

Theresa Villiers visits RSPB headquarters

Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers this week visited the headquarters of one of the country's leading environmental charities, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

During her visit to the Lodge in Sandy, Bedfordshire on Wednesday (21 August), the Environment Secretary met the RSPB's newly-appointed CEO, Beccy Speight, to gain a better understanding of the charity's priorities for improving and enhancing the environment.

The visit comes ahead of the government's introduction of the Environment Bill – the first for more than 20 years – later this year, and the UK's exit from the European Union on 31 October.

Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers said:

I want to thank the RSPB and Beccy for welcoming me to the Lodge. It's a truly great example of a charity practising what it preaches and providing a perfect environment for nature to thrive.

Our landmark Environment Bill will underpin the ambition we set out in our 25 Year Environment Plan and help us meet our goal of protecting the environment for future generations.

The measures in the Environment Bill will ensure that environmental ambition and accountability remain at the heart of government after EU exit, improve air quality, restore and recover environmental biodiversity, strive towards a circular economy, and ensure we can manage our precious water resources in a changing climate.

Last month, the government published a [policy statement updating on progress on the Bill](#).

During the visit, the Secretary of State was also given a tour of the reserve by the RSPB's regional director, Jeff Knot, and saw the charity's ongoing heathland restoration project first-hand.

Work began to restore lost heathland in 2005 and now heather seedlings are growing on Sandy Warren. Heathland covered The Lodge for 5,000 years, but almost all of it was lost to forestry and agriculture in the 1800s. Now, a large area is being re-seeded to bring the heathland back to the site.

The government set out its commitment to restoring heathland and other wildlife-rich habitats in its [25 Year Plan for the Environment](#).