

Motions (1)

The following Motion was submitted by Councillor Oliver Patrick:

Motion to support DEFRA's ambition to phase out the badger cull in England

Council stands with our farmers who face the ever-present threat of their herd receiving a positive diagnosis of bovine tuberculosis (bTB). Council believes that our hard-working farmers and rural communities deserve effective, long-term solutions to this disease which is one of the UK's greatest animal health threats.

In 2018, the Environment Secretary commissioned the Godfray Review¹. This review analysed England's cull data and all available scientific evidence, concluding that the Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) should consider alternatives to the current policy of large and repeated badger culls.

In March 2020, DEFRA responded to the Godfray Review by publishing a policy paper: *Next steps for the strategy for achieving bovine tuberculosis free status for England*.² In the foreword, Secretary of State George Eustice MP stated that the government will pursue an exit strategy from the intensive culling of badgers, with a view to phasing it out by the mid to late 2020s.³ These proposals focus on longer-term solutions to the problem of bTB such as improving farm biosecurity, strengthening cattle testing and movement controls, increasing badger vaccination programmes, and continuing to develop an effective bTB vaccine for cattle.

However, despite DEFRA's ambition to phase out the cull, Natural England issued a new 4-year licence for Somerset in September 2020. There are now 5 known cull licences in operation across Somerset:

1. Area 17 licence: expires January 2021⁴
2. Area 18 licence: expires January 2021⁵
3. Area 30 licence: expires January 2022⁶
4. Area 2 supplementary licence: expiry unknown⁷
5. NEW Area 51 licence: expires 2024⁸

¹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756942/tb-review-final-report-corrected.pdf

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-strategy-for-achieving-bovine-tuberculosis-free-status-forengland-2018-review-government-response>

³

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/870414/bovine-tb-strategy-review-government-response.pdf

Proposal:

That Council resolves to ask the Chief Executive / relevant officer to:

- i. Write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to:
 - inform him of our support for DEFRA's ambition to phase out the badger cull, and that we are opposed to repeated badger culling in Somerset
 - offer access to Council land as part of a coordinated badger-vaccination programme
- ii. Continue to refuse permission to cull badgers on SSDC land, and to write to all Parish Councils in South Somerset to encourage them to do the same;
- iii. Engage at the appropriate level with other councils across Somerset to ascertain what steps, if any, that our partners in local government are taking in relation to the issue of bTB;
- iv. Publicise Council's resolution to support DEFRA's ambition to phase out the cull;
- v. Provide councillors with an update regarding all of the above at least prior to the next badger cull due to commence in autumn 2021.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-authorisation-for-badger-control-in-2017>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-authorisation-for-badger-control-in-2017>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-authorisation-for-badger-control-in-2018>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-authorisation-for-supplementary-badger-control-in-2018>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-authorisation-for-badger-control-in-2020>