



Opportunity to Comment 2017: Summary of Responses

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

Opportunity to Comment Period

The opportunity to comment (OTC) ran from 28th March 2017 to 24th April 2017, covering the counties of Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire. Notices were placed in the local press and advertised on the GOV.UK website. A total of 82 responses were received for this period.

County Breakdown of Responses

The table to the right shows a summary of the responses received broken down by county.

County	Total
Gloucestershire	30
Somerset	23
Dorset	16
Wiltshire	16

General Themes

A number of general themes were raised by respondents. These were public safety, tourism and business, recreation, ecological concerns, perturbation and vaccination. Specifically:

- 34 responses raised concerns for public safety; an additional 19 responses expressed similar concerns regarding recreational activities. Respondents expressed concerns about their safety when walking in the countryside and on public footpaths, dog walking at night and wildlife watching whilst shooting was taking place.
- 24 responses raised general concerns about tourism and business. The majority believed that a licence could have negative impacts on visitor numbers and local services such as wildlife research and rescue centres.
- 18 responses raised concerns surrounding ecological impacts such as increased fox numbers and impacts on the habitat of ground nesting birds and other wildlife.
- 7 responses raised concerns about an increase in perturbation, with some concerned that their livestock may become infected in future.
- 4 responses relate to the possibility of using vaccination as an alternative.

Issues

The analysis identified a total of 13 issues raised by businesses/persons in the four counties involved. Companies will be notified of these responses if they relate to their area. The potential issues will need to be considered and addressed by the applicants as part of their licence application.