

Summary of responses to the Opportunity to Comment Process

As part of the badger control licence application process, members of the public were invited to provide information (on an entirely confidential basis) on material issues that may be relevant to the determination of the licence application.

Opportunity to Comment Period

The opportunity to comment (OTC) ran from 18 February to 16 March 2016, for 29 new applications and/or expressions of interest areas, covering the counties of Cheshire, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Somerset, Wiltshire and Worcestershire. Notices were placed in the local press and sent to Local and County Councils, it was also advertised on the GOV.UK website. A total of 939 responses were received.

County Breakdown of OTC responses

The table below shows the breakdown of the responses received for each of the nine counties involved.

County	Total	County	Total	County	Total
Cheshire	145	Dorset	81	Somerset	113
Cornwall	153	Gloucestershire	87	Wiltshire	75
Devon	125	Herefordshire	57	Worcestershire	60

General Themes

A number of general themes were raised in the 939 responses which included public safety, recreation activities, tourism and business and ecological concerns. A summary of these is listed below:

- A total of 661 responses raised a general concern that they believed a licence could have an impact on businesses in the county as a result of people avoiding the area, if badger control was to take place.
- A total of 386 responses raised health and safety concerns, of which 350 responses were linked to concerns regarding recreational activities. Respondents expressed concerns about their safety when walking on public footpaths, dog walking at night, wildlife watching, horse riding, and camping when shooting was taking place.
- A total of 192 responses had concerns surrounding the ecology/ecosystems, with some respondents believing that a reduction in the badger population may have an impact on other species.
- A total of 157 responses raised general concerns about the impact on tourism.
- A total of 116 responses related to vaccination.

Material Issues

The OTC process identified a total of 46 specific material impacts on businesses/persons in the nine counties involved. The relevant companies will be notified of these responses, which relate to their area. The potential material issues will need to be considered and addressed by the applicants as part of their applications.