

Roisin Kelly
Clerk to the Committee for Regional Development
Committee Office
Room 402
Parliament Buildings
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

CENTRAL MANAGEMENT BRANCH
Room 413c
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8GB.

Telephone: (028 905) 41140
Facsimile: (028 905) 40064
Email: alan.doherty@drdni.gov.uk

Your reference: DALO 331
Our reference:

5 February 2010

Dear Roisin

**THE COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT) CONCERNING THE WILDLIFE AND
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BILL**

I refer to your letter of 12 January and attached correspondence from the Committee for the Environment in relation to the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill.

The Committee for the Environment is seeking a view from the Department, on the proposed Bill, particularly in relation to the new biodiversity duty on public authorities that it will introduce.

Departmental officials were aware of the proposals and had previously advised their DOE counterparts that we had no comments to make and this remains our position. Officials from Translink have reviewed the correspondence and have advised that they have been proactive in the sphere of biodiversity by working on a 3-year partnership with the Ulster Wildlife Trust on a Biodiversity Project.

You may therefore wish to note that as a result of this liaison a Biodiversity Action Plan has been drawn up. Reference to this can be found at the following web link:
<http://www.translink.co.uk/biodiversity.asp>.

Translink welcomes the review of the Wildlife Order and the inclusion of a biodiversity duty for every public body.

Invasive, non-native species are a cause of concern for the organisation, particularly Japanese knotweed and to a lesser extent giant hogweed. There is a need for primary legislation to bring the issue of its management and control to the forefront.

The Bill is silent on the sensitive area of dealing with invasive animals such as the grey squirrel and the damage being caused by over-population of animals with little or no natural predators. This is leading to an imbalance in nature and the damage this does to indigenous wildlife, flora and fauna is not addressed by the intention of the Bill as produced.

Translink welcomes the introduction of custodial sentences.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan', written in a cursive style.

ALAN DOHERTY
Assembly Liaison Officer