



Craig Whittaker MP

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Passports Contract

Thank you for contacting me about passports.

There has been much concerned comment about the preferred bidder for the new passport contract; fortunately, there are a number of points that can be made to allay those worries.

I can reassure you that the preferred bidder was selected following a rigorous, fair, and open competition. The company demonstrated that they will be best able to meet the needs of the passport service with a high quality and secure product at the best value for money for customers and the taxpayer.

All personal data is added to the biometric chip in the passport in the UK and this will continue to be the case with the new contract.

It has been the case since 2009 that the Home Office does not require passports to be manufactured in the UK. A proportion of passports have been made overseas since then with up to 20 per cent of blank passport books currently produced in Europe with no security or operational concerns.

It is also true that the preferred bid will save the taxpayer approximately £120 million during the lifetime of the new contract, while the factories in Fareham and Heywood are expected to create up to 70 jobs across the two locations.

The preferred bidder is an experienced and trusted company which already works with the Government on the production of UK driving licenses, UK Biometric Residence Permit cards and on e-gates at the border. The terms for this procurement process have also been completely transparent. They are in line with UK law, as well as both EU and World Trade Organisation rules, and will meet a key objective of Government procurement regulations which is to keep delivering the best value for money.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP