

Committee: Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 25th January 2022

Agenda item:

Wards: ALL

Subject: Promoting Child Healthy Weight and Tackling Diabetes action plans

Lead officer: Dr Dagmar Zeuner, Director of Public Health

Lead member: Councillor Rebecca Lanning, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

Forward Plan reference number:

Contact officers: Julia Groom, Consultant in Public Health, Hilina Asrress, Senior Public Health Principal - Public Health Team

Recommendations:

HWBB members are asked to:

1. Consider and endorse the Health and Wellbeing Board's refreshed Child Healthy Weight Action Plan (2022-2025) and note the update on the Tackling Diabetes Action Plan (2019-2024).
 2. Champion the priority for 'healthy place', in particular consider how the food environment in Merton can be shaped to ensure all residents have access to nutritious, healthy and affordable food.
 3. Consider how Board members can champion and support the priority for making child healthy weight everyone's business and in particular the implementation of the communication and engagement plan.
 4. Retain the current governance structures for the oversight of the action plans (see section 2.20 below).
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1 Purpose of report and executive summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present key priorities in the refreshed Child Healthy Weight action plan and to ask the Health and Wellbeing Board to endorse the priorities for implementation over the next three years (2022 – 2025) and consider how it can support the key challenges.
- 1.2. The paper provides an update on the Tackling Diabetes Action Plan already agreed by the Board. The paper also sets out the background to the plans and successes and challenges of the previous action plans.

- 1.3. Actions plans to tackle child healthy weight and diabetes have had a positive impact over the recent years, with a number of successes achieved despite impact of the COVID pandemic. However, emerging evidence shows that the pandemic has had a negative impact - we have seen a significant increase in childhood obesity during the pandemic and diabetes is the most common pre-existing condition in recorded COVID deaths. The pandemic has shown excess weight also puts individuals at risk of worse outcomes from COVID. The negative impact of the pandemic highlights an even more urgent need to tackle these major public health challenges as part of our COVID-19 resilience and recovery plans.
- 1.4. The plans take account of new evidence and learning from previous plans and are presented jointly reflecting the synergies between the two issues - if we are able to reduce obesity levels in childhood, we will potentially reduce the numbers of people with type 2 diabetes in the future. Priorities include making child healthy weight everyone's business; supporting children, young people and their families; clinical oversight and service improvement for diabetes; and holistic individual care. Both plans have a shared third theme of 'Healthy Place', which recognises the importance of the environments where we live, work and play on health and well-being and the links between action on healthy weight and action on climate change.
- 1.5. The Board are asked to:
 - Consider and endorse the Health and Wellbeing Board's refreshed Child Health Weight Action Plan and note the progress on the Tackling Diabetes Action Plan.
 - Champion the priority for 'healthy place', in particular consider how the food environment in Merton can be shaped to ensure all residents have access to nutritious, healthy and affordable food.
 - Consider how Board members can champion and support the priority for making child healthy weight everyone's business and in particular the implementation of the communication and engagement plan.
 - Retain the current governance structures for the oversight of the refreshed action plans (see section 2.20 below)

2 Background

- 2.1. Childhood obesity and diabetes are among the greatest public health challenges facing the UK population today, with prevalence increasing significantly over the last decades. Their causes are multiple and complex and there is no single solution.

Obesity in childhood is a significant risk factor for poor physical and mental health in childhood and is a significant risk factor for diabetes and other health conditions into adulthood. The COVID pandemic has had a negative impact on children's weight and resulted in an increase in overweight and obesity. National and London data shows the highest annual rise in obesity levels since measurement began in 2006/07. Local data for 2020/21 (unpublished) indicates that rates of overweight and obesity in Merton are similar to London,

where 15 % of 4-5 year olds and 30% of 10-11 year olds are obese, and 45% of 10-11 year olds either overweight or obese. Childhood obesity is a major health inequalities issue, with children living in the most deprived areas more than twice as likely to be obese than those living in the least deprived areas. National data indicates that obesity is also highest in Black children, with boys also having a higher obesity prevalence than girls for both age groups.

- 2.2. The burden of diabetes in Merton has been increasing yearly. The prevalence of diabetes including among undiagnosed populations is estimated to be 8.1%, projected to rise to 9.3% in 2035. The COVID pandemic has had a negative impact - diabetes is the most common pre-existing condition in recorded COVID deaths. The pandemic has shown excess weight also puts individuals at risk of worse outcomes from COVID. Diabetes is a health inequality issues-prevalence of diabetes is higher among people living in more deprived areas, and people from Black African, African Caribbean and South Asian backgrounds are at greater risk of developing diabetes at a younger age.

See Appendix 1 for further details.

- 2.3. In June 2017, the Health and Wellbeing Board agreed to build upon its previous work on tackling child healthy weight and to focus as a partnership on tackling diabetes. There have been concerted efforts across partners on developing and implementing action plans, taking a whole systems approach to tackling these issues locally. This recognises the major impact of the places where we live, work and play on health and wellbeing, as well as individual behaviours and choices.

DETAILS

Child Healthy Weight Action Plan 2022-2025

- 2.4. Obesity is a complex problem and there is no single solution. As highlighted above, evidence indicates that a comprehensive programme that focusses on delivering population wide changes across aspects of the physical, food and cultural environment is most likely to be successful, and cost effective, together with approaches with specific communities and groups and hence the approach in Merton.
- 2.5. The impact of the COVID-19 shows there is emerging evidence that stay-at-home guidance, the move to online education and closures of leisure facilities has disrupted children's routines leading to negative impacts on sleep, nutrition and physical activity levels. The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may also have impacted families' ability to maintain healthy weight through accessing and being able to afford healthier food options.
- 2.6. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, poorer mental health and wellbeing has been reported in children and young people, particularly those in care or disadvantaged financially.¹ Poor mental health has a marked effect on obesity. There have been increases nationally in referrals to child and

adolescent mental health and eating disorder services during the pandemic. The pandemic has worsened a number of important risk factors for eating disorders. The pandemic has also caused a number of more complex impacts that may have contributed to disordered eating behaviour. For example, fewer opportunities to exercise during lockdowns, loss of usual routines, isolation and anxiety, disruptions to organised sport and other physical activities and disruptions in accessing face-to-face support services.

- 2.7. Stigma associated with obesity is also associated with significant physiological and psychological consequences. Obesity stigma can be particularly severe for children and young people and can also lead to disordered eating, avoidance of physical activity and avoidance of support. The recent youth survey in Merton showed that over a third of young residents worried about their mental health during lockdown. Feeling bored and isolated, they spent a lot more time on screens during lockdown, with habits that might continue and additionally different groups disproportionately are impacted by food poverty.
- 2.8. The previous Merton Child Healthy Weight Action Plans have had successes in progressing work to tackle childhood obesity locally (see section 2.9). The refreshed Plan is based on a review of the evidence, engagement with residents in east Merton (The Great Weight Debate Merton) and more recently the Merton Youth Survey and engagement, and considerable partnership working over the past 5 years; including discussions at the Child Healthy Weight steering group and Children’s Trust Board.
- 2.9. Achievements from the previous plan include:

Key achievements to date	
Managing new takeaway restaurants within 400m of schools	Merton’s Local Plan has adopted mechanisms to manage new takeaway restaurants within 400 metres of schools .
New advertisement policy adopted	A Transport for London (TFL) style advertising policy that aims to tackle unhealthy advertising and promote wellbeing was developed and implemented in Merton in April 2020.
Successful in securing funding to install water fountains in town centre (reduces single use plastics, promotes good rehydration and reduces need to purchase sugary drinks)	Merton Council successful in applying for funding to install water fountains in Mitcham (installed), Colliers Wood, Morden and Raynes Park. ‘I Love Wimbledon’ applied for water fountain for Wimbledon Town Centre and has been successful.
Healthy Schools London (HSL) programme engagement	49 schools in Merton are registered for “Healthy Schools London” (HSL), an

	Awards Programme that works with schools to improve children and young peoples' health and wellbeing. To date Merton has 18 bronze awards, 9 silver awards and 3 gold awards.
Schools participation in Daily/Active Mile	29 primary schools in Merton participated in the “ Daily/Active Mile ”, an initiative to get children to run or jog for 15 minutes every day
New school meals contractor procured with contract including public health and nutrition outcomes	A new school meals contract has been developed with public health and nutrition outcomes included in the service specification and has been awarded to Cater Link.
Partnership communication and engagement strategy plan developed	A refreshed “ Communication and Engagement Strategy ” for child healthy weight has been developed to support a co-ordinated approach across partner organisations part of which have been implemented but requires more coordinated implementation.
Food Poverty Action Plan supported with additional funding	Merton’s Food Poverty Action Plan and food poverty work supported with additional funding to help mitigate the impact of COVID including continuation of Merton’s Community Fridge Network and coordination role through Sustainable Merton.

2.10. The refreshed 2022-2025 action plan (see appendix 2 for ‘plan on a page’) has three key themes:

Merton Child Healthy Weight Action Plan (2022-2025)		
<u>Theme 1:</u> Making Child Healthy Weight Everyone’s Business	<u>Theme 2:</u> Supporting Children, Young People and their Families	<u>Theme 3:</u> Healthy Place (Shared with Diabetes Action Plan)

Priorities for action 2022-2025

2.11. Theme 1: Making Child Healthy Weight Everyone’s business: priorities include:

- Refresh the communication and engagement plan with wider partnership in its implementation to coordinate consistent messaging

and address the interlinked issues of stigma, mental wellbeing and healthy weight.

- Train and educate front-line partners to provide brief intervention and signposting on CHW, making every contact count.
- Embed healthy weight and think family approach into all work including identifying opportunities to bring in additional funding.

2.12. Theme 2: Supporting Children, Young People and their families: priorities include:

- Improve/enhance Merton’s service support offer for families that need additional provisions to achieve a healthy weight
- Provide a social prescribing offer for CYP that need support with achieving a healthy weight and supporting low level mental health issues (initial pilot in east of the borough to develop and implement an offer)
- Enhance the support children and families receive in schools and early years settings to live healthily

Key Questions for Board:
How can Board members champion and support communication and engagement to deliver consistent messages and address the interlinked issues of stigma, mental wellbeing and healthy weight?
How can Board members help embed a ‘Think Family’ approach to child healthy weight?

Tackling Diabetes Action Plan 2019-2024

2.13. The unintended disruptions from the pandemic to routine diabetes services has impacted those with the condition. In April 2020, there was a 70% reduction in new diagnosis rates with larger reductions seen in older people nationally¹. Reductions of 77% in HbA1C testing (blood tests used to monitor diabetes) suggests poorer disease control among people living with type 2 diabetes and potential delays in the management and prevention of long-term complications. A comprehensive data collection on diabetes is needed to study the impacts of this on Merton population in the coming months and years.

2.14. The Diabetes Action Plan was implemented in 2019. This plan is for the duration of 5 years (2024). The key aim of this plan is to:

1. Develop a whole system approach across the life course to tackling diabetes in Merton
2. Focus on prevention and health inequalities
3. Deliver behaviour change at scale for diabetes

¹ Source: Impact of COVID-19 on the diagnoses, HbA1c monitoring and mortality in people with type 2 diabetes: a UK-wide cohort study involving 13 million people in primary care. Available at: <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/medrxiv/early/2020/10/27/2020.10.25.20200675.full.pdf>

4. Focus on diabetes as an exemplar for developing holistic care (covering physical, mental and non-clinical personal support)

2.15. This is an update on the progress of the plan so far and an opportunity to refresh priorities under a COVID lens. The update is based on a review of the current plan, including discussions at the multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral Diabetes steering group.

2.16. This plan has had significant successes in progressing work to tackle diabetes prevalence locally.

Key Achievements to date

Key achievements to date	
Launched Diabetes Year of truth	Delivered the uptake of training to front-line staff e.g. Cambridge Diabetes Education Programme, behaviour change and 'structured conversations'
Diabetes Champions network created	Insights on patient perspective of gaps and opportunities gathered to secure service improvement
Uptake of NDPP programme	Explored opportunities for enhancing pathways and services
PCN-led approach to diabetes & inequalities commenced	Develop communications to GP's and patients to promote https://www.diabetesbooking.co.uk
SWL diabetes QI programme	EIA complete and target groups have been identified and plans in place to tackle underperformance
Identified variations in NDA to improve achievement of the NICE recommended treatment and all practices in Merton have signed up to the local incentive schemes (outcome based KPIs implemented)	SWL commissioned Healthy Eating & Active Lifestyles for Diabetes (HEAL – D): a culturally-tailored diabetes self-management programme for African & Caribbean communities. This was anticipated to start in January 2020.
Commissioned Diabetes Complete	Diabetes Digital Decathlon
Year of physical Activity (Try 20 in 2020)	Social Prescribing and IAPT

Tackling Diabetes Action Plan (2019-2024)		
<u>Theme 1:</u> Clinical Oversight and Service Improvement (SWL CCG)	<u>Theme 2:</u> Holistic Individual Care (SWL CCG and LBM)	<u>Theme 3:</u> Healthy Place (Shared with CHW Action Plan)

Priorities include:

- keep services and pathways under review & use patient views to identify and secure improvements in existing and future projects
- increase access to and uptake of evidence based and highly effective structured education programmes e.g. Desmond and DAFNE and deliver culturally specific programmes e.g. DoSA.
- produce a Directory of Services e.g. Adult Education and cooking classes that support residents at risk of or living with diabetes,
- actively engage communities and residents living with diabetes (T1 and T2) in service design and improvement.

Key Question for Board

What is the one thing you can do to contribute to tackling diabetes in Merton?

Tackling Child Healthy Weight and Diabetes in a 'Healthy Place' (Theme 3)

- 2.17. Theme 3, a shared theme of both the Child Healthy Weight and Diabetes Action Plans is 'Healthy Place'. This priority also features in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Merton Health and Care Together Plan, recognising its importance of our environment in promoting our health and the close links between action on health and action on climate change.
- 2.18. When we talk about healthy place, we mean the physical, social, cultural and economic factors that help us lead healthy lives by shaping the places we live, learn, work and play. These factors also shape the choices we face, for example around the food we eat. This reflects the understanding that adults, children, and young people share the same physical environment, which can strongly influence health behaviours contributing to both childhood obesity and diabetes.
- 2.19. There are close links between action to tackle healthy weight and actions to tackle climate change, for example, walking, cycling, active travel, food growing and promoting water. The Merton Climate Change action plan focuses on achieving a zero carbon targets with thematic area priorities on the Green Economy, Building and Energy, Transport and Greening Merton. The actions under the Healthy Place theme seek to complement these priorities, (but do not repeat what is already included in other plans). Action to tackle the

food and physical environment can be challenging and contentious, such as restricting vehicle access through the school street programme, however by working in partnership and co-creating solutions with residents, including children and young people, we have the best opportunity for sustainable change that contributes to making Merton a healthier place to live, study, work or play.

Theme 3: Healthy Place priorities include:

- Promote changes in key settings to ensure they support healthy lifestyles - including supporting workplaces to register and implement the Healthy Workplace Award initiatives, increasing healthy start vitamins uptake in children’s centres and retail outlets accepting food voucher for fresh/frozen fruit and veg and milk.
- Refresh the ‘Health in All Policies’ action plan to include a focus on developing a sustainable healthy food environment.
- Work with partners and businesses to promote local Sugar Smart campaign and continue to tackle the advertising of unhealthy food and drink
- Increase and promote opportunities for physical activity and active travel, aligned to the Climate Change strategy.
- Develop the School Neighbourhood Area Project (SNAP/Superzones) further to support a healthy environment around schools
- Deliver a ‘Merton Year of Physical activity, with a different focus for each month

Key Question for the Board:

How can the food environment in Merton be effectively shaped so that all residents have access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food? This might involve working with retailers and catering businesses, promoting food growing in public spaces or through other means.

Governance

2.20. The Child Healthy Weight Action Plan will be managed at an operational level by the Public Health led Child Healthy Weight Steering Group with reporting into the Children’s Trust Board (CTB). The Tackling Diabetes Action Plan will be managed on a day to day basis by the CCG led Diabetes Steering Group. Each group will report performance to the Merton Health and Care Together Board as required and ultimately to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

3 Alternative options

N/A

4 Consultation undertaken or proposed

- 4.1. A number of engagement exercises have been undertaken to inform previous work. For example, the Great Weight Debate Merton included engagement with a full range of stakeholders, including residents and children and young people. The findings from this exercise continue to be relevant and will inform the refresh of the CHW action plan. The Children and Young Residents Survey (2021) has also been reviewed alongside development of the refreshed action plan.

Furthermore, the refresh of these actions plan will be undertaken with support from key partner organisations that make up the relevant steering groups.

5 Timetable

Timescales are as per individual Child Healthy Weight and Diabetes Action Plans

6 Financial, resource and property implications

None – using existing assets and budgets/resources

7 Legal and statutory implications

None

8 Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications

The Action Plans are specifically aimed at tackling health inequalities.

9 Crime and Disorder implications

None

10 Risk management and health and safety implications

None

11 Appendices – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report

11.1. APPENDIX 1. Background information

11.2. APPENDIX 2: Child Healthy Weight Action Plan (Plan on a page)

12 Background papers

Appendix 1: Background Information

Child Healthy Weight

- 12.1. Obesity in childhood is a significant risk factor for poor physical and mental health in childhood and is a significant risk factor for diabetes and other health conditions into adulthood. The pandemic has had a negative impact on children's weight and resulted in an increase in overweight and obesity. National data shows the highest annual rise in obesity levels since measurement began in 2006/07. Local data has not been published for 2020/21 because, due to COVID, it was based on a smaller 20% sample. However, sample data indicates that rates of overweight and obesity in Merton may be higher than London for Reception (4-5 year olds) and similar to London for Year 6 (10-11 year olds).

In London, data for 2020/21 indicates that prevalence of obesity in Reception is one of the highest out of all regions at 15.3%, which is a 5.3% increase from 2019/20 (compared to England prevalence of 14.4). Year 6 obesity rates rose 6.3 percentage points to 30% and was highest out of all regions (compared to England prevalence of 25.5%). Prevalence of overweight and obesity combined (excess weight) in Year 6 was 45.2%, an increase of 7% from the previous year for London, compared to England prevalence of 40.9% in 2020/21.

- 12.2. Childhood obesity is a major health inequalities issue. There is a strong correlation between weight status and deprivation, with children living in the more deprived areas experiencing a higher prevalence of obesity. This gap is widening and reflects socioeconomic inequalities in Merton, between 2017 and 2019, there was a 12.2% gap in the prevalence of obesity among 10-11 year olds between wards in the east and west of the Borough and the pandemic is likely to have further increased this gap. National data for 2020/21 shows children living in the most deprived areas were more than twice as likely to be obese, than those living in the least deprived areas. Obesity was also highest in Black children in both Reception and Year 6, with boys also having a higher obesity prevalence than girls for both age groups.

Diabetes

- 12.3. The burden of diabetes in Merton has been increasing yearly. Currently, the prevalence of diabetes in Merton is 6.3%, lower than London (6.8%) and England (7.1%).² The prevalence including undiagnosed populations is estimated to be 8.1%, projected to rise to 9.3% in 2035³ - these estimates pre-date the pandemic and might be higher depending on impact of lifestyle factors.
- 12.4. People from Black African, African Caribbean and South Asian backgrounds are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes from the age of 25. This is much

² Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF) - <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/diabetes>

³ Source: Tackling diabetes in Merton. Merton Council. 2019. Available at: APHR_2019_Diabetes_In_Merton_FINAL_WEB.pdf

younger than the white population, as their risk increases from 40.⁴ Prevalence of Type 2 diabetes is highest in East Merton primary care network, followed closely by Morden and North Merton PCN all located in the east of the borough.⁵

- 12.5. Of deaths in England and Wales where COVID-19 was the underlying cause, the most common pre-existing condition recorded on the death certificate was diabetes (July to September 2021). This was identified in almost a quarter of COVID-19 deaths.
- 12.6. Overweight or obese adults are at high risk of developing diabetes and more than half of the population in Merton (53.2%) aged 18+ was classified as overweight or obese in 2019/20 so by aligning with the Child Healthy Weight Action plan we can work to reduce the number of people who develop diabetes in the future.
- 12.7. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for urgent action in the UK, with adults living with obesity and diabetes experiencing more severe outcomes from COVID-19 disease.
- 12.8. In June 2017, the Health and Wellbeing Board agreed to build upon its previous work on tackling child healthy weight and to focus as a partnership on tackling diabetes. There have been concerted efforts across partners on developing and implementing action plans to support reducing childhood obesity and tackling diabetes. The approach takes a whole systems approach to tackling these issues locally, which recognises the major impact of the places where we live, work and play on health and wellbeing, as well as individual behaviours and choices.
 - 12.8.1 A number of lessons were learnt in successfully delivering the previous Child Healthy Action Plans which have also informed the refresh process and draft plan presented here. These key lessons include:
 - Maintaining a broad and committed partnership approach
 - Maintaining momentum communication and partner engagement
 - The challenges of co-ordinating an ambitious action plan
 - Making the most of what other people do - With the challenge of limited resources, a key focus of the refreshed plan is to make the most of the opportunities and assets across partners.

⁴ [Ethnicity and type 2 diabetes | Preventing diabetes | Diabetes UK](#)

⁵ Source: Tackling diabetes in Merton. Merton Council. 2019. Available at: https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/www2/APHR_2019_Diabetes_In_Merton_FINAL_WEB.pdf

Merton Child Healthy Weight Action Plan (CHWAP) 2022-2025 – Summary Plan on a Page

Theme 1: Making Child Healthy Weight Everyone's Business

Vision: *We have a joined-up approach to tackling childhood child healthy weight in Merton with partners taking a coordinated, whole systems approach with a focus on effective communication and engagement.*

In order to deliver this vision, we will achieve the following actions:-

Action 1) Refresh the Merton communication & engagement strategy recognising links between healthy weight, mental health and stigma associated with obesity. Take a universal as well as targeted approach to ensure campaigns and messaging are coordinated, consistent and evidence-based, and tackle inequalities across partners.

Action 2) Train and educate front-line stakeholders in Merton to provide brief intervention advice and signposting on CHW making every contact count

Action 3) Work in partnership across and beyond the Council to embed healthy weight and a "Think Family" approach into work including

Theme 2: Supporting children, young people and their families

Vision: *Schools and early year's settings support all families to live healthily and children that need additional help are offered high quality and effective support by services.*

In order to deliver this vision, we will achieve the following actions:-

Action 4) Improve Merton's service offer for children and families that need support with healthy weight e.g. enhancing Family Start, reviewing needs and CHW pathways

Action 5) Develop and implement a Social Prescribing pilot offer for CYP and families that need support with Healthy Weight targeted in east Merton

Action 6) Enhance the support children and families receive in schools and early years settings to live healthily through e.g. promotion of breastfeeding, Healthy Early Years and Healthy Schools programmes

Theme 3: Healthy Place

Vision: *Merton as a place to live, study and/or work encourages people to be more active and make healthier choices.*

In order to deliver this vision, we will achieve the following actions:-

Action 7) Support changes in key settings to ensure they support healthy lifestyles e.g. promoting the Healthy Workplaces Award scheme, refreshing and implementing the School Neighbourhood Approach Pilot, expanding the School Streets and evaluating Green and Healthy Primary Care Network (PCN pilot)

Action 8) Increase the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers to enable pregnant women & young children in low-income families to access fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables, milk and vitamins

Action 9) Create a healthier food environment in Merton by working with partners and businesses to e.g. continue to manage new fast food takeaways near schools, organisational sign up to local Sugar Smart campaign and managing unhealthy food advertising on bus shelters and stand-alone advertising

Action 10) Increase the promotion and provision of free drinking water in Merton to encourage drinking water instead of unhealthy alternatives

Action 11) Increase and promote opportunities to be physically active for children, young people and their families e.g. through promoting a developing and promoting a physical activity campaign, increasing schools engaged in Daily/Active Mile and School Travel Plans encouraging cycling/scooting/walking

Action 12) Work in partnership across Merton Council to tackle the obesogenic environment for children and young people for example by ensuring Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) are undertaken according to Local Plan on developments and procuring nature based Green Social Prescribing including intergenerational interventions

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