

**LEEDS CITY COUNCIL**

**THIRD EXTRAORDINARY  
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR  
(Councillor B Cleasby)

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**VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2007

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I now open the next meeting? I move us on to the Identity Card item and call on Councillor Brett.

ITEM 2 - IDENTITY CARDS

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Lord Mayor, I hope this will engender something of a mood change because the major reasons for opposing compulsory ID cards are that they are prohibitively expensive. The Home Office estimates the total cost over ten years will be £5.7 billion, which equates to £93 for every person in the country. If all of us agree to support this motion, it is a quick and easy way to get in the region of £1½m for every ward in Leeds.

Research by the LSE has suggested that the real cost could be three times what the Home Office estimates. It would be a huge - huge - IT project. The Government sadly has a very poor record on this type of large ICT project, overspending by more than £1 billion in the last five years. This would be far more complex than anything done before and would be an extremely high risk, as it is going to be based on new, untested technology.

Since the whole Government rationale is to use ID cards to tackle illegal immigration and help tourism and terrorism, it is likely, sadly, to lead to increased harassment of blacks and Asians. This could lead to more increase in tensions in many of our stressed communities, or resentment, and worse community relations.

On such a huge ID card database, inaccuracy will be very difficult to avoid. The National Insurance Database is so riddled with errors that a few years ago David Blunkett, when he was Home Secretary, concluded that it could not be the basis for an ID card database but, of course, since then his successors have changed their minds. I believe that even if a huge effort is made to get the ID card database right at the start, it is likely very quickly to become error strewn. At present I am advised that 20% of the driver information currently held by the DVLA is thought to be inaccurate or out of date.

Recent events made it obvious that storing such huge amounts of personal data in a single database will be extremely attractive to fraudsters. The Government's claim that we should have faith in their abilities to securely manage data has been blown apart by recent events and the loss of the entire database of child benefit recipients last month.

I do not believe that ID cards will prevent or deter illegal working. Employers in area of high illegal labour are already required to check employees' identification and ID cards will not change this. What we need is more and better inspections rather than ID cards.

The Madrid and New York bombers all carried valid ID documents. The police generally do not have a problem identifying who they need to arrest in these sorts of terrorist situation - the main problem is catching them, and ID cards will not help with that.

Once introduced ID cards might be used for more and more purposes, some of which may be, shall I say, less than liberal. When our wartime Government understandably introduced ID cards in 1939, it was stated very clearly that this was for three specific purposes. By 1950 the use had grown to 39 on the list. I believe

that if we had ID cards it would be too tempting for any centralist, controlling Government to resist using it to keep us all in check.

Where would I like to see the £5.7 billion spent, if necessary, in all the wards in Leeds? The answer for me is in combating at an early stage antisocial behaviour. We need a massive increase in early parenting support. The All Relative courses in Leeds are extremely successful at helping families with youngsters who are on brink of the criminal justice system. We need to expand this type of early parenting support.

In summary, ID cards are prohibitively expensive, will lead to more harassment of the black minority ethnic communities, will be vulnerable to fraud, will not stop illegal working, will not deter terrorism. Let us all calmly think this through fully and reject a national ID scheme. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR BALE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, there are so many reasons for supporting this White Paper, so many reasons for opposing compulsory identification cards, that it is difficult to know where to begin.

I will begin by addressing the unspoken question of why are we discussing it here. I believe there are two very important reasons why we should be. Firstly, for nearly three-quarters of a million people this is local democracy and this is a vitally important issue in local democracy and therefore I believe it is absolutely right that we should be discussing it in this Council and expressing a view.

Secondly, as with so much ill-thought out legislation, when the legislation fails, it is Local Authorities and their partner institutions - in this case particularly the Health Service and the Police Service - who will be left to pick up the pieces. There are very good reasons for discussing it here.

We can be sure of a number of things. One is that that £5.7 billion would almost certainly be overrun. Secondly, that the project would overrun in time terms and, in the light of recent experience, quite probably the entire database would be lost in the post. You may think those are reasons enough for supporting this White Paper, but for me they are not the most important reasons. The most important reason is a reason of principle - it is an issue of personal liberty. In this country, as in the USA and in the Commonwealth countries that share our constitutional principles, citizens are free under the law. The state only has the powers we choose to give it. We are not licensed by the state - the state is licensed by us. In many or most of the countries which have ID cards, individuals only have the freedoms which the state cares to grant them. I can assure you that when you see that situation in its most extreme form you begin to really value freedom. I did some work in Poland in the five years immediately after the end of the Communist era and a Polish friend of mine told me that he used frequently to take his passport out of the drawer, handle it and look at it because for all the years of his adult life up to then, 1989, he had not been able to keep it at home, it was kept at the police station. He had to apply for permission to leave the country, go and collect his passport and give it back on his return. When you see that sort of situation you realise what freedom is about.

Some of us remember the old blue passports. I dug my first passport out yesterday. "Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs requests and requires in the name of Her Majesty..." etc, etc. That is the only sort of card I want to carry. I certainly do not need an identity card to prove my citizenship.

Talking of Poland reminds me, chillingly, of another memory. The motto above the entrance to Auschwitz - "Arbeit macht frei" - work makes you free. I am afraid the advocates of compulsory identity cards are saying, this card will make you

free, will make you a citizen. Lord Mayor, I do not need a card in my pocket, I do not need an image of my iris on a dodgy database in order to be free because that is my birthright.

This is not, as Richard has said, about security. It is about control. It is about an Orwellian fantasy which always turns into a nightmare. These things purport to strengthen society but in fact they subjugate an individual and weaken society. As Richard has implied, the 7/7 bombers would have had no problem with this matter. They would have shown their identity cards as they went on their way and they would have carried their cards with them into oblivion.

We have the chance today, Lord Mayor, to send a message to our legislators. This is not about Conservatives and Liberals criticising a Labour Government. It is about us sending a message to our representatives that we reject absolutely the imposition of a system that would require us to prove our right as citizens to go freely about this city and this country. Sometimes, Lord Mayor, the noblest expression of loyalty is to tell your own side they are getting it wrong and I urge Labour members to do that today. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The reason that we do not believe the national identity card scheme will work is primarily that the Government has proven inept at operating any computer system effectively, whether that is at the passport office, whether that is at the child tax credit office, whether that is at the child benefit office or wherever it may be. Their inability to bring computer systems on line that are effective and certainly within a cost that is acceptable to people, is a very poor record indeed.

We think that what you need, perhaps, is technology in the right places. CCTV works well. The automatic number plate recognition system is another system that is working well and can be used very much to help and assist us in terms of clamping down on those illegal activities that the ID card scheme is supposed to combat.

What we would say - and this is a criticism we would make of central governments - is the obsession with cutting civil servants and playing this rather macho game of making sure that you get rid of civil servants, because civil servants are the people who on immigration control, civil servants are the people who are running the asylum system that does not work as well as it should do, civil servants are the people who are part and parcel of the Customs and Excise Department, civil servants are the people who are operating at the tax credit level and the child benefit level. While ever you have got this obsession, any Government, this ideological obsession with cutting numbers, cutting people who are undertaking these particular activities, you are always going to have problems with immigration, you are always going to have problems with contraband coming into the country, you are always going to have problems with people avoiding paying the taxes that they should be paying.

We do not believe that slicing the civil service and trying to replace it with a technology that does not work and is proven not to work is a particularly wise approach.

As far as we are concerned, you cannot put your faith in a computer system that does not work. We would much rather put our faith in people undertaking these activities at every port, every airport, every tax credit office, every child benefit office and I think at that particular point we will combat some of the problems that have led to a call for ID cards. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR MORTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Other people have made the plastic poll tax argument against ID cards, that they are incredibly expensive and will not work and in due course will be unpopular. If anybody in the Labour Party - and I draw a distinction with the people on the Labour benches who I think probably more people agree with me than I might realise - thinks that this is going to be popular, wait until it dawns on people that they have to be compulsorily finger printed, have an iris scan and you can see the reaction that you are going to get on this issue.

We will not talk about that. We will not talk about classical Liberal arguments because, rather embarrassingly, Councillor Bale has made it better than I think any of us are going to do on our benches and I am very grateful to him for that and I will not attempt to top him.

Let me just say this. It may be a short step but it is a short step on the route to hell when you reverse the relationship between state and individual people. The state justifies its existence and its actions to individual citizens and not the other way around and when you reverse that you are taking a very, very dangerous step and that is what compulsory ID cards and the database does.

Let us instead talk about the politics of fear. I listen to a lot of commercial radio and something quite remarkable has happened over the last ten days. Somebody, somewhere, who has access to Government media budgets has hit the panic button quite literally. We can speculate what we want him to be distracted from, what might have been in the national news recently, but in the run-up to Christmas the dominant Government advertising campaigns are on terrorism and illegal immigration. There is not even a fig leaf of a number that you can ring, there is not even a fig leaf of a website that you can look at, there is not even a fig leaf of a statement saying this is a Government information campaign. These are horrific voice-overs using horrible music, using horrific scripts, who are trying in the season of goodwill to make people frightened and I am asking you today what the motivation is and are ID cards part of it and it is about the politics of authoritarian Government and saying that we have security through fear rather than security through liberty.

Let us talk a little bit about what people are frightened of at the moment. Mass casualty terrorism. In the leafy suburb in which some members of the Labour Group think I live, I remember being the first street that was not evacuated when they found the bomb factory in Hyde Park. I remember reflecting that when the TV crews came along and talked to people on the rope line, anybody who did not have a white face was buttonholed by TV cameras because they obviously thought they were Muslims and people were saying, "No, actually I am a Lebanese Christian," "No, actually, I am a Sikh", "No, actually I am Hindu."

Complex solutions require complex answers, not the simplicity of an ID card. We have got ourselves into a situation where native-born citizens wanted to kill some of us - a very, very small number and that needs to look at real security and intelligence. You are actually going to alienate people by making them have an ID card. We need to make people feel valued when people feel that they are actually being threatened, we need secure neighbourhoods which is to do with better lighting, it is to do with Street Scene, to do with police who are actually on the beat - not £5.5 billion that we can spend on those things on a piece of plastic.

You are going down the route of fear. You are wanting to make people feel fearful they will rally to a flag or rally to a piece of plastic in times of trouble and it is not going to work, and it will not make people feel safer in the end. That is my fundamental objection to this, that it is just an impractical scheme.

Who gains from this? We have all, even people of my generation, when I was young in the 1980s we had the Cold War, at school we had The Day After, we had Threads, we watched it in school, "When the Wind Blows" cartoon about nuclear annihilation. At a time in our history when we were facing civilisation ended, somehow we all felt a little bit safer than we do now with the threat of the mass casualty attack which, however horrific that would be, would not threaten national existence.

What exactly is going on and who is feeding this and who is benefiting from it? I think these questions do need to be asked and it is not fashionable to make Councillor Bale's argument, which is the philosophical argument you cannot put that on a focus leaflet, nor that you would - you cannot put my argument on a focus leaflet, not that I would be allowed to.

We will go down the plastic poll tax route. Yes, it is incredibly expensive; yes, it is impractical and we will do that and we will beat you on those grounds, but there is a wider issue which is that this is motivated not through practicality but for altogether more sinister motives. I think they are borne slightly out of desperation.

I will go back to my leafy suburb and I will keep doing what I do, which is saying it is too dirty and let us try and get it a little bit cleaner, saying that the street lights do not work - and thank you to Les Carter for making sure that Hyde Park is now going to be done more quickly as a burglary hot spot - and I will keep talking about the neighbourhood issues, about promoting walking, promoting dialogue, the interfaith work that will bring real security and we will bin your silly little piece of plastic and all the sinister things that it engenders. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR SHEL BROOKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I want to draw on the second part of the motion which is about providing more front line resources to combat crime.

Specifically I want to draw on what is very topical at the moment in the news about the pay offer being made to the police. It does seem ridiculous that we talk about spending £5.7 billion on ID cards which, as we have heard round the Chamber, will probably do zero to combat the terrorist threat which is the fear we are having shoved down our throats, yet for the want of saving £30m we are willing to alienate the very people who are supposed to be out there protecting our society.

Just to fill Council in for those who may not have caught the news, back in the late 1970s the Edmund-Davies Committee recommended that all police pay be linked to inflation year on year, and that was it, that was the level. In return for this, the police struck an accord that they gave up their right to strike. The police have been happy with this arrangement for nigh on 30 years now and it has worked well. However this year, for reasons which absolutely I cannot comprehend, the Home Secretary has decided not to back pay the police to 1<sup>st</sup> September when the pay rise was due to come in, even though that pay rise is slightly below inflation, and now will effectively lower that pay rise to well below inflation for the first time, effectively breaking that agreement.

It is not about whether the police will strike or whether you can argue about whether it is wise to be demotivating the police at the time we asking for shift patterns to change. It is about what is the point in spending money on areas to improve our security if we have nobody to police that security in the first place?

Indeed, the words "petty" and "needless" could be described against that and what the Home Secretary has done. That is not my words; that is the words of the Labour MP in my constituency who has backed a Parliamentary bill.

I think that the Government really need to look at why they are spending such a huge sum of money. That huge sum of money keeps rising and rising. How many people missed the fact that the day after we did not qualify for the European Championships, it was announced that the budget for the ID cards had gone up a further half a billion pounds? Funnily enough, the same day that they announced that all houses would get HIPs packs, but we will not go down that route at the moment.

My message is a very simple one. In supporting the whole motion but specifically the last part of the motion, the Government are acting disgracefully in the way that they are treating the police service. They want to spend £5.7 billion on a system which is proved by every commentator to be worthless and fruitless and is more of a grandiose project designed to centralise control and yet they are willing to argue and demoralise the police for the want of just £30m. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Firstly, let me congratulate Richard on his election as Leader of the Liberal Democrat Party. I think we look forward to making your life even more stressful and worrying than it is now. Personally I would have gone for youth to lead because we needed a bit more youth on the Executive Board, so I am sorry that Colin Campbell did not get the vote. *(Laughter)* He would have added that youthfulness and that enthusiasm and that knowledge of local Government that he does.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You can always step down, Keith.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I am going on and on.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: "Boing", said Zebedee.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Can I say, I know you have been trained by Les Carter and Les always says if you are in trouble, if you have made a mistake, change the topic straightaway, so let us bring in ID cards. Actually I think while it has been an interesting discussion, there are a lot more things you could have mentioned and could have said. I think you have missed your opportunity.

You could have said why you were going to change the composition of the Lib Dems on the Executive Board and bring a woman into the Executive Board, like you promised. You could have said that, but you have not. In fact you have still got Mark driving from the back seat because he said in the paper, "I still want to play an influence in the life of the Lib Dems", so you have still got your master behind you pulling you."

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Defend your Government, Keith.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You could have said why you left the Children's Services in a mess. That was earlier referred to. Why have you left it £2m overspent? Why have you left it...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Lord Mayor...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I am coming around to it. Les, it is building up.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Under the Constitution, Lord Mayor, should the Member not be speaking to the White Paper?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Name the number.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Name the number? 4378(b). He does not know any different! (*Laughter*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Fortunately I do, Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: It makes a mockery of it, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Atha, sit, please. Councillor Wakefield, continue.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: He could have explained why only 4% of looked-after children get five A-Cs. That would have been more important, because actually it is nothing short of disgraceful for the most vulnerable people in this city to get 4%. He did not. I will refer you to your answer at the last Council. I refer you to your answer, Richard:

“I would rather have 1970s Socialism than 19<sup>th</sup> Century Victorian begging letters that you wrote in order to address this issue.”

I will come on to the issue...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: There were people who cancelled their Christmas shopping. Bernard came back from holiday to listen to Richard. I am sure he is very disappointed. Let me just mention one thing briefly, because there was an interesting part in that debate - I think David and John did mention some interesting and philosophical points, but broadly speaking, yes, we have got concerns about the cost; yes, we have got concerns about cards addressing bombs and terrorism, because the example used in Spain is a very good one; yes, we have got concerns about the security, but let me just tell you, the stuff that the DWP and yourselves use exactly the same system that cause the loss of 500,000, so I do think it is important not to be too hypocritical because your previous Leader and you are now in charge of a system that led to that failure in this city.

I will tell you what very, very briefly. I would love to live in the world with David and philosophical discussions, talks about you remind me of Burke, Hume and Locke - as you probably know along with John, freedom of individual rights against the state - but the fact is the world has changed. If you want somebody to look after your interests, to protect you against crime, to protect you against terrorism, the last party I would go to in this country would be the Lib Dems because they have proven to be soft on every issue to do with crime, antisocial behaviour, law and disorder.

I would rather live with a Labour Government with some strong authoritarian strands to it in order to protect us because we do live in a different world to the one that you and David, John, were imagining about the philosophers meeting in the park, talking about freedom. We do live in a society that is threatened by terrorism and that is why I think, Richard, you have chosen the wrong issue. Les advised you wrong. You should have chosen about your record, this administration, because so far it has not been very impressive. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would also like to congratulate Councillor Richard Brett on becoming Leader of his party group in Council, not least because I told him that he was going to win about two weeks



before the event and all my colleagues said I was wrong. Richard said, "How do you know?" and I said, "I have talked to lots and lots of Liberals and I can tell who is lying" and you got twelve votes which was only one out which, considering the fact I am a Labour Councillor and should not be privy to any of these discussions anyway, I thought was not a bad guess, actually.

Richard is in the most extraordinary position, Lord Mayor, because he is the only party Leader of any political party in this Council Chamber I can ever think of who actually was not elected with a simple majority of everybody voting in the final ballot, it was that close.

They have a rule that is a bit like the away goals in European football - how you perform in an early stage of the ballot eventually determines who gets elected if you have a tied vote. There are those people who are still going round who are unhappy about the result being so tight and they intend to run their horse again in May, so Richard has a problem. He has only got a few months to make his mark, so when I heard he had submitted a White Paper Motion for Council today, I suppose I thought it would be about the incinerator. After all, it is a huge issue, very controversial and who better placed to talk about the incinerator than the Councillor for the incinerator in terms of where it is going to be located, Councillor Brett. In fact he has not mentioned the incinerator once.

In terms of ID cards, there are mixed view around the Chamber. There are some Labour Councillors I know who are quite relaxed about ID cards, as long as there are appropriate safeguards. There are some others of us who are not really so happy at all to say that, but the White Paper Motion in my opinion Lord Mayor - I know this White Paper has been allowed - in my day, if I can use that expressions, motions always had to either refer to Leeds or the citizens of Leeds. This is a very general White Paper attacking the Labour Government. Some of the people who have spoken have also spoken about other issues - for example the loss of a significant amount of data. I ask, therefore Councillor Brett has at any time since his administration has been in power, have we, Leeds City Council, lost any data? After all the Council holds data on a huge number of people in the city, we sent information back and forth to departments like DWP - exactly the same as in the case which we all know about. Perhaps he can take this opportunity in his summing up to tell us whether there have been any losses like that here in our city.

I think that Richard wants to make his mark as being a libertarian. He made some important points about civil liberties, as does Councillor Morton. David is consistent. He is an unusual Liberal, is David - he is a sort of anarcho-Liberal member of the Liberal Democrat Party, but these are thoughtful contributions which have been made.

As Councillor Wakefield has said, life has changed a lot but while you have been in power in your administration, Councillor Brett, you have actually increased the number of closed circuit televisions in Leeds city centre. Some people think that is a good thing. You cannot actually walk now from one side of the city centre to the other without being recorded. The images are now digitally recorded - and they are presumably preserved for ever.

There are some important civil liberties issues there. Of course we have some checks and balances in place to make sure those images are not abused, but some people would say that was an example of big state getting too much involved in every day life. That is something to think about.

What about the people who protested down at the Corn Exchange? These are people who are going to lose their livelihoods. I think I know my way around the

Council very well but I was absolutely amazed, Richard, when I heard they had had all their leaflets confiscated and had to pay a fine. What I thought we were influencing in terms of anti-litter policy for things like kebab shops, as it were, was being used, or it is perceived that it is used to stop democratic dissent. This does trouble a number of us and if you, Richard, are going to present yourself as a libertarian leader, you should go beyond Government knocking and the issue of ID cards because the final ID card proposal is not with us anyway; you should encompass some of these other things and look at some of the things that you are in charge of, at least to Council. Are the rights of the individual being protected? Is the right to democratically protest being protected in our city? You can actually do something about those. You can actually do something about the level of CCTV. You can do something about modifying the policy so that there might be a different policy for people who are pursuing a political issue that is not anything to do with advertising a commercial product rather than attacking a Government which is doing its best in difficult circumstances following 9/11 on something which this Council Chamber itself can have no control over.

Richard, if you are still going to be Leader in May you are going to have to do better than this. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I must admit I echo Councillor Taggart's comments. I am not entirely sure why this White Paper has actually been put forward to Council, but seeing as it is, I have given the issue a lot of thought about how to address Councillor Brett's comments. Do you make reference to the ease with which the Liberal Party make these kind of statements knowing full well that ultimately they have an onerous responsibility when it comes to protecting the people of Great Britain against terrorism, benefit fraud, ID fraud and, of course, illegal immigration?

These are all issues, it seems to me, that they would be quite happy to pay lip service to, especially the opposition parties, but never in a way that actually offers any actual tangible solutions. Why attack the terrorist? Why attack the fraudster or, indeed, tackle the problem of immigration when we can have a cheap shot at the Government, which really is what this White Paper represents.

As well as tackling the issues I have outlined, I feel ID cards would play a really useful part in detection with an issue that all parties in this Chamber will be extremely concerned about, and that is the easy access to alcohol from our young people on a weekend in our off licences.

The administration has shown their true colours on this by withdrawing the funding for proof of age scheme. Why bother having a proof of age scheme at all, Councillor Brett, when I believe Don Foster, your culture spokesman, supports lowering the age of young people buying alcohol to 16?

It would also be very easy to attack Councillor Brett's White Paper as another example of the Liberals' somewhat *laissez-faire* approach to the issue of national security.

I suspect that no member of this Chamber who actually supports the principles of liberty, freedom of speech and the right to privacy, would actually sit too comfortably with the concept of an ID card simply for the sake of it or as a control tool, and I certainly do not. Indeed, I think the Orwellian shadow that has been cast over us is ever greater and sometimes it is more intrusive than personally I would like. Sometimes you have to be grown up about these things and you have to offer pragmatic solutions where necessary.

It seems to me we have got to embrace technology that is at our disposal, and if that means once all the details are available and we feel technology like ID cards are the way forward, then that is a difficult step but one that we will have to consider taking. The Government has a very tough decision to make and yet, sometimes, an unpopular one, but surely that is what governing is all about - the ability to look at the big picture and have the courage to make the sort of decisions for the nation's wellbeing and, not simply as this White Paper would suggest formulating the policy on the back of just a bit of cheap point scoring.

Councillor Brett's White Paper suggests the money used on ID cards can be used to finance - and I quote - "front line resources to combat crime." That is without substance when you consider some of the Liberal Party's policies on crime and disorder. They voted against antisocial behaviour orders, they voted against dispersal orders, and instead proposed a better way of dealing with yobs and joyriders by sending them on go-karting trips; on drugs, in their words, "to reflect the fact it is less harmful than heroin or cocaine", they have downgraded ecstasy to a Class B drug, they have axed mandatory life and short-term prison sentences. In fact if the Liberals had their way, Lord Mayor, we would have no prisons at all.

I am quoting here from the former Home Office spokesman, Mark Oaten, who famously said, "I am convinced that prison is a complete and utter waste of time."

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: What happened to him?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Good point. I can see Councillor Brett making the short journey to Armley Jail to place Lib Dem election boards outside the gates.

Of course, this entire argument is somewhat academic. If the ID cards are not implemented, where are these savings generated to fund front line policing going to come from? Taxation? The money tree at the bottom of the garden? Frankly, I have no idea and, I suggest, neither has Councillor Brett.

I also find it interesting the Liberals in their briefing paper, "Police or plastic", also claimed the implementation of ID cards would be another expensive IT fiasco, and that is something that has been raised in this Chamber this afternoon. I feel that is something that Councillor Brett will know a lot more about than me, actually, given the implementation of Academy, the software system brought in and introduced by this administration, which is late, over budget, we lost hundreds of man hours over the first few months of its implementation whilst it was permanently down and it is still not achieving the purpose for which it was implemented. That might be the sort of IT fiasco that Councillor Brett is referring to, or maybe it could even be a matter closer to members' hearts, the new IT equipment.

I have been a member of this Council now for seven months and I still have not got access to the Council's system from home, so IT fiasco indeed, Councillor Brett.

To sum up, this nonsense knock-about is just cynical at best and party-political manoeuvring at worst and not particularly effective at either. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was just going to mention Councillor Wakefield and he is going. I know Councillor Wakefield, like myself, is a very keen reader of George Orwell and I remember going to a play at the Playhouse some time ago, where we both were there, about George Orwell - who incidentally was called Blair. It is somewhat strange that the ID card came from a namesake of his.

One of my favourite books is 1984 and it describes a society that is totally unbelievable and, I have got to say, ID cards stink of that kind of society. The only place in the whole world where ID cards are effective are in those police states like the Soviet Union was. They do not work in the rest of continental Europe, they do not stop terrorist attacks, they do not stop benefit fraud, they do not stop anything because to make them work you have got to be so totalitarian that freedom goes out of the window. As far as I am concerned it is an entire infringement of liberty if we had an ID card and we would not support that at any time. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Speaking this far down the debate a lot of the points that I wanted to make have already been made.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Sit down then.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Councillor Lyons, but I shall not. One of the things that does really concern me, though, is that some 25 years ago I was a computer programmer and I was employed by companies then, one of them being a multi-national company, to see if I could, at their behest, hack into their computer system and it took me an hour-and-a-half to hack in and to reset all their passwords.

It frightens me that 25 years ago I could do that. If you look on the internet now and you look on You Tube, you can find ways of countering dialectic data very cheaply, very easily with silicone, with superglue - ten quid, that is all it will cost you and they show you how you can do it. Any system that comes in place with that much data on it, with that much valuable data about our personal identities, can be manipulated, forged, copied and we can all have our data accessed. That to me is a very worrying scenario.

We do as we stand have quite a lot of Big Brother technology around. Anybody who has a supermarket loyalty card, for instance, every time you go to the checkout and they swipe that through to give you your points back, they are also recording all your shopping habits so that they can then analyse that. Some people might think that is a good idea and it is a system that you can opt into and opt out of, you do not have to have that card if you do not want them recording that personal data on it.

If I move on to CCTV cameras, yes, you are captured on CCTV cameras for most of the time that you are in Leeds, but I think that there is very much a place for them and I think that society wants them in the inner city areas and town centres. We are about to get them in my ward in the town centres of both Otley and Yeadon. When I consulted with residents, I had a staggering 90% plus people who said they wanted CCTV cameras.

These are the ways of combating the problems that we have in our society - not with an ID card. I am sad to say that a very close member of my family was physically attacked recently and, of course, there was no way of recording that, there is no ID card that would have saved that person, so these things do not work for security.

The other thing that frightens me even with the systems we have got, up at Leeds Bradford Airport only last month a whole planeload of people were allowed to just pass through without any checks whatsoever on passports, so we do not know who came into the country. Systems are not secure enough. I heard this morning on the news that I believe data disks were lost for Northern Ireland driving licences. That came through in the early hours of this morning. We have got more and more data going missing, but even if data is not going missing I question who has access

to that data and what can they do with it? The more we rely on society on other people holding our personal information, I think it is a slippery slope.

I would like to see money the Government proposes to raise from this to be used for front line policing methods. Something that this Council has done, this administration has done, is paid for PCSOs throughout the city equally spread across wards, so again this is something that we have shown where we are fair to the whole of Leeds. We do not discriminate between inner city and outer city. In my ward five of the six PCSOs are funded, part-funded, by this Council. I have been out with them and the intelligence that they can gather is phenomenal. They know the community, they know the people who are there and they can find out the very things in areas where maybe potential terrorists are coming along, they can find that out on the ground by talking to people and if we put more money into front line policing - I think it is no coincidence that since we have had those additional PCSOs in Otley, north of the river which used to be a high crime area, in the last two periods has recorded zero headline crime. That is a real result.

I think that what we should do is not be looking at spending money on an expensive system, for all the reasons that Councillor Bale and others have said before. We should look at putting that money into practical solutions for front line policing and going back to investigative policing which will actually find far more terrorists than an ID card ever will. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This morning I went to look for my ID card. It is still there, sitting in the drawer, the one that was issued to me when I was born and lasted until 1950. As Councillor Brett has already said, when the ID card was issued in 1939, I think it was - I may have that date wrong - it was for three things - conscription, national security and rationing. By 1950 when it was taken out of circulation it was responsible for monitoring 39 items. It is not perhaps the Government today that I do not trust with ID cards, but the Government of the future.

We do not have a written constitution in this country to protect us. It could be a Government of any persuasion in the future. I do not trust Government. As a democrat I was brought up not to trust Governments.

ID cards will put too much power into the hands of people who could be tempted to be corrupted by that power. We do not have civil liberties here to protect us. We have no way of protecting ourselves against a Government in the future that would choose to misuse the identity cards we might give them. *(Interruption)*

That does not work either. It does not, Mick, and you know it does not. This is taking a sledgehammer to crack a nut. We have one of the best security services in the world in this country. For the last 20, 30 years we have been going through terrorist attacks with very few being successful. We are now coming to have ID cards. If you are a determined terrorist, a criminal, a fraudster, whatever, you can get around this piece of plastic. You will get round this piece of plastic. It will not stop crime and it will not help with the detection of crime either in the long term, but it will damage our civil liberties.

Also people have talked about cost. I can imagine a day when I am retired from this Chamber and I got to the doctor's and I have got to have my card with me and it has got to be stamped. The Government will know that I have been to see my doctor that day. Then I have got to go the chemist - again my ID card has to be scanned and again it is recorded. Wherever I go - the bank - my ID card will have to be scanned and the Government will know about it. The potential for a future Government to misuse and to control us through this technology is frightening.

Yes, it is Orwellian and, frankly, I do not trust Governments, past, present or future. It is not that long ago a Government told me we had to go to war because of weapons of mass destruction. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Somebody passed a comment a little earlier from that side that this was political slapstick, or words to that effect. I have not heard one speech from over there, from over there, round here, that resembled anything remotely like political knock-about - that was the phrase. What I have heard from here, however, is a deliberate attempt not to talk about the very serious issues that ID cards raise. Actually it is one of those occasions when I wish the people of Leeds, all 700,000 of them, were crammed into these balconies, because what they would have heard was a deliberate attempt by the so-called opposition to say nothing whatever about the substantive issue and instead talk inanely about the new Leader of the Liberal Democrats. At least our colleagues in the administration have got a Leader. Your chap, once again, has indicated his complete abdication of being prepared to talk about a serious issue if it was at all critical of your national political party.

I do not believe for one minute that every one of you over there believes that the introduction of ID cards is correct. Perhaps not even Councillor Dobson, who seems yet again to just want to repeat what Colin Burden had written for him.

It is an extremely serious issue because, like Councillor Harker, I regard all Governments as reaching a stage in their lifespan where they become over mighty, where every initiative in a certain field that they have tried has failed and so they tend to try and get more authoritarian as they go on in an attempt to put right what they have singularly failed to put right previously.

One has to ask oneself the question, why have we reached a stage where this debate on identity cards is suddenly at the top of the political agenda? Councillor Harker alluded to Iraq. You could also allude to the fact that since 1997 crimes of a particularly serious sort have risen and risen and risen in regularity and the Government has proved itself totally unable to control those.

Even in those serious circumstances you have to ask yourself this question - do you believe that the Government is the servant of the people or the people are the servant of the Government? I would ask you all, because some of you, as I have said, on those benches I know do not support the introduction of identity cards.

We will see. We have not got 700,000 citizens of Leeds in the balcony but we have got the vast majority of the elected members of the city in this Chamber and we will see whether on this major issue you are finally prepared to show you have got some backbone and some principles. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I just want to speak, I was not going to but I just thought the most shocking speech from Councillor Carter I have heard for a very long time.

He said that the speeches over here did not deal with the issue seriously. I thought they did. I thought the speech over there did not. What the speech over there did not. I thought there were people actually addressing the issue and when, Councillor Carter, we read this verbatim, I hope you look all of you - because you have got to make your judgments about people like Andrew Carter yourself - read the speeches that have been made, the read what he said they were like and you will see they are completely different. It is a dishonest tactic that you have used.

We can be quite clear. Many of us have the strongest reservations on the grounds given all over about this particular means of identity and what information they contain. Those are the legitimate concerns of any decent, sensible human being and they ought to be. On the other hand you have got to weigh against them the problems that you see all over the world where terrorism exists and will it be an effective weapon or will it not? The chances are it will not, in many people's view, but we should address the issues not as a party kick-about - and I do not think, Councillor Carter, people represented the discussion previously as knock-about comedy. What was said, and I think quite rightly in what were three excellent speeches from this side, as they were on the other side, what they were saying is that the new Leader of the Lib Dems, Councillor Brett, has in fact introduced this for a reason which was, "They have going to do this one about the airport, we must do something; what can it be? Let us have a go at this." That is what makes it pathetic. The debate that you other members raised do not make it pathetic. You raise it to the level it ought to be.

I listened to the very first speech over there. You cannot help but say yes, every point he makes resonates with you, but you do not do it when you are trying to put other people in another party in a position where they have got to vote against or with and not on the issues because that is cheap trickery and we all know what it is and Councillor Carter contributed to that trick by saying that the responsibility for intelligent discussion was over there and not over here. If you doubt what I am saying now, read the verbatim and what he said and read the verbatim of the speeches made round the Council and you will find they will denigrate him but not the speakers. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I am sad at what Bernard has just said because I listened very carefully to the three speeches. They did not address the issue. Councillor Wakefield was having a go at Councillor Brett about all sorts of erroneous things. Councillor Taggart did the same. I have forgotten who the other speaker was because he was not all that good - Mr Dobson. I cannot remember what he said.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: You are doing it now, Les. You are doing it now.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I cannot remember what he said. Let me just tell you, I will read the verbatim Bernard - I will read them to you because you obviously cannot hear and I do not know if you can see because that verbatim will tell you exactly what was said. I saw and I heard what was said.

When I am sitting here, this is a very, very important subject. We should be knocking around in Council and we should be coming to a view in Council, a view that we all hold. I have been to the CCTV centre. I have seen and talked to the people who are working to protect us. I will tell you, it is a very serious subject and I am concerned about your safety and everybody else's safety in this Chamber.

The issue was not addressed by your people, Bernard. I do not believe it was addressed. It is a subject which I know many of your party share a similar view about things. My view might be weaker than some of the other people's on it. We all have different views on which way we are coming from on this particular subject. All I am saying is we should as a Council express our opinion and if our opinion is right, we should be telling our MPs and we should be telling our Government. It is a huge sum of money.

The nonsense that this will not affect anything as far as the budget is concerned - it has got to be found from somewhere. If somebody can find the billions of pounds to run this scheme, then what somebody said over here was quite right -

they could use those billion pounds on front line policing. I am absolutely certain front line policing would do us a lot more good than running round with a card in our pocket. We all have cards in our pockets. I have identity cards in my pockets, driving licences and all sorts of different things. I do not think it will help. If you really wanted a card you would have to do it properly - I do not know how you would do it - DNA is about the only safe way you can ever do it because that is one way that nobody will actually pick up, your own DNA. The only trouble with it is that you cannot get the DNA tested quickly enough for it to be of any use on a particular card, but DNA gives you a total. If you want hard policing, then the police would say let everybody's DNA go into a police computer. I do not think you would go for that so I do not see why you are going for this card.

All I am saying is, I think you are wrong to have a go, Councillor Atha. If you want to talk about this subject, if you find it embarrassing because you do not want to really vote against this, then that is what you should have said. You are just having a go at Councillor Carter. Thank you. Thank you, Lord Mayor (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor. The reason why it is absolutely appropriate for us to debate this matter here is because in all likelihood if such identity cards were introduced, then a significant number of the services that this Council delivers would be tied to those identity cards. We would have a fundamental position to make there.

I am on record publicly as having said in any event because of our national leadership candidates, one of them said that he would encourage Council leaders to boycott the use of identity cards with regard to delivering Council services. I was on record as saying if it has happened whilst I was Leader it is not going to now. We would have to deliver through those identity cards - that is the issue. It will become a decision we have to make and we will have to implement them here in this city.

That is a philosophical issue but in addition to that you have to consider what that then reduces this Council to. We are then simply a delivery mechanism for central Government. Everything we will do, everybody who uses the services of this Council potentially will be tracked and logged through those identity cards. We will be completely emasculated as an authority. It is bad enough as it is now but we will, frankly, cease to have any value other than as an absolutely puppet of central Government.

That is why it is absolutely appropriate that this matter is put before us today and absolutely appropriate that we debate it. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think the thing that concerns me, really, about this identity card is what are actually the benefits of introducing it? Some years ago I am sure you will remember a terrible situation in London when the Admiral Duncan pub in Soho was blown up by a nail bomber. I was due to go to London that afternoon but ended up spending some time at work and did not go - I was due to meet a friend in London and the probability is that we would have been in that pub or the pub opposite.

I do not think that an identity card would have identified David Copeland as being somebody who was mentally unstable, and I do not think it would have helped deal with that particular act of terrorism. I do not think that identity cards would have helped with the London bombings with Mohammed Sadiq Khan when he decided, along with some friends, to kill and maim a number of people on public transport throughout London. I really cannot see why anybody thinks that this is a benefit for the cost which it would lead to.



Robert Finnigan earlier mentioned that CCTV and automatic number plate recognition schemes which are run throughout West Yorkshire. Recently we were in discussion with the Divisional Commander of City and Holbeck Police who told us that the ANPR and CCTV system in Bradford identified the murderers of Sharon Beshenivsky and it also identified that there just was not one car involved, there were a number of cars involved. That is how those people were brought to trial and found guilty of that most appalling crime.

There are things there which are already in place which can help deal with counter terrorism, counter fraud and other such issues.

We heard earlier someone say you carry a plastic card. I have a variety of plastic cards, as we all do, so when I go and spend money on *this* card I try not to - I try to spend it on *this* card - *this* being the debit card, *that* card being a credit card. It leaves an audit trail of where I have been. For instance, it will tell you that I bought some sweets this afternoon in Sainsbury's new 24 hour shop and withdrew some money from the bank. (*Interruption*)

Excuse me, ladies. Thank you. I could not hear so I thought other people might not be able to. Perhaps people do not want to hear you, Debbie. That is why you should be quiet. Have you ever thought of working in a fish market? (*Laughter*)

Payment cards do leave a trail, the payments that you make with financial services organisations are also identified and a lot of people are caught out by terrorism via the work of banks and financial institution. As you will know I work for RBS Group and I am aware of the work that is carried out in financial services.

Similarly you will have seen adverts on television with Vinnie Jones where his rather fetching vintage car breaks down and he rings up from the rather unfortunately named village and he will not tell people where it is. That little thing here and this one here will tell people where you are, so there is a variety of ways to identify where people are and what they are doing which are already available.

I do not really think there is a need to spend a vast amount of money on this particular scheme. I really do not think it is workable, I do not think it is necessary and I think we are already well catered enough for dealing with counter terrorism and counter fraud. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Lord Mayor, I would like to start by thanking Councillor Harris - who is not here - for explaining the link to Leeds, for putting the time that he has done to lead the Liberal Democrats for eight years. It was, you are right, Keith, remiss of me not to say that earlier.

One thing I will say about our election is that for the first time ever the Liberal Democrat Group in Leeds did have an election. In the past we have only had one person willing to do the job and it says something about the way Mark has led us that we are now in such a position of strength that there were three people who wanted the job.

I want to thank John for his passionate defence of personal liberty and thank the numerous people on our side who have made helpful remarks. I understand and agree with Councillor Blackburn's 1984 society and thank you, Councillor Grayshon, for his comments as well.

My difficulty with the contributions from the Labour side is that we have tried clearly to explain our worries about how ID cards would actually solve some of the problems the Government says they are for. Bernard, I have listened very carefully

to what your side has said - four different speakers - and I have not heard any explanation as to how ID cards will actually prevent terrorism; how they will actually prevent illegal working. These are the things that a decent defence against this motion would have tackled and the absence of that, it seems to me that some of you were quite deliberately talking about a different agenda.

Keith, I thank you for your support, even if it was surrounded by ageist remarks, and for your honesty in admitting that Labour has - I think I quote you - authoritarian streaks, or authoritarian strands, I think you said, which I thought was honest in the situation that you are finding.

Neil talked a great deal about all sorts of things but I struggled to find the relevance to ID cards in much of what he said. Councillor Dobson, can I first of all point out to you that certainly in my ward the Liberal Democrats have very strongly supported the dispersal orders in Osmondthorpe and along Harehills Lane, so you must not assume that because the national party does something the local party has to jump and do exactly the same. Maybe in your party that happens but we actually think about what the right thing is in each area.

The tenor of much of the remarks on the other side seem to be about, 'We really want to answer a different sort of question, so we will assume there was a different question.' I am not sure what that question was. Maybe, Councillor Dobson, it sounded a little to me a little bit about you were defending 90 day detentions without trial. There seemed to be, throughout a lot of what was said, a paternalistic "We need to protect you."

At the end of all of this I make no apology at all for raising this debate and it has been, I think, an interesting debate. Thank you for the contributions from all sides. I would urge you all to use your brain and think for yourself, regardless of what others have said to you, and support this motion. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J C CARTER: Lord Mayor, can we have a recorded vote, please?

THE LORD MAYOR: Is that seconded?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Chief Executive, recorded vote, please.

*(A recorded vote was taken)*

THE LORD MAYOR: The figures are present 88; 'Yes' 51; Abstain 37; 'No' zero. That is CARRIED. Thank you, Council.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: What a shower!

THE LORD MAYOR: I declare this meeting closed.

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