

Oxford (January 2005)

ID Cards

Proposed: Cllr Matt Sellwood

Seconded: Cllr Elise Benjamin

Council notes:

- That the UK government is currently going through the Parliamentary process of introducing an ID Cards Bill.
- That this Bill will establish a National Identity Register, in which the details of all UK residents over the age of 16 will be logged.
- That this Bill will create a single ID card, which will include the biometric data of the holder.
- That many Oxford City Council functions will be affected in some way by the introduction of these new ID Cards and the National Identity Register.
- That the Government has estimated that the cost of such a scheme could reach 5.5 billion, with independent commentators predicting costs of as much as five times that estimate.
- That according to the pressure group Liberty, no other common law country in the world has an ID card system (i.e. countries in which an individual's actions are legal unless explicitly prohibited by law, and in which the courts are responsible for the interpretation of law).
- That there is massive concern among ethnic minority, LGBT and youth communities as to the impact of such a scheme on relations with police.
- That the Government has a poor record on the setting up of national databases, as examination of the Passport Agency, the Census and the Criminal Records Bureau reveal.

Council believes:

- That the Identity Cards Bill will permanently alter the relationship between the individual and the state.
- That the disbenefits of such a scheme will outweigh its benefits.
- That there is reason to believe both that the National Identity Register will cost much more than is currently estimated, and that there will be occasions on which it will be misused.

Council resolves:

- To mandate the Chief Executive to write the Home Secretary, expressing these views and asking him to reconsider his decision to push forward this legislation.
- To affiliate to the 'No2ID' campaign, which already includes MPs and several political parties. (NOT PASSED).
- To make representations at every possible stage, reiterating this Council's opposition to ID cards.

Cllr Matt Sellwood, Deputy Leader of the Green Group and proposer of the motion, commented: "This is a strong signal from local government that this scheme is dangerous and unworkable. It is councils such as Oxford that will have to bear the brunt of this scheme when ID cards are required for access to local services, and local government will have to sort out the mess when the database inevitably suffers problems and flaws. Most importantly, it is the residents of Oxford who will be asked to submit to this fundamental shift in their personal freedoms, and we will not stand for it."