



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Our ref: RFI 6296
Date: 13/03/2013

Dear [REDACTED],

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Badger Cull Questions

Thank you for your request for information about the two pilot culls in West Somerset and Gloucestershire, which we received on 13/02/2014. We have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

The EIRs apply to requests for environmental information, which is a broad category of information defined in regulation 2 of the EIRs. Public authorities are required to handle requests for environmental information under the EIRs. They give similar access rights to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

1. How many badgers did you hope to kill in Somerset?

&

2. How many badgers were actually killed in Somerset?

The initial target set in the license was the removal of 70% of the population of the local badgers or 2081. This was revised to 1020 in light of further information obtained about the population level. 940 were removed in total during the West Somerset Pilot, including the extension.

3. How long was the cull period supposed to be?

&

4. How long did it take?

The license originally allowed for six weeks of badger control activity- on the advice of the Defra Chief Veterinary Officer, Natural England extended this by three weeks.

5. Did you intend all the killed badgers should be shot?

&

6. Were the badgers that were killed shot?

All badgers that were removed by the pilot culls were culled via cage trapping or controlled shooting, as per the terms of the license granted to the cull companies.

7. How much did the Somerset cull cost (including police costs)?

&

8. How much did it cost per dead badger?

We do not hold the data in a format that allows us to provide costs in that level of detail. The total costs of the cull incurred by Defra and its agencies are still being calculated. The information you have requested is therefore exempted under regulations 12(4)(a), information is not held when the applicant's request is received, and 12(4)(d), material which is still in the course of completion, unfinished documents or incomplete data.

However, you may find it helpful to see Defra's published 2011 Impact Assessment which provides information on projected costs:

<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/diseases/atoz/tb/documents/bovine-tb-impact-assessment.pdf>.

9. Would this money be better spent on dredging the rivers of the Somerset levels last year as the locals asked?

We are not in a position to comment on this.

10. How much would a vaccination programme cost for Somerset?

Please see Defra's published impacted assessment from 2011, which details the cost of vaccination in the two pilot areas.

11. How many badgers did you hope to kill in Gloucestershire?

&

12. How many badgers were actually killed in Gloucestershire?

The initial target set in the license was the removal of 70% of the population of the local badgers or 2856 badgers. This revised down to 1,645 on the advice of the Defra Chief Veterinary Officer in light of further information being received on population levels. 921 badgers were removed from Gloucestershire in total.

13. How long was the cull period supposed to be?

&

14. How long did it take?

The license originally allowed for six weeks of badger control activity. This was extended by Natural England on the advice of the Defra CVO for an additional eight weeks, although the cull ended on the advice of the cull companies 5 weeks into the extension granted by Natural England.

15. Did you intend all the badgers should be shot?

&

16. Were all the badgers killed shot?

Please see the answer for Somerset above.

17. How much did the Gloucester Cull cost (including Police costs)?

&

18. How much did it cost per dead badger?

Please see question 7 and 8.

19. Would this money be better spent on dredging the rivers of the Somerset levels last year as the Somerset people asked?

Please see question 9.

20. How much would a vaccination programme cost for Gloucestershire?

Please see question 10.

21. What percentage of Defra staff honestly think it was a success?

We are not in a position to comment on this.

Regulation 12(4)(a)

This exception relates to information which is not held at the time when an applicant's request is received. Regulation 12(4)(a) is a qualified exception, which usually means that a public authority is required to conduct a public interest test to determine whether or not information should be disclosed or withheld. However, the Information Commissioner, who is the independent regulator for requests made under the EIRs, takes the view that a public interest test in cases where the information is not held would serve no useful purpose. Therefore, in line with the Information Commissioner's view, Defra has not conducted a public interest test in this case.

Regulation 12(4)(d)

This exception relates to material which is still in the course of completion, unfinished documents or incomplete data, applies to the details of cull costs including the cull extension which are still in the course of completion. Currently the data are still in a raw state and a detailed summary has not been completed. There would be no public interest in disclosing the incomplete data or estimates as this would not meet the purpose of your request which is to ascertain the costs of the pilot cull in Somerset and Gloucestershire. Estimated figures may change as collating expenses and checking takes place.

This exception also requires the public authority in question to carry out a public interest test. Defra has concluded that the public interest in withholding the information sought outweighs the public interest in its disclosure. Releasing the details of costs now before they've been fully collated and checked and then potentially having to release another set of costs later on would only mislead and confuse the public. It is logical to wait until there is confidence with the figures. There is a strong public interest in deferring disclosure of the information until it is complete.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIRs, and in keeping with the government's Transparency Agenda, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you will now be published on www.gov.uk together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. Please note that this will not include your personal data.

I attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

I also attach Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours,

Defra TB Programme

Ccu.correspondence@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A

Copyright

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Annex B

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF