

Development Bid Supporting Statement

ABBOTSWELL ROAD—NORTH,
Aberdeen

On behalf of CLIENTS

June 2013

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Aberdeen City Council, as Planning Authority adopted the present Local Development Plan in February 2012, compliant with the 2009 Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan. The Strategic Planning Authority has now published a draft Strategic Development Plan which is likely to be approved by Scottish Ministers this coming year. This will replace the 2009 Structure Plan and as a consequence a new Local Development Plan will require to be put in place within 4 years of that approval. Aberdeen City Council have not called for formal bids to be made – but are willing to consider suggestions for consideration through the local plan process.
- 1.2 This proposed amendment has arisen out of earlier pre application discussions concerning a site to the north of Abbotswell Road. The proposal was to replace present industrial premises with residential development and an outline feasibility study was prepared. This is attached as Annexe 1 to this document. These discussions took place nearly 2 years ago and at that time the proposed change of use was deemed to be contrary to policy. The principles in terms of design, approach, density etc were also discussed and nothing insurmountable was encountered.
- 1.3 However the policy framework didn't allow for this approach and a suggestion was made that this would be better dealt with as a "bid" or "suggestion" to the forthcoming Local Development Plan process – with the aim of amending the land use policy from Business and Industry [BI 1] to Mixed Use Area [H2]. The annexed document shows a proposal for one of the parcels of land (page 1) and the area proposed for Mixed Use LUP (page 5).
- 1.4 This document makes that proposal and provides a justification based partly on the existing land uses (i.e. change has already happened) and partly based on wider policy justification.

2.0 ABBOTSWELL ROAD NORTH

- 2.1 The area under consideration lies to the north of Abbotswell Road within West Tullos. It is bounded in the north by the River Dee and in the north east by the main east coast railway line. The south west edge of the area fronts onto the parkland meadows which form the southern banks of the River Dee.
- 2.2 The area is bounded to the south by the busy Abbotswell Road connecting West Tullos Road to Wellington Road. To the south of this road is the substantial, vibrant and constantly evolving West Tullos business estate. Although formerly predominantly industrial in nature, this area is increasingly characterised by "less" industrial uses, including many car showrooms and new offices.

3.0 PRESENT ZONING

- 3.1 The whole of West Tullos, including the small area to the north of Abbotswell Road, is presently zoned for Business and Industry, and coloured pink on the Land Use Policy map of the present Local Development Plan. The Policy states as follows:

Policy BI1 - Business and Industrial Land

Aberdeen City Council will support the development of the business and industrial land allocations set out in this Plan. Industrial and business uses (Class 4 Business, Class 5 General Industrial and Class 6 Storage or

Distribution) in these areas, including already developed land, shall be retained. The expansion of existing concerns and development of new business and industrial uses will be permitted in principle within areas zoned for this purpose. Where business and industrial areas are located beside residential areas we will restrict new planning permissions to Class 4 Business. Buffer zones will be required to separate these uses and safeguard residential amenity. Conditions may be imposed regarding noise, hours of operation and external storage. New business and industrial land proposals shall make provision for areas of recreational and amenity open space, areas of strategic landscaping, areas of wildlife value and footpaths, in accordance with the Council's Open Space Strategy, Open Space Supplementary Guidance and approved planning briefs/masterplans. Ancillary facilities that support business and industrial uses may be permitted where they enhance the attraction and sustainability of the city's business and industrial land. Such facilities should be aimed primarily at meeting the needs of businesses and employees within the business and industrial area. Bad neighbour uses should either be located together in single industrial areas or within one part of a larger estate

- 3.2 It is against this policy position that the proposals set out in Annexe 1 were seen as being contrary to policy. No matter what the design merits, the residential benefits or the underlying economic rationale – the current land use policy would mean that the proposals could not be favoured.

4.0 PRESENT LAND USES

- 4.1 We have taken the suggestion made by the Council Planners seriously and examined the area to the north of Abbotswell road in some detail. It is clear that the area is comprised of much more than just business and industry. The ABERDEEN Industrial Areas Guide 2012-13 document shows only a proportion of this area still in business and industry use. Viz:

Site 44 Saltire Drilling Tools

Site 45 PTS Plumbing Trade Supplies

Tam International North Sea Ltd

Site 46 Unit 2 Servtech

Unit 4 Jones Yarrell

Unit 6 Menzies, John

All these uses are class 4, 5, and 6 – but predominantly storage and distribution.

- 4.2 There are other land uses within this area – some of which have been long term, others more recent changes. These include

- A series of residential properties at 16 – 22 Abbotswell Road. These are two storey inter-war granite semi-detached houses with mature gardens currently in residential use. To the rear of these residential

properties is a further domestic dwelling (possibly older).

- A residential care home
- The Banks of Dee Sports Centre and Football Pitches

4.3 Two minor roads access these latter 'non-conforming' uses. It is of note that both access roads are well maintained and do not suggest that these uses are in any way 'backland' uses.

5.0 PROPOSED LAND USE POLICY

5.1 The proposal is quite simply that this area to the north of Abbotswell Road should become zoned as Mixed Use [M2 on the local plan map – pale yellow]. The mixed use zoning is already in use just across the railway for the small retail units on Wellington Road. The Mixed Use Policy states as follows:-

Policy H2 - Mixed Use Areas

Applications for development or change of use within Mixed Use Areas must take into account the existing uses and character of the surrounding area and avoid undue conflict with the adjacent land uses and amenity. Where new housing is proposed, a satisfactory residential environment should be created which should not impinge upon the viability or operation of existing businesses in the vicinity. Conversely, where new industrial, business or commercial uses are permitted, development should not adversely affect the amenity of people living and working in the area.

5.2 Mixed use areas are not intended to directly create a mixture. They are much more intended to 'allow' a mix of uses to develop and help control changes of use within those areas so that residential amenity is not unduly affected. Similarly where new industrial or business uses are sought the policy would ensure that it would be acceptable close to residential use.

5.3 This approach has been used elsewhere in the City during previous iterations of the Local Plan. The policy background for this comes from the Structure Plan and from good 'sustainable' planning practice. The focus of development planning, for some considerable period, has been to give emphasis to inner city and brown field sites. The term 'densification' is used to set out the aim of increasing population densities near to City Centres – partly to increase activity, partly to bring under used, often brownfield sites back into active use. The Fraser Road area of Aberdeen was one of the more recent Land Use Policy changes from business & industry to mixed. As a result over the last ten years an influx of new housing has taken place in the Fraser Road area. Much of this has been affordable, housing association development. This has led to many semi-derelict or underused sites to be utilised and for the area as a whole to appear better kempt with greater amenity.

5.4 The fear that there could be loss of industrial capacity would be unfounded given the scale of the land release for business and industry in the 2012 Local Development Plan.

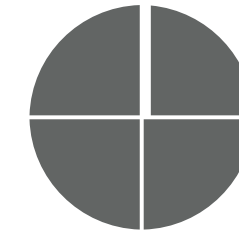
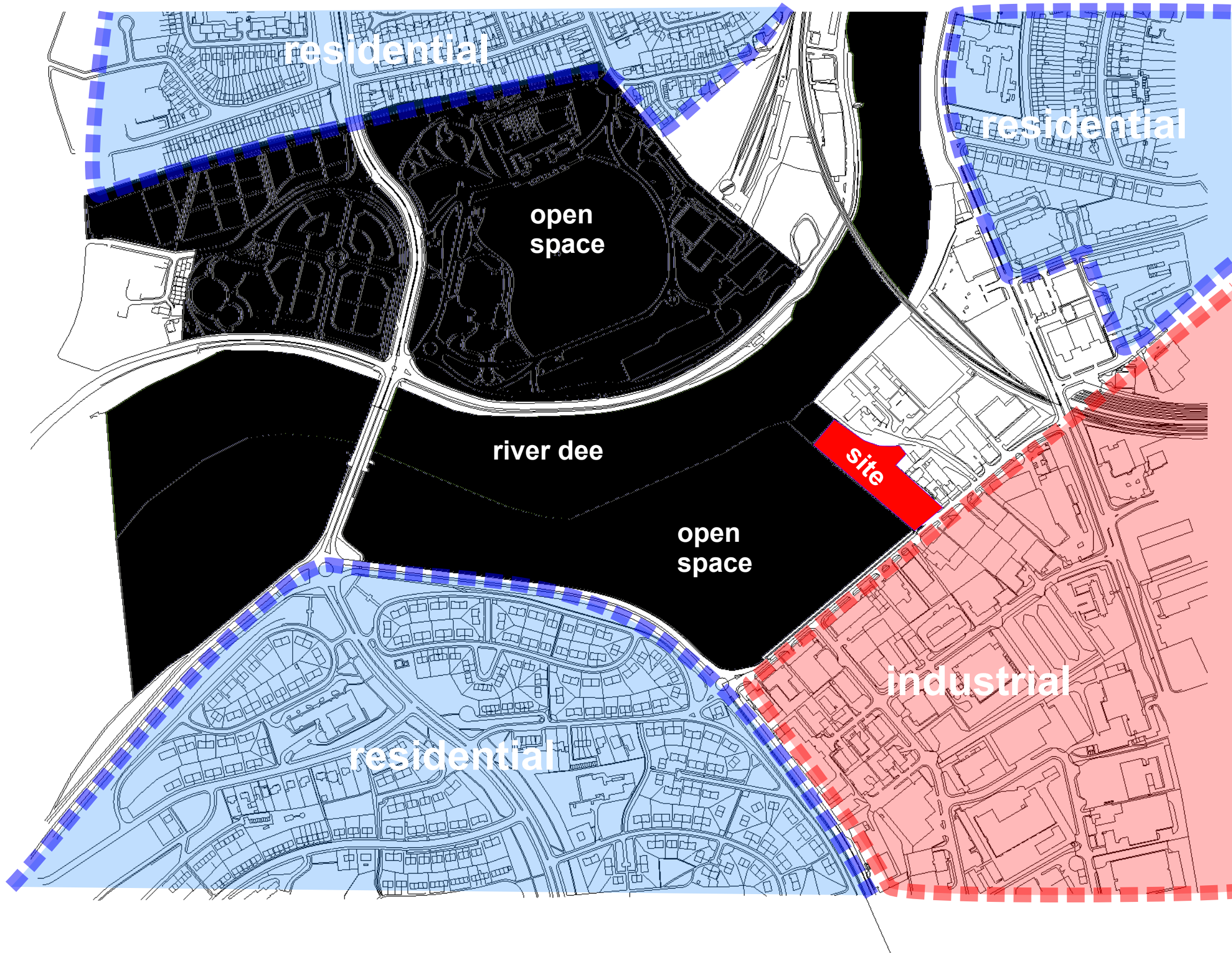
5.5 There are benefits to the Abbotswell Road North area that would come about as a result of the changed land use

policy. At present the existing residential uses in the area have little policy protection. Were a change of use to be proposed, say, for the Bank of Dee sports facility into an industrial use – the existing residential care home would not be able to found any objection on the land use policy for the area. Even if a change were refused – any reporter considering an appeal would firstly look to the Local Development Plan zoning. Admittedly this is an extreme scenario – but it illustrates the point that if the area were to be zoned for mixed use – such a proposal could be resisted because of the impacts upon amenity.

- 5.6 It is understood that such a proposed change might require neighbour notification to the existing uses. Another interpretation would be that such consultation is only required in cases where land is being allocated for development.
- 5.7 Finally – under proposed land use policy – it is worth considering what might happen following a changed zoning.
- 5.8 Several of the sites enjoy substantial amenity as a result of being located close to the River Dee or close to (even overlooking) the meadows and parkland extending across toward the George VIth Bridge. It is likely that it would become economically viable to change one or several of the present small business uses into residential use. These would undoubtedly be popular residences, close to City Centre, close to the River Dee Parkland area – not dissimilar to the very successful residential developments that have taken place across the other side of the Dee adjacent to Duthie Park.
- 5.9 The existing residential uses would undoubtedly be more protected.
- 5.10 It is most unlikely that this would be seen as a precedent for land further south across the other side of Abbotswell Road. Indeed, it could be seen as potential residences for folk who work in the wider West or East Tullos area – allowing reduced commuting by car in an area already suffering from traffic congestion at peak periods.

6.0 POLICY SUPPORT

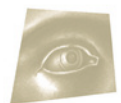
- 6.1 The Scottish Planning policy seeks to achieve sustainable development. Paragraphs 34 to 40 of the current SPP support the move toward Sustainable Development. Para 38 in particular emphasises the need to develop mixed communities. Paragraphs 41 – 44 focus even more closely on Climate Change and the role planning can take in helping mitigate the risks. In particular para 42 encourages development plans to promote a pattern of development which reduces the need to travel – hence the need for more mixed use areas close to City Centres or other areas of employment.
- 6.2 These SPP imperatives have been translated into the (presently draft) Strategic Development Plan – with considerable emphasis given over to the target of establishing “Sustainable mixed communities” [p36]. Para 4.39 specifically requires that ‘new housing and developments for employment and commercial use should be integrated (well related to each other and community facilities) to improve people’s quality of life and opportunity’.
- 6.3 The New LDP for Aberdeen will need to pick up on these SPP and SDP policies and carry them forward to achieve their ends. It is respectfully suggested that changing the land use policy for the area in consideration would be one step toward those ends.



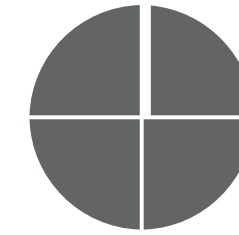
river dee and adjacent open spaces generally bounded by residential development

potentially prominent site from road and rail approaches to city and adjacent open spaces

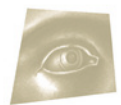
industrial sector in general bounded by west tullos road and abbotswell road



ABBOTSWELL ROAD residential



73 apartments 70 sq.m.
150% parking
26 affordable
100% parking



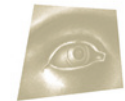
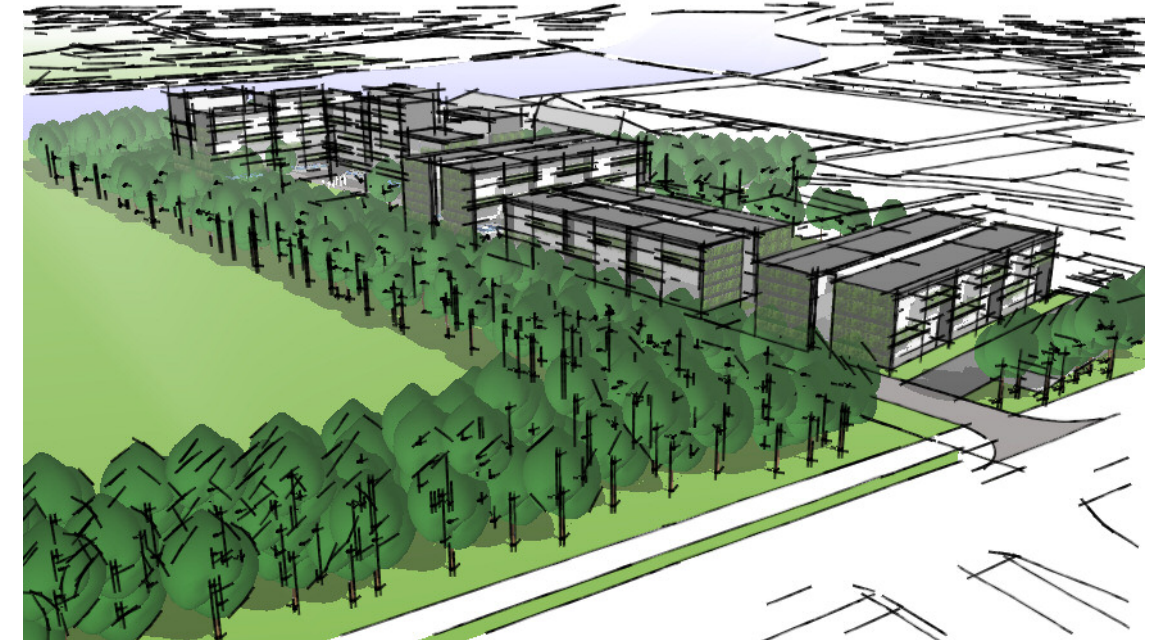
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ABBOTSWELL ROAD residential



**mixed tenure houses and
apartment buildings 3-6 storeys
with potential for communal
facilities such as fitness centre.**

off site prefabrication
communal waste recycling
communal heating systems
solar thermal and photovoltaics
communal gardens
rainwater harvesting



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FACILITY

NURSING
HOME

SERVTECH
JONES YARREL
(JOHN MENZIES)

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TRADE SUPPLIES

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