

**NOTICE OF MOTION****CONSERVATIVE GROUP****GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE OF COMMUNICATIONS – THE DATABASE STATE**

“This Council notes with grave concern the Home Secretary’s recent announcement of an Interception Modernisation Programme which will establish a central database of the electronic communications data records of all individuals in Britain. The proposals are as a result of the Government’s adoption into UK law of the EU Data Retention Directive 2006, which requires the introduction of such a scheme for internet communications by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. A public consultation on the proposals is due to take place in early 2009.

Whilst this Council recognises the increasingly complex nature of investigating the terrorist threat, it believes that a database of this sort would represent a serious and unnecessary infringement of the ancient and hard-fought civil liberties of the people of Brighton & Hove and the rest of the country.

This Council agrees with the Information Commissioner who stated recently that such proposals would be “a step too far for the British way of life”. Indeed, such an approach is counter-productive and hands a moral victory to the terrorists, and their apologists, who oppose the very democratic principles upon which our liberal society is founded.

This Council expresses concern with the proposals on the following grounds:

- Cost – Government IT schemes are notoriously expensive. Initial estimates put the potential costs of the Interception Modernisation Programme at up to £12 billion.
- Data security – The Government has an abysmal record of protecting personal information and sensitive data. Indeed, the Prime Minister recently admitted that “we cannot promise that every single item of information will always be safe”.
- Efficacy – a recent report from the U.S. National Academies concluded that such a surveillance system would be inefficient, would create huge numbers of false leads and would be highly unlikely to detect or pre-empt terrorist attacks.
- Surveillance overload – this is another in a long line of intrusive surveillance measures introduced or proposed by this government such as ID cards, the National DNA Database (which stores the DNA of innocent people) and the Contact Point child database.

Therefore, this Council instructs the Chief Executive:

- To write to the Local Government Association and the Office of the Information Commissioner, requesting that they join the council in conveying to the Government their concern about the potential adverse impact on civil liberties of establishing a central electronic database;

Proposed by: Cllr Brian Oxley

Seconded by: Cllr Ayas Fallon-Khan

Supported by: Cllrs Mary Mears, Geoff Wells, Dawn Barnett, Vanessa Brown, Jan Young, Brian Oxley, Averil Older, Ted Kemble, Maria Caulfield, Ann Norman, Jason Kitcat, Bill Randall, Paul Elgood, David Watkins