

Opportunity to Comment 2020

Summary of responses on applications for a Badger Disease Control Licence

As part of the Badger Disease Control Licence application process, Natural England invited members of the public to provide information on issues that may be relevant to its licensing decision.

Opportunity to Comment period

Natural England has ran the Opportunity to Comment (OTC) over the last eight years in counties across the High, Edge and Low Risk Areas of England where a licence application has been submitted.

Public notices were published in the local press and advertised on the GOV.UK website¹. Responses to previous OTCs are available at: www.gov.uk/search/policy-papers-and-consultations.

Summary of responses

Natural England has received applications for a Badger Disease Control Licence in 2020 to prevent the spread of bovine tuberculosis in cattle. The public were able to comment on how badger control in their area might affect their livelihood or daily activities.

A total of 47 responses were received for the OTC that ran from 17 February 2020 to 2 March 2020. Table 1 shows a summary of responses received in each county.

Table 1: Summary of responses for each county

County	Responses received
Nottinghamshire	15
Leicestershire	13
Lincolnshire	19

General Themes

The following general themes were raised by respondents:

- **Business and tourism (7 responses).** The majority of respondents believed that badger control could negatively impact visitor numbers and local services, such as wildlife research and rescue centres.
- **Recreation (3 responses).** Respondents expressed concerns about their safety when walking in the countryside, on public footpaths or wildlife watching.

¹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/bovine-tb-comment-on-an-application-for-a-badger-disease-control-licence-february-2020

- **Ecological and perturbation (23 responses).** Respondents expressed concerns about the impact on other wildlife species. Respondents also expressed concerns about the effectiveness of the policy, value for money, and impact on the spread of bovine tuberculosis.
- **Vaccination (14 responses).** Regarding vaccination as an alternative control method.

Conclusion

Natural England will notify applicants of the responses related to their area. Prior to making a licensing decision, it will also take account of relevant mitigation measures that applicants have put in place.