

Smart *and* fair

If the will is there, it's possible to design a future energy system that is both of these things. CSE's report suggests how this might be done ...

We know the energy system definitely needs to get much smarter if the UK is to achieve our commitment to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 at the latest.

But can it get smarter in ways which ensure widespread consumer participation and share the costs and benefits of the transition fairly? Can we have a net zero energy system which is both smart and fair?

Who'll benefit most from the transition to a smarter

energy system - and who'll pay the price?

This is a vital question because, as recently concluded by the UK Climate Assembly, the public will insist that the transition to net zero is done in ways which are fair and inclusive. 'Smart' without 'fair' is not socially acceptable or politically sustainable.

It's also the question that's at the heart of CSE's Smart and Fair? programme which we launched in June 2019, with support from Western Power Distribution and Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks.

We've now completed Phase One of the programme and published our report outlining our findings and recommendations (and our plans for Phase Two). Our work leaves little doubt about two important findings and an obvious resulting conclusion:

- The sorts of smart innovation needed and coming forward in the energy market – from time of use tariffs to smart technologies – will bring with them new ways to generate unfairness and leave people behind.
- The smart innovation we need is unlikely to be forthcoming if we seek to achieve fairness by insisting



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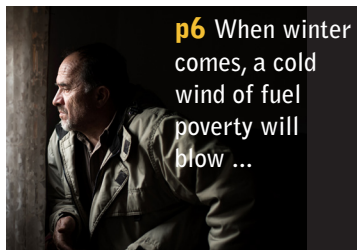
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that every smart offer in the market has itself to be fair and inclusive from the outset.

- Smart and fair outcomes will not emerge reliably from the market without deliberate and purposeful action to secure them by policy-makers and regulators, including requiring adherence by all market participants to a set of Smart and Fair Guidelines.

The report sets out a draft of these Guidelines and makes 21 recommendations for this deliberate and purposeful action by BEIS, Ofgem, energy system practitioners (including energy suppliers, network operators, innovators and consumer advocates). These recommendations include:

- Funding the design and testing of interventions to widen participation.
- Introduction of policies to reduce the risks of consumer

The Smart and Fair? Capability Lens reveals an extensive range of consumer capabilities and attributes required to participate meaningfully in smart energy.



harm from poorly designed, targeted or realised smart energy offers.

- Committing resources to effective market monitoring and ongoing distributional impacts analysis.
- A requirement on all market participants to follow the Guidelines.
- A re-evaluation of definitions of consumer vulnerability to reflect risks associated with the transition to a smarter energy system.

The report also describes the analytical framework and associated tools which CSE has developed in Phase One, with input from expert stakeholders, including the Capability Lens, the Offer Profiling Tool and the Consumer Classification Model.

To download a copy of the Phase One report and the Offer Profiling Tool, click here



Funding for research into citizen influence in energy venture

The second round of funding from the Bristol Sustainable Energy Research Fund (BSERF) has been awarded to Dr Emilia Melville and Jack Nicholls, to support their joint research project, titled "Energy Democracy in Bristol's City Leap".

BSERF is funded and run jointly by CSE and Bristol Energy Co-op, and supports academic researchers with grants of up to £5,000 for research that contributes to the development of a more sustainable, equitable and democratically accountable energy system in the South West of England.

In the panel's view, this research will produce valuable findings, with practical significance for energy democracy and stakeholder governance here in the South West, as well as nationally.

Melville and Nicholls' research will investigate democratic participation in Bristol council's City Leap initiative, a series of investment opportunities in energy efficiency, smart tech, low-carbon heat, and low emission transport.

New Futureproof website

www.futureproof.uk.net

Our home retrofit project, Futureproof, now has a brand new website and we're rather proud of it.

The site was re-designed to offer a better user experience for homeowners and builders, as well as to roll out exciting new features for clients. You can take a look [here](#).

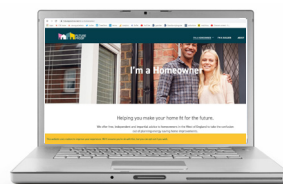
In this first phase, the new public facing site benefits from sleeker, easier to navigate pages and improved accessibility.

The next phase will include a designated user area

for builders who complete Futureproof training to create and edit business profiles on the site, as well as additional functionality to help homeowners easily contact builders through their profiles to get quotes

Futureproof aims to be a bridge between householders who want to make their homes low-carbon and builders who wish to work in this area. It runs training in low-carbon retrofit for builders and [this video](#) summarises

the training on offer. And for homeowners it offers free, independent and impartial advice to take the confusion out of planning energy saving home improvements.



Futureproof was given a significant boost when the Government announced the Green Home Grants in July. And in [this blog](#) for Bristol Green Capital, CSE Chief Executive, Simon Roberts, explains how retrofitting and initiatives like Futureproof hold the key to a genuinely green recovery in post-pandemic Britain.



Back in August the Government announced the Green Homes Grants as part of a £2bn stimulus to support 100,000 jobs and enable 600,000 homeowners to install energy saving and zero carbon heating measures in six months.

While the ambition and decent funding are welcome, now, in the wake of Covid-19, the commitment has mutated into a rushed grant give-away that rather than 'building back better' risks stoking frustration and undermining market confidence. Here's why ...

1) The rush to spend

Firstly the money has to be spent (and works completed) by the end of March 2021. That would have been desperately tight, even in pre-pandemic conditions. Some works available under the scheme – for example solid wall insulation – may require planning approval, and can be held up in bad weather. Throw in further lockdown restrictions and it's difficult to see many installations meeting the deadline.

2) Someone to do the work

Secondly there simply aren't enough of the right kind of contractors to meet the demand – and, unless things change, it's unlikely there will be. This is because in order to be eligible to install measures under the Green Homes Grant scheme a contractor needs to be Trustmark approved and member of a qualifying quality assurance programme such as the renewables-focused MCS or the energy efficiency industry standard PAS 2030:(2019) scheme – and for some this is a hurdle they're not prepared to jump.

I use the term 'contractors' here to cover both installers of

Green Homes Grant



The stimulus that could end up building mostly frustration

Ian Preston fears that the Green Homes Grant will disappoint ...

single measures like cavity wall insulation, and local general builders. But these aren't the same, and this is where the problem lies.

Take a decent small to medium sized local building company – of the type that the government hopes will get involved in the Green Homes Grants. They have the skills to install internal or solid wall insulation alongside other measures, but implementing PAS 2030 requires time and money. It costs £1,500-£2,000 to become registered for one measure and then another £500 for each additional measure. So it could cost a small business £4,000 to become registered for all the insulation measures associated with a grant that may stop in a few months.

One building company that had their fingers burnt registering for the failed Green Deal in 2012 told me: "Having gone through PAS 2030 in 2014, we don't wish

to go through all over again, especially if the plug will be pulled on the scheme after a few months."

Installers are a different matter. These are not general builders but companies who specialise in a particular measure. For them, Trustmark registration comes with the territory as they're set up to deliver Energy Company Obligation (ECO) work – typically loft or cavity wall insulation. And they install this measure in large quantities, over a large geographical area and according to a set procedure.

I've spoken to a couple of these installers who both told me two that they had over 15,000 Green Homes Grants enquiries in the first few weeks, but that they aren't interested in following up all or even most of them. The enquiries they will pursue are those that fall into the low-income household stream of the Grant where the householder isn't liable to any

of the payment. This stream fully funds measures up to £10,000; you do the work and claim all the cash from the government. There's more money and no householder contribution to collect, and they can potentially hive off any lucrative ECO submissions.

PAS 2030:(2019) was introduced following the dispiritingly high number of poor quality solid wall insulation works carried out under the Green Deal. Unfortunately the issue isn't necessarily the quality *standard* that's been implemented, it's that solid wall insulation is not a quick measure where you can follow a set procedure and install a measure in a day or less. Each job is different and requires someone who will take the time to ensure the right materials and approach are used. And who would you want to do this to your home? A local builder you trust or an installer from maybe hundreds of miles away that you've never heard of?

I caught a Green Homes Grant phone-in on BBC Radio

“Solid wall insulation is not a quick measure where you can follow a set procedure and install a measure in a day or less. Each job is different and requires someone who will take the time to ensure the right materials and approach are used.”

5 live with Martin Lewis the other day. A lady from Banbury rang to say that she wanted to work with her local builder who's currently retrofitting her home but he wasn't registered and the only installer she could get was from Birmingham. Needless to say she wasn't keen on taking



up the offer.

The Government thinks that opportunity will stimulate more contractors to go through the PAS 2030 process and then there will be more Trustmark approved people to do the work. But an ECO installer and a local building company aren't the same thing at all.

What's needed is an approach to quality assurance for complex building works like solid wall insulation that includes appropriate training and support, like that currently being offered by The Green Register as part of our Futureproof programme. Here we take a whole-house and building fabric approach, based on the concepts of building physics, the need to manage moisture and ensure adequate ventilation.

3) Advice, what advice...?

Thirdly, and finally, the advice available to householders before they even approach a builder or installer is inadequate.

At the moment, the first stage in the process is to go to the Simple Energy Advice (SEA) website, but the very basic report that householder gets can raise more questions than it answers. So householders have been calling us and organisations like us for additional

independent advice, and we simply don't have the capacity to deal with this.

'Independent' is the key word here. If I call an installer and ask for advice on a single measure they have a vested interest to sell it to me. Furthermore without help, I am unlikely to have considered other critical issues like planning, conservation area restrictions, property orientation etc. Householders accessing the Green Homes Grant need to know they can spend a portion of their grant on independent advice from a Retrofit Assessor or Coordinator to help them identify the best course of action for them and their property. This is a simple step that could be included on the SEA website with a link to the appropriate certification bodies (Elmhurst and Trustmark).

Quick fixes

There are **four ways** that the Green Homes Grant can be significantly reviewed with relatively little disruption:

- 1 Extend the deadline for delivery under phase 1 to September 2021.
- 2 Review PAS 2035 (which will soon replace PAS 2030: (2019) or work with a trade body like the Federation of Master Builders to develop an alternative quality standard that's appropriate for local builders.
- 3 Commit to a second round of funding to run over two to three years now and assign some of this to enabling local trades people to become Trustmark accredited.
- 4 Allow householders to spend part of their grant on advice.

Carbon footprinting tool for parish councils

Since June, and in partnership with Midlands Energy Hub, we've been developing a tool that will enable parish councils to estimate baseline carbon emissions for their area. This will be calculated using information on energy use, travel and the consumption of goods and services modelled at household level and scaled up to reflect individual communities.

The tool will allow the development of meaningful and locally appropriate carbon reduction strategies by parish councils that support their district and county councils with well-targeted activity that focuses on big-emissions sectors rather than spending time on well-meaning but low-impact activities. Users will be able to test out a number of scenarios that demonstrate the potential carbon-reducing impact of different projects.

CSE's Annette Lamley said, "To tackle the climate emergency, we need the

involvement of all levels of government, from the commanding heights of Westminster down to parish councils. The latter have a critical role to play being uniquely placed to inspire grassroots movements, set a leadership example and deliver practical local action.

And we know from the many requests for assistance that CSE receives from parish councillors that many are determined to play their part. So we're hugely encouraged by that BEIS (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy) has recognised the role of parish councils and is funding a project to develop a community-level footprinting tool."

■ Our thanks to the many parish councillors and clerks who have helped us develop and the test the tool. Back in the summer we put out a call and around 170 parishes signed up to trial the prototype and provide feedback on its format and content. Amazing response!



Parish councils are responsible for a range of local matters that can include planning, traffic calming, community transport, street lighting, allotments, bridleways and footpaths, car parks, commons and open spaces, leisure, litter bins and street cleaning, tourism and youth projects.





Local council action planning days

Hundreds of local authorities have passed declarations of a Climate Emergency. But where do they go from here? How do they go from warm words and good intentions to actually and effectively supporting the rapid transition to a zero-carbon economy?

To address this, earlier this year, we launched a new series of action planning workshops, designed to help town and parish councils across the UK take practical action on their climate emergency declarations.

The workshops provide local councils with:

- A good grounding on the climate emergency from global to local level.
- An understanding of the role of local councils and influence they have.
- The beginning of a practical action plan.
- Access to CSE resources and continued support.

So far five groups of local councils have received workshops. The first of these was shortly before the March lockdown when a group of Derbyshire councils attended a face-to-face action day (photos, below). All subsequent workshops have been delivered via the online events platform Hopin – to groups from Surrey, Worcestershire, Wealden District, Forest of Dean District and Avon – but these have been highly successful nevertheless.

Workshops can be run for whole counties, district-wide or for individual councils and are suitable for between 25-50 delegates.

The day consists of four main elements: **1)** an introduction; **2)** facilitated workshops on local impacts, communicating with your residents, and building an action plan; **3)** an online conference 'Exhibition Hall', with stalls from local advice providers, projects

and schemes, and; **4)** networking opportunities.

The total price for design, preparation, delivery and reporting for each workshop will be £2,565 (+VAT). As host you can either incur all, half or none of the cost by offering the workshop to delegates free of charge, by charging a reduced delegate fee and paying the balance, or by passing all of the costs to delegates.

For more information about the day and costs, call **0117 934 1400** or (better) email us on **climateemergency@cse.org.uk**.

Here's what some of the attendees had to say:

"A great opportunity to share ideas with other councils and learn from their experiences so far. Loads of information ... and actually good fun for such a serious subject." **Powick Parish Council**

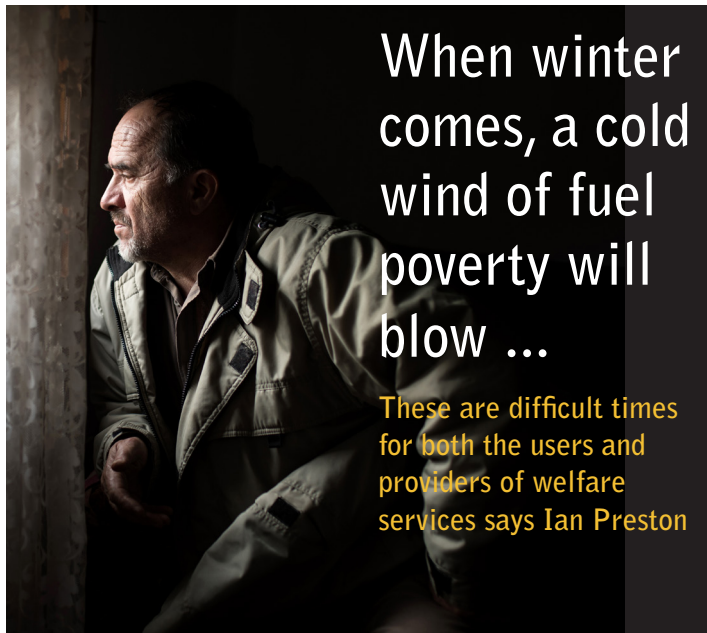
"A very good introduction to encouraging local councils to work together. Confident that this format could result in actions stemming from the input of the attendees." **Lydney Town Council**

"Effective review on a very important issue which can sometimes feel too large to tackle ... with some immediate practical solutions." **Uckfield Town Council**

"Inspirational, energising and fully worth the time to attend." **Withyham Parish Council**



The first Local council action planning day was for a group of Derbyshire councils and held shortly before lockdown in the splendid Whitworth Centre, Matlock



Earlier this year I wrote in a blog that I expected to see much higher rates of energy debt, self-disconnection and mental stress among our more vulnerable clients this winter. Regretably, nothing since has made me change my mind.

In my piece I mentioned Mr F, a client in Bath who we contacted through Western Power Distribution's Power-Up service. The call was handled by one of our energy advisors, Ed Divers. Mr F has type 1 diabetes so is shielding and the issue he sought help

with was food delivery - he struggles to access food suitable to someone with his health condition. After signposting Mr F to the council's community support hub, Ed asked him how he was managing his bills discovered that a number of them, including electricity, were extremely overdue. As the call progressed it became clear that Mr F - who at one point expressed that he would be "better off dead" - was finding lockdown extremely challenging despite the brave face. In line with some recent training, Ed found appropriate

mental health support locally.

I fully expect that we're going to see more cases like this in the next few months due to gaping holes in the welfare safety net caused by the current exceptional circumstances.

One issue will be the repayment of deferred energy bills. Over the summer, all energy suppliers put in measures to support customers - payment 'holidays', no cut-offs and so on. But this isn't free money; the energy companies will recoup this money, either through deferred payments or by taking it out of the customer's Warm Homes Discount. This will exacerbate hardship at the worst time; when energy bills are higher and the expected recession has started to bite. One supplier has told me that they have deferred £8m of payments from 40,000 customers.

The debt charity StepChange recently revealed "a personal debt tsunami" of £6bn directly attributable to the pandemic is already being stored up among 4.6 million households. This burden of debt will slow down any economic recovery and impose an unprecedented burden on

advice services, including ours.

In 2019-20, CSE supported 10,093 households with energy advice. We estimate this will rise by a third, and that the increase in case complexity will mean spending some 40% more time on each client.

In the words of one advisor, Will, "More and more of our calls are from people in extreme fuel poverty who are isolated and impoverished by the effects of Covid-19 on their jobs, health and families. We're increasingly seeing multiple deprivations - inadequate housing, potential homelessness, mental and physical health issues, loneliness, job insecurity and debt. Clients often need emotional support as well as energy advice."

The Government urgently needs to put measures in place to make sure advice services like ours aren't overwhelmed and ensure that people can access the financial support they need.

Bleak? Yes, sorry about that ...

This is an abridged and adapted version of a blog that appeared in June. Click here to read it



Local area energy planning: how it can be 'done well'

CSE and Energy System Catapult have published the final review draft of Local Area Energy Planning: The Method, a new report for Ofgem outlining how local area energy planning should be undertaken.

Local area energy planning is a key technique to inform, shape and enable key aspects of the transition to a net zero

carbon energy system. It can inform future practice by local authorities and others engaged in such planning and potentially underpin specific proposals to upgrade local energy networks to enable local decarbonisation commitments to be met.

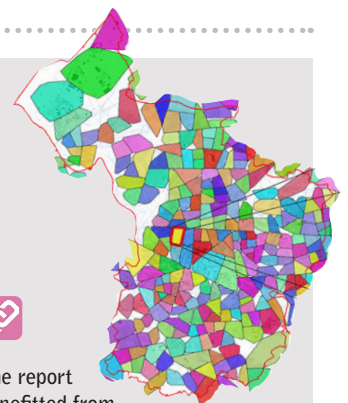
Four elements of local area energy planning are covered in the report: **1)** the use of

robust technical evidence; **2)** consideration of wider non-technical factors which need to be addressed to secure change; **3)** the importance of effective stakeholder engagement, and **4)** the approach to governance and delivery of the resulting plan.

For each of these elements, the report describes key issues to consider and techniques which could be applied and it provides a 'done well' checklist that doubles up as a quality assessment framework.



The report benefitted from input from involving Ofgem, the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Committee on Climate Change, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and Innovate UK.



Planning White Paper: it's flawed and needs rewriting

The Government's Planning White Paper is flawed, and should be rewritten with the UK's Climate Change targets at its heart.

That is both our view and that of the Town and Country Planning Association, and together we are calling on Government to ensure that rapid carbon emissions reduction is given pre-eminent status when considering the objectives, structures and governance of England's reformed planning system.

Rachel Coxcoon is one of the authors of our joint response to the public consultation which closed in October. "The planning system has a unique contribution to make in the delivery of the UK's carbon reduction target. So it is deeply disappointing that the white paper creates uncertainty about the role of planning in tackling climate change and fails to provide a detailed explanation of how carbon reductions will be secured."

In brief, we recommend that a reformed planning system must have these four central characteristics:

- 1 The legal objectives of the Town & Country Planning Act and Climate Change Act should be aligned.
- 2 Carbon reduction should be the first amongst equals of material considerations in the planning process.
- 3 National guidance should set out those local planning policies likely to have greatest impact on carbon reduction and not restrict the ability of local planning authorities to set building performance targets over and above national standards.
- 4 National guidance should set out a clear methodology for carbon handling in the plan preparation and development management process.

The consultation is now closed, but we will be keeping a close eye on developments ...

Our response to the Planning White Paper Consultation which incorporates input from the UK Green Building Council, RTPI and Client Earth can be downloaded here.



More hospital-based caseworkers supporting NHS patients and staff ...

As winter approaches, hospital admissions rise and demand for NHS services surges again, the mechanisms that ensure patients are discharged as soon as they're well enough and with the support they need, are more vital than ever to ease the pressure.

Too many people leave hospital and return to homes that are unhealthy damp and cold, with broken or inadequate heating systems. This puts their health at risk and in many cases means they end up back in hospital - an outcome neither they nor the NHS wants.

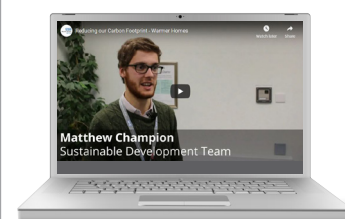
To speed up the time it takes for patients to return home, we've expanded our team of hospital-based caseworkers who can now be found at two hospitals in Bristol as well as at Weston Super Mare, Bath, Swindon and Salisbury.

Our caseworkers work alongside hospital staff, from ward managers to

occupational therapists, ensuring that, following their stay, patients have access to the right support and don't go home to cold homes or poor heating systems.

The team check if patients are eligible for warm home discounts, sign them up for priority services in the case of power cuts, provide advice on energy and heating, debt and welfare as well as helping people access further support through partners like Citizens Advice or local councils.

North Bristol NHS Trust are in no doubt about the success of the partnership both in easing the pressure on NHS services and also in supporting their sustainable development strategy to reach carbon neutral by 2030. They've even made a video about it ...



Our hospital posts are funded by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, Wiltshire Council, Bristol Impact Fund, Affordable Warmth Solutions CIC and the Energy Redress Scheme.

Power Partners, round 4

Some funding schemes are so successful that they just keep going! November saw the launch of yet another round of UK Power Networks' support funding for community groups. It's the fourth round since January 2019.

Not-for-profit organisations are invited to apply for sums of between £2,000 and £20,000 for initiatives that combat fuel poverty, or support people in vulnerable circumstances by increasing energy resilience.

The £300,000 per year community investment fund focuses on support services such as income maximisation,

energy efficiency advice and interventions, tariff switching and time of use tariff awareness, new registrations for the Priority Service Register; provision of energy advice training and support for frontline workers.

Projects which support individuals or communities who are experiencing emerging vulnerabilities resulting from Covid-19 or entering into fuel poverty as a result of the pandemic are a key focus of this round which is being allocated in November.

UK Power Networks is the utility that owns and maintains electricity infrastructure in the South East, East of England and London distributing power to 8.3 million customers.

Click the link button to see which organisations were funded in the previous round.



More TEA?



Two more years for Tenants Energy Advice service

Good news for Bristol council tenants. In June we were awarded the contract to deliver the Tenants Energy Advice (TEA) service on behalf of Bristol council for another two years.

The project supports

tenants with advice on managing energy bills, using heating controls effectively, dealing with problems of condensation, damp and mould, and similar issues.

Since November 2013 we've supported over 5,100 people through TEA which altogether has led to savings of over £600,000 through lower bills, clearing fuel debt and applying for rebates like the Warm Home Discount.

Jamie Walters is managing the service. "Securing the new contract means we can continue to provide support to some of Bristol's most vulnerable households well into 2022", he said.



Annual Review & Accounts 2020



Our Annual Report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 was published this autumn. And what a year it was, beginning with our 40th anniversary celebration in 2019 and ending with almost all of us working from home as the Covid-19 lockdown took effect.

"In financial terms, it was a record breaker with turnover up by 30% and continuing growth in staff numbers," said Anne Obey OBE, Chair of Trustees. "It means we've been able to help more people than ever, including over 10,000

households who've contacted our advice line, many of them living in horrifically cold or damp homes or struggling with fuel debt and intransigent energy suppliers. And we've been able to strengthen our work supporting local councils and communities to deliver on their net zero carbon emission ambitions and providing insightful research and analysis to policy-makers nationally."

"Our strong financial performance and good funding relationships mean we face the challenges ahead with confidence."



We are an independent national charity that shares our knowledge and experience to help people change the way they think and act on energy.



St James Court
St James Parade
Bristol BS1 3LH

0117 934 1400
info@cse.org.uk
www.cse.org.uk

TWITTER @cse_bristol
YOUTUBE csebristol

COMPANY 2219673
CHARITY 298740
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