HM Treasury

Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

Ministry of Defence

23 November 2026

Dear CEOs and dutyholders,

A year on from publication of the Nuclear Regulatory Review, we are writing to reaffirm the Government's commitment to implementing the Review, recognise the progress made across government, regulators and industry, and encourage continued collective action to deliver the transformation it requires.

Nuclear capabilities are critical to the UK's national security, energy security and economic growth. Ensuring nuclear projects can be delivered safely, securely and at pace will help reindustrialise communities across the UK, unlocking investment and creating high-value employment. It will bring through a new generation of highly skilled workers while sustaining the deterrent and strengthening the UK’s long-term resilience.

Delivering the nuclear power, submarines, warheads and decommissioning requires a regulatory and assurance system that maintains robust standards and enables timely, proportionate and cost-effective decision making. The Review was clear that government, regulators and industry each have a role to play in creating a more effective system. Safe, secure and efficient delivery must become a shared objective across the sector with concerted effort made to share evidence, proven approaches and lessons.

Government is acting to enable and accelerate this wider transformation. We continue to work at pace to implement our response to the Review by the end of 2027, combining practical action through new guidance, policy and regulatory changes with legislation, including the Nuclear Regulation Bill.

The lead regulator model has been established (Recommendation 3), the ONR has completed its consultation on revised Safety Assessment Principles and published its Relevant Good Practice policy (Recommendation 7). The Nuclear Innovation and Research Advisory Board has been mobilised and is considering the definition and application of Tolerability of Risk for nuclear (Recommendation 6). Nuclear companies now have a dedicated single point of contact in place to support with export licensing, alongside greater flexibility for longer-term licences to be issued where appropriate (Recommendation 43).

The revised National Planning Policy Framework has been published, ensuring that substantial weight is given to the benefits of improving energy security and the transition to a net zero future. (Recommendation 24). National Infrastructure Planning Guidance published over the summer supports reforms introduced to streamlines the Development Consent Order (DCO) regime (Recommendation 25). New guidance also sets out the use of ‘minded-to letters’ upon extensions at the decision-making stage, which will give developers greater clarity where outstanding issues remain during the DCO process (Recommendation 27). We have published guidance on the discharge of requirements following the grant of a DCO. The DESNZ Post Consent Unit is now operational (Recommendation 30). Together, these will support efficient decisions on the discharge of DCO requirements so that construction can begin sooner.

On 2 November, biodiversity net gain became mandatory for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects; the mandatory framework streamlines BNG and makes it proportionate for major infrastructure, while maintaining strong outcomes for nature (Recommendation 18). The review of the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion is underway, seeking to take into account changes to reactors designs, improved safety, new technology and reactor size (Recommendation 33). We will also consult on updates to the National Policy Statement for Nuclear Energy Generation (EN-7), and encourage industry to engage actively in shaping these reforms.

This is a shared endeavour. Lasting success will depend not only on legislative and regulatory reform, but on sustained changes in behaviour, culture and delivery across government, regulators and industry. The Nuclear Regulatory Implementation Panel is holding us all to account for this (Recommendation 47) but we must all be prepared to challenge unnecessary complexity, focus effort on the most significant risks, adopt proven approaches where appropriate, and prioritise outcomes over process.

In March, the previous Chancellor wrote to leaders across the nuclear sector. She set out the need for substantial change across government, regulators and industry to support the safe, timely and cost-effective delivery of nuclear projects. We have read your responses with keen interest and welcome the overwhelming support for these reforms alongside strong, constructive responses across the civil and defence nuclear sectors. Many have set out ambitious plans and are already changing how they work, including sharing evidence and proven approaches, challenging unnecessary complexity and identifying opportunities to reduce cost and delay while maintaining robust standards. These early examples show what can be achieved when the whole system works towards shared outcomes.

There is, however, much more to do. We encourage every organisation across the sector to demonstrate active leadership, embed the Review's recommendations in its plans and continue sharing evidence, learning and examples of progress. This includes the small number of prominent organisations are yet to respond to the Chancellors letter; we ask that these responses are sent by 14th December. Only with active commitment and action from every organisation can these reforms succeed and demonstrate that the nuclear sector can transform its performance and deliver projects

safely, on time and to cost. We have tasked our teams and the Nuclear Regulatory Implementation Panel to follow up with companies and regulators to chase responses and interrogate plans shared. This includes implementation of Recommendation 38 requiring a board level risk on culture and ensuring there are points of contact across the sector leading this work.

The ambition of the plans set out in our response to the Review is not incremental improvement, but radical change in how the nuclear sector works together to deliver projects. We are already seeing the benefits of better working and over the coming year, we expect to see clearer evidence that these reforms are reducing unnecessary duplication and delay, improving the quality and pace of decision making, and supporting projects to deliver safely, securely, on time and to cost. Our ambition is not simply to reform the existing system, but to make the United Kingdom the best place in the world to deploy civil and defence nuclear projects safely, securely and at pace. Achieving that change will require leadership, commitment and action from government, regulators and industry alike.







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