

Opportunity to Comment 2018:

Summary of Responses



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

Opportunity to Comment Period

The opportunity to comment (OTC) has been run in counties across the High Risk and Edge Areas where badger control licences have been applied for or expressions of interest have been received. Public notices are placed in the local press and advertised on the GOV.UK website. To see the summary of responses for previous OTCs please visit the GOV.UK website.

A total of 567 responses were received for the most recent OTC that ran from 5th March 2018 to 19th March 2018. The table below shows a summary of the responses received, broken down by county (the former county of Avon consists of the areas: Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire).

County	Total
Avon	101
Berkshire	84
Derbyshire	83
Hampshire	69
Oxfordshire	85
Shropshire	63
Staffordshire	41
Warwickshire	34

2018 General Themes

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

- **Public Health & Safety - 135 responses.** Respondents expressed concern about their safety whilst shooting occurred when walking in the countryside, on public footpaths and wildlife watching. An additional 28 responses expressed similar concerns regarding recreational activities.
- **Tourism & Business - 83 responses.** The majority of respondents believed that a licence could have negative impacts on visitor numbers and local services, such as wildlife research and rescue centres.
- **Ecological Impacts - 72 responses.** Concerns included the impact to other wildlife species.
- **Perturbation - 13 responses.** Concerns included worries that farmers' livestock may become infected in future.
- **Vaccination - 113 responses** regarding vaccination as an alternative method of control.

Applicants will be notified of the responses related to their area. Natural England will take account of relevant measures that applicants have put in place to mitigate for the issues raised prior to the decision of issuing a licence.