

183. Motions (Agenda Item 12)

Motion 1

Councillor Oliver Patrick said that badger culling had been happening for many decades and was felt necessary to control bovine TB (bTB) which caused hardship to farmers who were constantly guarding their cattle against it. He mentioned previous control methods which he said were all short-term measures as Somerset was still considered a high risk area. He said that farmers deserved a better solution and that was mentioned in the Godfray Review commissioned by DEFRA, which said it would implement an exit strategy from culling by the mid 2020's. He concluded that his motion was proposed to ensure that DEFRA honoured their promise

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Sarah Dyke.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- The policy of culling should be conducted to its conclusion by DEFRA to monitor its effectiveness in the reduction of bovine TB.
- Until the vaccination programme is properly implemented there is no other option but culling. Hopefully the vaccine would be available by the mid 2020's.
- The loss of a herd of cattle to TB can have a profound effect on farmers and their families.
- The farming community deserves a long term solution to TB which the badger cull programmes does not provide.
- DEFRA also had areas where they were testing the vaccination of badgers.as a comparison to the culling. Writing to DEFRA would only interfere with their programme which was put together by experts.
- Culling is a repugnant and haphazard way of dealing with the disease.
- Pleased to hear that DEFRA are to phase out culling.
- Every mammal including deer, stoats and weasels all carried TB.

In response to a question, the Portfolio Holder for Environment confirmed that SSDC did not allow any badger culling on its land. She confirmed that a relative's cattle had recently tested positive for bTB and that would have a great impact upon them. The badger cull was not working and it was clear that a different strategy was required.

At the conclusion of the debate, a vote was taken and the motion was carried by 37 votes in favour, 8 against and 4 abstentions.

RESOLVED: That Full Council agreed to ask that the Chief Executive:-

- a. write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to:
 - inform him of SSDC's support for DEFRA's ambition to phase out the badger cull, and that the Council are opposed to repeated badger culling in Somerset
 - offer access to SSDC owned land as part of a coordinated badger-vaccination programme

- b. continue to refuse permission to cull badgers on SSDC land, and to write to all Town and Parish Councils in South Somerset to encourage them to do the same;
- c. 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;
- d. publicise the Council's resolution to support DEFRA's ambition to phase out the cull;
- e. provide councillors with an update regarding all of the above at least prior to the next badger cull due to commence in autumn 2021.

Reason: To support DEFRA's ambition to phase out the badger cull in England as a method of controlling the spread of bovine tuberculosis (bTB).

(voting: 37 in favour, 8 against, 4 abstentions)