

## **Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council (3rd March 2005)**

### **This Council notes:**

- The Parliamentary progress of the Identity Cards Bill, which seeks to establish a National Identity Register, in which the details of all UK residents over the age of 16 will be logged.
- That the Government has estimated that the cost of such a scheme could reach 5.5 billion, with independent commentators predicting costs much higher.
- That the cost of the scheme could instead pay for an extra 10,000 police officers.
- The implications of such a scheme for local authorities such as Sefton.

### **This Council believes:**

- That the introduction of ID Cards will be illiberal, ineffective and expensive and that the disbenefits of such a scheme will outweigh any benefits in crime prevention
- That, in the light of experience of major government IT projects, there is reason to believe that the National Identity Register will cost much more than is currently estimated.

### **This Council resolves:**

- To request the Chief Executive to write the Home Secretary, expressing these views and asking him to reconsider his decision to push forward this legislation.
- To write to the LGA calling on it to adopt a position of opposition to ID cards and for the money saved to be put into funding additional police officers.

### **Press Release:**

Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council on Merseyside has declared its opposition to the government plan to introduce national identity cards, saying it believes they will be illiberal, ineffective and expensive.

Instead councillors have called for the estimated 5.5 billion cost of the scheme to be put into funding 10,000 extra police officers.

Sefton Council has no overall control with Liberal Democrats being the largest party. At the council meeting that took place Thursday evening, 3rd March, the successful motion was proposed by Southport Lib Dem councillors Simon Shaw and Iain Brodie Browne. The motion was carried by 20 votes to 17, with the majority of Labour members voting against and most Conservatives abstaining.

Cllr Shaw pointed out that the public support that the Labour government have claimed for the proposal appears to be disappearing fast.

"It is timely that national newspapers on the morning of the council meeting carried reports of a Which? survey. They found that although initially 70% of people questioned were in favour of the ID card scheme, this dropped to just 31% support when people were told there was a 35 fee," explained Cllr Shaw.

In 1952 one of the most popular acts of the then Churchill government, so history tells us, was to scrap ID cards which had been compulsory since 1939. Our motion, passed by Sefton Council, calls on the Home Secretary to reconsider his decision to push forward this legislation.

Cllr Brodie Browne added:” When you look at some of the failures in major government IT projects, it is no wonder that many people agree with us that it is far better to put the 5.5 billion the scheme would cost into extra police officers.”