

Wiltshire Council

**Council
13 July 2010**

Notice of Motion No. 12
Political Reform and Freedom bill

**From Councillor Jon Hubbard, Melksham South division and Councillor
Peter Colmer, Cricklade and Latton Division**

‘That:

Council notes:

The new Government's commitment for much needed political reform and the restoration of our civil liberties.

Council welcomes:

The proposal to bring in a proportionally elected second chamber ensuring that all Wiltshire residents have a full and proper say in who represents them;
Proposals to regulate party funding increasing transparency to Wiltshire residents of how their political parties operate;
The proposal to hold a referendum to give people a chance to vote to end First Past the Post elections for Local Authorities, such as Wiltshire Council, and the House of Commons;

Council also welcomes the introduction of the Freedom Bill, which will enhance the lives of Wiltshire residents by:

Scrapping the illiberal ID cards scheme;
Bringing to an end to the fingerprinting of children in schools without their parent's consent;
Introducing better regulation of CCTV cameras;
Placing significant restrictions on the DNA database;
and restoring the right to protest.

Council resolves to write to Wiltshire's MPs asking for their support in Parliament when these bills are heard

To write to the Deputy Prime Minister giving this council's support to the proposed bills'.

Supporting information on the Freedom Bill attached

Notice of Motion No. 12 – Supporting Information

Queen’s Speech – Freedom (Great Repeal) Bill

“Legislation will be brought forward to restore freedoms and civil liberties through the abolition of identity cards and repeal of unnecessary laws.”

A Freedom or Great Repeal Bill would address concerns around what has been described as a tidal wave of criminal justice legislation in recent years. It also provides an opportunity to strengthen the accountability of bodies receiving public funding in light of lessons learnt so far from the operation of the Freedom of Information Act.

The purpose of the Bill is to:

Roll back the State, reducing the weight of government imposition on citizens that has increased in recent years through legislation and centralised programmes.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

The exact content of the Bill will be announced in due course and could cover a range of benefits, including:

- Restoring freedoms and civil liberties.
- Providing for greater accountability of the State to citizens.
- Reducing the burden of Government intrusion into the lives of individuals, by repealing unnecessary criminal laws.
- Strengthening the accountability of bodies receiving public funding in light of lessons learnt so far from the operation of the Freedom of Information Act.
- Introducing new legislation to restrict the scope of the DNA database and to give added protection to innocent people whose samples have been stored.
- Allowing members of the public to protest peacefully without fear of being criminalised.
- Ensuring anti-terrorism legislation strikes the right balance between protecting the public, strengthening social cohesion and protecting civil liberties.
- Protecting privacy by introducing new legislation to regulate the use of CCTV.
- Ensuring the storage of internet and email records is only done when there is good reason to do so.

The main elements of the Bill are:

The exact content of the Bill will be announced in due course and could cover a range of policies, including:

- The extension of the scope of the Freedom of Information Act to provide greater transparency.
- The protection of historic freedoms through the defence of trial by jury.
- The reform of libel laws to protect freedom of speech.
- The repeal of unnecessary criminal offences.
- Adopting the protections of the Scottish model for the DNA database.
- The restoration of rights to non-violent protest.
- Safeguards against the misuse of anti-terrorism legislation.
- Further regulation of CCTV.
- Ending of storage of internet and email records without good reason.

Source: www.number10.gov.uk

'The official site of the Prime Minister's Office'

25 May 2010