

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

CABINET – 5 DECEMBER 2002

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

HOME OFFICE CONSULTATION -

ENTITLEMENT CARDS AND IDENTITY FRAUD

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to request Members for their comments on a Home Office Consultation Document regarding “Entitlement Cards and Identity Fraud.”

The aim of an entitlement card would be to confirm identity for official public purposes, (eg claiming benefits) or for private sector organisations, (eg validating identity for credit purposes).

The Government does not wish to consult on the introduction of a compulsory scheme by which it means a card which everyone would have to carry at all times.

The closing date for consultation is 10 January 2003 but the Local Government Association has asked for comments to them by 6 December 2002.

2 BACKGROUND AND PROPOSED POLICY

- 2.1** Members may be aware that the Government has invited views on the principle of establishing an entitlement card scheme as a more convenient way of providing services, tackling illegal immigration and illegal working and combating identity fraud.
- 2.2** If Members are in favour of this approach there are some 35 other questions seeking views on such a scheme in more detail. The Local Government Association has issued a consultation document for Local Authorities (App 1). A summary of the consultation paper is attached (App 2). Also attached (App 3) is the list of consultation questions together with comments which might assist Members if they wish to express a view.
- 2.3** A full copy of the consultation paper is available in the Members’ Room and on the Home Office Website – www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dob/ecu.htm.

3 FINANCE AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

The National costs of the scheme set out in the Consultation Paper are £1.5 billion. It is too early to estimate in detail the costs to the Council but the use of an entitlement card might have savings for the Authority.

4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct implications arising from this report but the intention of the card would be to make identity easier and surer to verify eg for accessing benefits.

5 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

The intention of the card would be to reduce identity fraud.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

The Government believes that an entitlement card would be compatible with its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 as set out in para 6.19 of the Consultation Paper.

7 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no implications directly arising out of this report in terms of equal opportunities, ethnic minorities, the elderly or the disabled; nor are there any LA21, or planning implications.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Governments Consultation Paper – “Entitlement Cards and Identity Fraud” and LG Alert 388/02 were used in the preparation of this report.

9 RECOMMENDATION

The views of Members on the principle of an Entitlement Card Scheme and the consultation points are requested.