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An open letter to Derbyshire Police and Crime Commissioner

Dear Hardy Dhindsa - Derbyshire Police and Crime Commissioner,

We are writing to you with our concerns regarding the Derbyshire Badger Cull.

You previously publicly expressed that you are aware of the strong opposition to badger culling that your constituents hold. We therefore ask you to respond to the proposals to manage the delivery of both badger vaccination and culling in edge counties by 26 June 2020:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/.../badger-no-cull-zones-edge-a.../>

You have been quoted saying, "it doesn't make sense to pursue an expensive culling programme at the cost of the taxpayer". However, [Derbyshire Constabulary](#) incurred £35,737 police costs in 2019, despite the cull being cancelled. It is likely these costs will increase with 'Operation Freddo' (operating under the National Operation Cobb) policing the badger cull in the near future.

We are sure you are aware, that in the past, in other counties, patrol groups of protestors and those opposed to the cull have formed and have gone out into the countryside, day and night with the aim of protecting badgers. It is inevitable that opposing groups with very strong opinion may come across one another when tensions are high. It should be a concern that one of these groups will be carrying high powered firearms.

Derbyshire is unique as its badger vaccination programme is the biggest in the UK. The judgement of the judicial review, published last month, ruled it was legal to cancel the cull last year. It was highlighted that there would be public outcry if a vaccinated badger was killed.

The current proposal will not effectively stop a vaccinated badger from been culled. The no-cull buffers will be difficult to enforce. The current suggested buffer will likely allow culling on some parts of a property while forbidding it on others. In practice, this will be difficult to enforce when cull teams work at night and on private land.

An added challenge will be that vaccination licensees will not be told whether they are adjacent to cull land, and, hence, will presumably not know whether no-cull buffers are in place and whether to report suspected breaches to Natural England.

If a badger is harmed in a no-cull buffer it would be presumably a breach of licence and therefore an offence under the 1992 Badger Protection Act. This could be difficult to police and DEFRA has offered no guidance on how to police this situation.

We are appealing to you to please ask the Government, once again, to reconsider their plans when extending the badger cull to Derbyshire. If the cull does happen in Derbyshire, there needs to be legally enforceable no-cull buffer zones to protect vaccinated badgers.

Yours sincerely,

[Derbyshire Against the Cull](#)