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Dear Professor Angell,

Thank you for your letter of 10 November and I am pleased that you found my contribution to the House of Lords meeting helpful. I was particularly interested to hear that you would be refining your cost estimates downwards significantly as a result of the material we published four months ago.

You asked a number of questions on public sector use and implementation and I am grateful for this opportunity to explain the Government's position. The Identity Cards Bill – in its current state and going right back to the draft Bill published in April 2004 – has never contained any obligation on public services to make use of the ID cards scheme, other than those involved in the administration of the scheme itself. The issue of whether the legislation should be prescriptive on public services from the outset was also discussed in the 2002 consultation paper and the way the legislation was drafted reflected the Government's view that it should be a matter for every public service to decide whether, when and how to make use of the scheme.

Broadly there are four ways in which the legislation makes provision for public authorities to make use of the scheme:

- (i) with the consent of the card-holder in which case the provisions of Clause 14 will apply;
- (ii) where a public service requires a person to prove their identity for the provision of a service. In this scenario a public service may already possess the necessary legal authority to require identity to be proved and it may be within the scope of these powers to include production of an ID card and/or other evidence of registrable facts;

- (iii) if existing powers are not sufficient in (ii) above, Clauses 15-17 provide for explicit powers to be agreed by Parliament for non-devolved services. This needs to be done on a case-by-case basis which reflects that a blanket approach to identification checks for all public services is not desirable and needs to reflect the different circumstances of individual public services;
- (iv) circumstances where information may be provided without the individual's consent to organisations specified on the face of the Bill or to specified Government Departments or public authorities approved by Parliament.

In none of the provisions in (i) to (iv) above does the Bill place any automatic obligations on specified organisations to make use of the scheme. The issue of sanctions for non-use therefore does not arise. I hope this clarifies your understanding of the legal basis on which the scheme will be founded, a basis which has been unchanged since the draft Bill was published 18 months ago.

Decisions on whether, when and how particular public services will make use of the ID cards scheme will be made by those services – individually or collectively as appropriate depending on how services are managed. The Government has a collective view as to how the major public services will take up the scheme and it is the remit of the Ministerial Committee on Identity Cards to oversee this. The Benefits Overview paper published in June provided a snap-shot of the benefits work undertaken to that date. This gives an indication of the range of organisations we have been working with in developing the benefits case and projections for the use of the scheme. It also shows in the diagram on page 12 that different services envisage using the scheme at different periods as the scheme rolls out. For example the Criminal Records Bureau will see some immediate process and quality of outcome benefits even in the early years when perhaps only a small proportion of their customers have an ID card. Other organisations will not see a business case for investing in the scheme until cards are widely held or unless and until it is compulsory to register with the scheme.

There is therefore no 'one size fits all' ready-reckoner to estimate the costs across all public services as each case is different depending on:

- (i) current and planned levels of investment in similar or related technologies. For example both the police and the immigration service are making use of portable fingerprint readers to access to their own fingerprint records and have been planning to invest further in this technology whether or not there was an ID card scheme;
- (ii) the type of use envisaged by the service. Some services will require a very simple ID card authentication service which operates discretely from their own systems and gives a very simple 'yes or no' answer; Others may want a higher degree of interactivity with the scheme via a web-browser interface, for example to confirm a person's address. This may require slightly more training for staff but would still be a

discrete system; and there may be those requiring a higher degree of integration with their other business systems and processes, for example if DVLA was to use the same digital photograph recorded on the National Identity Register for the driving licence.

I agree with Simon Davies' comments at the meeting in the House of Lords that this higher degree of integration can be delivered for new systems without additional cost as the requirements will be designed in from the outset. Given that the rollout of ID cards will take place over some years, many systems will fall into this category. For a lot of the others, integration costs will be absorbed in the usual cycle of system upgrades and technology refresh. Rather than having to incur the costs of a specific project to 'ID-enable' their system they will wait and plan it into their upgrade and maintenance cycles.

Where costs of using the ID cards scheme have been identified, they are included in the business case in calculating the net present value of the scheme. It would not be appropriate to include these costs as part of the issuing costs of the scheme and this might best be illustrated by way of an example. Passport fees cover the costs of issuing passports, they do not cover the costs of passport readers installed at ports. These are funded by the Immigration Service as it is they who derive the business benefit.

You also asked some questions on card technology.

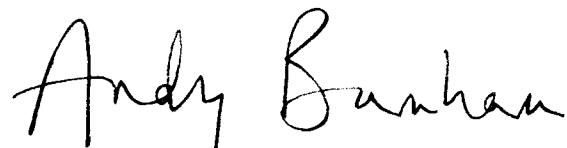
We have conducted a wide-ranging market sounding study to obtain the market view of the feasibility of a ten year card life. The survey was distributed to a cross section of suppliers in the smartcard value chain and completed responses were obtained from 12 suppliers. Amongst other questions, suppliers were asked for their views on the durability and costs of contact, contact-less, dual interface and hybrid cards. This survey concluded that a ten year life for a contact-less card was feasible.

We expect to use Extended Access Control to secure the fingerprint biometrics on the card for international travel purposes and also Basic Access Control in accordance with international standards and practice. It should be noted that swiping, to enable Basic Access Control, is only likely to be required when the card is used as an international travel document and more recent reader technologies use a camera to read the machine readable characters on a card or passport and therefore do not require the document to be swiped. When the card is used for non-travel identity verification, it will not need to be swiped and hence we believe that it is appropriate to base our durability estimates on the level of swiping associated with the use of the card for international travel.

We will use appropriate technologies to prevent the card being skimmed. Basic Access Control is one technology that is available to deter skimming and you will be aware of other approaches. Any card issued by the scheme will need to be security accredited and will be tested for resistance to skimming access where appropriate.

I will also be publishing this response on our website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Burnham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ANDY BURNHAM