



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

[REDACTED]

Our ref: RFI 6410
Date: 04 April 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: The Independent Expert Panel Report

Thank you for your request for information about the report into the recent badger culls prepared by the Independent Expert Panel (IEP), which we received on 14 March. 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).

Your questions and the responses are below:

1. On what date did Defra and/or ministers and/or ministerial staff first receive the report of the Independent Expert Group on the pilot trials of controlled shooting of badgers?

The report was received by Defra on 5 March.

2. Was the IEP report then subject to discussion or negotiation which led to substantive revisions being made?

The IEP led on the preparation of and had ownership of their report. Defra did not influence the content, conclusions or recommendations, nor were there any negotiations. We do not know of any substantive revisions made by the IEP, although we understand that some amendments were made following the quality control process of proof-reading and data checking.

3. Starting with the report first received, how many draft versions of the report were there?

Defra is unaware of the number of drafts as the members of the IEP shared versions between themselves which Defra did not have sight of or received. Defra had sight of two drafts and by their numbering, there were at least 10 versions, starting with skeleton reports and finishing with the final version.

4. On what date was the IEP report finalised?

It was finalised on the 5 March and forwarded to Defra the same day.

5. What factors currently are causing a delay in the publication of the IEP report?

Ministers wished to review the report carefully in order to decide whether or not to roll out the policy. Given the complexity and detail of the report, Ministers needed time to view the report and reach their decision. The report has now been published and can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/300382/independent-expert-panel-report.pdf

The Government's strategy which was published on 3 April can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plans-to-eradicate-bovine-tb-in-england-unveiled>

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 have attached an annex 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 sincerely,

Defra TB Programme

Email: ccu.correspondence@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Annex

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