

# Annual Parking Report

1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017



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## Introduction

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I am pleased to present our Annual Parking Report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. I am sure it will once again prove to be an invaluable source of information and give readers a good understanding of the services we provide and why we provide them.

Our practices are in line with the Council's vision; 'Building a Better Bromley'. This is the framework that drives the council's work and how it is done through various objectives including being an excellent council, maintaining a quality environment and ensuring a safe Bromley.

Four years on and the Bromley and Bexley Shared Parking Service continues to work well demonstrating a fair, transparent and consistent approach to all customer services.

The enhancement to our online appeals service known as Response Master Self-Serve which was introduced in 2015 continues to benefit motorists and the Council. With the policy information and guidance now available, motorists can make an informed decision about whether to pursue an appeal without having to make verbal or written contact with the Council.

The procurement project with the London Borough of Bexley to secure a joint enforcement contract was completed during the period of this report. Tender returns have now been evaluated and the contract awarded to commence in early April 2017. The services to be provided by the new contractor include parking enforcement, permits, ICT, cash collections, pay and display machine management, debt collection and several other business processing solutions.

Our joint campaign with the London Borough of Bexley to protect the Blue Badge scheme for genuine users continues into 2017. Routine checks are carried out daily to ensure that badges are being used in accordance with the scheme rules. We also continue to raise awareness of the serious nature of misuse through on-street signs, distribution of information cards, regular news releases and information on our website.

Finally, to demonstrate how trends in parking have changed over the years, we have included statistics from previous years in addition to those for the last financial year.

Shared Parking Service  
(Bromley and Bexley)  
Civic Centre  
Stockwell Close  
Bromley  
BR1 3UH



Ben Stephens  
Head of Parking Services

## **1. Background to parking in Bromley and services provided**

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The London Borough of Bromley has a population of approximately 309,000 people living in 131,000 households (statistics in accordance with the 2011 Census of England and Wales). The borough is situated in south east London with central London only nine miles from Bromley town centre. It is of a mainly urban character to the north, while approximately half of the Borough (mostly the south and east) is rural and green belt.

The main controlled parking zone is located in Bromley town centre, which is also home to The Glades Bromley; a large shopping centre that attracts thousands of visitors every day. Approximately 117,000 daily shoppers are drawn to Bromley, Orpington and Beckenham town centres; the Borough's main shopping areas. Bromley South Station also attracts thousands of daily commuters, so demand for parking space is always high. For more background information on the London Borough of Bromley, see section 1 of Appendix 1.

With so many cars and pedestrians on Bromley's roads, effective traffic and parking enforcement is vital. In order to enforce parking regulations effectively, approximately 21 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) patrol the Borough daily. The use of hand-held computer terminals and body-worn video (BWV) devices now play an important part in the parking enforcement process. The role of our CEOs is outlined in greater detail within this report.

Closed circuit television (CCTV) has been used to enforce bus lane contraventions in Bromley since 2003. There are thirteen bus lanes within the Borough where the Council uses this method of enforcement to issue PCNs to motorists who contravene regulations. Enforcing bus lanes helps to prevent traffic hazards and delays caused by unauthorised vehicles and protect the safety of pedestrians.

For more information on Bromley's parking facilities and management, see sections 3 and 4 of Appendix 1.

### **1.1 Parking provision**

We provide public parking facilities to assist with traffic management and support town centres. The Council is responsible for parking enforcement of both on-street facilities (typically those located by the kerbside) and off-street (within our car parks). Within the two Council-owned multi-storey car parks in Bromley town centre, namely; the Civic Centre and The Hill, payment can be made in coins, notes and by credit/debit card. For regular users, value cards are available for use in either of these car parks. Season tickets are also available for use in a number of Council-owned car parks, including The Hill. For more information on Bromley's parking provision, please see section 2 of Appendix 1.

## **1.2 Parking strategy**

The Council's Parking Strategy, approved in 2012, aims to reduce congestion on the road and public transport networks, improve safety for road users and provide affordable parking spaces in appropriate locations to promote and enhance the local economy. The structured use of car parking controls is essential in helping to balance competing demands for road space, restraining non-essential traffic, and encouraging a shift towards more sustainable modes of travel.

Our current Parking Strategy is available on our website at: [www.bromley.gov.uk/parking](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/parking)

## **1.3 On and off-street parking**

On-street parking offers a high turnover of spaces generally for shorter stays, close to specific destinations. Off-street parking offers longer stays than it is usually possible to offer on-street and provides capacity which is not available at the kerbside. The table in section 5a of Appendix 1 gives details of the on-street facilities within the Borough, including the total numbers of parking spaces and disabled bays at each location. The table in section 5b of the same appendix gives details of the off-street facilities within the Borough, including the total numbers of parking spaces for each car park and the number of users during the period of this report.

## **1.4 Paying to park by mobile phone**

Mobile phone technology to pay for parking time using a debit/credit card is available in all Council-owned pay and display parking areas, including on-street pay and display bays and car parks (with the exception of the multi-storey car parks in Bromley Town Centre). We currently work alongside a specialist company; RingGo, to provide this service.

The main benefits to motorists are that coins are no longer required to pay for parking and the motorist is able to extend parking time, wherever they are, by making a simple phone call or using the RingGo app on their mobile phone or tablet.

A link to the RingGo back office enables checks against specific vehicle registrations for payments made, which assists us in dealing with appeals against PCNs.

Mobile phone parking has proved to be a success with an average of 53,619 users per month for 2016/17, (an increase from 34,190 per month in 2015/16). In total the number of transactions made through the RingGo solution in 2016/17 was 605,152 which is also an increase from the figure reported in 2015/16.

Providing more convenient options to pay for parking helps us to improve our customer service standards. The service is well received and we receive very few queries or complaints.

## 1.5 Park Mark® Safer Parking Scheme

Park Mark® is an initiative of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) designed to reduce crime and the fear of crime within parking facilities. The Safer Parking Scheme is managed by the British Parking Association and supported by the Home Office, the Scottish Executive and the Metropolitan Police.



The primary aim of the scheme is to provide a safe environment and prevent criminal behaviour within parking facilities. Owners and operators of parking facilities are required to adopt an active management strategy to deter crime.

After assessment, Park Mark® status can be awarded to parking facilities that are properly managed and maintained. These facilities will also have achieved appropriate standards that contribute to reducing the opportunity for crime through:

- surveillance
- lighting
- signage
- cleanliness

This year, 33 of the 36 public car parks that we manage have retained their Park Mark® status. The facilities that do not have this status are unique in their nature, i.e. one is a coach park, but they are nevertheless maintained to a high standard. The on-street facility at Princess Parade, Locksbottom has also achieved Park Mark® status. See section 5b of Appendix 1 for details of all car parks with Park Mark® awards.

If you have any ideas or suggestions about how we can improve our car parks, please contact us at: [www.bromley.gov.uk/parkingenquiries](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/parkingenquiries)

## 1.6 Permits

The permit areas within the Borough have been introduced to ensure that there is a balance between the need for residents to be able to park near their homes and the needs of other motorists. Three types of permit allow motorists to park within controlled parking zones; residential permits, business permits and visitors' vouchers. Please see section 6 of Appendix 1 for more information regarding parking permits.

## 1.7 Customer service

We are committed to providing a consistently high level of customer service to meet the needs of a diverse and wide range of customers and stakeholders. Customer service is at the core of everything we do and we endeavour to make continuous improvements through the following:

- An established online service for those who wish to contest a PCN. This has been developed further through the provision of Response Master Self-Serve. This facility allows motorists to instantly determine whether a

challenge or representation against a PCN is likely to be successful, enabling them to make an informed decision as to whether to pay or appeal.

- This year 68% of all challenges and representations received were submitted online. See section 3 of Appendix 2 for more information regarding our online services.
- Provision of an online permit application service covering residential/business permits and visitors' vouchers, dispensations and suspensions. This year in excess of 90% of all permit applications were submitted online.
- A range of online e-forms for specific parking enquiries. Please see section 3 of Appendix 2 for more information.
- Ongoing structuring and development of parking web pages to offer simple ways to provide information and means of communication for customers.
- Use of award-winning mobile phone technology to allow customers to pay for their parking time using a debit/credit card. See section 8 of Appendix 2 for more information.

Please see Appendix 2 for more information regarding customer service.

## 2. Parking and bus lane enforcement

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### 2.1 Legislation

Parking enforcement is carried out under the Traffic Management Act 2004. Parking penalties are issued on our behalf by our parking contractor; Indigo Park Services UK Limited (formerly Vinci Park Services UK Limited).

Bus lane enforcement is carried out under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended) and London Local Authorities Act 1996 (as amended). For more information on enforcement and associated legislation, please see sections 8 and 13 of Appendix 1.

### 2.2 Contravention charges

Charging levels for parking, bus lane and moving traffic contraventions in London Boroughs are set by London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee (TEC), subject to approval by the Mayor for London and Secretary of State. In Bromley, such charges apply to bus lane and parking contraventions. Higher penalties are imposed for bus lane contraventions and parking where it is generally not permitted, for example; yellow lines, school 'Keep Clear' markings, permit holders' bays and disabled bays without displaying the appropriate permit or badge. Lower penalties are imposed for contraventions such as; overstaying time paid for in a pay and display bay, or parking outside bay markings. For information regarding Bromley's parking and bus lane charges, see section 9 in Appendix 1.

### 2.3 Parking contract

In 2010, the Council agreed to extend the current 5 year contract with Indigo Park Services UK Limited (formerly Vinci Park Services UK Limited) for a further 5 years until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016, under the terms of the existing contract.

The procurement project with the London Borough of Bexley to secure a joint enforcement contract was completed during the period of this report. Tender returns have been evaluated and the contract awarded with a commencement date of early April 2017. The services to be provided by the new contractor include parking enforcement, permits, ICT, cash collections, pay and display machine management, debt collection and a number of other business processing solutions.

### 2.4 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs)



Our parking enforcement contractor; Indigo Park Services UK Limited (formerly Vinci Park Services UK Limited), is contracted to deploy 21 CEOs on average per day. The hours of enforcement are primarily between 8.30am and 6.30pm, when most parking restrictions apply. Up to date technology is used to issue PCNs and record photographic images of contraventions. Each CEO is checked through the



Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and is required to pass a rigorous training schedule prior to undertaking enforcement duties. Training is based on NVQ standards and covers a range of modules to ensure that each CEO has full knowledge of parking law, health and safety issues, local knowledge (to assist the general public, who may be unfamiliar with the area) and all other aspects of their role.

## 2.5 Body-worn video (BWV)



CEOs in Bromley continue to use BWV devices overtly to record the details of parking contraventions. The footage has proven to be very useful in establishing training requirements for CEOs, which in turn, has improved communication with motorists and the general public. All of our procedures are in line with the best practice guidance from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) – the regulator of the Data Protection Act (DPA)

1998. For more information on the use of BWV devices and the standards our services must meet, please see section 11 of Appendix 1.

## 2.6 CCTV enforcement



In June 2016, fixed CCTV cameras were introduced in Bromley to enforce the yellow zig zag lines outside school entrances. This new technology discourages drivers from parking dangerously and compromising the safety of children and pedestrians.

For more information on CCTV enforcement and safety outside schools, see section 12 in Appendix 1.

### 2.6a Bus lane enforcement using CCTV

CCTV has been used to enforce bus lane restrictions throughout the Bromley Borough since 2003. The bus lane enforcement scheme forms part of a wide range of measures aimed at improving reliability and punctuality of public transport, reducing congestion and pollution and allowing access for the delivery of goods.

Bus lane restrictions are enforced under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended) and the London Local Authorities Act 1996 (as amended).

For more information bus lane enforcement using CCTV, see section 13 of Appendix 1.

## **2.6b Enforcement requests**

The number of requests from the general public for enforcement at specific locations in the Borough continues to increase each year.

Members of the public can make a request online. This service is particularly effective as the request is sent directly to our parking enforcement contractor, who can then despatch a nearby officer. We endeavour to respond to all requests as quickly as possible. If there is a continuing problem, the provision of more regular enforcement may be investigated.

Residents are often inconvenienced by vehicles parked in front of the dropped kerb outside their property, mainly in the vicinity of schools. To assist with this particular problem, we offer an online service which enables residents to register their address for regular enforcement.

If you would like to request enforcement in a specific area, please contact us at: [www.bromley.gov.uk/parkingenquiries](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/parkingenquiries)

### 3. Other services we provide

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We are contacted throughout the year by motorists and the general public on a wide range of subjects and concerns. The range of services we provide includes the provision of parking facilities, enforcement of parking and bus lane restrictions, dealing with challenges, representations and appeals and responding to requests for enforcement.

#### A qualified workforce

The Department for Transport 'Operational Guidance to Local Authorities: Parking Policy and Enforcement' states; "The process of considering challenges, representations and defence of appeals is a legal process that requires officers dealing with these aspects to be trained in the relevant legislation and how to apply it". We therefore consider it essential that our staff have full knowledge of such matters. Accordingly, all members of the Processing Team have achieved the City and Guilds NVQ, Levels 2 and 3 in Notice Processing.

#### 3.1 The Blue Badge Scheme

This is a national arrangement of parking concessions for people with severe mobility difficulties who travel as drivers or passengers. The scheme allows badge holders to park close to their destination. The national scheme applies to on-street parking only. For more information regarding the Blue Badge scheme, please see section 5 of Appendix 2.



#### 3.2 Blue Badge fraud and misuse

A national database holds records of every Blue Badge issued in England, Scotland and Wales to ensure more effective monitoring of cancelled, lost or stolen badges. Local authorities can access and share electronically stored information which helps in tackling misuse.

We have widely publicised our joint campaign with the London Borough of Bexley to tackle Blue Badge misuse. Our main aims remain to protect the integrity of the Blue Badge Scheme by ensuring that only genuine badge holders benefit from the scheme's parking concessions.

We also continue to raise awareness and encourage members of the public to report known misuse. Such reports are thoroughly investigated and appropriate action is taken. Where the Council is satisfied that misuse has occurred, the case is referred for prosecution.

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, the Council had successfully prosecuted 28 cases of Blue Badge misuse. In all cases, the driver was guilty of using a badge without the badge holder being a part of the journey, or using a badge that was previously

reported as lost, stolen or cancelled. The average total fine amount for these cases was between £400 - £500, including court costs and surcharges.

Our website has more information about [Blue Badge misuse](#). If you suspect that a Blue Badge is being misused or have cause for concern, please contact us at: [www.bromley.gov.uk/reportbluebadge](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/reportbluebadge) or by phone on: 020 8313 4800.

For more information about Blue Badge fraud and misuse, please see section 6 of Appendix 2.

### **3.3 Parking dispensations and suspensions**

The Council continues to issue hundreds of parking dispensations and suspensions on request to residents and businesses who require a temporary exemption from some parking controls. Often such requests are to enable commercial deliveries, house removals, road or utility works, larger construction projects, or for private contractors to park close to a property to carry out works that require continuous access to load or unload goods or materials.

When a parking dispensation is authorised by the Council, the applicant is permitted to park on a waiting restriction (yellow line) during restricted hours. Similarly when a parking suspension is authorised, it allows the applicant to park in a pay and display bay during restricted hours.

Please see section 7 of Appendix 2 for more information on parking dispensations and suspensions. Our services are provided by a fully trained team in Parking Services. See section 2 of Appendix 2 for more information about who provides the services.

### **3.4 Responding to PCN enquiries**

We know that in many cases following the issue of a PCN, at any stage from the issue of the penalty to debt collection, a motorist may wish to contact the Council. We consider it our duty to explain our actions and make motorists aware of their options at all stages. To ensure we are able to deal with the number of calls received each year, Contact Centre representatives have received ongoing focussed training and guidance from Parking Services to ensure that the level of service provided is of the highest quality.

Response Master Self-Serve was set up on the Parking section of the Council's website in 2015. The service is an enhancement to the online PCN appeals service; it provides motorists with information and guidance that specifically relates to their type of PCN and reason to appeal. By entering their PCN number and contravention code, the motorist can select their reason to appeal and view the policy that relates to it in an interactive way. The motorist then has an idea of the likely outcome of an appeal and can make an informed decision as whether or not to pursue an appeal.

For the total number of parking related calls received by the Customer Service Centre between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, please see section 4 of Appendix 2.

### **3.4a The Environment and Traffic Adjudicators (ETA)**

The Environment and Traffic Adjudicators (ETA), administers the independent tribunals established to hear appeals against Penalty Charge Notices in London. In cases where the registered keeper of a vehicle has made an unsuccessful representation against a PCN, and has subsequently received a Notice of Rejection, the keeper has the option to either pay the charge or appeal to an independent parking adjudicator at ETA. To view information on the number of cases referred to ETA, see section 8 of Appendix 3.

### **3.4b Debt recovery and enforcement agent action**

The three enforcement agents we currently use provide important services, particularly in helping to trace individuals who attempt to avoid paying their Penalty Charge. If an individual cannot be traced through these agents, a further attempt to establish contact with the debtor will be made after a six month period. The smooth running of the parking enforcement agent and debt collection service is vital for the London Borough of Bromley; each year the service helps us to collect unpaid Penalty Charge Notices of approximately £250,000 in value. For the number of cases referred to our debt collection enforcement agent companies, please see section 9 of Appendix 3.

## **3.5 Complaints**

A complaint is defined by the Council as an expression of dissatisfaction about a service received. We take complaints very seriously; feedback from our customers helps provide an insight into the real issues, problems and concerns motorists face with the service they have received. As such, we try to resolve complaints as promptly and comprehensively as possible. See section 9 of Appendix 2 for more information on complaints statistics. More information about the Council's formal complaints procedure can be found on our website: [www.bromley.gov.uk](http://www.bromley.gov.uk)

## **3.6 Freedom of Information requests**

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 applies to non-personal information held by a local authority. When an individual or organisation makes a formal request, we must first confirm or deny whether we have the information. This is known as the duty to confirm or deny. Unless the information requested falls into one of several categories of exempt information, we must then provide it. Due to public awareness, the FOI Act has been used more in recent years to obtain information about parking related matters. We are always happy to provide information about our services, whether or not we have received a request under this Act. For FOI request statistics and examples of common FOI requests we receive, please see sections 10 and 11 of Appendix 2.

### 3.7 London Borough of Bromley decisions and democracy

Members of the public can let the Council know their concerns about a particular location or the Borough as a whole; and anyone who lives, works or studies within the Borough can inform councillors of their views to help influence local decision making.

As employees of Bromley Council, we have a commitment to act on your behalf. When issues and concerns are raised by members of the public, committee members or external organisations a report may be written up if appropriate and submitted to the relevant committee. The Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny (PDS) Committee is often consulted for matters relating to Parking Services. The matters in hand are discussed in a democratic PDS Committee meeting to which members of the public are welcome. Here you can ask questions about the Council's activities, or decisions to be made regarding issues that matter to you. Consequently we can consider your opinion and decide how best to act from that point onwards, which encourages democracy and transparency in the Council's decision making process.

The different kinds of public meeting include Full Council, Executive, Portfolio Holder and PDS Committee. After addressing all proposals, the committee will consider them and make recommendations to the relevant Portfolio Holder, who takes them into account and approves or disproves them.

The Council's decision making structure is divided between executive and non-executive matters. All executive matters likely to be the subject of key decisions taken by the Council over a four month period are outlined in a public document called the [Forward Plan](#), which is published every month. As a consequence, members of the public have the opportunity to consider and observe the upcoming proposals, can access the relevant documents and attend the appropriate meetings.

Parking Services put forward one report for consideration in this financial year; a proposal for:

- [Award of the Parking Service Contract](#)  
**23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016 - Executive and Resource Committee and**  
**24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 - Pre-Decision Scrutiny/Environment PDS**  
**Report ES16062**

A report outlining the procurement process for re-tendering Parking Services was submitted to the Executive and Resource Committee and Environment PDS Committee. It also set out in principle the range of parking related services and existing contracts to form the basis of a new contract, along with information on the proposed contract term and performance management.

It was recommended that the Executive agreed to note the information set out in the Part 1 report and subject to any comments, award a contract for the Parking Service for a term of 10 years effective from 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017.

## 4. Financial Information

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### Parking income and expenditure

Under Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as modified by regulation 25 of the Civil Enforcement or Parking Contraventions (England) General Regulations 2007, each local authority is obliged to publish their parking account.

We hope that the information in this report explains the background to parking income from both PCNs and parking charges.

We would like to see a reduction in the number of PCNs that we need to issue. However, this can only happen if more drivers comply with parking and traffic regulations, road signs and markings.

The benefits of compliance include improved road safety, better vehicular movement and clearer access for pedestrians and individuals with disabilities. Other less obvious benefits include an enhanced local economy, for example better turnover of time-limited parking bays outside shops and the positive impact of less congestion on the environment.

Under the terms of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and, subject to agreement by the Mayor of London and Secretary of State, London Council's Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) set the charges for PCNs. TEC is made up of representatives from all 33 local authorities in London and Transport for London (TfL).

The Council is responsible for enforcement. In Bromley this is set at a level which aims to encourage compliance. It is possible that a financial surplus may be made if the number of parking contraventions that take place within the Borough generate PCN income greater than the cost of enforcement.

For information on income derived from parking services, see the Parking Account on page 16 of this report.

### Surplus

Under current legislation, any surplus from PCNs must be used to meet the cost of providing and maintaining parking facilities, highways and street improvement schemes, traffic management schemes, highway maintenance and public transport services. Here in Bromley, most of the surplus from parking charges and income from PCNs is allocated as our contribution to the Freedom Pass, which helps disabled people and those aged 60 or over to travel around London (see below).

#### 4.1 Parking Account

The following table is an extract of the Council's Parking Account for 2016/17.

<b>Parking Account for 2016/17</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Income</b>	
On-street parking	3,215
Penalty Charge Notices	3,204
Permits	485
Disabled permits	44
<b>Total income</b>	<b>6,948</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Operational costs	777
Enforcement	1,284
Admin, appeals, debt recovery	844
Central support recharges	173
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>3,078</b>
<b>Net Surplus after costs</b>	<b>3,870</b>

<b>Net Surplus is used to fund the following expenditure:-</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Traffic management schemes	28
Maintenance of car parks	225
Highway improvement schemes	142
Contribution towards concessionary fares	3,475
	<b>3,870</b>

<b>Memorandum item for information only</b>	
(This section does not form part of the Parking Account as off-street income is not bound by the provisions of Section 55 as above in section 4)	
<b>Off-street parking income</b>	<b>4.069m</b>



## 5. Closing statement

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Thank you for taking the time to read this report. We hope it demonstrates the diverse and complex variety of work undertaken by our Parking Service to meet the requirements of our customers, motorists and the general public.

Each year we strive to find ways of improving our service and aim to provide accurate and full details in this report. We hope you were able to locate any specific parking information you were looking for with ease.

We welcome your feedback; your input is vital to us as it assists us in making improvements for you and all our stakeholders.

We are genuinely interested in your comments, queries or suggestions, not just in relation to this report, but also with regard to any of the parking information available on our website at: [www.bromley.gov.uk/parking](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/parking)

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