<u>ontre Cusp.</u>

DST. 19



A vision for cultural life in Shetland 2009 - 2013



Shetland's culture is at the heart of our lives. We are very proud of our cultural heritage; we keep our traditions alive and learn from the past, but we are also a forward looking community and have a continual thirst for new cultural experiences and influences. The Strategy recognises Shetland's extraordinarily rich heritage, traditions and creativity and its unspoilt natural environment.

This strategy has been prepared by a number of organisations in Shetland which, working in partnership and individually, will fulfill its aims and objectives. It seeks to offer a shared view of the way in which Shetland's citizens would like life in the islands to develop. The Strategy sets out objectives for developing cultural facilities, services and activities for the benefit of the Shetland community. It recognises that there is a vital contribution to be made by public agencies and private enterprise, but that the essence of Shetland cultural life flows from local communities and individuals. This strategy is therefore for everyone in Shetland.

As the Chairman of the Community Planning Board, I am confident that this Strategy, and the Action Plan flowing from it, will help us work together to achieve the goals in our Community Plan - a prosperous economy; a society which is vibrant, healthy, safe and in which everyone can take part; an environment which is conserved and enhanced; and a cultural identity which is celebrated and promoted.

This is a crucial time for Shetland. Our islands' culture is at last being recognised for the resource it is and some very positive developments are underway or contemplated. We really are 'on the cusp'; I believe that we have the potential to be the most exciting creative and cultural island community in the world.

I wish those involved in leading on cultural activity well. I look forward to seeing continuing progress throughout Shetland.

<u>Sandy Cluness</u> Chair, Community Planning Board



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Generations

Da filskit scallywags dat dey ir da young eens, wir ain bairns dem makkin aw yun upsteer an halliracket. Some bricht new moarnin, no sae lang fae noo some lang lippened day i da future dey'll grip da tiller oot o wir haands an sail dir solo coorse, shaeste dir ain fate.

James Sinclair

Foreword

By <u>Rick Nickerson</u>, Spokesperson - Culture & Recreation & <u>Hazel Sutherland</u>, Executive Director of Education and Social Care

In promoting this second Shetland Cultural Strategy, we recognise that the term 'culture' can mean different things to different people. However, for the purposes of this Strategy, it includes visual arts, music, song, theatre, dance, film, digital media, prose, poetry, food and the built and natural heritage. Sport and physical recreation, which were included in the first Cultural Strategy, will henceforth be covered by a separate strategy.

Shetland is blessed with a rich and diverse culture; it has Pictish, Norse and Scottish roots, but there were other important historical connections, particularly with Germany and the Netherlands. Shetland's geographical remoteness has helped preserve customs, traditions and artifacts; but that remoteness has been tempered by contacts with many peoples, not only around the North Atlantic and North Sea but also much farther afield. Over centuries, this northern crossroads has seen thousands of travellers come and go for every conceivable purpose: fishing, trade, kinship, war and oil are just the more obvious ones. Shetlanders are also conspicuously well-travelled themselves; thanks in part to the Press Gang, they were prominent in the Royal Navy but also sailed the world on merchant ships or whalers. Today's young Shetlanders forge links with their contemporaries in many countries, from Japan to the USA and the Czech Republic to South Africa or southern India, particularly through the Global Classroom. The islands' fishing, knitting and agricultural traditions are essential foundations for the islands' culture and have impacted on the cultural heritage of Shetland in terms of language, dialect and traditional skills. However, Shetlanders have also responded to many new influences. Today, island life is enriched by the participation of people from many different parts of the world. The result is a culture that is distinctive, strong and dynamic. It is an enviable legacy.

Culture is central to any community's quality of life and wellbeing; it largely defines the identity of a place and its people and it promotes personal growth and community cohesion. A vibrant and distinctive culture is also a hugely important economic asset. Investment in culture, which can take many forms, may therefore be expected to produce many different benefits. In Shetland, physical infrastructure provided over the last 30 years has included many new or improved community halls, the Bonhoga Gallery, improved interpretation at many sites, the restoration of many significant buildings, archaeological excavations, a library and, last but most certainly not least, a new Museum and Archives that is a stunning achievement in both conception and execution.

However, there have also been many other kinds of investment, not only in cash but also in time, imagination and energy. Shetland's education system helps nurture traditional skills and knowledge but also provides a springboard for creative talent in every sphere; its record in the encouragement of local music and musicians is exemplary. Local voluntary groups have undertaken all kinds of cultural projects, from dialect recording and work in schools through the operation of local heritage centres to the promotion of the work of Shetland's contemporary artists. There has been important private investment too, for example in recording facilities and in gallery space. Several events have become established, including the Shetland Folk Festival, the Fiddle and Accordion Festival, Wordplay, Screenplay and the Johnsmas Foy, incorporating Flavour of Shetland. New fire festivals have appeared around the islands alongside the Lerwick Up Helly Aa. These events are recognised world wide.

There can be no doubt that these developments have been a source of pride and confidence in the community, that they have made life in the islands so much more rewarding and that they have significantly strengthened Shetland's reputation. In all these respects, they have improved the prospects for economic development, most obviously through tourism but in other ways too. To the extent that the Council supports these facilities, it discharges its statutory duty to 'ensure that there is adequate provision of facilities for the inhabitants of their area for recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities'¹.

The foundation for further development is sound and we must aspire to make progress on all fronts, for culture is at the heart of any new Shetland, vital for future health, social strength and economic prosperity. It has been estimated that Shetland's creative industries contribute around £25m to the economy. Within the lifetime of this Strategy, Shetlanders can look forward to the provision of Mareel, one of the outcomes of the first Cultural Strategy. A first class cinema, music venue and educational facility, it will not only bring a real cinema experience and celebrate one of Shetland's most robust resources, namely the islands' musical heritage; it will also demonstrate confidence in the creative industries in general, a sector which is seen as having real growth potential. We hope that other important projects will also come to fruition over the period of the Strategy.

This Strategy brings together a partnership of agencies and communities with the aim of ensuring that our cultural life continues to thrive and develop. Each of these partners will, where appropriate, prepare or revise their own strategies, but we have included what we regard as the 'flagship' projects and opportunities in the Action Plan that forms part of this Strategy. There are opportunities for everyone in Shetland to participate at whatever level they wish. We want them to have the chance to be challenged, excited, inspired and educated and, above all, to fulfill their potential.

¹ Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982, Section 14.



Background

The Shetland Cultural Strategy is a strategy for all of Shetland, for all who live here and all who visit us, and it could not have been prepared without the assistance of many individuals and organisations that contributed their knowledge, opinions and recommendations during 2008. A Steering Group, convened by Shetland Islands Council, has guided the development of the Strategy.

The Strategy is important because it covers so many areas of people's lives. It touches on all the things we do and enjoy: the things in which we believe or take pride and the things we want to achieve, whether as individuals or communities. It must conserve our inheritance while capturing Shetland's potential for the future. It needs to reach into our outlying communities.

In developing strategies of this kind and putting them into effect, we must also bear in mind the interests of people beyond the islands, because our cultural life is one of the things that attract people to visit us or to join us as new Shetlanders. Shetland, as a whole or in its parts, has been recognised by growing numbers of writers and broadcasters. We must recognise the islands' value in their terms as well as in ours; it will be important not to take our strengths for granted. When we refer to Shetland's potential, we do not only mean the cultural value of our heritage and contemporary practice or the sheer skill that may be displayed by our artists, musicians, cooks or craftspeople, though developing these for their own sake is essential in itself. We also mean the economic potential of Shetland's culture. Because it is distinctive and authentic, it not only attracts visitors but is partly responsible for building the kind of reputation that can inspire people to seek out the best of Shetland products, wherever they live. A cherished, vibrant culture is an indispensable tool in building a healthy economy and healthy community.

Culture plays an important role in supporting individual and community wellbeing. At the heart of Shetland becoming 'healthier' is effort to help the population stay well. Participation and attendance at cultural events reduces isolation, brings communities together and in doing so provides opportunities to maintain social networks that are vital to mental wellbeing. Further, the very act of coming together provides 'a sense of place' and a range of collective experiences, which strengthen communities and increase community confidence and ability to respond to change. However it doesn't stop there. There are many known physical health benefits associated from attending and engaging in cultural activity.



The Cultural Strategy builds on existing cultural strengths. It is intended to influence policies, activities and investment across all aspects of Shetland life. By exposing the possibilities and options, it should assist communities and politicians when they need to decide between competing priorities. It seeks to identify important cultural development opportunities and suggest means by which they can be seized.

By explaining how individual cultural developments fit into an overall framework that has the support of the partners and the community, the Strategy should provide evidence to local and external funding bodies that new projects are being brought forward in a considered and coherent manner.

In general terms, the principles behind this second Shetland Cultural Strategy echo national policy and 'Culture Delivers' (Scottish Government). The Shetland partners wish to endorse the need for equality of opportunity and the participation of all sections of the community.

The development of cultural opportunities in Shetland should satisfactorily balance economic, environmental and social considerations; in other words, the process should be sustainable.

The Shetland Cultural Strategy is a means of enriching life in Shetland. It is expected to have a five-year life, but it will be reviewed at least once during that period.

These priorities include:

- Improving access for all, removing barriers (including lack of transport) where possible and promoting the use of information technology.
- Improving recognition of the value of volunteers.
- Making more and better use of the available facilities.
- Continue to support in development and maintenance of community facilities such as public halls and help groups access funding.
- Encouraging new facilities where they will strengthen what Shetland has to offer.
- Increasing the range of cultural activities to meet the needs of new user groups and visitors.
- Developing and improving promotion of the unique Shetland natural environment, archaeology and cultural traditions.
- Ensuring that cultural activities are available from pre-school age throughout school years and beyond.
- Maintaining and developing inclusive formal and informal arts education programmes.
- Using cultural resources to improve health and well-being.
- Exploring new partnerships to support fresh approaches to creative industries, tourism and regeneration.
- Recognising the importance of diverse cultural provision in retaining young people in Shetland and attracting new people to settle in the islands.
- Maximising financial support and sponsorship so that more can be achieved within available resources.

This Strategy seeks to:

- Unite the community and service providers in partnership.
- Support and involve all individuals and communities wishing to engage in cultural activity, wherever they are in Shetland.
- Improve Shetland's economic prospects.
- Preserve and conserve Shetland's heritage, culture and environment.
- Nurture new Shetland talent and provide an environment in which creative skills can flourish both in and outside Shetland.
- Strengthen confidence, pride and a sense of place.

Vision, Themes and Objectives 3. Learning

A vision for cultural life in Shetland.

We seek to ensure that Shetland's cultural assets are conserved, developed and supported in order to allow everyone to reach his or her potential, strengthen community identity, pride and confidence and secure prosperity for the benefit of present and future generations. We intend that Shetland's cultural assets will be recognised as among the richest and most diverse to be found anywhere. We want Shetland to be the most exciting creative and cultural island community in the world.

Themes

1. Access, participation and potential

Encourage active and participative lifestyles, equality of opportunity, personal growth and community development through increasing access to, and participation in, the broadest range of cultural activities throughout Shetland, particularly for people who may be excluded or marginalised at present.

2. Creativity and heritage

Celebrate and promote the islands' creativity, multinational culture, distinctive heritage, dialect and environment, and develop and promote them within Shetland and to the wider world and recognise the value of collaboration and partnership in and outwith Shetland.

Recognise the value of creative and cultural skills as a source of self-fulfillment and a foundation for community learning and identity, ensuring that the broadest practicable range of related educational opportunities are available both informal/formal for a range of ages (including cross generational) and backgrounds.

4. Culture and the Economy

Ensure that the connections between culture and economic development are explored and understood and that investment in cultural assets and creative activities is actively pursued as a means to increasing prosperity. Shetland has a chance to exploit its unique place in a connected digital world that makes us more accessible than ever before.

5. Health and Wellbeing

Recognise the impact that participation in cultural activities and cultural development has on the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Encourage and promote programmes that improve health and wellbeing through culture and cultural activities.

Aims

Within each of these five themes, it is possible to set out three or four main aims linked to aspects of Shetland life and culture and identify methods of achieving them. These aims may be pursued by the community in general or, by the Council, Shetland Arts, Shetland Amenity Trust or other organisations, including the voluntary and private sectors.

<u>Theme 1</u> <u>Access, Participation</u> <u>and Potential</u>

Encourage active lifestyles and paticipation in a broad range of cultural activities for everyone.

<u>Aim 1.1</u>

Support the contribution of cultural life to the vitality and economic prosperity of Shetland.

Methods

- 1.1.1 Promote cultural initiatives in order to build community confidence and increase the sustainability of communities throughout Shetland.
- 1.1.2 Improve access to, and participation in, a diverse range of cultural activities for all residents and visitors, especially those in outlying communities or at risk of social exclusion.

<u>Aim 1.2</u>

Maintain and develop the services and facilities necessary for the vitality and prosperity of Shetland's cultural life.

Methods

- 1.2.1 Support people who volunteer and recognise those who work in the cultural sectors throughout Shetland; promote their value in terms of the cultural life of the islands and provide the training they need to enable them to contribute effectively.
- 1.2.2 Promote the intrinsic value of cultural facilities, activities and services throughout Shetland.

- 1.2.3 Develop a Shetland Heritage Association Action Plan in consultation with community history groups.
- 1.2.4 Develop and support a network of artist led or facilitated groups.

<u>Aim 1.3</u>

Promote activities and facilities that encourage individuals of all abilities, especially young people, to pursue a lifestyle that supports their development.

Methods

- 1.3.1 Ensure that diverse cultural activities and facilities are provided throughout Shetland to meet the needs of local communities.
- 1.3.2 Support strategies and activities that encourage individuals to develop healthy lifestyles and participate (and achieve their potential) in cultural activities.
- 1.3.3 Promote access to and understanding of Shetland's natural environment.
- 1.3.4 Ensure that modern information communications are available for people to be creative in digital media.

<u>Aim 1.4</u>

Support participation in the cultural life of the islands by ensuring that there are accessible transport services to and from Shetland, and within Shetland.

Method

1.4.1 Seek to ensure that external air and ferry services are convenient and affordable and that internal transport services offer opportunities to participate in cultural events for everyone, whether or not they have personal transport.

<u>Theme 2</u> <u>Creativity and Heritage</u>

Celebrate, promote and invest in the islands' distinctive creativity, diverse culture, heritage and environment and promote these within Shetland and to the wider world.

<u>Aim 2.1</u>

Celebrate and build on the diversity and excellence of artistic and creative activity that is characteristic of Shetland.

Methods

- 2.1.1 Provide strategic support for cultural and creative infrastructure including training and career development opportunities.
- 2.1.2 Support and develop a programme of bringing cultural activities and artists into Shetland for the benefit of residents of Shetland.
- 2.1.3 Maintain and develop arts education in schools, further and higher education; develop facilities which enable young artists to perform and develop their careers.
- 2.1.4 Support individual and collective expression in traditional and new forms of creative activity.
- 2.1.5 Develop, promote and support Shetland talent outwith Shetland.
- 2.1.6 Promote cultural exchange between Shetland and other places recognising both our traditional links and the potential of new ones.

<u>Aim 2.2</u>

Sustain and promote Shetland's dialects and place names within the Islands and beyond.

Methods

- 2.2.1 Support and promote the use and culture of, and develop interest in, Shetland's dialects, place names and literature.
- 2.2.2 Continue to encourage the use of Shetland dialects in schools and informal settings.
- 2.2.3 Support organisations that seek to record and promote dialect.

<u>Aim 2.3</u>

Maintain, develop and promote the rich cultural and natural heritage, arts and crafts, architecture, built environment and archaeology of Shetland.

- 2.3.1 Maintain, develop and promote Shetland's museums, galleries, libraries, archives, recognising them as centres of excellence.
- 2.3.2 Support the recording of Shetland's cultural heritage.
- 2.3.3 Ensure the long-term preservation of Shetland artefact, archive, heritage and library collections within the islands including the repatriation of key artefacts and digitising of library material.
- 2.3.4 Continue to manage Shetland's built environment, including the archaeological heritage, in ways that respect its outstanding quality.

- 2.3.5 Promote, interpret and facilitate access to Shetland's built environment and its archeological and cultural heritage.
- 2.3.6 Encourage traditional skills such as drystane dyking, peat casting, boat building, lime work and hand knitted fine lace.
- 2.3.7 Encourage appropriate habitat management in order to secure and strengthen biodiversity.

<u>Aim 2.4</u>

Safeguard, promote and ensure access to the natural environment of Shetland and its outstanding landscape, flora and fauna.

Methods

- 2.4.1 Recognise that Shetland's exceptional landscapes and seascapes are among our strongest assets and ensure that development within them is carefully considered and appropriate.
- 2.4.2 Support efforts to have the special qualities of Shetland's natural environment recognised and promoted, for example through Geopark designation.
- 2.4.3 Safeguard, promote, and ensure appropriate access to, Shetland's wildlife, sea life and high quality natural environment.



<u>Aim 2.5</u>

Encourage and promote creative industries.

- 2.5.1 Support sustainable creative industries and clusters of related industries in Shetland, recognising that they offer potential for employment and the generation of activity in rural areas including the new technologies available.
- 2.5.2 Ensure that percent for art is incorporated where appropriate in new development proposals and encouraged as part of refurbishment projects.
- 2.5.3 Recognise the value of architecture and planning in creating surroundings that are distinctive, memorable, rewarding and stimulating.
- 2.5.4 Develop traditional and contemporary craft industries and use their products to strengthen Shetland's identity throughout the world.
- 2.5.5 Seek to revitalise craft industries where they are at risk or in decline, promoting the teaching of traditional skills and exploring new market opportunities.
- 2.5.6 Encourage the use of Shetland locations in film and television productions and the use of Shetland stories and themes in screenplays.
- 2.3.7 Lobby for the highest possible levels of broadband to encourage creative IT businesses to thrive in Shetland.

<u>Theme 3</u> <u>Learning</u>

Ensure that, whatever their age, background or interests, people have the opportunity to learn about and participate in Shetland's culture and heritage.

<u>Aim 3.1</u>

Support the contribution of cultural activities to school education and to the lifelong learning process for the wider community.

Methods

- 3.1.1 Offer diverse cultural and multicultural teaching and activities within schools, further and higher education establishments and informal settings.
- 3.1.2 Promote the cultural benefits of learning, whether formal or informal, for individuals and communities.



<u>Theme 4</u> <u>Culture and the Economy</u>

Ensure that the value of cultural activity in securing a prosperous future is recognised and captured.

<u>Aim 4.1</u>

Recognise the contribution made by cultural heritage and activity to sustainable economic development and support appropriate projects.

- 4.1.1 Support development based on cultural heritage, cultural activity and creative enterprise that is appropriate in environmental, economic and social terms.
- 4.1.2 Place cultural assets at the heart of the marketing and promotion of Shetland and support activity by Shetland talent outwith the islands where doing so will help to advance these aims.
- 4.1.3 Consider opportunities for the more effective marketing, in and beyond Shetland, of products related to Shetland culture.

<u>Aim 4.2</u>

Recognise that the principal foundations for developing tourism are Shetland's rich and diverse cultural life and outstanding built and natural heritage.

Methods

- 4.2.1 Work with all relevant agencies to ensure that cultural and heritage assets are conserved, that appropriate new facilities are developed and that the quality of related services provided to visitors is as good as it can be.
- 4.2.2 Promote, by the most effective means, the diversity and quality of available cultural and heritage assets, facilities and activities.



<u>Aim 4.3</u>

Promote Shetland's cultural life and activities in order to contribute to the retention and growth of the population of the islands, especially in fragile areas and outlying communities.

- 4.3.1 Support in culture to provide facilities, activities and employment opportunities which attract individuals and organisations to locate in Shetland.
- 4.3.2 Recognise that, in attracting people to live in Shetland, the cultural heritage and the presence of a vibrant creative community are both vital.
- 4.3.3 Recognise the important role in building confidence and strengthening reputation of events such as Up Helly Aa, the Shetland Folk Festival, the Johnsmas Foy, Fiddle Frenzy, the Shetland Food Festival, the Fiddle and Accordion Festival, WordPlay and ScreenPlay.
- 4.3.4 Support volunteering, recognising that it makes a vital contribution to creative activities; ensure that training is provided to deal with new challenges; and support efforts to ensure that the legislative framework within which volunteers work is realistic and appropriate.
- 4.3.5 Work with the media to promote and report cultural issues, activities and achievements.

<u>Theme 5</u> <u>Health and Well-being</u>

Ensure that the reciprocal relationship between culture and health is considered in all areas of cultural promotion and development.

<u>Aim 5.1</u>

Recognise and support cultural activities for their value in promoting health and well-being.

Methods

- 5.1.1 Build the health and well-being benefits of cultural activities into promotional activities such as mental health awareness campaigns.
- 5.1.2 Build the health and well-being benefits of cultural activities into all relevant strategies and action plans.

<u>Aim 5.2</u>

Where appropriate, carry out health impact assessments on cultural developments.

Methods

- 5.2.1 Educate multi-agency staff involved in cultural development on the benefits of health impact assessments.
- 5.2.2 Promote services provided by Health Improvement in carrying out health impact assessments.
- 5.2.3 Look into the development of training for multi-agency staff on carrying out health impact assessments.

<u>Aim 5.3</u> Support and promote projects that complement cultural activities in the promotion of health and well-being.

Recognise aspects of culture that may be potentially detrimental to health and well-being and develop and implement strategies and actions to address these.

Method

5.3.1 Support and promote the Drink Better Programme, obesity programmes, sexual health and smoking cessation programmes and look to extend prescribing programmes to include arts activity and 'green gyms' in heritage and cultural settings.



Action Plan

This Cultural Strategy cannot encompass every project or initiative now contemplated, far less anticipate those that may emerge over its lifetime. However, certain actions are fundamental; they can be seen as foundations that will strongly support cultural activity, raise confidence and enhance Shetland's reputation as a place that is creative, clever and connected. They fall into three categories:

- Physical Resources
- Human Resources
- Events

Physical Resources

Various initiatives involving work on the ground are seen as essential catalysts; in alphabetical order, they are:

- Garrison Theatre Refurbishment
- Lerwick Library Refurbishment
- Mareel
- Maywick to Scalloway Fibre Optic Link
- Old Scatness
- Shetland Textile Museum
- Sumburgh Head
- Viking Unst
- Several initiatives involving work on the ground are seen as essential catalysts and they are, ongoing support for community and development for existing and new facilities, e.g. schools, community halls, community museums, for example Tingwall Agricultural Museum and Scalloway Museum.

Human Resources

Progress depends on:

- Identifying talented people and offering them appropriate training and support.
- Attracting creative people to live and work in Shetland.
- Encouraging the widest possible participation by the people of Shetland in cultural and creative activity.

Events

Events offer opportunities to discover and highlight talent. They can also contribute strongly to efforts to raise confidence and develop reputation. The key action required is the development of an Events Strategy that will:

- Define the ways in which events may contribute to cultural and economic development.
- Establish criteria to assist in assessing the value of existing and proposed new events and determining the level of support that they should receive.
- Indicate how benefits to Shetland can best be realised from one-off or irregular events to which commitments have been made, including:
 - The Year of Architecture - Power of Place 2009/10
 - Hamefarin' 2010
 - Mirrie Dancers 2009/10
 - Tall Ships Races 2011
 - Cultural Olympiad London 2012
 - A Year of Island Cultures 2011

It is proposed that an outline Events Strategy will be developed by Spring 2010.

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring

This Cultural Strategy provides a framework for policy and the development of action plans by many different organisations, most of which have their own more detailed strategies. This Strategy and the accompanying Action Plan indicate practical methods of achieving goals. Initially the Council, the Charitable Trusts, and the many potential partner organisations should revise their departmental and corporate strategies in order to ensure that, as far as practicable, they reflect the proposals outlined here.

Review

This second Shetland Cultural Strategy, launched in November 2009, builds on the work done between 2004 and 2008. It is intended to stimulate progress and change rather than being seen as something static, for that is how it can remain relevant to the Shetland community. This Strategy covers a five year period from 2009 to 2013, and within the Council it is the responsibility of the Executive Director, Education and Social Care. It is recommended that the Strategy be formally reviewed at least once during its lifetime by the Cultural Strategy Planning Group. The reviews should allow account to be taken of changing circumstances and new ideas. A summary review and progress report should be prepared annually and distributed widely; revisions should appear on the section of the Council's web site devoted to the Cultural Strategy.

Communication

This strategy is for everyone in Shetland. It is important that it is widely available and relevant. The Strategy is available in print format and on the Council's web site - (www.shetland.gov.uk).



<u>Cultural Strategy Planning Group Members</u>

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