- 2.37 Additionally, some specific types of open space are located within a larger space. Where this occurs and the primary purpose is clearly defined, these sites are considered to be two separate sites and should be subdivided. A good example is the location of a children's play area within a park. It is important that these sites are considered separately as they have different roles and fall into different typologies.
- 2.38 The Council provided PMP will all available data on the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities and community halls across the borough. PMP then undertook a detailed desk based exercise, using data sources including:
- aerial photography
 - A–Z/ large scale maps
 - local plan maps
 - Internet search engines.
- 2.39 It is important to note that only those sites within settlement boundaries have been included in the audit, in line with guidelines set out in PPG17. However, the significance of sites outside of these boundaries, alongside areas of nearby natural countryside will be considered throughout this report.
- 2.40 A total of 246 sites were identified during the audit process. Each site was classified into a relevant typology and site assessments were then carried out at each site identified.
- 2.41 Site assessments were undertaken using a matrix developed with Council Officers enabling comparisons between sites in the same typology and across typologies. For consistency purposes, all sites were assessed by the same person. Sites were rated against the following categories:
- accessibility
 - quality

- wider benefits.
- 2.42 The site assessment process resulted in an overall quality and accessibility score for each site in addition to ratings for each individual factor. The site assessment matrix can be found in Appendix G.
- 2.43 In addition to assessing the quality, accessibility and wider benefits of open space sites across Broxbourne, the site visits also provided an opportunity to ensure that no sites had been omitted and that the classification of each open space was correct.
- 2.44 Each open space site was then digitised using Geographic Information System (GIS) software and its associated ratings and characteristics were recorded on an Access database. The Access database enables further updates of open spaces and varying forms of analysis to be undertaken. It allows a dynamic reporting and assessment mechanism and enables individual sites or specific geographical locations to be examined in detail.

Steps 3 and 4 - Setting and applying provision standards

- 2.45 PPG17 recommends that local authorities use information gained from the assessment of needs and opportunities (Step 1) to set locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities. These local standards should include:
- quantitative elements (how much new provision may be needed)
 - a qualitative component (against which to measure the need for enhancement of existing facilities)
 - accessibility (including distance thresholds).
- 2.46 The local standards for quality, quantity and accessibility of open space, sport and community facilities should relate directly to the local consultation undertaken and should therefore be reflective of local needs. PMP has produced locally based standards using the findings of the household survey and other consultations undertaken where appropriate.
- 2.47 Table 2.2 summarises the process adopted for setting each of the local standards.

Table 2.2 – The setting standards process

Process stage	Methodology
National standards	Analysis of any existing national standards for each typology. These are usually provided by national organisations e.g. National Playing Fields Association for playing pitches. It is important to ensure that national standards are taken into account as part of determination of local standards.
Existing local standards	Consideration of existing local standards for each typology that are currently applied by the Council. These include standards set out in the Local Plan and in other strategies and documents.
Current provision (quantity standards)	Assessment of the current quantity of provision within the local authority area as a whole and within each of the four analysis areas.

Process stage	Methodology
Benchmarking	Figures detailing local standards set by PMP within other open space projects to provide a comparison benchmark when setting local standards.
Consultation (household survey)	Consideration of the findings of the household survey with regards the quantity of provision for each type of open space. This analysis provides a robust indication (at the Borough wide 95% confidence level) of public perception of the existing level of provision of all different types of open spaces.
Consultation comments (quantity)	PPG17 indicates that where local provision is regarded as inadequate it is important to establish why this is the case. A feeling of deficiency can sometimes be due to qualitative issues of existing open space sites rather than actual quantity issues. It is therefore important to assess findings of both the household survey and the drop in sessions and other qualitative consultation in order to gain a thorough understanding of local community need and perception.
PMP recommendation	PMP recommendation of a local standard. The standard is based on an assessment of the local community need and will be in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity – x hectares per 1000 population • Accessibility – a distance threshold in metres • Quality – a list of essential and desirable features.
PMP justification	Full justifications for the recommended local standard based on qualitative and quantitative consultations are provided for each typology.

Quantity

2.48 The audit developed enables an understanding of the quantity of provision of each type of open space in each area of the borough. The collection of this level of detail enables the calculation of the provision of each type of open space per 1,000 population. This information is provided within typology specific Sections 4 – 15.

2.49 The overall aim of the quantity assessment is to:

- provide an understanding of the adequacy of existing provision for each type of open space in the borough
- establish areas of the borough suffering from deficiency of provision of each type of open space
- provide a guide to developers as to the amount of open space expected in conjunction with new development.

- 2.50 This assessment measures the quantity of provision against the current population of 87,054 (Census 2001). Consideration is also given to the likely implications of future population growth up to 2021. The Council provided the population projections used in this report. The population is projected to increase by 9.5% up to 2021 based on 2004-based Sub-national population projections for Hertfordshire and Districts.
- 2.51 In order to ensure that any standards set are reflective of local community needs and opinions, key themes emerging from consultations in each geographical analysis area relating to the quantity of each type are analysed. The key issues for each type of open space are assessed within Sections 4 – 15. Local standards are subsequently set taking into account the current level of provision compared to the perceived community need.

Accessibility

- 2.52 Accessibility is a key assessment of open space sites. Without good accessibility for the public the provision of good quality or sufficient quantity of open space sites would be of limited value. The overall aim of accessibility standards should be to identify:
- how accessible are sites?
 - how far are people willing to travel to reach open space?
 - areas of the borough that are deficient in provision (identified through the application of local standards).
- 2.53 Similar to quantity standards, accessibility standards should be derived from an understanding of the community views, particularly with regards to the maximum distance that members of the public are willing to travel.
- 2.54 Distance thresholds (ie the maximum distance typical users can reasonably be expected to travel to each type of provision using different modes of transport) are a useful planning tool especially when used in association with GIS. PPG17 encourages any new open space sites or enhancement of existing sites to be accessible by environmentally friendly forms of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. There is a real desire to move away from reliability on the car.
- 2.55 Accessibility standards are set in the form of a distance in metres where walking is considered to be the most appropriate mode of travel, and a drive time where driving to the open space site would be more appropriate.

Quality

- 2.56 The quality and value of open space are fundamentally different and can sometimes be completely unrelated. An example of this could be:
- a high quality open space is provided but is completely inaccessible. Its usage is therefore restricted and its value to the public limited; or
 - a low quality open space may be used every day by the public or have some significant wider benefit such as biodiversity or educational use and therefore has a relatively high value to the public.
- 2.57 The overall aim of a quality assessment should be to identify deficiencies in quality and key quality factors that need to be improved within:

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- the geographical areas of the borough
 - specific types of open space.
- 2.58 The quality standards set as part of the study are intended to provide information on key features of open space that are important to local residents. Sites are then assessed and given a score for a range of factors including:
- cleanliness and maintenance
 - security and safety
 - vegetation
 - ancillary accommodation.
- 2.59 Each element of quality is rated on a scale of very good (5 points) to poor (1 point) and a total percentage score is then calculated. Where an element of provision (such as toilets) is considered to be not applicable, this will not be taken into account in the calculation of the percentage score.
- 2.60 Scores achieved during site visits are translated into percentages and can then be benchmarked against each other. The application of the process for each typology can be found in typology specific Sections 4 – 15.

Step 5 – Drafting policies - recommendations and strategic priorities

- 2.61 The application of the local standards enables the identification of deficiencies in terms of accessibility, quality and quantity and also enables spatial distribution of unmet need.
- 2.62 Based on this analysis, strategic options can be devised based on existing provision to be protected, existing provision to be enhanced, existing provision to be relocated and proposals for new provision.
- 2.63 The recommendations contained within the report are based on the findings of the application of the local standards for each typology. An example is provided below:

P&G1	Given the low number of sites within the borough, all park and garden sites should be afforded protection.
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