

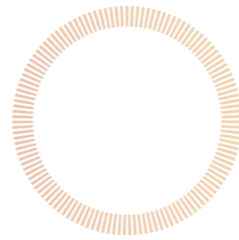


An introduction to our **CONSULTANCY SERVICES**



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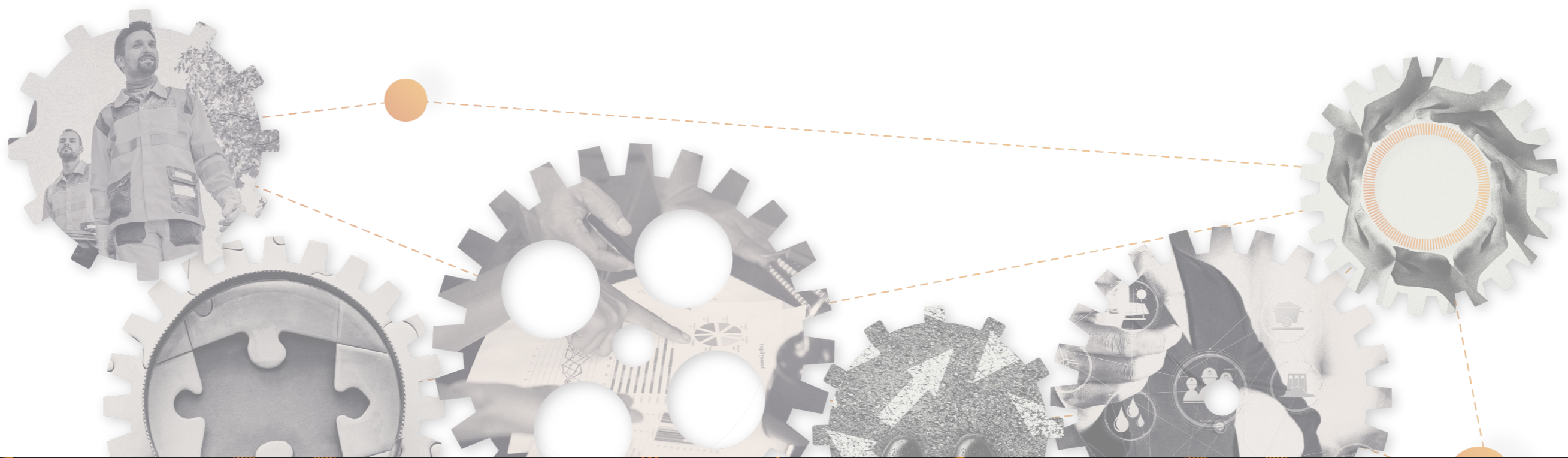


Introduction

Changes in policy and political leadership at a national and local level mean that the landscape is perpetually shifting, and we must adapt along with it. At Solace in Business our team of experts are on-hand and able to facilitate necessary changes and help to confront workplace challenges.

We've been supporting our local government clients with consultancy services for over 20 years and it's something we do quietly, in the background, as the projects are often confidential in nature. Our aim is to help you - the senior leaders of our country's most vital services - to get the very best out of your organisation.

So, how do we do this? This brochure outlines our key consultancy services. However, if you have more bespoke requirements, please do not hesitate to get in touch with our team who will be happy to arrange a confidential conversation.



Service Reviews

Solace in Business has been providing experienced associates to carry out service reviews for over a decade, increasing efficiency and adapting service areas to meet changing demands.

What can we do for you?

Many front-line services are struggling to operate effectively, within the context of reducing budgets, gaps in talent pipeline and a more diverse range of community needs than ever.

Improving and strengthening community engagement can aid in understanding changing demands post-Covid, ahead of planned reform to social care services.

Additionally, with rising demands around specific policy areas like climate and sustainability, there has never been a more critical time to ensure your front-line services are well equipped to deliver.

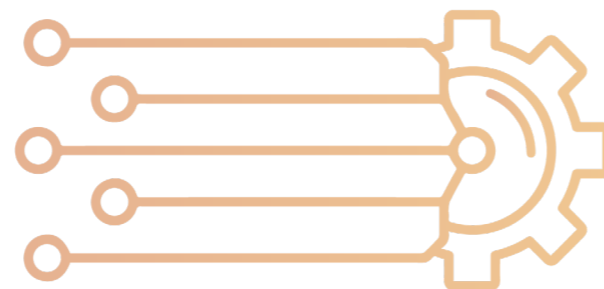
Increasing budgets is not necessarily the answer - although that would be good, it's often about providing the best service possible with what you have.

Solace in Business has been providing experienced associates to carry out service reviews for over a decade. Often with 20 years + experience in the service area, as well as experience across a range of places and settings, our team have a proven track record in service redesign and transformation.



Timescales and costs

There's no such thing as a typical service review as it very much depends on the scale and scope of the review, but the majority of tend to take between 5 and 20 days. The cost is usually offered as a day rate, and an estimated total cost can be provided at briefing stage.



Service Reviews - Case Study 1

Roads and Infrastructure Review

Dumfries and Galloway Council commissioned two associates, through Solace, to facilitate in the delivery of a Review of the Roads Service, develop the subsequent Improvement Plan and provide direction in the development of the Roads Service over the next few years.

The outcomes from the review and improvement process that they have facilitated include:

- ✓ Developing a more effective, efficient and customer-focused Roads Service
- ✓ Developing and implementing a Roads Service Improvement Plan to deliver improved Service performance
- ✓ Change the way that we deliver Roads Services by bringing together all aspects of roads-related activities to create a unified Service
- ✓ Change our roads maintenance policies and practices to reflect current national best practice

The two associates are both former Council Chief Officers and Chartered Engineers. Their approach is to work with the client organisation, to make things better within the budget they have available.

In this instance they have effectively empowered local staff and managers to look at their own activities, to identify areas for change and make them happen, all working within the authority's financial confines (both current and anticipated in the future).

Client Testimonial

[The associates'] appointment was of particular benefit to DGC in that they provided a mix of recent Roads Authority experience plus a knowledge of the national position for Scottish Roads Authorities. I would have no hesitation in re-appointing them for similar work or recommending their services to others

- Head of Infrastructure, Dumfries and Galloway Council



Service Reviews - Case Study 2

Leisure Service Review

Boston Borough Council and East Lindsay District Council joined a strategic alliance in 2020 and they were looking to review Leisure and Culture across both organisations.

Boston's Leisure services are in-house and East Lindsey's Leisure is managed from a Trust.

They approached Solace in Business to undertake a service review, to cover a review of the delivery mechanisms of leisure and culture across both authorities, with a view to determining options to find the most efficient and effective model of delivery for each authority.

This was to include any potential opportunities for closer alignment across both authorities.

Client Testimonial

The service was excellent, the staff I encountered were very professional and very helpful. Would use Solace in Business again. Value for money is very good

-Director, Boston Borough Council



Strategic Reviews

At Solace in Business we have a tried and tested team of experienced consultants who work with elected members and senior officers in local authorities, to carry out strategic, top team reviews.

What can we do for you?

Local government, by its very nature, is constantly evolving and transforming. Changes in policy and political leadership at a national and local level mean that the landscape perpetually shifts and adapts. This means that the structure, capacity and capability within an individual local authority rarely reaches a “steady state”.

Our experienced team can assist in maintaining equilibrium in periods of change and help to align capacity, culture, capability and structure to new priorities, whatever they may be.

Our process

Each review is tailored to the individual organisation and their specific set of circumstances, but the following points give a high-level overview of some of the potential steps in the process:

- ✓ Each project will have a dedicated Solace in Business sponsor, working closely with an independent Solace associate, or a small team of associates, depending of the scope and scale of the review
- ✓ Information gathering will take place via structured interviews and feedback from elected members and staff at senior level (and key reporting lines, where applicable) within the organisation
- ✓ A review of internal documents and comparator data will also form part of the process
- ✓ Draft recommendations and options will be presented by the reviewer
- ✓ A written report outlining and justifying proposals on evidence collected will be produced
- ✓ The full process will involve regular and frequent sense checking with the Political Leadership



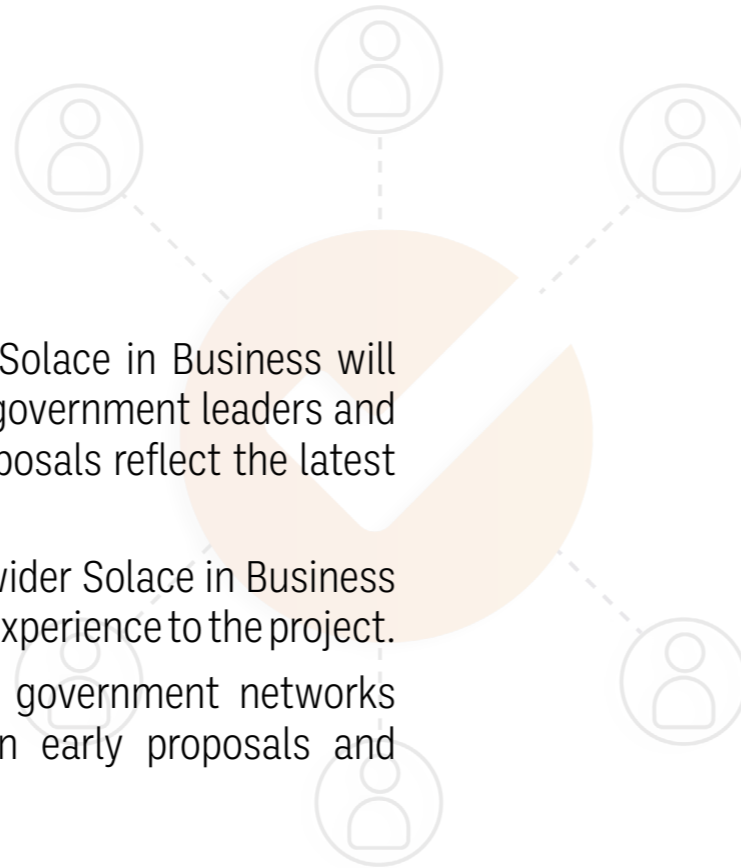
Strategic Reviews

External validation

In addition to the traditional review process, Solace in Business will make use of its membership network of local government leaders and private sector business partners to ensure proposals reflect the latest thinking in organisational design and change.

The project sponsor, in collaboration with the wider Solace in Business team, brings an exceptional level of insight and experience to the project.

We are also able to engage our wider local government networks to help inform the project and feedback on early proposals and recommendations.



Timescales and costs

There's no such thing as a typical strategic review as it very much depends on the scale and scope of the review, but the majority tend to take between 10 and 30 days.

The cost is usually offered as a day rate and an estimated total cost can be provided at briefing stage.

Strategic Reviews

Sample reviewer profile

An award-winning HR Director with 25 years' experience at Board level and in leadership roles in both the public and private sector. An exceptional track record in the delivery of strategic planning, transformational change and operational excellence, with particular strengths and significant achievements in:

- Strategic planning, organisation design & restructure
- Major change programmes, including service redesign and implementation
- Business process redesign and transformation, including programme management
- Business planning and financial modelling to deliver efficiencies
- Leading and influencing teams and stakeholders
- Recently completed strategic reviews include a London Borough and a Welsh Authority, plus a recently completed a commission at a City Council, where they reported to the Chief Executive and provided consultancy support on the design and implementation of a new target operating model.



Client Testimonial

I am delighted with [our Solace in Business consultant's] input over these last months. The guidance and expertise has been immeasurable and instrumental towards my organisation successfully delivering upon a significant change programme at the highest possible level. In short, [they] have been excellent

- Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Local Authority

Diagnostics

Is your organisation under pressure to meet demand in the face of budgetary changes? Solace in Business's Diagnostic service can help to streamline services and increase efficiencies.

What can we do for you?

To meet future challenges many local authorities are experiencing unprecedented pressure to change. However, in the face of these challenges, there is great potential to identify and realise significant savings.

All too often, customer demand either does not change, or increases; savings do not materialize and further costs are incurred to correct the problem again. This may result in poor service, lower customer satisfaction, higher costs and decreased staff morale.

A Diagnostic encompasses all aspects of delivery, supporting effective decision making and facilitating ongoing operations through practical advice on how to improve the services, as well as shifting the 'mindset' of the organisation.

Each Diagnostic could identify cashable savings/areas for investment, new efficiencies and strengths/weaknesses of the current service.

Process

With prior discussions and agreements, conventionally our Diagnostic process includes the following steps:

- ✓ Review information provided (off-site)
- ✓ Face-to-face meetings (consultant on-site for 2 days)
- ✓ Preparation of our detailed report with executive summary
- ✓ An assessment of current vision and plans etc., or
- ✓ A revised definition of current position, vision and roadmaps
- ✓ Submit final report and agree findings with stakeholders
- ✓ Optional on-site presentation to a stakeholder group determined by you



Diagnostics

Typical Review

No one review is the same as another. Typically, we would expect a Solace in Business Diagnostic to include most of the following:



A detailed, independent review/audit of your current operation/services, plans, staffing and strategy (AS-IS position)



An appraisal of innovative solutions to address the demands for greater savings and efficiencies, taking a more strategic, longer term approach



An understanding of the organisation so that its strengths and weaknesses can be clearly identified



A business case with a range of options and savings, which can be used to generate debate internally about the pace and intensity of change



Either providing external challenge of the existing strategy vision and plans, or providing a current assessment, vision and roadmap for those local authorities who are less advanced



Recommendations on other projects, decisions, activities that will ensure greater success



Improve handling of customer enquiries and requests for service



Establish the most effective roadmap for your organisation – what needs to be undertaken, to move from the current position to the target position (TO-BE) tactical improvements and financial implications



Defining the vision, targets and outcomes (TO-BE position) that are desired, in association with key stakeholders

Timescales and costs

Our standard charge is very competitive and designed to allow quick decisions to be made on commissioning a Diagnostic review. Each can be tailored to your specific needs, and you can have a report on where your service area is within a few weeks of giving the go ahead.

Duration: 10 -12 days, on-site and off-site.

Diagnostics

Proven Success

£1.3 million

in savings realised in a review of a social care/medical facility



£400,000

saved following a review of ICT services

These were achieved through researching customer demand and using this knowledge to redesign service operations accordingly. These figures indicate the scope for cost and service improvement is significant.

Options Appraisals

For over two decades, our experienced associates have been delivering timely options appraisals, optimising and streamlining front-line service delivery.

What can we do for you?

With rising demand on local authorities to do more with less, unsurprisingly there are increasing numbers of service delivery options available to local government leaders.

Whether you have outsourced services to an ALMO, trust or private sector partner, or you have an in-house service that you feel could run more effectively, an independent options appraisal would be a great way to get under the skin of current service delivery and propose a series of fully evaluated alternative options for consideration.

Solace in Business has been providing experienced associates to carry out options appraisals for over a decade. Our associates often have 20 years + experience in the service area, as well as experience across a range of places and settings, and we have a proven track record in service review, redesign and transformation.

Process

- ✓ Each project has a dedicated Solace in Business sponsor, working closely with an independent Solace associate, or a small team of associates, depending of the scope and scale of the options appraisal
- ✓ Information gathering will take place via structured interviews and feedback from elected members and staff at a senior level (and key reporting lines, where applicable) within the organisation
- ✓ A review of internal documents and comparator data will also form part of the process
- ✓ Draft recommendations and options will be presented by the reviewer
- ✓ A written report will be produced outlining and justifying proposals on evidence collected
- ✓ The full process will involve regular and frequent sense checking with the Political Leadership, where appropriate

Options Appraisals

External validation


In addition to the traditional review process, Solace in Business will make use of its membership network of local government leaders to ensure proposals reflect the latest thinking in organisational design and change. The project sponsor, in collaboration with the wider Solace in Business team, brings an exceptional level of insight and experience to the project. However, we are also able to engage our wider local government networks to help inform the project and feedback on early proposals and recommendations.



Sample reviewer profile

A highly experienced consultant working in both the public and private sectors, with experience drawn from thirteen years in civil engineering contracting and a twenty-four year career in local government with a large unitary authority. As a consultant, they have a track record of successfully leading options appraisals and gateway reviews for local authorities, delivering projects across a wide range of disciplines such as strategic housing programmes, Housing Zone delivery projects, regeneration plans, extra care PFI facilities and major transport schemes. They have also provided consultancy services to civil engineering contractors and have successfully contributed to improving business systems, customer relationships and quality bids in winning work.

Options Appraisals



Timescales and costs

There's no such thing as a typical options appraisal as it very much depends on the scale and scope of the review, but the majority of tend to take between 5 and 20 days. The cost is usually offered as a day rate and an estimate total cost can be provided at briefing stage.

Client Testimonial

“ [Our Solace in Business consultant] undertook the work with no fuss, with regular verbal updates and drew sound conclusions and made clear, deliverable recommendations. [Their] quality of work was 5/5 - Group Head of Technical Services, South East Local Authority ”



Investigations

Solace in Business has been undertaking independent workplace investigations in public and third sector organisations for over 20 years.

What can we do for you?

Our services range from preliminary investigations to establish if there is a case to answer, through to grievance and disciplinary cases, whistleblowing investigations and Member/Officer code of conduct and support on national inquiries.

Often, our investigations are carried out by an individual, but we have also provided teams of investigators to work together on more complex inquiries.

The nature of complaints varies greatly but can include:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding
- Public Complaints



Who are the investigators?

Our bank of experienced investigators includes associates who are qualified HR, legal or finance professionals, who have often worked at Head of Service or Director level in their substantive career. We also have a range of very experienced ex-Chief Executives, who now specialize in investigations.



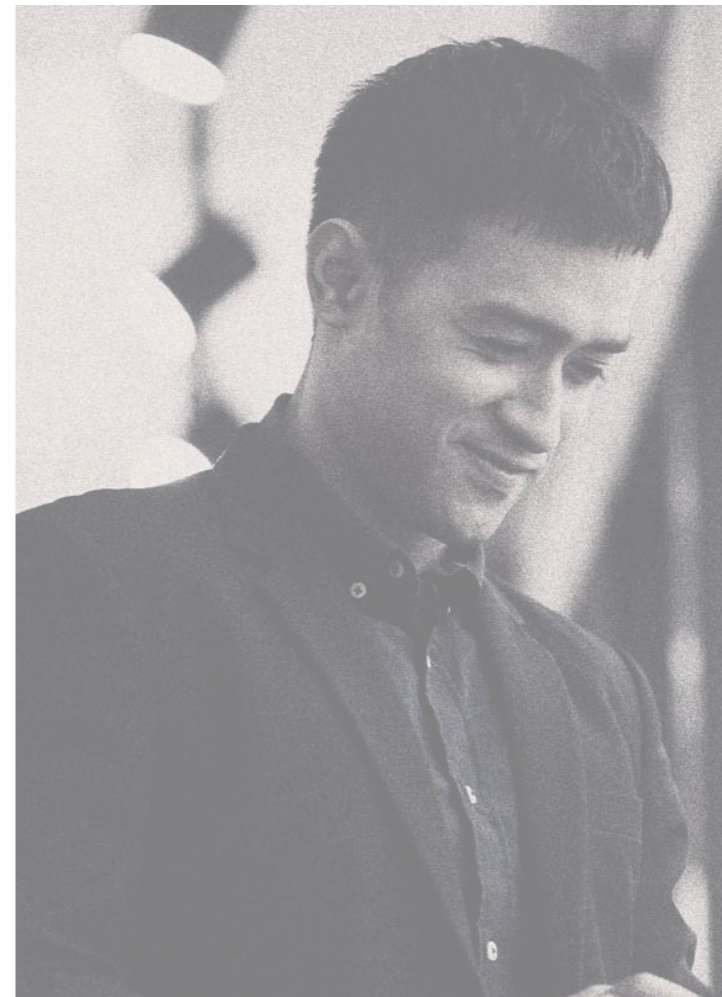
Investigations



Timescales and costs

There's no such thing as a typical investigation as it very much depends on the nature and complexity of the complaint, but the majority of investigations tend to take between 5 and 20 days.

The cost is usually offered as a day rate rather than fixed price, to allow for some flexibility around scope.



Sample reviewer profile

A highly experienced consultant working in both the public and private sectors, with experience drawn from thirteen years in civil engineering contracting and a twenty-four year career in local government with a large unitary authority.

As a consultant, they have a track record of successfully leading options appraisals and gateway reviews for local authorities, delivering projects across a wide range of disciplines such as strategic housing programmes, Housing Zone delivery projects, regeneration plans, extra care PFI facilities and major transport schemes.

They have also provided consultancy services to civil engineering contractors and have successfully contributed to improving business systems, customer relationships and quality bids in winning work.

Investigations

Proven Success

100%

of clients who have provided feedback on a Solace in Business Investigation stated they would use the individual again

100%

of clients who have provided feedback on a Solace in Business Investigation rated the quality of the work provided good, very good or excellent

Client Testimonial

“ [The investigator] was pragmatic and sensitive in their dealings with this matter. Really appreciated the work they did ”

- *Interim Chief Executive, South East Local Authority*

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