

[Keystone cops](#) [1]

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If proof were needed that our government institutions have a lot of fat to trim, consider the arrest earlier this week of Andy Coulson by Strathclyde police.

The former communications director for David Cameron was detained by seven Strathclyde police officers at his London home at 6:30 am on Wednesday before being driven all the way to Glasgow where he was formally charged at 10 pm for alleged perjury.

Yes, that's right ? seven cops from Glasgow hurtled down the M1 to London, rounded up Mr Coulson and then hurtled back to Glasgow. Seven! What on earth were they expecting? Mr Coulson barricaded in his home and yelling ?Come and get me, you dirty rats!? followed by the rat-tat-tat of machine gun fire?

Such a high profile operation would clearly have involved the most senior staff in Strathclyde police in the decision-making process. Did no one speak up and say: ?Wait a minute. Seven cops driving to and from London is gonna cost a lot. There's a couple of drug gangs about to have a bust-up and we could use the lads there. Why don't we just drop Coulson an email, demanding his appearance at our station here. EasyJet does a same-day return for about a hundred quid.?

But there's no such mentality with other people's money. So seven coppers blew hundreds, if not a couple of thousand, pounds on overtime, accommodation, food and fuel to haul in the dangerous Mr Coulson. In the greater scheme of things, that may not seem like a lot but as any household or business knows, sound long-term budgeting comes from counting the pennies on a thousand decisions a day.

We have our own problems with the coalition government's economic policy but we also have huge sympathy for George Osborne's biggest challenge ? overturning a mentality in government institutions that has no real regard when it comes to spending taxpayer money.

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