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[Redacted]

By email: [Redacted]

Our ref: EIR2021/13744  
24 May 2021

Dear [Redacted]

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Cost of Badger cull 2019 and 2020**

Thank you for your request for information of 21 May 2021 about the cost of badger culling in 2019 and 2020. 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 information request and our response are set out below.

*How much tax money in total was spent on the 2020 cull? How much on the 2019 cull? Amounts to include Everything including police costs, training for the licensed killers, equipment for the killers, money paid out per Badger killed, ammunition, disposal of bodies etc - total cost to tax payer.*

The government's badger control costs for 2019 are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-government-badger-control-costs>

This includes policing costs contributed by Defra.

As the information you have requested is already publicly available and easily accessible to you in another form or format, regulation 6(1)(b) of the EIRs exempts Defra from providing a copy of the information with this response to your request.

The government's badger control costs paper for 2020 is under preparation and will be published in due course.

The information you requested is being withheld as it falls under the exception in regulation 12(4)(d) of the EIRs, which relates to material that is still in the course of completion, unfinished documents and incomplete data.

In applying this exception, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure.



Defra recognises that there is a public interest in understanding the work of Government. We also understand that information in relation to bovine TB surveillance in badgers is a subject of public interest and we accept that providing such information when it is ready for publication is important in demonstrating the transparency of public policy and public funds.

However, releasing information before the results are complete, fully reviewed and finalised would risk misleading the public and may not provide an accurate reflection if it has to be revised as part of the process. Defra will be publishing the information in due course and it will be available to all interested parties on the link above.

There would therefore not be any further public interest to be served by early disclosure of the information which will be available to all interested parties in due course.

We are writing to advise you that the information that you have requested in relation to other costs is not held by Defra. Any costs associated to badgers culled under licence is a commercial matter for licensed cull companies. Defra neither contribute to this process nor holds the requested information.

The information is therefore exempt under regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIRs, which 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's Office (ICO), 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 ICO's view, Defra has not conducted a public interest test in this case.

The remaining questions in your email of 21 May 2021 do not amount to information requests made under the EIRs and/or the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and would be best handled under general correspondence. Therefore, they have been forwarded to Defra's correspondence unit to reply directly. Should you wish to contact them yourself then please email: [defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk](mailto:defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk)

We attach 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

**Information Rights Team**  
[InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk](mailto:InformationRequests@defra.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 11 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to [Redacted], Head of Information Rights via email at [InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk](mailto:InformationRequests@defra.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's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure.

The ICO's offices are currently closed so please visit their website on how to contact them during this period, here:

<https://ico.org.uk>

Additionally if you wish to make a complaint to the ICO please use the following link:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/official-information-concerns-report/official-information-concern/>