

## How the Senior Civil Service deal with Rats

The various branches of the armed forces like to tease each other - see *How the Military deal with Snakes* elsewhere on this website.

Here is the equivalent inter-departmental teasing, gathered together by a necessarily anonymous senior civil servant.

### How the SCS deals with Rats

1. **Cabinet Office:** sets up a Committee of Inquiry to report within two years, chaired by a retired politician with expertise in banking and finance (and coincidentally a former flatmate of a Minister) whose name was found in the list of the great and the good. He is listed as an expert in rating.
2. **Home Office:** identifies some species of rats that appear not to merit sufficient points to remain in the country under immigration rules, but fail in a court case on deportation as documents are submitted late and appear to be badly chewed, thus obscuring legal arguments.
3. **Foreign Office:** advise that under international law it is not possible to act without a United Nations resolution, but send senior diplomat to West Indies to investigate their possible approach to similar problems.
4. **Scottish Office:** claims rat problem would not have existed but for Brexit and advise on the need for a referendum on ratifying additional transitional arrangements for exporting new brand of Scottish rat haggis.
5. **Welsh Office:** make submission for special subsidy for the erection of bi-lingual signs to advise on risks of rat infestation from England.
6. **HM Treasury:** rule out extra funds to deal with the problem but instigate several contracts to consultancy firms on how to best apply private sector expertise to the problem. In the mean-time propose a rat tax to fund the studies.
7. **Transport:** put forward startling statistical cost benefit model that demonstrates that progress will only be made by building more roads and high-speed rail links to allow rat catchers to be ferried round the country on average 40 minutes faster.
8. **DEFRA:** protest that the increase in rats is part of a long-planned initiative to re-wild parts of East Anglia, Birmingham and London that they have always intended to promote once we had left the EU and their grey squirrel, parakeet and beaver policies had been shown to be successful.
9. **Northern Ireland Office:** require a large increase in funding for the building of heated barns in which to keep trapped rats for observation before export to the EU via Dublin.
10. **Health:** insist that the policy should follow the science and require a lockdown for another year while food waste is reduced to starve rats out. In the meantime, Professor Whitty would deliver weekly news conferences on progress and in TV ads fronted by him and a man in a white coat.
11. **Work and Pensions:** lobby for a new annual winter rat payment to be administered by local offices when claimants present a suitable number of rats' tails. Require funds for a pilot study on Merseyside.
12. **Defence:** mobilise the air force to carry out an aerial survey of rats using new technology to be bought from the USA; alert the navy to give weekly reports on rats

leaving naval vessels in all dockyards; make the case for new drones to be bought to allow the army to target rats with small rocket propelled devices; set up a Committee to sort out which service policy should be given priority given funding shortfalls; and in the mean-time instruct the SAS to eat as many rats as they can.

13. **Revenue and Customs:** make case for VAT to be raised on all rat products including rat poison, but say rat tax proposed by the Treasury is unworkable for technical reasons and certainly without an increase in their IT budget.
14. **Education:** set up a bursary for academic studies in research councils on rat behaviour, to report within ten years.
15. **Attorney General:** advise that the targeting of rats from drones as proposed by the MOD may be lawful under international law provided that there is a suitable dossier authenticating the risk from rat infestation. The full advice should not however to be published for legal reasons.
16. **Office of National Statistics:** report that according to the latest statistical information available from 1999 there should not really be a rat problem, but suggest further evidence should be gathered by commissioning an ONS random sample study under which all respondents would be paid £25 to report their recent rat experience in a matched sample to be carried out over three years.
17. **10 Downing Street:** set up a photo opportunity in which the Prime Minister can be seen in a high viz jacket and a hard hat holding up the corpse of a dead rat to the admiring but anxious gaze of a small child, and telling her that there is nothing to be worried about.
18. **Digital, Culture, Media and Sport:** lobby for funding for the BBC for a new prime time series called “Splat the Rat” hosted by Joe Wicks in which rats are to be pursued by teams of sporting and theatre celebrities. They would later cook the rat meat in new UK recipes from around the regions such as Lancashire rat pot, Yorkshire rat pie, and Cornish ratsie. In the meantime DCMS propose hiring unemployed musicians to attempt to pipe the rats out of the country.

And Stefan Czerniawski added that:-

- **MHCLG:** are repeatedly told by Local Authorities that there isn't a rat problem in the first place, but choose to take no notice of their practical experience, still less to share that insight across the rest of government.

Martin Stanley