Office for Nuclear Regulation

Corporate Plan 2026/27

Large print

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Contents

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1. Foreword

As we enter a transformative era for the nuclear sector, our operational landscape is evolving at an unparalleled pace. Industry momentum is accelerating, driven by the government's ambitious growth agenda and reinforced in the Prime Minister's Strategic Steer to the Nuclear Sector. This rapid progression demands that we transform as an organisation, a requirement that is reinforced in the Nuclear Regulatory Review 2025. This Taskforce report points to a radical reset of the UK's regulatory system to enable the UK to capitalise fully on the strategic benefits of nuclear technology for the nation.

We can be unequivocal: our commitment to safety and security remains paramount – our independent, robust, regulatory decision-making is, and will always be, central to our purpose. But to fulfil our mission effectively in this climate of urgency and economic challenge, we must embrace working differently. As the evolving demands of our environment require us to be agile and responsive, the timing of the Taskforce report presents the ideal opportunity, in the development of our new Strategy, to adjust and refine our approach to be bold, ambitious, and drive meaningful, long-term change.

Our strong yet independent relationship with government enables us to collaborate across the sector, shaping its direction while preserving our regulatory integrity. Our Strategy sets out a modern, agile, and productive approach to regulation, guided by our core values: accountability, open-mindedness, fairness, and supportive. This Corporate Plan starts our journey to translate our strategic vision into clear, measurable outcomes for the year ahead. It sets a clear pathway for how we will drive strategic delivery and our ambition to be a modern, agile, and productive regulator.

We are committed in our role to help secure a safe, resilient, and innovative nuclear sector that supports energy security, national security, and economic growth for the UK, but we need to be in the best possible position to respond effectively. We have introduced a new high-level organisational structure designed to deliver the ambitions of our Strategy and navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. This evolution marks a pivotal moment for ONR – it is about how we organise and structure ourselves to address the Taskforce recommendations and advance both national and global priorities that impact the sector and the public we serve.

This Corporate Plan gives a clear line of sight to our Strategy and supporting Roadmap. It clarifies the deliverables we are committed to complete in the first year of our new Strategy, enabling us to begin our transformation, while delivering our purpose in a rapidly changing environment. It gives us the permission to stop what slows us down and strip out what holds us back, to work even more effectively with all our stakeholders, and to create the right culture for our people.

We are confident that these changes and delivery of our Strategy signal a brighter future for ONR, the sector, and the UK. By being less risk-averse and more open to innovation, and by adopting more efficient processes with reduced bureaucracy, we will regulate in a way that enables the nuclear sector to realise the government's ambitions safely and securely. Together, we will deliver lasting benefits for generations to come.

Nicola Crauford
ONR Chair

Mike Finnerty
Chief Executive/
Chief Nuclear Inspector

2. Who we are and what we do

The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) is the United Kingdom's independent statutory body with responsibility across all its statutory purposes for regulating the nuclear industry.

Our mission is to ensure safe nuclear for a secure and sustainable future

As the UK's independent nuclear regulator, our primary role is to ensure the highest standards of nuclear safety, civil nuclear security and safeguards, and conventional health and safety are maintained across Great Britain, through the exercise of our statutory authority.

We operate at the forefront of a rapidly evolving nuclear landscape, with our remit to:

- regulate legacy nuclear facilities, ensuring there is adequate investment and robust plans in place to maintain these assets safely
- oversee vital programmes of decommissioning and waste management across both civil and defence sectors

- regulate major nuclear new build projects, and support the development of civil new nuclear, ensuring innovation is matched by strong standards of safety and security, and enabling government ambitions to expand nuclear energy and reshape the UK's energy landscape
- regulate the safe and secure operation of generating nuclear power stations, both existing and those newly constructed, to ensure the expected standards across our regulatory purposes are upheld
- regulate the safe transport of civil nuclear and radioactive materials by road, rail and inland waterways
- support dutyholders to comply with the law, enabling them to deliver significant investment in the UK's nuclear defence portfolio, which underpins the nation's Continuous At Sea Deterrent (CASD)

Our nuclear security regulation also covers approval of civil nuclear industry security arrangements, including cyber security of digital technology, regulatory oversight for the security of transportation of civil nuclear materials, and the effectiveness of arrangements to protect sensitive nuclear information. Through our safeguards regulatory regime, we ensure civil nuclear material remains fully accounted for and controlled, enabling the UK to meet its safeguards obligations as set out under international treaties and agreements.

3. Introduction to our Corporate Plan 2026-27

This Corporate Plan creates a clear line of sight from our Strategy, linking our mission and vision to delivery and outcomes.

Our vision is to be a modern, agile and productive regulator enabling innovation and growth

Our new Strategy comes at a pivotal moment for the nuclear sector. The scale of pace and change ahead demands a step change in our regulatory approach and how we set our strategic direction, enabling innovation across the sector. It represents a significant shift in how we will plan for the future, providing us with the agility and flexibility needed to regulate a rapidly evolving sector effectively. It positions how ONR will evolve as a modern, agile and productive regulator, with public trust and strong standards of nuclear safety and security at its core and demonstrates the scale of ambition to succeed as a modern regulator.

Alongside the Strategy, we have developed an ONR Roadmap that provides a clear framework for delivering our Strategy over multiple years, aligning actions with strategic objectives and defining expected outcomes. This roadmap will be regularly reviewed and updated, ensuring sustained progress beyond the current Corporate Plan.

This Corporate Plan provides a clear golden thread, translating our Strategy into focused, measurable and achievable outcomes to be delivered at pace during the coming year. It sets out how we will enable a safe, resilient, and innovative nuclear sector – one that supports energy security, strengthens national security, and drives sustainable economic growth across the sector, while maintaining high standards across our regulatory purposes.

It sets out how we will strengthen and deliver robust leadership domestically and internationally, working with global partners to shape future regulatory standards. We will be more proportionate, less risk averse and more open to innovation – streamlining processes to regulate industry more efficiently and effectively, while enabling the sector to deliver the government’s ambitions safely and securely, both now and for future generations.

Every member of ONR is at the heart of what we do, and each plays a vital role in achieving our mission, with their contributions truly valued. We recognise the collective strength of our diverse workforce by embracing different perspectives, encouraging innovation, and fostering an inclusive culture. We ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute their best. Together, we are committed to making ONR a place where every individual feels respected, empowered, and integral to our shared success.

We are committed to building and embedding the right structures, systems and culture to support every individual’s development, capability and wellbeing. By investing in skills, leadership and professional excellence, we will ensure we have the right people, in the right roles, at the right time. Our values – accountable, open minded, fair, and supportive – will shape our culture, guide our decisions and strengthen our impact as a trusted forward-looking regulator.

Our budget to deliver our 2026/27 Corporate Plan is £110.8m which represents a minor increase of £0.1m compared to our 2025/26 budget of £110.7m.

4. Our future ambition

We are driving forward a bold and ambitious agenda through the delivery of our Strategy on the issues that will shape the future of the nuclear sector – recognising the dual imperative to rethink regulation and accelerate growth.

Our vision to be a modern, agile and productive regulator positions us to enable innovation and growth whilst keeping our statutory purposes at the forefront of our decisions. In a rapidly changing nuclear landscape, we will anticipate change, adapt at pace and regulate with confidence.

As a nationally and internationally respected regulator, we understand national priorities: driving growth, strengthening energy security, delivering net zero, sustaining the nuclear deterrent, and cleaning up legacy facilities. In response to the significant transformation within the nuclear sector and rising expectations from government, industry and society, we are committed to supporting the government's ambitions by acting as a responsible, resilient and robust regulator. We will maintain our competence, independence and credibility, and through our strategic approach, deliver regulatory excellence that enables sector growth and strengthens public trust.

Proportionate regulation is at the heart of government ambitions. The Nuclear Regulatory Review 2025 - GOV.UK sets out a coherent blueprint for modernising the UK's nuclear regulatory framework to better support government ambitions. The Government Response to the Nuclear Regulatory Review 2025 lays the foundation for a transformative programme of reform by accepting all 47 recommendations. This strategic commitment will modernise regulation and drive accelerated progress to position and reinvigorate the nuclear sector to meet future challenges and opportunities. We are ready to support this regulatory transformation, working closely with other regulators and government, on recommendations that simplify the regulatory landscape and enable more coherent, coordinated and efficient regulation. These reforms will enable ONR to remove unnecessary burdens and duplication while preserving rigorous standards across our purposes, improve resource deployment, sharpen decision-making and enhance our technical capability.

We play a key role in the nuclear energy ecosystem. As a trusted, effective regulator we will apply an effective and proportionate approach to the regulation of sites throughout the whole nuclear lifecycle. Our regulatory focus will actively enable – not hinder – growth and innovation within the sector.

Proportionate, risk informed regulation is more critical than ever. We will modernise our regulatory guidance, tools and processes to reduce regulatory burdens and provide greater clarity to those we regulate to better understand how to comply. This will enable us to regulate more efficiently, consistently and transparently and supports delivery of the HM Treasury Regulatory Action Plan.

Research, innovation and technical assessments are vital to our future success. As nuclear deployment accelerates in the UK and globally, we are getting ahead of emerging risks and opportunities, including those presented by advances in technology, by working in close partnership with domestic and international stakeholders. We are driving wider international harmonisation and regulatory alignment, and strengthening collective efforts to cut duplication and accelerate decision-making to speed up deployment of new technologies – while maintaining our independent judgement and legal integrity. Our commitment to shaping and upholding global nuclear standards is exemplified by our active participation and ongoing collaboration to deliver commitments under the Atlantic Partnership - a key strategic outcome.

To support this transformation, we will modernise our charging approach to provide greater cost certainty and transparency for dutyholders whilst ensuring we continue to invest for the future.

Public trust remains fundamental. As a modern regulator, we will go further as an exemplar of openness and transparency. We will strengthen public engagement, deepen understanding of and actively build confidence in our role and regulatory decisions. We will listen, learn and adapt by exploring the levers we can use to maintain stakeholder confidence in our decisions and ensure the expectations of the society we protect are reflected in how we regulate and lead.

5. Strategic aims

Our strategic aims set out how we will fulfil our mission and vision and are the long-term goals that set the overall direction for ONR. They are broad and ambitious, allowing for the development of more detailed objectives and plans to underpin them, and provide a bridge between the overarching strategy and the practical outcomes for delivery.

Our robust, effective and enabling regulation remains at our core. We will continue to drive demonstrable improvements at sites in significantly enhanced or enhanced regulatory attention, and to influence the long-term improvements identified in the Chief Nuclear Inspector's annual report on Great Britain's nuclear industry. To support our regulation, our three strategic aims will enable delivery of our mission:

Modern

Our culture encourages innovation, embraces modern technology and ways of working and welcomes challenge. We work collaboratively with our stakeholders to shape the future of the nuclear sector globally.

Agile

Our strong workforce capability and flexible structure allow us to respond quickly and efficiently to changes and expansion in the industry. Streamlined guidance and processes support timely, proportionate decision-making and help industry understand and comply with our expectations.

Productive

Strong governance and robust business fundamentals deliver transparent, and efficient operations, aligning resources and processes with our mission and values.

We drive value for money and understand the cost of our regulatory decision-making.

6. Strategic risks

Managing and controlling our strategic risks is fundamental to our ambition to operate as a modern, agile and productive regulator. By clearly identifying the threats and opportunities that could impact delivery of our strategic objectives, we are able to make informed, risk-based decisions, prioritise resources where they will add most value, and adapt quickly to changes in our regulatory environment.

Our Risk Improvement Group (RIG), Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) form the organisation’s risk governance structure ensuring effective strategic risk management. This strengthens ONR’s resilience, supports innovation by providing clarity on acceptable levels of risk, and contributes to emerging issues being identified and addressed early. It enables ONR’s ability to move at pace with confidence, improve performance and deliver consistent, high-quality outcomes for stakeholders.

The strategic risks set out below represent the key threats to the delivery of our Corporate Plan and will be proactively managed to enable the successful delivery of the Strategy.

Organisational capability: There is a risk that ONR does not have the right skills, leadership or workforce flexibility to deliver its strategic objectives. This could lead to slow decision-making, reduced quality of regulatory outputs, and an inability to respond effectively to emerging risks or policy change.

Organisational culture: There is a risk that the ONR's culture does not consistently promote accountability, collaboration, learning and appropriate risk-taking. This may lead to behaviours that are misaligned with the vision to be a modern, agile and productive regulator including siloed working, resistance to change and reduced innovation.

Funding: There is a risk that ONR's funding is insufficiently flexible in how it can be used to support ONR's strategic objectives or that the funding is insufficient in its amount. This may lead to ONR failing to fully realise its strategic objectives.

Ineffective regulation: There is a risk that regulatory approaches are not sufficiently targeted, proportionate or intelligence-led, resulting in resources being deployed to low-impact activity while higher-risk issues are not addressed. This could undermine regulatory outcomes, damage stakeholder confidence and weaken ONR's reputation as an effective regulator.

Corporate security: There is a risk that ONR's security controls, in the physical, personal and cyber domains, are not sufficient to protect ONR from a deliberate or accidental compromise leading to damage to buildings, people or information systems. In an evolving security environment with constantly emerging threats, there is a risk that controls do not keep pace with developments to adequately mitigate security risks.

Inadequate resilience: There is risk that ONR is unable to fully deliver its statutory obligations due to an unforeseen event that exceeds our capacity to respond effectively.

Change and transformation delivery: There is a risk that major change programmes are not prioritised, resourced or embedded effectively, leading to change fatigue, duplication of effort and failure to realise expected benefits. This may undermine staff confidence, slow the pace of transformation and limit progress towards becoming a modern, agile and productive regulator. It may also delay or reduce the benefit realisation by ONR and the wider industry of our innovation and research outputs.

Stakeholder confidence: There is a risk that, if ONR does not maintain trust and confidence among key stakeholders (including dutyholders, industry, NGOs, public, government), this could result in an erosion of its credibility, a perceived loss of independence or a loss of trust in its regulatory decisions.

Information management: There is a risk that ineffective information management undermines delivery of the ONR’s Strategy, particularly where strategic objectives rely on being modern, data-driven, efficient and transparent.

7. Our plans for 2026-27

This Corporate Plan marks the initial step in translating our strategic vision into clear, measurable outcomes for the year ahead. The ONR Roadmap will provide a clear framework for delivering our Strategy, and will be regularly reviewed and refined to ensure each future Corporate Plan aligns deliverables with strategic objectives and defined expected outcomes

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7.1 Modern

Our vision to be a modern, forward-looking regulator will be enabled by our people, our culture, and our commitment to innovation. We will empower our experts to think differently, collaborate boldly and embrace new, innovative ways of working – building a culture of trust, openness and intelligent risk-taking that drives continuous improvement in safety and performance. This approach seeks to attract and retain the best talent, and encourage professional growth.

We will further harness advanced technologies data and

AI to regulate more effectively across the nuclear sector. Working in partnership with domestic and international regulators, we will align approaches, reduce duplication and accelerate safe deployment of new technologies.

Through transparency, stakeholder engagement and strong advocacy, we will build confidence in nuclear safety and influence policy that supports and advances a safe, secure, sustainable and innovative nuclear future for the UK.

Strategic objective	Deliverable
Build a forward-looking organisational culture that empowers staff to live our values, work as one ONR, embrace innovation, and deliver our mission	A repeatable cultural self-assessment created and completed in-year to establish an organisational baseline that proactively supports ONR's cultural development
Deploy modern technologies across ONR to support more efficient and effective regulation	Strategic AI blueprint developed to define a clear, phased approach to enhance AI capabilities

Strategic objective	Deliverable
Enable accelerated deployment of new nuclear reactors working with other domestic and international regulators, to mutually recognise each other’s assessment, with appropriate due diligence, retaining independent decision-making	Formal collaboration framework with US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), in partnership with the environment agencies, established and implemented to deliver on commitments under the Atlantic Partnership Joint international Strategy and plan implemented in collaboration with government and other regulators to deliver on Taskforce commitments
Build and maintain international relationships that strengthen collaboration and advance shared goals and secure positions of influence to drive outcomes and shape international agenda	Efficient information sharing to influence harmonised approaches accelerated through the delivery of new and refreshed bilateral arrangements with key partners – including Czechia, France, and Canada

Strategic objective	Deliverable
Adopt a more proactive approach to stakeholder engagement, expanding our influence and reach, to learn from others, explain our work, enhance our reputation and address common misconceptions around our role	Comprehensive communications and engagement plan launched to increase stakeholder engagement by expanding our communications channels to reach new audiences

7.2 Agile

Being an agile, future-ready regulator will ensure we are ready to adapt and respond to a rapidly changing and evolving nuclear landscape including modern technologies and emerging threats. Our risk-informed, intelligence-led approach will ensure our regulatory approach is proportionate, consistent, trusted and focused on where it matters the most.

Through our skilled workforce and enabled by the phased implementation of advanced technologies, data and AI, we will regulate with agility, clarity and confidence. We will set clear, fit for purpose standards bringing transparency to regulatory decisions and providing greater clarity for industry – enabling innovation while maintaining high standards of safety.

Through horizon scanning to identify risks and trends, streamlined guidance and processes to support proportionate regulatory decision-making, we will deliver timely, proportionate decisions that support national priorities and sustain public trust.

Strategic objective	Deliverable
Have clear, forward-looking regulatory processes aligned with both national and global priorities in safety, security, clean energy, and defence	Initial phase of modernisation of our regulatory guidance framework completed to provide clarity and transparency and ensure it is agile and forward-looking
Establish an efficient, flexible operating model and structure that allows us to adapt to a changing industry	Initial phase of organisation design changes implemented to sharpen alignment with our Strategy, clarify accountability and enhance organisational delivery against corporate priorities, with further refinement to be undertaken in future phases

Strategic objective	Deliverable
Retain, attract and train a highly capable workforce, across all of our functions, who understand the latest technological and regulatory developments, make robust, proportionate decisions and ensure ONR is a well-run efficient organisation	Enhanced training programme scoped for phased implementation to keep staff updated on modern technical developments and practices and strengthen longterm capability
Be outward looking and proactive in anticipating change, working with others to ensure we are ready to regulate whatever the future shape of the nuclear industry	Futures Directorate established to include an intelligence and insight function to inform targeting of regulatory effort and position ONR as a forward-looking regulator, proactively shaping regulatory strategy, policies and capability

Strategic objective	Deliverable
Work closely with other regulators and government to deliver Taskforce recommendations including the lead regulator model, commission and simplification of the regulatory landscape	Together with government and other regulators, lead regulator model established to enable delivery of outcome-focused regulation Support and advise government to: consolidate the majority of nuclear safety functions to simplify the regulatory landscape define proportionate Outline Planning Zones (OPZs) and Detailed Emergency Planning Zones (DEPZs) under REPPIR19 adopt a risk-based proportionate approach to export control licences

7.3 Productive

Our journey to evolve as a high performing, productive regulator will be driven by strong governance, streamlined processes and a culture of continuous improvement. By simplifying how we work and removing unnecessary complexity, we will accelerate decision-making, reduce duplication and maximise value.

Knowledge management and organisational learning is central to our productivity – ensuring the right information reaches the right people at the right time, enabling smarter decisions, reducing duplication and empowering staff to review, learn and improve from past experience and gain future insights. This strengthens accountability and aligns delivery with our mission, vision and values, and reinforces trust with stakeholders.

Through disciplined investment and well-managed change programmes, we will ensure our resources are deployed where they deliver the greatest impact. This will enable us to regulate efficiently and with confidence – today and for the future.

Strategic objective	Deliverable
Establish clear, efficient and effective business processes removing unnecessary complexity and accelerating delivery	Enhanced performance management and goal-setting system introduced to improve alignment between individual and team objectives to strategic aims and promote accountability Targeted review of ONR processes implemented to streamline workflows, reduce duplication, strengthen our control environment and enhance organisational productivity
Redesign our charging approach to improve cost certainty for dutyholders and support investment in ONR's capability and international engagement	Options developed to address issues with our current charging model to inform the phased redesign of our charging approach
Ensure all organisational change is prioritised, resourced, well managed and strategically aligned	Transformation Directorate established to systematically prioritise, resource, manage and deliver current and anticipated major change programmes

Strategic objective	Deliverable
Embed Knowledge Management and Organisational Learning to drive continuous improvement, share learning across ONR, retaining critical expertise	Phased implementation of an integrated organisational learning and knowledge management framework initiated to drive continuous improvement, enable learning across the organisation, and ensure expertise is retained and accessible
Decrease the administrative burden of regulation in line with our commitments in the Regulatory Action Plan and related Taskforce recommendations	Targeted review of regulatory guidance and frameworks implemented to streamline, simplify and reduce regulatory burdens while upholding compliance
Continue to work with core Government Shared Services Programme to transform our processes and move to a shared services model for Finance, Human Resources, and Procurement	Range of preparatory sub-projects and workstreams successfully completed and documented – including data migration, position management, impact assessment and change management – to support the transformation of HR, IT, Finance, and Procurement, and align relevant data and processes ready for the implementation of the new shared services programme

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