



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Comhairle
**Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin**

Derry Cittie & Stràbane
Destrack Council

Citizen Recognition Policy

(Freedom of the City and District, Naming of Council Assets and the installation of new infrastructural elements in or on Council property e.g. plaques, statues, etc., Festivals, events and other initiatives)

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Citizen Recognition Policy

1 Preamble

Purpose

- 1.1 This document establishes the Council's policy position in respect of its Recognition Framework for acknowledging citizens who have made positive contributions to the Council area, communities and /or fields of expertise.
- 1.2 It specifically focuses on the award of the Freedom of the City and District, the naming of Council assets and the installation of infrastructural elements in or on Council property/ Council-owned assets
- 1.3 It aims to ensure a clear, process is in place for acknowledging the contribution of citizens which is responsive to anticipated community expectations and consistent with the values of stakeholders and the Council and ensures proper consideration.

2 Scope

General

- 2.1 This Policy applies specifically to the following categories of recognition:
 - The award of the Freedom of the City and District,
 - The naming of Council assets and
 - The installation of new infrastructural elements in or on Council property e.g. plaques, statues, etc
 - Festivals, events and other initiatives
 - Mayoral Medal
- 2.2 It does not apply to other approaches to recognition such as those which are:
 - at the **discretion of the Mayor**, for example, Mayoral receptions, Illumination of Council Assets, Books of Condolences, attendance at events;
 - **service led initiatives**, for example, sports/ business awards, historical plaques, cemetery furniture, street naming.
- 2.3 The Council reserves the right to withdraw or suspend the operation of this policy, at any time.

Freedom of the City and District

- 2.4 The Freedom of the City and District will only be awarded to a living individual, not an organisation/group.

Naming of Council Assets

- 2.5 This policy applies to (a) new Council-owned assets / facilities and (b) those that have recently undergone significant refurbishment/ redesign / upgrade. (This also includes associated pitches, sports grounds, rooms, stands, and environs etc. associated with the relevant asset.)
- 2.6 It does not apply to the following categories of Council assets : administrative buildings, theatres, museums, public art, car parks, bus shelters, memorials, greenways, streets/roads, street furniture (including seating in cemeteries), or other assets or infrastructure, be they naturally occurring or constructed, which are (wholly or partly) owned, controlled or managed by other authorities/bodies, extend beyond the boundary of the council area or are subject to a funding agreement that prohibits naming.
- 2.7 The previous naming of any existing Council assets cannot be taken as a precedent for future approvals.
- 2.8 Naming proposals in a language other than English will be considered.

The installation of new infrastructural elements

- 2.9 Requests for the installation of infrastructural elements will be considered under this policy. It is however recognised that the nature of these requests may vary and as such will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

Commemorative plaque - any plaque which is affixed to either its own integral support structure or a seat, table, shelter or other structure located within a Council owned facility space, and which has as its primary purpose, the commemoration of the life and/or deeds of a person, family or organisation.

Council owned asset – a physical asset which solely owned by the Council and has a unique and separate identity. For the purposes of this policy, the asset must be a new asset or an asset which has recently undergone significant refurbishment/ redesign / upgraded. Examples of assets include sports facilities sports grounds, community centres, parks and open spaces, and play grounds.

Council owned asset – Tier 1- a physical asset which meets the above criteria and also has regional significance

Derogatory - Insulting, disrespectful

Discriminatory – treating an individual or group of people different from others in an unfair way, especially on grounds of race, age, disability, religion/political opinion, sexual orientation or gender.

Honouree - A person who has been commemorated in recognition of the significant contribution they have made to the community within the Council area.

Offensive – Subject to Members' views, a name will be considered offensive if it can be interpreted to be abusive, antagonistic, discourteous, disrespectful, lurid, rude or intolerant or if it causes personal distress especially on grounds of race, age, disability, religion/political opinion, sexual orientation or gender.

Open Space - For the purpose of this policy, 'open space' refers to all Council owned land (other than a road) that is primarily reserved for leisure, recreation or nature conservation purposes and contributes to community wellbeing principally through its aesthetic qualities and opportunities for recreation within an urban or rural setting.

Parks – shall include Council owned parkland, open spaces, environmentally protected areas, and trails primarily dedicated to public use for informal recreation purposes that contributes to community wellbeing principally through environmental qualities and provides opportunities for nature-based recreation.

Proposer – the person who submits the request or application for recognition.

Recognition Panel – the Panel of Elected Members responsible for considering requests for recognition and making recommendations to the Council's Governance and Strategic Planning Committee or other relevant committee. This Panel will supported by a relevant Council Officer(s).

Recognition Register – a list containing details of the dates, nature and recipients of recognition under this policy.

Room - an enclosed space established for public or private gatherings within a building

Significant positive contribution – The person must have made a major positive impact on the community. “Significant positive contribution” will be defined in terms of:

- Achievements which have enhanced social, economic or environmental wellbeing for the local community or wider Council area/region.
- Achievements have been recognised regionally, nationally and/or internationally.
- Level of positive change for the local community or wider Council area/region brought about by the actions of the person.

Sports facility - one or more roofed structures which are enclosed by walls and are established by Council for use predominantly by Council or the community for sporting activities. It includes associated pitches, sports grounds, rooms, stands, benches, commemorative plaques, etc.

Sports ground - an area of land formally and permanently marked or set aside for the playing of organised sport which is owned by the Council and which is situated within the environs of a Council sports facility.

4 Policy Statement

Policy Statement

- 4.1 Derry City and Strabane District Council recognises the importance and value to the community of formally recognising citizens who have made a significant positive contribution to improving the quality of life of people in the Council area, promoting and enhancing the city and district, and to achieving excellence in a recognised field. Council also acknowledges that any policy that it adopts on this issue must be responsive to anticipated community expectations, consistent with the stated values of the Council and be supported by a robust and transparent process.
- 4.2 Derry City and Strabane District Council is committed to providing a fair, sensitive, consistent and efficient process while respecting the important need for public consultation, where appropriate.
- 4.3 Council will consider every request for recognition under this policy but reserves the right to support a proposal, reject a proposal, or request reconsideration of a proposal by the proposer.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The **Chief Executive** has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- 5.2 **Directors** (in whose area the Council asset lies) are responsible for:
 - Developing, commissioning and coordinating consultation processes, where appropriate.
 - Preparing a report for consideration by the Recognition Panel and relevant committee.
 - Seeking additional information, as required.
 - Providing advice on the operation of this policy, as required.
 - Considering recognition submissions, reviewing against the appropriate criteria and determining the recommendation to be put forward to Committee.

- Agreeing the appropriate stakeholder/ community consultation /engagement plan.

5.3 The Elected Members of the Recognition Panel are responsible for:

- Considering recognition submissions, reviewing against the appropriate criteria, seeking additional information as required and determining the recommendation to be put forward to Committee.
- Exploring and identifying, where relevant, the appropriate stakeholder/ community consultation /engagement plan.

5.4 The **Elected Members** of the relevant Committee are responsible for:

- Considering the evidence and proposals put forward by the Recognition Panel and making a recommendation for consideration by full Council.

5.5 The **Elected Members** sitting as Derry City and Strabane District Council have responsibility for decision making in respect of any recognition award arising out of this policy.

5.6 Staff of the Democratic Services and Improvement Strategic Support Unit will provide advice, keep records in respect of the implementation, seek information at Stage 2 of the recognition process and be responsible for the review of this policy.

5.7 All those involved in the implementation of this policy are required to respect the confidentiality of nominee details, stakeholder responses, and other personal data.

6 General Principles and Criteria for Awarding the Freedom of the City and District

General Principles

- 6.1 Council has the authority to confer the Freedom of the City and District in accordance with the Local Government (Transitional, Incidental, Consequential and Supplemental Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.
- 6.2 The Freedom of the City and District is the highest honour that the Council can grant. The overriding principle must be that this award should be made on merit based on significant achievement or exceptional service.
- 6.3 They should be awarded because an individual has made a contribution which is exceptional and they stand out above others in what has been achieved.
- 6.4 Normally honours are awarded to those men or women who have lived in the Council area and have demonstrated a significant positive contribution to the community and/or excellence in their field and in the process raised the profile and enhanced the reputation of the Council area regionally, nationally and/ or internationally. (Subject to Member views, people who have worked in or who have a strong connection with the Council area, may also be considered.)
- 6.5 It is important that if a nomination to confer an Honorary Freedom is to be considered, all Members of the Council are in possession of sufficient facts in order to make a decision as to whether the honour should be conferred. There may be instances where there are strongly held views for and against and these need to be addressed as far as possible in advance of a Special Council meeting called for the purpose for making a decision on the award (two thirds majority required).
- 6.6 The title of Honorary Freeman/woman is a mark of distinction upon the person whom the Council wishes to honour. Conferring the Freedom of the City and District does not grant the title holder any privileges, legal rights or responsibilities.
- 6.7 There is no obligation on Council to approve any nomination.

Criteria for conferring the Freedom of the City and District

6.8 It is in the interests of transparency and public confidence that we adopt clear criteria for conferring the Freedom of the City and District. It is anticipated that Recipients would have achieved prominence at local, regional and ideally international levels in one or more of the following areas:

- demonstrated exceptional achievement or service to the community which is outstanding in its field
- brought distinction to the Council area or enhanced its reputation
- demonstrated innovation, entrepreneurship or exceptional business acumen which has delivered benefits to the Council area
- carried the respect of and inspired his/her peers
- significantly improved the lot of those less able to help themselves or suffering disadvantage
- promoted community cohesion
- improved social, economic or environmental well-being in the Council area
- contributed to the Council area and its citizens in a way that stands out above others.

and

- Have lived in the Council area. (Subject to Member views, individuals who have worked in or who have a strong connection with the Council area, may also be considered.)

6.9 This list is not intended to be exhaustive and other factors may be considered, at the discretion of Members.

7 General Principles and Criteria for Naming Council Assets

General Principles

7.1 The position adopted under this policy is that naming of Council assets / facilities is to be consistent with the overarching values, ethical principles, and current standards of Council, stakeholders and both the local and wider community.

7.2 Asset names are not to be duplicated anywhere within the Council area and duplication of names of existing assets within adjacent local authority areas is

to be avoided wherever practicable. Further, a similarity between the names of different assets is also to be avoided. Assets named after individuals having similar names may be accepted provided that they are well separated, in a different and non-adjointing locality.

- 7.3 Whilst the asset name will generally be considered permanent, the Council reserves the right to remove the name, under extraordinary circumstances, for example, where the honouree is no longer regarded to be a positive influence for the community.
- 7.4 Where an asset is removed or replaced, the name need not move with the building.
- 7.5 Whilst ideally new assets would be named at the time of opening /dedication, it is acknowledged that there may be instances where it is impractical or inappropriate to allocate a permanent name to some of those assets at their opening/ dedication and interim arrangements will be put in place.

Criteria for Naming Council Assets

- 7.6 In considering proposals for the naming of Council facilities, the proposed name must satisfy one or more of the following principles:-
- Engender a strong positive image
 - Provide a sense of place, reflecting the geographic location, community, neighbourhood or street where the Council asset is situated (and / or unique flora /fauna);
 - Reflect the historical significance of the area or reflect unique characteristics of the site;
 - Recognise the significant positive contribution of an individual
 - Provide a commercial/ income generation opportunity for Council.
 - Demonstrate a linkage / association with the asset.
- 7.7 Proposals will not be considered where they:
- Unlawfully discriminate within the meaning and scope of the provisions of Section 75 and/or other equality legislation;
 - Are potentially offensive or derogatory to any group or individual in the Council area;

- Excluded from consideration by virtue of a funding requirement or other condition attached to the asset;
- In the case of naming an asset after an individual:
 - A living person,
 - A deceased person who passed away less than 3 years prior to the naming proposal being submitted.

7.8 This list is not intended to be exhaustive and other factors may be considered based on local circumstances.

8 General Principles and Criteria for the installation of infrastructural elements

General Principles

- 8.1 Whilst the nature of requests may vary, proposals will generally be considered in line with the underlying principles associated with the naming of assets.
- 8.2 Requests/proposals will be dealt with in line with the process set out in this policy.

Criteria for the installation for the installation of infrastructural elements

- 8.3 The criteria identified in respect of the naming of assets will generally be applied, although consideration may be given to the aesthetic, environmental, practical, operational and other aspects of a proposal.
- 8.4 Such considerations may include the need for planning and other permissions

9 General Principles for the award of the Mayor's Medal.

- 9.1 Each Mayoral term, the Mayor has discretion to bestow a Mayoral Medal on an individual or organisation that has made a substantial contribution to the Council area.
- 9.2 This form of recognition would be limited to one per Mayoral term and the recipient would be left to the discretion of the Mayor of the time.
- 9.3 All costs would be covered from the Mayoral budget.

10 Recognition Process

General - Confidentiality

10.1 In the case of any request / proposal for recognition, especially those relating to the Freedom of the City and District, it is important that nominations remain confidential and that the nominee is unaware that he or she is being nominated. This is to avoid confusion / hurt since not all nominations will be successful and /or an alternate form of recognition may be offered.

Stage 1 – submission and assessment

10.2 All proposals for recognition under this Policy, with exception to the Mayor's Medal, must be accompanied by a Proposal Form signed by a Proposer and a seconder and submitted to the Chief Executive.

10.3 Submissions may be put forward by Elected Members, individuals and organisations. The same process will apply in all cases.

10.4 Each submission/ proposal should include, as a minimum:

- Detailed reasons and material in support of the proposal

10.5 The proposer of the recognition award is expected to ensure that all material supplied to Council is accurate and is not open to misinterpretation or be misleading. The proposer may be required to provide additional evidence or research material to further substantiate the proposal.

10.6 As appropriate, a map or diagram which clearly shows the location of the asset/feature e.g. room/stand etc for which the name is being proposed.

10.7 A blank Proposal Form is contained within Appendix 2.

10.8 All applications, with exception to the Mayor's Medal, will be considered by the Recognition Panel which will review the submission(s) against the appropriate criteria and recognition options. The Panel will determine if further information is required and the subsequent proposal(s) to be put forward to the relevant Committee, under confidential business.

10.9 Subject to the positive recommendation of the Committee and ratification, by the Council, an application can be progressed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 - agreement

10.10 In the event of a decision by Committee, ratified by Council, to recognise a living individual, the Mayor's Office will contact the proposed recipient to ascertain if they are willing to accept the form of recognition that is being offered.

10.11 In respect of proposals, where the recipient being recognised has passed, evidence of the agreement of the next of kin, to the proposal will be sought by the Mayor's Office, in conjunction with the Proposer.

10.12 Agreement will not be required in respect of the renaming of Council assets, where the name does not relate to an individual.

10.13 Acceptance of the proposed award of the Mayor's Medal will be facilitated through the Mayor's Office.

11 Consideration by the Recognition Panel

11.1 With exception to the Mayor's Medal, the Chief Executive will share, in confidence, proposals and convene a Recognition Panel made up of each of the group leaders of the political parties (or their nominees) on the Council and all Independent Members.

11.2 Normally, this Panel is convened on a six-monthly basis to consider one or more submissions, although this may be varied, subject to demand.

11.3 Officers will draw up a preliminary report, based on the criteria set out in this Policy.

11.4 The Recognition Panel will meet with the relevant Officer(s) to consider:

- whether the nomination meets the agreed criteria
- the appropriate level of recognition to be awarded
- whether there is sufficient support for the matter to go on to the relevant Committee for decision

- 11.5 Councillors representing the District Electoral Area, in which an asset under consideration is located, may be requested to provide input.
- 11.6 As deemed necessary by the Panel, further information may be sought from the Proposer.
- 11.7 There is no obligation on the Panel to approve any of the nominations if they do not feel the criteria is fully met. Any nomination which has been unsuccessful can be reconsidered after 12 months.
- 11.8 Where it is considered that a Proposal will be unsuccessful / is not eligible, instead of a resubmission approach, consideration may be given to offering an alternative recognition award.
- 11.9 Tier 1 Asset Naming - In the event of a lack of consensus, Members may consider conducting a consultation exercise to ascertain public opinion.
- 11.10 The scope of stakeholder /community engagement will be determined by the Council on a case-by-case basis, having particular regard to anticipated community sensitivities, and the nature of the asset.
- 11.11 In general, any consultation will seek to identify the views of all stakeholders including funders.
- 11.12 Further to the deliberations of the Recognition Panel, the relevant Director / Officer will draw up a report for consideration, in confidential business, at the appropriate Committee.

12 Legal & Policy Framework

12.1 Linkage to Corporate Plan

Within the Council there are policy areas in place which could be interpreted as relating to or informing the issue of naming of Council assets to a greater or lesser extent, namely:

- Equality Scheme
- Street Naming and Property Numbering
- Code of Practice on Producing Information
- Irish Language Policy
- Ulster Scots Policy
- Linguistic Diversity Policy
- Corporate Branding Toolkit

- The Street Naming Policy;

12.2 Legal /External Policy Context

There are a number of relevant policy frameworks in place in Northern Ireland, which relate and inform the issue of naming of Council assets, namely:

- Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998 - building a shared society underscored by the good relations duty under Section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
- The Together: Building a United Community Strategy outlines a vision of “a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation - one which is strengthened by its diversity, where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced and where everyone can live, learn, work and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.”

13 Impact Assessment

13.1 Screening and Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been screened out for equality impact assessment.

13.2 Impact on staff and financial resources

It is not anticipated that this policy will impact on staff as implementation of this policy will be delivered within existing resources.

Implementation of the policy will have financial resource implications due to costs associated with consultation exercises. There may be costs incurred to cover signage, design and associated costs, updating records (databases, letterheads and promotional materials) (re)building community recognition

13.3 Sustainable development

This policy lends itself to enhancing the cultural heritage of the Council area as historical and geographical names can be seen as a key to identifying specific places and is also of irreplaceable cultural value of fundamental importance to local identity, and a person’s sense of belonging, and therefore must be protected and preserved.

14 Implementation

14.1 Support and Advice

Advice on appropriate names with geographical and historical significance can be obtained from the Heritage and Museum Service.

Advice on the process regarding the naming of Council assets can be obtained

via the Policy Team, Democratic Services and Improvement Strategic Support Unit.

14.2 Guidelines and Forms

- Overview of Process (attached as Appendix 1)
- Application form (subject to agreement on policy, will be attached as Appendix 2)

14.3 Communication Strategy

This policy will be considered by the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee and a meeting of full Council. Subject to Council approval a copy of the policy will be made available on the Council's website and on request.

14.4 Training

Training / awareness raising regarding the policy will be provided, as required.

14.5 Risk Management

As this is a new policy area, there may be unanticipated requests/proposals. In order to mitigate this risk and learn from the application, (a) a Recognition Panel will have oversight of the recognition process, with officer support and (b) the policy review period has been shortened.

15 Monitoring, review and evaluation

15.1 This policy is subject to review within 12 months or earlier if deemed necessary.

15.2 A central register of proposals, awards, the outcome of screening and consultation exercises will be held by the Democratic Services and Improvement Strategic Support Unit.

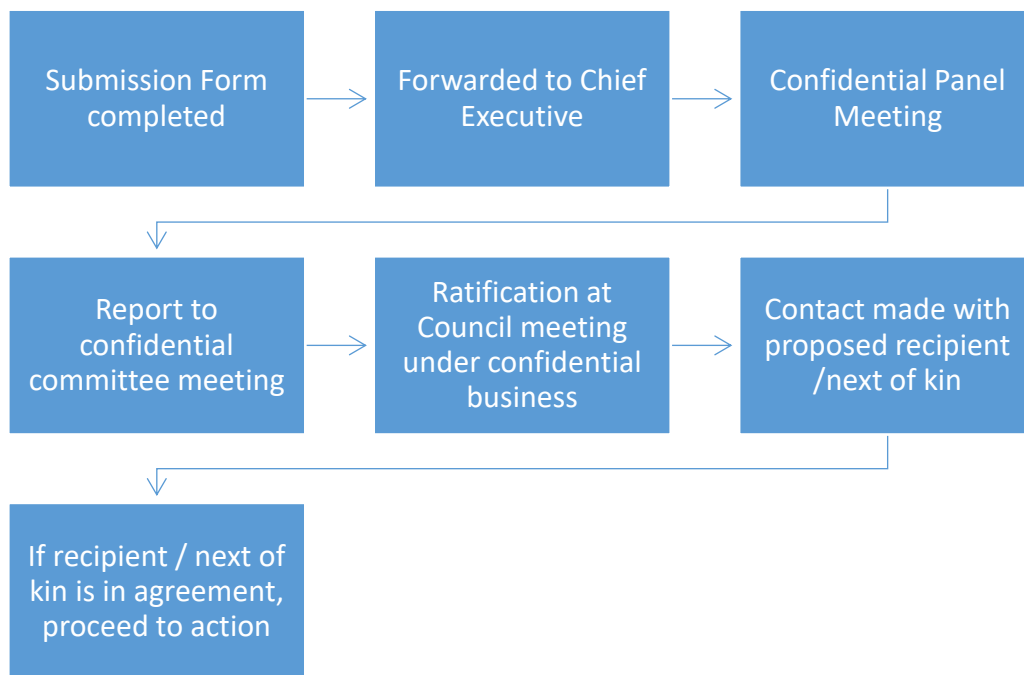
The Unit will also hold the name any Council asset named under this policy in a Council Asset Names Register.

Appendix 1 – Overview of Process (with exception to Mayor’s Medal)

Overview of Revised Process for the consideration of proposals for

- (a) the award of the Freedom of the City and District,
- (b) naming of Council assets
- (c) the installation of infrastructural elements e.g. plaques, statues, etc in or on Council property

Stages - generic



Stage	Elements
Proposal - Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposer completes Assets Naming/ Freedom of City and District / Infrastructure Submission Form support and submits to Chief Executive. The Proposer may be an Elected Member, C&V or private* sector organisation or an individual. (Secunder details required). • Only requests submitted via the completion of a Submission Form can be progressed. • The Submission Form is structured around the criteria set out in the policy.
Consideration by Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submissions are shared in confidence with an Elected Member Panel made up of Party Leaders / nominees and all Independent Members. A closed meeting is set up to consider the submission(s) and discuss and agree proposals for the relevant committee. This meeting will be facilitated by a relevant officer(s).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members will consider the submission against the criteria set in the Policy, although this list is not intended to be exhaustive and other factors may be considered based on local circumstances. • Input from Councillors representing the DEA, in which an Asset under consideration is located, may be requested.
Additional information (discretionary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As deemed necessary by the Panel, further information may be sought from the Proposer. • Where it is considered that it is the Proposal will be unsuccessful / is not eligible, consideration may be given to offering an alternative recognition award e.g. Recognition Certificate
Consultation (discretionary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier 1 Asset Naming - In the event of a lack of consensus, Members may give consideration to conducting a consultation exercise to ascertain public opinion. • In respect of the Freedom of the City and District award, non-tier 1 assets naming and memorials/infrastructure elements, it is not normally envisaged that a public consultation exercise will be conducted, although this is at Member discretion.
Recommendation to Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Report to the relevant Committee (in confidential business) is prepared highlighting the key considerations, proposal(s) and rationale.

Document Number	.
Responsible Officer	Head of Democratic Services and Improvement Unit
Contact Officer	Name of Lead Officer: E Cavanagh Telephone: (028 71) 253 253 Ext 6704 Email: ellen.cavanagh@derrystrabane.com
Approval	
Effective Date	Original Policy: Sept 2024 Amended Policy:
Modifications	N/A
Superseded Documents	N/A
Review Date	To be reviewed after 3 years. However, the policy will be reviewed sooner in the event of any one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure or weakness in the Strategy is highlighted • Changes in legislative requirements • Changes in Government/ Council or other directives and requirements.
File Number	
Associated Documents	Proposal form Equality monitoring form

This information is available upon request in a number of formats including large print, Braille, PDF, audio formats (CD, MP3, DAISY) and minority languages.

For further information on alternative formats please contact

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