



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

**Thirsk & Malton Area Constituency Committee**

**North Yorkshire Council**

*Easingwold, Hillside & Raskelf, Huby & Tollerton divisions.*

*Dear colleagues,*

**Re: Wetherby & Easingwold MP Update – 5 December 2025**

I hope you'll forgive me for making this report usually but intentionally focussed on a national issue, but the overreach into the daily lives, activities and civil liberties of residents in Wetherby & Easingwold as proposed by the introduction of mandatory ID cards could be so profound – and unprecedented – that I want to spend some time mentioning it here.

The premise of the argument that ID cards are needed because of the government's inability to control our borders is a weak one. It is true that under this government the number of migrants entering the country illegally has grown exponentially, and consequently those working illegally in the so-called black market is growing at pace, too. However, ministers have failed to explain how mandating that every citizen in the UK must have a digital ID card will fix the problem of people employing illegal migrants.

Under the last government, I voted for the Immigration Act 2016 which introduced new measures to clamp down on companies employing migrants with no legal right to work in the UK. This developed the concept of a "Right to Work", prohibiting banks from opening accounts for those without leave to remain in the UK, extending a criminal offence for landlords who rent to illegal immigrants and strengthening penalties on companies and individuals who employ illegal migrants – increasing civil penalties up to £60,000 per illegal worker employed and criminal sanctions up to 5 years in prison.

Let me give you a live example of why ministers' justification of the need for mandatory ID cards to stop illegal working is a fallacy. A few weeks ago, the police and immigration enforcement officers arrested a foreign national for working illegally at a recently opened barber shop in our constituency. The law already requires the owner of this business to comply with 'Right to Work' checks, risking a fine of up to £60,000 per worker and a custodial sentence for not doing so. I fail to see how requiring an employer to ask for sight of an additional ID card will provide any greater deterrent to employing illegal migrants.

To solve this government's growing problem of illegal working, ministers merely need to enforce laws already in place under the Immigration Act 2016 and prosecute those guilty of employing illegal workers. In our region, only 620 arrests were made in the first 12 months of this government with no evidence of maximum penalties being imposed.

I do not believe the government's track record in developing computer programmes, databases and protecting personal data would convince anyone that the state holding – digitally - the personal details of every citizen in the land is a good idea. The last nationwide computer programme

introduced by government was Horizon, and we all know how that affected innocent sub-Postmasters in our Post Offices.

Finally, major employers such as Jaguar Land Rover fell victim to a large cyber-attack in recent weeks, alongside childcare providers across the UK. As Vice-President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, I regularly raise the need for allied nations to take seriously the threat of hybrid warfare, including cyberattacks with the capacity to destabilize the economy or civil society.

In summary, if there is an argument to be made that there's a balance between civil liberties and national security, the current government has failed to make it. Instead, introducing mandatory digital ID cards has been a knee-jerk reaction but with huge ramifications for all citizens.

I will be voting against any legislation to introduce mandatory ID cards.

*Yours ever,  
Alec*