



Department of Information Systems

ID Cards - LSE declines to issue further costings because of 'secrecy and contradictions'

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The Identity Project © Department of Information Systems, London School of Economics and Political Science. <http://is2.lse.ac.uk/idcard/>

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The Identity Project

Press release

ID Cards - LSE declines to issue further costings because of 'secrecy and contradictions'

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The London School of Economics (LSE) today publishes the second report of its controversial 'Identity Project'. The [first report from the project](#) [pdf 2.5 MB] was published in June 2005.

Today's report levels criticism at the government over the secrecy of the ID planning process, conflicting statements made by the Home Office and a disregard for Parliament's right to consider important costs and facts related to the scheme.

The report recommends that planning for the ID card be removed from the Home Office and given to Treasury. The report's authors argue that the Home Office is not the appropriate department to deliver or operate the scheme. 'In light of the numerous inconsistencies and conflicts that have emerged, serious unanswered concerns that remain, project dynamics that are dysfunctional and potential outcomes that may be harmful to the public interest we can now no longer support even the principle of an identity scheme owned and operated by the Home Office.' the report says.

The report observes: 'Dozens of questions about the scheme's architecture, goals, feasibility, stakeholder engagement and outcomes remain unanswered. These questions are outlined in this report. The security of the scheme remains unstable, as are the technical arrangements for the proposal. The performance of biometric technology is increasingly questionable. We continue to contest the legality of the scheme. The financial arrangements for the proposals are almost entirely secret, raising important questions of constitutional significance.'

For these reasons, the LSE team has declined to publish further costings for the scheme. In his introduction to the report LSE's Director, Sir Howard Davies observed: 'As this second report shows, the Government have not been very forthcoming in providing details of their proposals. The LSE team stands by the cost estimates outlined in its first report, but changes to the policy made by the Home Office make it difficult now to produce a definitive assessment of the total cost. Other government departments, if they wish to adopt the ID scheme, may opt in at a later date. Any estimates made of the cost of the current proposals may therefore significantly underestimate the total cost of the scheme in the longer term.'

Professor Ian Angell, head of LSE's Department of Information Systems said: 'We don't know what to believe any more. Contradictions, guesswork and wishful thinking on the part of the Home Office make a mockery of any pretence that this scheme is based on serious reasoning.'

Dr Edgar Whitley, reader in information systems at LSE said: 'We have been surprised at how little consistent or reliable information exists about the government's proposals. Claims are routinely made for the scheme and then just as quickly are abandoned or contradicted.'

[Download the report](#) [pdf 1.5 MB]

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