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Dr Thérèse Coffey MP
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Peter Chapman MSP
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3/1/18 January 2018

Dear Mr Chapman,

Thank you for your letter of 18 January to the Secretary of State about the Lynx Trust's proposal to reintroduce the Eurasian lynx in the north of England. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

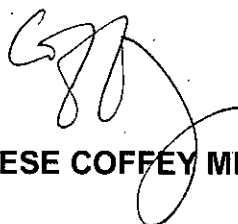
I understand the real concerns that people on both sides of the border have about the Lynx Trust's proposal, which is why any decision needs to be taken very carefully.

As you may be aware, the Secretary of State will be making the decision on advice from Natural England, which has a good understanding of the wide range of stakeholder views, from concerns such as animal welfare to support for the proposal, from both sides of the border.

Natural England's advice to the Secretary of State will include a full technical assessment of the proposal against relevant legislation and International Union for Conservation of Nature guidelines, including an assessment of the overall feasibility of the reintroduction proposal; an evaluation of the environmental and socio-economic risks and benefits; and an assessment of the viability of the reintroduction methodology, monitoring proposals and the adequacy of the exit strategy.

A decision on the licence application will be made in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Thérèse Coffey

DR THERESE COFFEY MP