Published on *Adam Smith Institute* (http://www.adamsmith.org)

First we kill all the bureaucrats [1]

Written by **Tim Worstall** [2] | Sunday 11 December 2011

Yes, I know, Henry IV by Willy Shakes, it's "first we kill all the lawyers". But *tempus mutandis* and all that and I'm afraid that the time has come to cleanse the land of bureaucracy. Simply attack with fire and sword and chase anyone with a clipboard into the wilderness [3].

> But with the addition of a heavy helping of red tape, a police force managed to stretch the description to 45 pages in a 10,000-word tendering document for catering firms supplying snacks to beat officers.

This is not how you deal with such matters. How you do deal with such matters is a phone call to the local sarnie shop and a request for 150 rounds of sandwiches to be ready at 10 am tomorrow please. Yes, I do know this, I have long experience of the catering industry, have even at one time owned a delicatessen.

> Lothian and Borders Police in Scotland published the ?invitation to tender? in October, setting out the precise requirements for sandwiches, crisps and bottles of water in lunchboxes for officers on duty at football matches in Edinburgh.
>
> The force, which has up to £70,000 to spend on just 7,500 packed lunches per year, specifies that officers will require a baguette measuring 11 inches long, and containing one of 17 different fillings set out in a separate spreadsheet, which include brie and cranberry, smoked salmon and cream cheese and prawn mayonnaise.

Who on earth came up with the idea of an annual tender for such a requirement? We're talking of an average of 20 sandwiches a day: and how on earth can a sarnie, drink and crips cost £10 a pop?

> Other sections of the document cover health and safety rules, requirements for environmentally-friendly packaging, compliance with anti-discrimination and anti-bribery laws, as well as a host of financial and legal clauses.

This is all to give the police officers who attend footie and rugby matches their legally mandated free lunch. Venues which, I am absolutely certain of this, all have their own catering operations. And really, even if a pie won't do (which, given Scottish pies, they might not), have we really reached the point where a police sergeant of some 20 years service is considered incapable of organising the delivery of 150 mixed baps from Greggs the Baker?

Yes, yes, I know, how trivial, Tim's getting worked up over nothing: but I'm afraid this is how the entire country is being run. And I really cannot think of a solution that does not involve the phrase "kill them all".

Although I will accept one which allows us to crush these enemies and hear the lamentations of their women.

blog comments powered by Disqus [5]

Source URL: http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/regulation-industry/first-we-kill-all-the-bureaucrats

Links:
[1] http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/regulation-industry/first-we-kill-all-the-bureaucrats
[2] http://www.adamsmith.org/taxonomy/term/5778
[3] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/howaboutthat/8940443/Police-force-invites-tenders-for-70000-of-sandwiches.html
[4] http://disqus.com/?ref_noscript
[5] http://disqus.com