Analysing the Home Office's May 2008 Identity Cards Cost Report

A report by the LSE's Identity Project

MAY 2008

Commentary

Today's announcement of the companies that will make up the Strategic Supplier Group responsible for implementing identity cards provides an opportunity to reflect on the likely next stages for the implementation of the Scheme. If we continue down this path set out by the Home Office the Scheme may well end up stillborn, either because of political dynamics or because of the technological complexity of trying to implement it. One alternative is that the Home Office can finally start listening and adhere to the guidelines set by HM Treasury developed in consultation across government and the private sector resulting from the world-leading work of the Crosby Review.

The Home Office Scheme remains driven by the visions of ministers. They continue to play politics by renewing claims about the role that identity cards will play in relation to National Security and terrorism. They are rushing the deployment of cards for foreign nationals in an attempt to appeal to xenophobic attitudes and to somehow implement the parts of the Scheme before the next election. At the same time key details about the implementation, oversight and buy-in to the Scheme remain vague. Indeed, the IPS is performing yet another 'consultation' about elements of the Scheme that must surely have been resolved by now.

The government has been given every possible opportunity over the past five years to listen, learn and reconsider. Expertise has been offered from all sectors of society, from across government, the private sector and civil society. The Treasury proposals are intended to meet the identity assurance needs of the rest of government and industry but this advice has been almost entirely ignored and the very usefulness of a national scheme has been all but eradicated. The little advice that has been taken from Crosby's review has resulted in drastically different scheme to the one promised to Parliament.

We are now beyond the point of recommending a radical rethink because that was exactly the opportunity presented to the Home Office by HM Treasury. We are sorry to conclude that not even a miracle can save this Scheme.

Table of Contents

Background and Key Developments

This report provides an updated analysis of the current state of the UK government's proposals to introduce a biometrically based National Identity Scheme. It draws primarily on data provided in both the November 2007 and May 2008 s37 Cost Reports produced by the Identity and Passport Service (IPS) but also draws on a range of other information about the Scheme and related events that have appeared in the meantime.

A number of important events have occurred since the November 2007 Cost Report was issued which have had direct consequences on the implementation of the Scheme.

HMRC data breach

Perhaps the most significant event was the announcement by the Chancellor Alistair Darling, on 20 November 2007, that a data breach involving "personal data relating to child benefit" had arisen in Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)[1]. On 18 October 2007, in response to a request from the National Audit Office for data in relation to payment of child benefit, a civil servant at HMRC sent a full copy of the data on two password protected compact discs. The discs were sent using the HMRC's internal mail service, operated by TNT. The package was not recorded or registered and failed to arrive at the NAO. When the requested discs did not arrive, a further set of discs was sent, this time by recorded delivery and these did arrive. Senior management at HMRC were not told about the lost discs until 8 November 2007.

The discs, containing details of all child benefit recipients, records for 25 million individuals and 7.25 million families, have still not been recovered. The records included the names of recipients and the names of their children as well as address details and dates of birth, child benefit numbers, national insurance numbers and, where relevant, bank or building society account details.

Following this statement, the Chancellor appointed Kieran Poynter, Chairman and Senior Partner of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP to review the circumstances surrounding the data breach and to make recommendations on urgent and longer–term changes required to ensure such breaches do not recur. Poynter issued a first report, addressing what exactly happened and what urgent measures should be taken, on 14 December 2007[2].

Unsurprisingly, the news of a breach of this scale immediately renewed concerns about the government's plans to store the personal details of the entire UK population on three logically distinct databases that would comprise the National Identity Register and there was renewed interest in alternative, more secure means of storing this data in such a way that minimises the risk of similar large scale breaches[3]. More generally, with more and more data breaches by government departments being reported[4] public confidence in the government's ability to manage personal data properly (what the NIS Independent Scheme Assurance Board[5] calls Data Governance) appears to have fallen[6].

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[1] Hansard 20 November 2007, Column 1101

[2] http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk./independent_reviews/poynter_review/poynter_review_index.cfm

[3] http://identityproject.lse.ac.uk/securitybriefing.pdf

[4] E.g. DWP http://www.theregister.co.uk/2008/05/09/dwp_discs_passwords/, DVLA http://www.theregister.co.uk/2007/12/17/kelly_data_statement/, Ministry of Justice http://www.theregister.co.uk/2008/01/23/court_info_sent_in_post/, MOD http://www.theregister.co.uk/2008/01/22/mod_gives_away_data/, NHS http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7319293.stm

[5] http://www.ips.gov.uk/identity/downloads/ISAP_Annual_Report.pdf

[6] Although the breaches were in unrelated departments, NO2ID's polling indicates a marked drop in public support for the Identity Cards Scheme following the HMRC data breach (polling by ICM research for NO2ID recorded a net result of 47% stating that they thought the ID scheme was a good idea in February 2008, compared with 54% in September 2007). The government's own Tracking Research shows a

Supplier shortlisting

In late October 2007, following the Pre–Qualification Questionnaire stage (which solicited eleven responses) the IPS announced a long list of suppliers that would be invited to participate in a Competitive Dialogue with IPS, prior to seeking final tenders for the Framework Agreement[7]. This 'long–list' consisted of eight suppliers: Accenture; BAE Systems; CSC; EDS; Fujitsu; IBM; Steria; and Thales.

The procurement approach is based around a "Framework Agreement" that will involve a small group of suppliers (the "Strategic Supplier Group" (SSG)) that will work with IPS to deliver capabilities for the Scheme. According to the NIS Strategic Supplier Framework Prospectus, the majority of components for the Scheme will be bought as managed services by running "mini–competitions" between members of the SSG. For example, two projects have received approval so far:

- The replacement of core Application and Enrolment processes for passports and the provision of desktop infrastructure for IPS

- The replacement and upgrading of the existing systems for fingerprint matching and storage in connection with immigration and visa requirements and transition to the replacement service[8].

All members of the SSG would therefore be expected to compete to implement these projects for the IPS.

Other projects that are envisaged, but not yet approved at the time the document was issued include

- Biometric recording, storage and matching needs, including the systems integration of new and existing services;

- Biometric support;

- Further development of Application and Enrolment solutions to meet future needs (which may include business process, people, systems and premises);

- Data sharing services;

- Biographical Background Checking Services (for the purposes of confirming identity);

- Identity Checking Services;

- Production, Management and Distribution of passports, ID Cards and other products;

- Biometric Enrolment Services; and

- Other capabilities including entitlement checking services and associated case management services

However, in January 2008 two major companies (Accenture and BAE) withdrew from the Competitive Dialogue process[9] and in February 2008 Steria also withdrew from the process[10]. This leaves only five suppliers in the Competitive Dialogue process all of whom have been included in the Strategic Supplier Group.

Leaked plans

In January 2008, the lobby group NO2ID leaked what it claimed were updated plans for the Scheme, based on the outcomes of an Options Analysis process[11]. According to this document, a 'tactical solution' for implement-

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statistically insignificant drop with 59% of those polled in January/February 2008 agreeing with the Scheme, down from 61% in October 2007.

[7] http://www.ips.gov.uk/identity/working-suppliers-framework.asp

[8] Supplier Framework Prospectus, page 17

[9] Uncertainty at timing of ID cards sees BAE and Accenture pull out, Maija Palmer and Jimmy Burns, FT 24 January 2008, available from http://www.ft.com/cms/s/92d94ba6-24e4-11d8-81c6-08209b00dd01,id=080124000076,print=yes.html

[10] http://www.kablenet.com/kd.nsf/FrontpageRSS/D62CF69B6DD65069802573FC005B90E3

ing the Scheme was proposed, including targeting particular groups for early enrolment. These include those in trusted relationships (linking identity assurance and vetting/Criminal Records Bureau checks, for example for airside transportation workers, was seen to have a "strong narrative") and young people (who could use them as identification when opening bank accounts or applying for student loans). The analysis suggested a two-phase approach, with the targeted groups enrolled in the second half of 2009[12] and a "high level" approach for enrolment from 2012 onwards. The plans also suggested downplaying the role of biometric identifiers ("we should *eventually* work towards a Scheme including a *high proportion* of fingerprint enrolment" emphasis added).

Delivery Plan 2008

In 6 March 2008, on the same day as Sir James Crosby issued the report on the "Challenges and opportunities in identity assurance"[13] (discussed in detail below) the Home Office issued what it called the "Delivery Plan" for the National Identity Scheme[14]. This document confirmed much that had been foreshadowed in the document leaked by NO2ID.

In particular, it noted a 'twin track' approach to delivering the Scheme, beginning with those who are employed in sensitive roles or locations and in 2010, for young people on a voluntary basis. The second track would involve, from 2011/12, high volume enrolment of British citizens, offering a choice of receiving a separate identity card, passport or both[15]. The plan also suggests that the widespread availability of personalised, joined–up services will be available in 2015.

The Home Office also announced recently a pilot to introduce compulsory identity cards for foreign nationals. During the pilot, the Home Office will take the fingerprints of 10,000 applicants in the student and marriage/partnership categories. This will be conducted at the Croydon Public Enquiry Office[16].

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[11] http://identityproject.lse.ac.uk/NIS_Options_Analysis_Outcome.pdf

[12] Parliamentary question response from Jacqui Smith to David Davis, May 6, 2008, Column 863W.

[13] http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/6/7/identity_assurance060308.pdf

[14] http://www.ips.gov.uk/identity/downloads/national-identity-scheme-delivery-2008.pdf

[15] Page 7

[16] Home Office monthly newsletter, May 16, 2008.

Implications of the new Delivery Plan

In order to understand the implications of the new Delivery Plan it is helpful to review how the Scheme is intended to be used in practice.

From a citizen's perspective, there are two main stages where they will interact with the Scheme. The first is enrolment, where the details of each person are entered onto the National Identity Register, the second is verification, where the use of an identity card and the information held on the Register is used to verify the identity of a particular person (for example, when opening a bank account, or travelling within Europe).

Enrolment

With the National Identity Scheme intended to be a government backed, 'gold standard' of identity, the government has repeatedly emphasized the care by which citizens would enrol onto the Scheme. In particular, the government is concerned that individuals cannot enrol into the Scheme more than once and hence have more than one 'official' identity. In order to achieve this goal, the enrolment process would involve two forms of checks.

The first of these is a biographical check, whereby biographical details about the citizen are checked against information held against them on various public and private sector records. This would involve interviews of 10–20 minutes duration. "At the interview, customers will be asked basic information about themselves—not deeply private information, but information that can be checked to confirm that they are who they say they are"[17]. For individuals with a reasonably extensive biographical footprint, this could include details about their date of birth, address history, their bank details, details about their children, national insurance numbers etc. For those with a less extensive footprint, the process is likely to be more problematic[18]. News reports suggested that the questions could be drawn from a list of 200 possible questions[19]. This enrolment would take place at specially designated 'enrolment centres' that would be no more than 1 hour travel distance for most citizens (with special alternative arrangements put in place for rural communities, such as the Highlands and Islands).

The biographical check, however, is not necessarily perfect as a determined individual could learn many of the details of another person and potentially pass the biographical check element using the other identity. Therefore, in addition to the biographic check, the Scheme also involves a biometric check. That is, the biometrics of individuals who enrol onto the Scheme will be checked against all the other biometrics from individuals who have already been enrolled. If the biometrics match those of someone already on the Register, this would mean that the person has already enrolled in the Scheme under a different identity. Clearly the effectiveness of this process is dependent on the quality of the biometrics collected and the method used to compare the submitted biometrics with those previously recorded.

The process of enrolment is therefore rather complex and, in order to manage the associated workload, the government has always intended to roll it out alongside the renewal of passports (which have a 10 year renewal cycle). Thus, every year approximately 10% of passport holders (who make up 80% of the adult population) would renew their passports and also enrol into the Scheme.

In light of the HMRC data breach, there are some obvious concerns with the way in which the biographical check would take place. "Applicants will be asked to confirm facts about themselves which someone attempting to steal their identity may not know but to which the **interviewers already know the answer**. Mr Herdan [executive director of the Identity and Passport Service] said there would be no pass or fail mark but officials

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[17] http://www.ips.gov.uk/passport/downloads/Introduction-of-Passport-Application-Interviews.pdf, page 3

[18] http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2008/may/16/idcards.ukcrime

[19] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/03/21/npass21.xml

would make a judgment on the basis of the whole interview whether an applicant was telling the truth"[20]. This means, at the very least, that the interviewers will have access to a lot of personal information about each individual enrolling in the scheme. A likely practical implementation of this process would involve collating this information at the interview location, before the interview begins. There appears to be no formal guarantee that this collated information will be destroyed after use and it is likely that, at the very least, the details of the particular questions asked and answers given would need to be stored.

There is also scientific uncertainty about the feasibility of the biometric checking that is being proposed. Whilst one–to–one checks are increasingly common (i.e., do the biometrics being presented by this person match the biometrics we have on record for this person), the one–to–many checks (i.e., do the biometrics being presented by this person match any of the biometrics that we have on record) required for the Scheme are less common, particularly at the scale proposed for the UK (once the Scheme is fully rolled out, each new biometric would need to be checked against upwards of 60 million other records).

At a technical level, biometrics differ in a variety of ways. These include *False match rate*—the probability that a person's biometric matches the enrolment template of another person, *False non–match rate*—the probability that a person's biometric fails to match their own enrolment template and *Failure to acquire rate*—where the submitted biometric is too poor for the system to make a reliable decision[21]. For example, the failure to acquire rate for fingerprints is affected when taking fingerprints from people with no fingers, or whose fingerprints have been damaged through manual work. Moreover, not all biometric systems are built equally. There may be performance differences between two implementations of the same biometric. Environmental issues such as lighting and usability issues such as user–interfaces that cater for individuals with disabilities can have dramatic implications for the effectiveness of system. The quality of the technologies used to collect and compare the biometrics also varies widely. For instance a simple photograph of the face from a mobile–phone camera could collect good images whilst a high resolution scanning technique using 3D technology would offer greater opportunities to differentiate between individuals.

Verification

Once an individual is successfully enrolled into the Scheme and their data is held on the National Identity Register, the Scheme is intended to provide a variety of verification services. At the simplest level, in some circumstances, all that may be required is for an individual to present their identity card when asked to verify their identity. Such a 'flash and go' check would involve checking that the card appears genuine and has not been obviously tampered with and that the person presenting the card 'looks like' the person whose image appears on the card.

More sophisticated verification processes are also envisaged, for circumstances where a higher level of identity assurance is required. The next level would involve the presentation of the identity card and the use of a Chip–and–PIN-type process whereby the individual puts their card in a specialist card reader and enters their secret PIN number to confirm that the card is theirs. This may also be compared with a visual check of the card. (It is unclear at this stage whether the PIN number would be checked against encrypted information held on the card or if the PIN would be checked against a central server. Most bankcards allow both a local check (for low–risk transactions) and a remote check (for high–risk transactions) which can include confirmation that the card has not been marked as lost or stolen).

There is growing evidence that PIN numbers are not particularly secure (people often use the same, memorable PIN for all their cards and PINs can be divulged[22]) and are deemed inappropriate for government identity management access in high–risk applications[23].

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[20] Ibid. Emphasis added

[21] Science and Technology Select Committee report, 2006, Section 17 and Appendix 2

[22] http://www.idfraud.org.uk/ and
http://www.which.co.uk/reports_and_campaigns/money/reports/banking_and_borrowing/Half_risking_bank_fraud_news_article_557_138786.jsp

A third level of check would involve checking the card and the biometric details of the individual whose identity is being verified. Thus, in addition to entering their PIN an individual might also be asked to present their biometric (again, it is unclear at this time whether the biometric would be checked against a local copy held on the card, or against the biometric stored on the National Identity Register).

In order to do these more sophisticated verifications, organisations would need to be suitably accredited, would need to invest in appropriate card readers (although, presumably, there is a possibility that the existing Chip–and–PIN infrastructure including card readers could be used) and, if required, suitable biometric readers. These would need to be connected to the identity verification services using appropriate secure communication links. Depending on the verification services offered, it may also be possible to integrate the verification process with existing organizational systems. For example, trusted organisations might be able to combine identity verification with a data push whereby the individual's current address details (as held on the Register) could be delivered to the organisation's internal systems to populate their databases.

According to the Identity Cards Act (2006), each time a formal verification of information held on the Register is made, an audit trail record is kept, which presumably would include data about when and where the verification took place (e.g. Elizabeth Yapp had her identity verified by a bank in May 2008, although it is likely that the audit trail would be much more detailed than this: Elizabeth Yapp had her identity verified by bank ABC, using verification-type 23, branch 123, using terminal xyz, at 10.13 on 9 May 2008. She entered her PIN and presented a fingerprint biometric for her right thumb. The verification took .13 seconds to process).

Changes to the process arising from the Delivery Plan 2008

According to the 2008 Delivery Plan, the process as described above has been changed significantly.

The first change involves the proposal to roll out the first cards to a distinct subset of the UK population, namely workers in areas of critical national infrastructure, such as airside transportation workers. Whilst these do provide a size limited subset of the population, enabling a small scale trial of the enrollment and verification processes, it would suggest that for the Scheme to be used as a verification and not just enrolment process it would probably be necessary to implement a separate 'temporary' National Identity Register (due to be ready for the end of 2009), that could be used by, for example, airports, to verify on a regular basis, the identity of all those who are moving airside. Thus, the delivery of the Scheme could involve the building (i.e. procurement, design and delivery) of two Registers, the first 'stand alone' system for these workers and the second, later, system for the population as a whole.

In this context it is important to recall the leaked emails that appeared in the Sunday Times in July 2006 from key civil servants associated with the Scheme warning of the problems of implementing two Registers:

> Also even if everything went perfectly (which it will not) it is very debatable (given performance of Govt ICT projects) whether whatever TNIR [Temporary National Identity Register] turns out to be (and that is a worry in itself) can be procured, delivered, tested and rolled out in just over two years and whether the resources exist within Govt and industry to run two overlapping procurements. What benchmark in the Home Office do we have that suggests that this is even remotely feasible? I conclude that we are setting ourselves up to fail.[24]

The second key group involved in the first phase roll out is intended to be students and other young people. The government has claimed that "Identity cards will provide many advantages to young people who wish to prove their identity as they start out their independent life in society"[25], although it acknowledges that "There is no requirement to have an ID card when applying for a student loan". Earlier reports that they could use the

[23] http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/csia/~/media/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/csia/id_risk_mgt061127%20pdf.ashx and http://identityproject.lse.ac.uk/s37Response2.pdf, pages 12–14

[24] Email from David Foord, OGC, Sent 8 June 2006, available at http://www.ips.gov.uk/identity/downloads/foi/3905_URN_129.pdf

[25] Meg Hillier answer to Parliamentary question [195095]

card to open bank accounts appear to have been dropped following the revelation that no one from government had actually contacted the UK banks about such a proposal[26].

The effective use of identity cards by young people for anything more than 'flash–and–go' verification will be severely limited until the organisations that they will interact with invest in the necessary card and biometric readers and the provision of appropriate verification services by government. However, as we noted earlier[27] such investment typically requires a sufficient user population to make it worth updating one's infrastructure. With the user population limited, in the early years, to a small group of workers and (optionally) young people, such an investment is unlikely to take place at any significant level.

During the passage of the Act, the government warned that particular amendments that might delay the implementation of the Scheme would be likely to increase the overall cost of the Scheme. This prediction has come to pass, as the government's decision to go for a two–phase roll out of the Scheme has resulted "in an overall increase in costs"[28]. Given the government's espoused goal of managing down the cost of the Scheme, the only possible explanations for the decision to implement a two–phase roll out would appear to be to a) try out the untested elements of the Scheme (enrolment and verification) in an incremental fashion and b) to ensure that at least some identity cards were issued to UK citizens by the end of 2009. The Science and Technology Select Committee warned the Home Office that the impact of any politically imposed deadlines "not override the impact of scientific advice or evidence on the readiness of the scheme"[29] and the government responded that "there is no evidence that Government has thus far imposed politically-motivated deadlines, and no timetable is dictated by the legislation"[30]. A similar point about artificial deadlines is also made by the Independent Security Assurance Panel[31], whose 2007 report is discussed further below.

The second major change indicated by the Delivery Plan and Cost Report is the decision to limit the (initial) scope of the scheme to face and fingerprint biometrics alone (although, interestingly, iris biometrics are explicitly listed in the Act as an example of the kind of biometric that might be used by the Scheme). Iris biometrics have been implicitly dropped since at least the Strategic Action Plan issued in December 2006 but the Delivery Plan and May 2008 Cost Report explicitly talk about fingerprint biometric identity cards.

We have discussed the likely implications of dropping iris biometrics previously[32] and in the summer of 2007, iris expert John Daugman told the BBC that the likelihood of matching errors by using fingerprints alone meant that he expected that the biometric checking element of the Scheme would collapse under the number of false matches after about 6 million people were enrolled[33].

A further innovation announced in the Cost Report is the decision to move biometric enrolment to the "open market". That is, in the same way as the photographs for passports are not taken by the Identity and Passport Service, but rather they are sent in by individuals when they apply for / renew their passports. The particular size and image requirements for passport photographs[34] mean that although it would be possible to use a personal camera to generate the appropriate photograph, most individual now use the open market (i.e. photo-booths and photographic processing shops) to produce the photographs.

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[26] http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/05ec0a02-c9f5-11dc-b5dc-000077b07658.html

[27] http://identityproject.lse.ac.uk/statusreport.pdf, pages 22–26

[28] May 2008 Cost Report, Section 1.2

[29] Recommendation 38 of the Science and Technology Select Committee report

[30] http://www.ips.gov.uk/identity/downloads/govtResponse.pdf Response to Science and Technology Select Committee Recommendation 38

[31] ISAP, page 13

[32] http://identityproject.lse.ac.uk/s37Response2.pdf

[33] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/file_on_4/6922882.stm

[34] http://www.ips.gov.uk/passport/downloads/photos.pdf

It would appear that the government is proposing something similar for the collection of fingerprint biometrics. However, there is no evidence that there is a market for the provision of such services at this time[35], with an Apacs spokesperson stating that he did not feel that biometrics technology was ready for the "rough and tumble of everyday shopping transactions" and a representative from Barclays suggesting that he did not foresee the use of biometrics in the next five to seven years[36]. Whilst clearly such a market can be nurtured, and IPS is asking for suggestions on how this may come about[37], the process of enrolling fingerprints is potentially more sensitive, with increased risk of these biometrics being intercepted or modified as they are collected. Appropriate vetting and training of staff to collect biometrics would therefore be needed, as well as the installation of appropriate specialist equipment. A further complication from leaving biometric enrolment to the open market is that it would have to be provided nationwide, within a reasonable distance of the majority of citizens (i.e., in similar locations to the biographical enrolment centres).

While we are not opposed to the distributed nature of the enrolment process, and in fact we called for a similar scheme in 2005, we don't believe that this is compatible with the technological promises made to Parliament, and will undermine the validity of the scheme as proposed by the Home Office. Other identity schemes could certainly be managed through this form of enrolment, but many of the promised benefits of the Home Office's scheme are now unlikely to emerge.

Finally, integrity problems will likely arise when biometric collection is outsourced. Each outsourced biometric enrolment provider would have to follow the strict standards set by IPS to ensure that biometrics are correctly captured, yet following such standards would introduce significant costs for these providers. Without these standards, however, low quality or invalid biometrics will likely be collected resulting in a logjam in the enrolment process leading to faulty verifications (likely false-rejects).

However biometric enrolment ends up being implemented, it would seem reasonable to expect that, just like the use of photobooths and shops, citizens would be charged to enrol their biometrics. Thus, whilst the cost of the Scheme to government would be reduced, the cost of the Scheme to the citizen would be increased: they would have to pay the enrollment fee (likely to be £30 for 2009/2010), the cost of having a suitable photograph taken plus the cost of enrolling their biometrics.

Further complications arise, however. Given that an obvious location for secure biometric enrolment would be the very centres that are due to undertake the biographical enrolment interviews described above, what is to become of the biographical enrolment process? The Cost Report gives contradictory information on this point. Section 1.2 (about the cost estimate for British Nationals) talks of providing the enrolment of fingerprint and photograph biometrics through the open market whilst section 4.2 (about the cost estimates for foreign nationals) explicitly includes "application processing functions and interview offices where biometrics will be recorded in the UK"[38]. The review of the Authentication by Interview project[39] suggests that it provides a "platform in terms of staff and some of the estate to undertake biometric enrolment when applicants attend for interviews" but also indicates that this will be "looked at" as a part of the public consultation around the Delivery Plan.

One possible explanation for this paradoxical situation is that the interview offices will be used to enrol the bulk of foreign nationals to whom cards are issued (the government expects that 90% of these individuals would be enrolled by 2014/15) but thereafter will be abandoned as a location for mass biographical (and biometric enrolment) for UK citizens[40].

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[35] In the United States, the company Pay by Touch suddenly announced that it was ending all of its fingerprint–based biometrics operations, amid concerns about the near–term prospects for the technology http://www.digitaltransactions.net/newsstory.cfm?newsid=1715

[36] http://www.computing.co.uk/computing/analysis/2216118/generation-payment-systems-3987512

[37] It is not clear how much of the current costs reported are going to be allocated to pump priming the market for biometric enrolment.

[38] Page 11

[39] Projects, page 5

[40] One possible explanation for this, might be that of the 700,000 first time passport applicants who have been through the AbI process and only 200 cases of potential fraud have been identified. The failure to detect large numbers of fraudulent applications, of course, can be

If this analysis is correct, then a Scheme which began with specialized, secure biometric enrollment and careful, face–to–face biographical checks before identity cards are issued ends up as a process where individuals submit their applications indirectly (i.e. by completing a paper or internet form) with face and fingerprint biometrics submitted separately, (subject to confirmation that the biometric belongs to the person making the application, e.g. a signature by a trusted third party), i.e. a process that is virtually identical to the current process for issuing passports.

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explained by *either* the success of the AbI process in deterring fraudulent applications *or* by only small numbers of passport application fraud being undertaken anyway. There is, of course, no scientific way of choosing between these options.

The Crosby Review on identity assurance

If the process by which individuals are enrolled into the Scheme is reverting towards the traditional process of applying for a passport, then the role of the Scheme for identity verification and assurance becomes more significant. In this case, the report by Sir James Crosby on challenges and opportunities in identity assurance[41] issued on the same day as the 2008 Delivery Plan is particularly significant.

When Gordon Brown was still Chancellor of the Exchequer, he appointed Crosby to chair the Public Private Forum on Identity Management. The forum was asked to review evolving technologies used for identity management and consider how public and private sectors can work together to maximise efficiency and effectiveness[42]. Crosby began his work in September 2006, consulting widely with government, industry and civil society. He presented his preliminary report to the Chancellor in March 2007 and was invited to produce a fuller report for later that year. Crosby's review was mentioned in the leaked NO2ID report and in the 2008 Delivery Plan and the government has claimed that it has benefitted greatly from the review and is incorporating key elements of it in their plans, a claim that has been challenged by others.

Introducing the concept of identity assurance, Crosby states that "the key element in common between the public and private sectors is the consumer" (1.2) and he therefore defines identity assurance as "a consumer–led concept in which people prove who they are to others, be they retailers, financial institutions, domestic or foreign governments etc" (1.3). In this context, identity is "an informational representation of the chain of life events that is defined by who they are" (1.4). For Crosby, the consumer focus in identity assurance makes it distinct from identity management which, although utilising many of the same technologies, he sees identity management as being designed "to benefit the holder of the information", whereas identity assurance "is focused on bringing benefits to the consumer" (1.6).

In terms of biometrics, Crosby notes that they provide "no 'silver bullet' in identity assurance" (1.19) and pure biometric images are irreplaceable once compromised. He therefore suggests that if biometrics are taken, "the database need only store one of a number of non–unique digital representations (a collection of points on the print) which can, if needs be, be replaced by another non–unique representation" (1.20). That is, from an identity assurance perspective, full images of biometric data should not be held on government databases although, from an identity management perspective, other government departments (such as the police with their collection of unmatched crime scene prints) may find the storage of full images beneficial[43].

In order for the public and private sectors to benefit from an identity assurance scheme, he recognises the importance of widespread and fast consumer adoption, noting that "low–cost schemes have found it easier to persuade citizens of the scheme's benefits and have demonstrated higher take up" (3.5) where low–cost might involve cheap or free tokens and low cost enrolment. It is apparent that the private sector has to be involved in the roll out of any identity assurance scheme and it should build on existing infrastructure.

Given that "it is technically impossible for any identity scheme to provide 100 per cent assurance" (4.7) a quick and efficient repair of identity is also required. Such a process will also help secure public trust in the scheme.

In summary, Crosby presents 10 key principles that, he suggests, will lead to a consumer led assurance scheme that has "universal status". That is, a scheme that would provide significant benefits to both the public and private sectors. Many of the principles he proposes, we suggest, are currently are not found in the national identity scheme as presented in the most recent Cost Report and the 2008 Delivery Plan.

1. *The purpose of any scheme should be restricted to that of enabling citizens to assert their identity with ease and confidence.* It would appear that the identity cards scheme, with its multiple purposes, is still

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[41] http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/6/7/identity_assurance060308.pdf

[42] http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/newsroom_and_speeches/press/2006/press_51_06.cfm

[43] Whitley, E. A., & Hosein, I. R. (2008). Departmental influences on policy design: How the UK is confusing identity fraud with other policy agendas. Communications of the ACM, 51(5), 98-100.

focussed on making it easier for the Home Office to collect information on each citizen rather than making it easy for the citizen to assert rights over their identity information.

2. *The scheme's governance should be designed to inspire the highest level of trust among citizens.* In fact, the scheme is designed in an unaccountable manner. The Independent Scheme Assurance Panel report gives little confidence in this area, as does the ongoing secrecy about the OGC reviews. The proposal for the Identity Commissioner to report to the Home Secretary rather than directly to Parliament also goes against this principle.

3. *The amount of data stored should be minimized.* In this context, Crosby recommends that only non–unique digital representations of biometric images should be stored and that any additional data accessed during enrolment should not be retained. IPS is entirely ignoring this essential point.

4. *Citizens should "own" their entry on any register.* In particular, Crosby suggests that the verification of identity should be performed "without the release of data", i.e. it should not be possible to 'push' data to other public or private sector organizations.

5. *Enrolment processes should vary between individuals and change over time.* Arguably, the changes to the enrolment process for the scheme address this point but we suspect that cost rather than Crosby's recommendation is the main driver.

6. *The scheme should be capable of being rolled out at pace.* As noted above, the government's current identity management plan involves a slower roll out than previously. The benefits will take even longer to accrue, even though the need for solutions is pressing.

7. *The scheme's systems should be closely aligned to those of the banks.* Other than the possible use of the Chip and PIN infrastructure, there is limited evidence that this is happening.

8. *Citizens should be able to rely on their cards being replaced and their identity being repaired quickly and efficiently.* We highlighted this issue in our analysis of the May 2007 cost report but are not aware of any specific steps being taken in this area. However, proposals could arise from the consultation on the Delivery Plan.

9. *Enrolment and any tokens will have to be provided free of charge.* The government is currently committed to the fee for an identity card being no more than £30 in 2009 and 2010. Now the individual will be required to pay additional fees for biometric (face and fingerprint) enrolment. It is unclear by how much the fees will rise beyond 2010. The enrolment and tokens are therefore unlikely to be provided free of charge by the government, unless some department other than the Home Office takes over the scheme.

10. *The market should provide a key role in delivering a universal ID assurance scheme.* The decision to leave the provision of biometric enrolment to the 'open market' can be seen as partly addressing this concern.

For the most part, the current Scheme ignores or violates these principles, except for where the Home Office could perceive costs benefits.

Therefore the Home Office has rejected the invaluable advice brought forward by the Crosby Review through HM Treasury. The Home Office is adamant that it must have a centrally controlled database of irreplaceable biometric data including fingerprints, that the individual citizen must pay for its system, and that the lessons from across government, the private sector, and around the world must be ignored so that the Home Office can have the system of its dreams. In this sense, nearly two years of real consultation is being set aside in favour of hubris.

Detailed analysis of the Cost Report

In addition to the 'headline' figures presented in the Cost Reports, the November 2007 and May 2008 Cost Reports present a more detailed breakdown of the costs of the Scheme, over the ten year reporting periods[44]. By comparing these figures, it is possible to see just how much of an apparent shift in emphasis the new Delivery Plan entails.

		½ 08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	Total
May-08	Common		£275	£275	£250	£275	£275	£275	£260	£250	£245	£230	£2,610
	Passport		£95	£95	£110	£95	£90	£100	£105	£110	£110	£100	£1,010
	ID Cards		£25	£45	£55	£90	£140	£115	£155	£165	£165	£165	£1,120
	Total		£395	£415	£415	£460	£505	£490	£520	£525	£520	£495	£4,740
	Volume		5.6	5.5	5.4	5.9	7.9	10.5	12.5	12.9	13.1	12.2	

		08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	½ 17	Total
Nov-07	Common	£36	£63	£130	£375	£370	£380	£375	£360	£350	£355	£170	£2,964
	Passport	£164	£342	£300	£120	£105	£80	£85	£85	£85	£65	£30	£1,461
	ID Cards	£10	£30	£40	£105	£100	£125	£130	£130	£125	£140	£70	£1,005
	Total	£210	£435	£470	£600	£575	£585	£590	£575	£560	£560	£270	£5,430
	Volume	5.8	5.6	5.9	9.4	10.2	11.2	11.6	11.7	11.8	10.4	11.3	

Table 1 Detailed cost breakdowns, all amounts in £millions.

In order to make sense of the figures for the volume of products issued (i.e. passports and identity cards), the Supplier Framework suggests that a figure of the order of six million passports are issued each year[45]. Thus, when individuals are issued with both passports and identity cards, this would suggest a volume of around 12 million products issued each year. Thus, according to the November figures, there is a fairly rapid rise in the number of products issued from around 5.6 millions passports issued in 2008/2009, to around 10 million passports and identity cards in 2011/12. In contrast, this volume of passports and identity cards is only reached two years later in the May 2008 report (in 2013/14).

As a result, by 2016/17 under the new Delivery Plan approximately 25 million identity cards will have been issued (total number of products issued 2008/2009–2016/17, less 6 million passports issued each year), compared to around 33 million identity cards in the November figures. Assuming a total eligible population of 52 million[46], this means that under the new Delivery Plan, less than half of the eligible population will have an identity card by 2016/17, whereas under the previous implementation plans, over 60% of the population would have been enrolled by this time.

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[44] These figures are given as Table 4 in both reports

[45] Page 36

[46] http://identityproject.lse.ac.uk/accountingreport.pdf, page 7

This also calls into question the feasibility of "wide availability of personalised, joined–up services" by early 2015, as envisaged in the Delivery Plan, as this would suggest just over 10 million identity cards in circulation by this date. With such a relatively small proportion of the population holding identity cards, the financial incentive for firms and government to update their systems to allow for integration with the identity verification services offered as part of the Scheme will be very limited as, in effect, these organisations will have to have two parallel systems: one for the 20% of individuals with identity cards and a second for those using existing forms of identification.

Parliamentarians had been repeatedly told that biometric passports account for 70 per cent of the total cost of the identity cards scheme that includes biometric passports, i.e. that most of the cost of the Scheme is associated with necessary upgrades associated with introducing 'biometric' passports. It has also been regularly stated that breaking down the costs further would jeopardise the ability of the Home Office to secure value for money from the procurement process. The Cost Report tables summarised as Table 1, above, however, do provide such a breakdown although there are marked differences in the breakdown of costs between the two reports.

For example, in the November report in 2008/2009 £63 million is allocated to projects that are common to both the identity card and passport elements of the Scheme, with £342 million specific to passports and £30 million specifically for identity cards. In the May 2008 report, in contrast, the common element is £275 million with only £95 million specifically spent on passports and £25 million on identity cards. The differences over time can be seen in Table 2.

	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Common	£212	£145	-£125	-£95	-£105	-£100	-£100	-£100	-£110
Passport	-£247	-£205	-£10	-£10	£10	£15	£20	£25	£45
ID Cards	-£5	£5	-£50	-£10	£15	-£15	£25	£40	£25

Table 2 Differences between May 08 and November 07, all values in £millions.

There is no obvious explanation for why the split between common elements and passport elements varies so significantly between the two Cost Reports, as the cost of the common elements and passports matches the 70% claim in both breakdowns, see Table 3.

		08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
May-08	Common	70%	66%	60%	60%	54%	56%	50%	48%	47%
	Passport	24%	23%	27%	21%	18%	20%	20%	21%	21%
	ID Cards	6%	11%	13%	20%	28%	23%	30%	31%	32%
Nov-07	Common	14%	28%	63%	64%	65%	64%	63%	63%	63%
	Passport	79%	64%	20%	18%	14%	14%	15%	15%	12%
	ID Cards	7%	9%	18%	17%	21%	22%	23%	22%	25%

Table 3 Percentage of costs by element

One possible answer is that the splitting of the development of the ID card programme from the passport until 2011 hints that the actual costs required for passports over that period is just 23% to 24% of the total. This differs significantly from the Government's claims that 70% of the cost of the ID programme would have to be spent on biometric passports in any case.

The dramatic reduction of 'common' costs after 2011 and significant rise in both passport and ID cards costs in later years seems to confirm that the two are not as closely linked as has previously been claimed. The inclusion of reduced, but unspecified, 'common' costs provides an accounting mechanism for future cross-subsidisation but clearly precludes an expansion of the enrolment centre network to process all passport or ID card applicants.

The rolling timescale

Another consequence of the rolling reporting period for the costs of the Identity Cards Scheme is that it now becomes possible to compare the six-month periods that 'drop off' the start of the Scheme and the extra six months that are 'added' to the cost of the Scheme. That is, in moving from Cost Report 1 to Cost Report 2, it is reported that the £200 million spent in the period October 2006–April 2007 is removed from the total cost of the Scheme and an extra £300 million is added for the extra period October 2016 to April 2017. A similar adjustment (£240 million and £305 million) arises from the move from Cost Report 2 to Cost Report 3 and a further adjustment (£220 million and £275 million) arises from the move from Cost Report 3 to Cost Report 4.

	Period	Cost 'subtracted'	Period	Costs 'added'
Cost Report 2	October 2006-April 2007	200	October 2016-April 2017	300
Cost Report 3	April 2007-October 2007	240	April 2017-October 2017	305
Cost Report 4	November 2007-May 2008	220	November 2017-May 2018	275
	Total	**660**		**880**

Table 4 Identifiable costs arising from changing reporting period

Thus, between October 2006 and May 2008, a total of £660 million pounds has been spent, the vast majority of this presumably associated with the issuing of passports.

Political buy–in

Political buy–in for a Scheme of this size is vital, especially if it is to be used by all government departments as the means of identity assurance across government. As we reported earlier[47], in December 2005 / January 2006 a series of parliamentary questions asked government departments about their plans to use the Scheme. The responses from the departments that were asked were virtually identical, speaking of initial work and the department's membership on the Ministerial Committee on Identity Cards.

In January 2007, Mr Philip Hammond asked a similar question about departmental plans to make use of data on the national identity register when it is established and what the estimated cost to the department of doing so would be. The Parliamentary question was responded to by the MOD, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Cabinet Office / Duchy of Lancaster, Exchequer, and the Departments for Communities and Local Government; Health, Innovation, Universities and Skills; Culture, Media and Sport; Environment, Food and Agriculture; Work and Pensions; Northern Ireland and Business, Enterprise and the Regulatory Reform. The responses were virtually identical: each responding department "will be working with the Home Office prior to the introduction of the national identity scheme to establish how identity information held on the proposed

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[47] http://identityproject.lse.ac.uk/statusreport.pdf, page 35

national identity register might be used to provide easier access to services. It is too early in the process to establish the detailed costs and benefits".

Whilst it is understandable that in 2005/2006, before the Identity Cards Bill was passed, there would be limited buy–in to the Scheme, it seems surprising that such a high profile Scheme still has limited formal buy–in from other government departments as it is still "too early" in the process to make such decisions. With such limited political buy–in, it is unclear how many departments will be able to provide personalised, joined–up services by 2015.

According to the IPS Key Projects Report[48], issues of buy–in and support for elements of the Scheme are not only found in relation to other government departments. For example, in relation to the roll out of the Authentication by Interview (AbI) process, "the level of business support and input from (most internal) stakeholders has been disappointing"[49].

Asking the right questions but at the wrong time

It has generally been recognised that following the departure of many of the key civil servants, consultants and Home Secretaries associated with the early versions of the Scheme there has been increased openness and willingness to discuss the implementation of the Scheme with industry and civil society. As we noted[50], the Identity and Passport Service has been commended for the openness by which it reports on various projects, noting things that went well and things that were less successful. This process continues, with the publication of a report on projects completed in 2007, noting both the problems faced and lessons learned[51]. Moreover, both the Delivery Plan and the May 2008 Cost Report include a series of consultation points that the IPS seeks public input on and the LSE Identity Project will be responding formally to these consultations.

Many of the questions and issues that the Home Office has now put out for consultations are very important. However, the fact that they are being asked at this stage, given that the government has consistently stated that it is being guided by best practice advice from industry and relevant scientific experts[52] and the advanced stage of the procurement process is rather perplexing.

For example, when the IPS asks:

"What kind of information about the Scheme may be needed by organisations that might want to take part in delivering the Scheme" (2.1(ii))

Or

"What sort of advice and support should be provided to the public and other users of the Scheme" (2.2(i))

Or

"How the ways to create an effective market to deliver fingerprint enrolment capability for the Scheme" (3.5(i))

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[48] http://www.ips.gov.uk/identity/downloads/IPS-report-on-key-projects-implemented-2007.pdf

[49] Page 7

[50] http://identityproject.lse.ac.uk/s37Response2.pdf

[51] http://www.ips.gov.uk/identity/downloads/IPS-report-on-key-projects-implemented-2007.pdf

[52] E.g. "The wider UK technology industry have the ability to meet the technological challenges created by the Government's ID card proposals. The technology being considered, which will form the basis of the scheme, has already been used in similar programmes across the world and is well established [Charles Clarke Hansard 18 October Column 800], "I am confident in saying that the technology for a large–scale national identity scheme is available and proven. There are at least 40 projects in 31 countries involving identity storage, the majority incorporating the use of biometric details. If the UK decides to pursue such a scheme, technology will not be a limiting factor". [Lord Mackenzie of Framwellgate Hansard 31 October 2005 Column 62]

Whilst one might expect the responses to these questions to inform the process of designing or procuring the Scheme, it is unclear what impact they can have at this late stage. It is possible that the primary purpose of the consultation is to divert attention from the Crosby review and attempt citizen buy-in to the Scheme.

The Special Projects Report also highlights a range of issues that, again, one might have expected the IPS to have already resolved, given that it is guided by best practice advice from industry. These include having plans for a manual live trial of the Authentication by Interview process in place "from the outset", the fact that the AbI project was the first IPS project to make use of "professional testers" and the realization that "security accreditation must be built into product delivery".

Similarly, the concerns raised by Independent Scheme Assurance Panel[53], especially in relation to Data Governance, indicate that issues that one would expect to have been resolved properly are still in a state of flux. For example, the report states that "**Data governance standards and their management for the NIR and its users across government should be addressed in advance of procurement (and this goes beyond simple data security)**" (bold emphasis in original). It also notes that "the assumption that 'middleware' is suitably advanced to allow the 'loosely coupled' architecture to be connected effectively and securely must be tested". The panel echoes the concerns of the Science and Technology Committee about the need for priorities to be finalised noting that "**the flexibility demanded of the Programme is useful but does not excuse the Programme from the need to adequately detail the requirements for ICT systems, processes and operations**" (bold emphasis in the original). The panel notes that it "has not yet seen the work plan for the development and implementation of identity assurance and data management standards, policies and processes", despite being advised that this work was in progress.

They are asking the right questions but at the wrong time. Many of the issues raised should realistically have been addressed previously, whilst answers to others are unlikely to have any significant effect on the implementation of the Scheme.

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[53] http://www.ips.gov.uk/identity/downloads/ISAP_Annual_Report.pdf

Other issues

Our ongoing observation of the Scheme raises a number of further issues about the likely implementation of the Scheme that we draw to the attention of Parliamentarians.

Reporting responsibilities regarding the security of the Scheme

According to a recent written answer[54] "The system will be fully security accredited before it can commence operation and its operation will be overseen by both the Information Commissioner and the national identity scheme commissioner to ensure that the integrity of the scheme is maintained". The Information Commissioner's Office is responsible for enforcing and overseeing the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act, the Environmental Information Regulations, and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations[55] and has particular responsibilities with regard to data protection. The National Identity Scheme Commissioner (NISC) is a newly created post, written into the Identity Cards Act[56]. At this time, the formal specification of the Commissioner's responsibilities have not been produced, however the Act gives indications of the areas of responsibility and reporting.

The NISC reviews any arrangements "for securing the confidentiality and integrity of information recorded in the Register". Unlike the Information Commissioner, who reports directly to Parliament, the NISC reports to the Home Secretary and it is the Home Secretary who lays any such reports before Parliament. The Home Secretary may exclude aspects of the Commissioner's report and must simply notify Parliament in such cases that part of the report has been excluded.

Whilst it is arguable that the skills necessary to manage the concerns of the National Identity Register may differ from those with the broader implementation of the Data Protection Act, the presence of two lines of responsibility and two different reporting lines on issues of "data protection" is likely to increase the regulatory burden associated with, for example, the accreditation of verification services. Moreover, it is generally acknowledged that the funds and powers allocated to the ICO are insufficient for him to perform his role as effectively as he would like. Whilst the Cost Reports include the cost of the Commissioner "for completeness" it is unclear what budget the Commissioner's office will command and how this will affect his ability to manage all aspects of the security of the Scheme.

OGC reviews

We have commented[57] on the government's continued refusal to publish the results of the early gateway reviews of the identity cards scheme before, reviews which are almost certainly going to be a mixture of amber and green and are increasingly irrelevant to the current Scheme for the reasons outlined above. We simply note that, most recently, the government has used the 1689 Bill of Rights as part of its defence against making these public. In the meantime, the government reports that the Authentication by Interview process has gone through at least three gateway reviews, the results of which will presumably not be made available to the public, let alone all members of the implementation team[58]. Such continued intransigence undermines the political agreement between the citizen and the state, even in situations where national security concerns apply[59].

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[54] Mr Hoban [180402]

[55] http://www.ico.gov.uk/about_us/what_we_do.aspx

[56] His responsibilities are defined in s24

[57] See the Identity Project's responses to the IPS cost reports: Cost Report response from October 2006 available at http://identityproject.lse.ac.uk/s37response.pdf; and Cost Report response from May 2007, available at http://identityproject.lse.ac.uk/s37Response2.pdf

[58] http://www.computerweekly.com/Articles/2007/06/01/224487/civil-servants-told-to-destroy-reports-on-risky-it-projects.htm

[59] http://identityproject.lse.ac.uk/CJM2007.pdf

Will the National Identity Register be connected to the Internet?

When the Home Office Minister appeared before the Home Affairs Committee to speak about Data Security Issues relating to the Identity Cards Scheme, she is reported to have said that the NIR would be hack proof and not connected to the internet[60] whilst by the time the (uncorrected) evidence[61] appeared, it stated that "The National Identity Register, essentially, will be a secure database; it will not be accessible online; any links with any other agency will be down encrypted links".

The government has frequently stated that citizens will be able to access information held on the Register "over the internet" (for example, to verify the information held about them), although this does not necessarily mean that the NIR would be directly accessible over the internet. For example, "we have said that internet access to the record would be free. A process will be outlined whereby people can amend their record simply. It will be there for the convenience of the individual and not to complicate the process or put obstacles in the way of people wishing to do so" [Andy Burnham, Hansard 7 July 2005 Columns 125–126] and "The NIR is not physically connected to the Internet or any publicly available network. The security control procedures designed to connect the NIR to application handling and identity verification systems are among the most sophisticated currently available" [Baroness Scotland, Hansard 15 November 2005 Column 989]. The Earl of Northesk suggested the most likely scenario whereby internet access to data is possible without the NIR being directly accessible over the internet:

> the intention is that the scheme should operate via closed and secure servers. But we also know—because the noble Lord, Lord Bassam, has told us and, indeed, the noble Baroness, Lady Scotland, confirmed it last week—that facility will exist for individuals to access their records on the register via the Internet. I can understand that too. Presumably data will be uploaded to firewalled gateway servers, which will, in turn, access the secure register servers to submit the revised information or, indeed, for verification and validation purposes. In fact, … , there will be a myriad of such gateways, not least to satisfy the law enforcement and national security purposes of the scheme. To that extent, therefore, it will probably be more accurate to say that the register will be "connected" to the Internet, albeit virtually rather than physically. [Hansard, 12 December 2005 Column 1030].

A national identity register or a national population register?

In a recent article[62] the columnist Philip Johnston points out that there have been plans for the National Identity Register to act as a de facto National Adult Population Register, allowing the government to "improve services by increasing the sharing of basic citizen information (contact details such as name, address and date of birth) across central and local government". As written evidence provided by Chris Pounder to the Home Affairs Committee has noted[63], despite numerous opportunities, the government chose to avoid pre–legislative scrutiny of these proposals (for example, as part of the general debate about the Identity Cards Bill), instead a written statement about the proposals was only issued three weeks after the Identity Cards Act had received its Royal Assent. In it, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury noted a 2004 decision that "the Government had accepted a recommendation from the Citizen Information Project (CIP) about using the proposed National Identity Register (NIR) as an adult population register" and reported that the CIP had now completed its work, including the recommendation that "The Identity and Passport Service should be responsible for developing the National Identity Register (NIR) as an adult population database". The proposals were not felt to be an example of 'scope creep' as the Identity Cards Act "includes securing the efficient and effective provision of public services as a purpose of the National Identity Register".

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[60] http://www.theregister.co.uk/2008/04/09/hillier_id_deletion/

[61] http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmhaff/uc365-i/uc36502.htm

[62] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2008/05/12/do1202.xml

[63] Available at http://identityproject.lse.ac.uk/Pounder.doc

To date, however, the specific work required to make the National Identity Register a national adult population register is not listed as part of the Delivery Plan or Cost Reports and the twin track delivery process would appear to limit the likely benefits of the Register in terms of a population register for many years. It is also unclear exactly how much progress is being made in terms of implementing the population register functionality. For example, written evidence by the Office of National Statistics to the Treasury Committee[64] notes that the recommendations from the CIP

> are being taken forward by other government departments, i.e. where the opportunities exist, subject to legislation, to develop systems that have the potential to deliver many of the CIP benefits in the longer term. It is recognised that a statistical imperative alone will not be sufficient to establish and maintain a comprehensive and up to date population register.

> In the UK there are several administrative sources of information about the population that are registered for a particular service e.g. NHS patient registers, NI numbers). None of them are sufficiently comprehensive or up to date to constitute a population register. In particular, there are significant practical difficulties in identifying those people on these registers who no longer live in the UK.[65]

In oral evidence to the Committee[66], Karen Dunnell noted:

> We had a major part to play in a project called the Citizen Information Project. This was done in preparation for the introduction of the national identity card scheme, and the conclusion of that work, which was a very large piece of work, was that the national identity card scheme should go ahead on a voluntary basis and create a register and use existing registers, in particular the one that is used for National Insurance purposes. That is the situation that we are in in relation to that. It would be quite difficult, I think, for the ONS to make a case to Parliament on its own that something like this was necessary. Maybe that will change in the future but until we have something which is actually there and we have a requirement that people change their address and notify somebody when they leave the country, we are not very confident that a register will be suitable for the kinds of purposes that we need to measure the population every year and have a benchmark every ten years.[67]

This lack of clarity about the proposed plans to use the NIR as a population register is particularly puzzling as, on 1 April 2008, the Identity and Passport Service took over responsibility for the General Register Office which oversees the registration of all births, marriages and deaths[68] and James Hall, Chief Executive of the IPS was appointed as Registrar General for England and Wales. A further concern relates to the potential benefits of using the NIR as a population register, which, according to the minutes of CIP meeting on 18 March 2005, identified that "substantial CIP related benefits (address sharing benefits) within HO ID Cards outline business case, amounting to around one fifth of the total"[69].

The scope of the Scheme: British citizens and beyond

The first three Cost Reports separated out the cost of implementing identity cards for UK citizens from related activities for non–EEA foreign nationals, although it was always very likely that the two systems would, in fact, overlap markedly[70] and the Delivery Plan finally acknowledges this: "The Scheme will be available to people

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[64] http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmtreasy/183/183ii.pdf

[65] Page 220

[66] http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmtreasy/uc183-iii/uc18302.htm

[67] Answer to Question 203

[68] http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/news/general-register-office-transfers-to-identity-and-passport-service.asp

[69] http://www.gro.gov.uk/cip/Download.asp?CIPPB(05)Minute03_tcm95-26255.pdf

[70] Analysis of May 2007 Cost Report, page 11

over 16 years old who legally reside or work in the UK. Specifically, it includes biometric visas, enhanced passports (for all ages) and identity cards, including those cards issued to foreign nationals in the form of biometric immigration documents"[71].

[71] Delivery Plan, page 6