

The UK Nuclear Regulatory Review 2025

Enabling nuclear delivery through regulatory reform

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Purpose of the Taskforce

Established by the UK Prime Minister to independently review the regulation of nuclear activities across both civil and defence sectors – including safety, environmental protection and planning.

- Examine all aspects of UK's nuclear regulatory framework
- Identify reforms to make regulation more efficient and proportionate, while maintaining safety standards
- Support faster, better value delivery of nuclear projects
- Provide clear, actionable recommendations for government action

Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce



John Fingleton (Chair)
Business, government
and regulation



Mustafa Latif-Aramesh
Infrastructure
planning law



Dame Sue Ion
Nuclear engineering,
industry and skills



Mark Bassett
Nuclear regulation
and international



Andrew Sherry
Nuclear safety, science,
and skills

Our approach



What did we see?

Many examples of conservatism upon conservatism piled upon individual items - some significant, but also often minor, collectively having a big impact on costs or causing delays.

Overlapping, and in some places, conflicting regulatory expectations without proper consideration of the overall objectives of

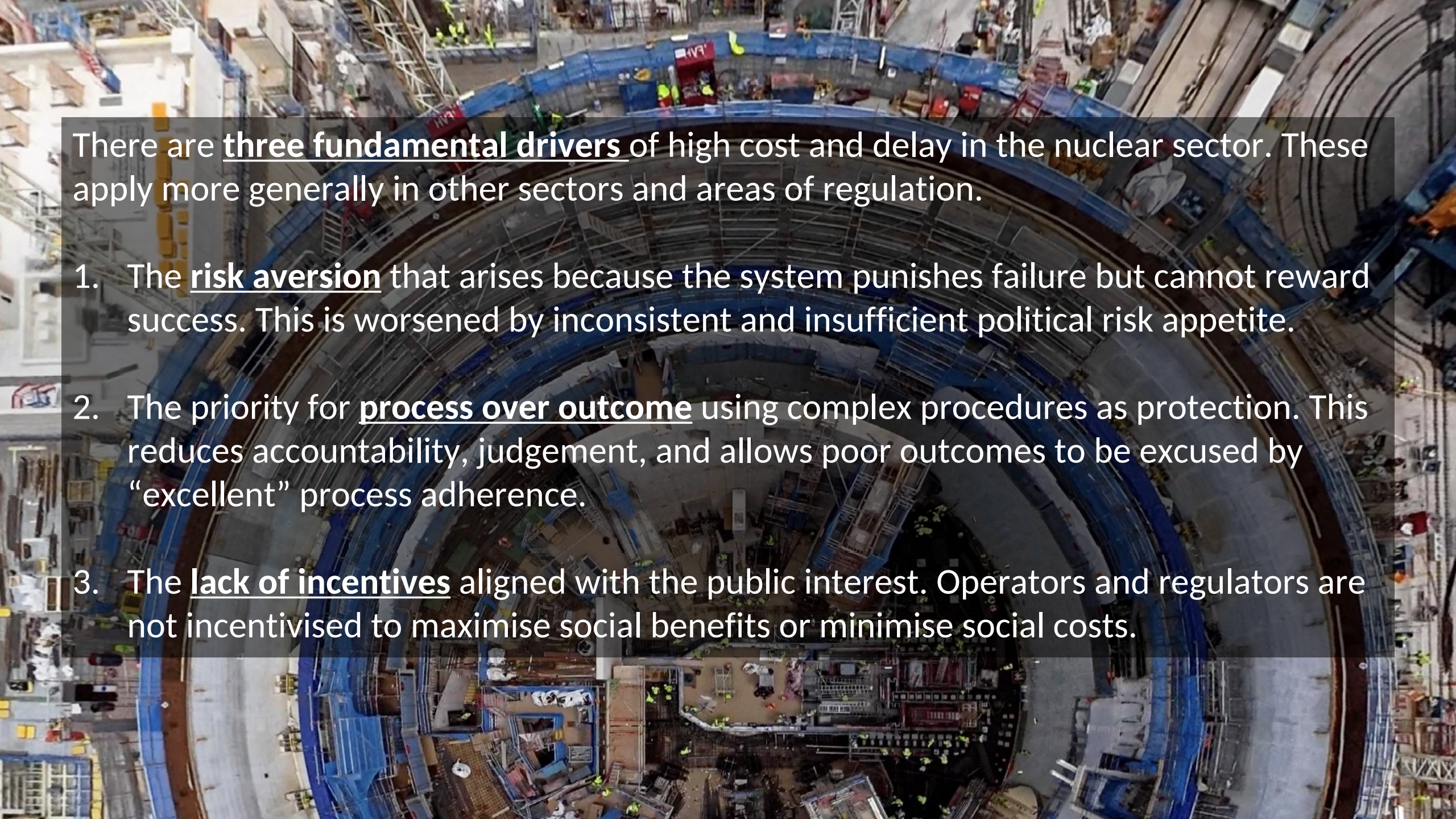
- power on the grid,
- timely cost-effective decommissioning of legacy facilities.

-while delivering outcomes safely and with due regard to the environment

It was never just a regulatory issue. It was primarily a systems problem.

Ultimate Goals of the 47 Recommendations

- Better, simpler safety
- Proportionate decision-making
- Less complexity
- Less over-engineering
- Faster cost-effective delivery
- Better overall environmental outcomes
- Strengthen UK nuclear sector and greater international engagement and harmonisation

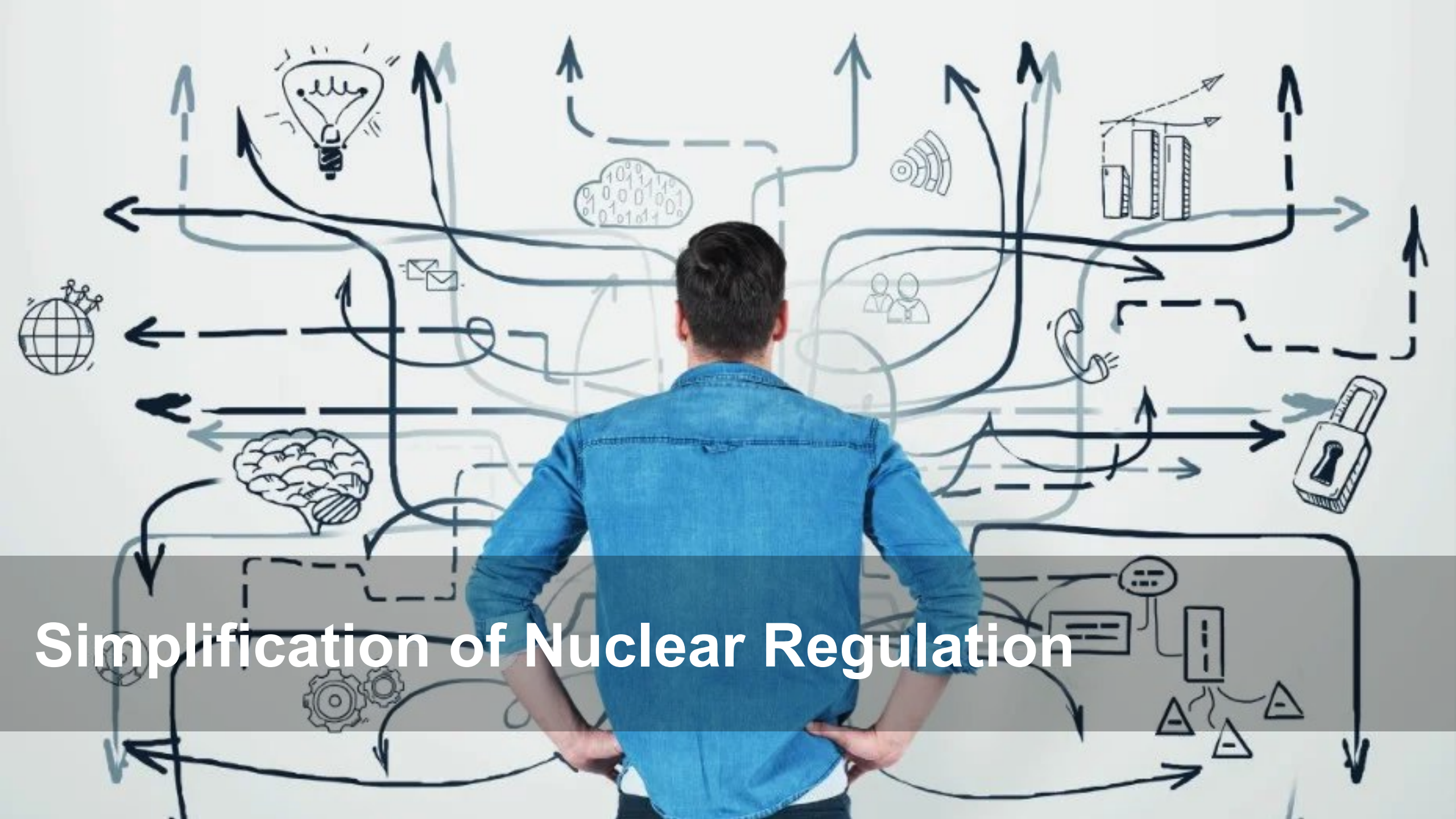


There are three fundamental drivers of high cost and delay in the nuclear sector. These apply more generally in other sectors and areas of regulation.

1. The risk aversion that arises because the system punishes failure but cannot reward success. This is worsened by inconsistent and insufficient political risk appetite.
2. The priority for process over outcome using complex procedures as protection. This reduces accountability, judgement, and allows poor outcomes to be excused by “excellent” process adherence.
3. The lack of incentives aligned with the public interest. Operators and regulators are not incentivised to maximise social benefits or minimise social costs.

Four Main Themes





Simplification of Nuclear Regulation

Civil Nuclear Regulatory Landscape

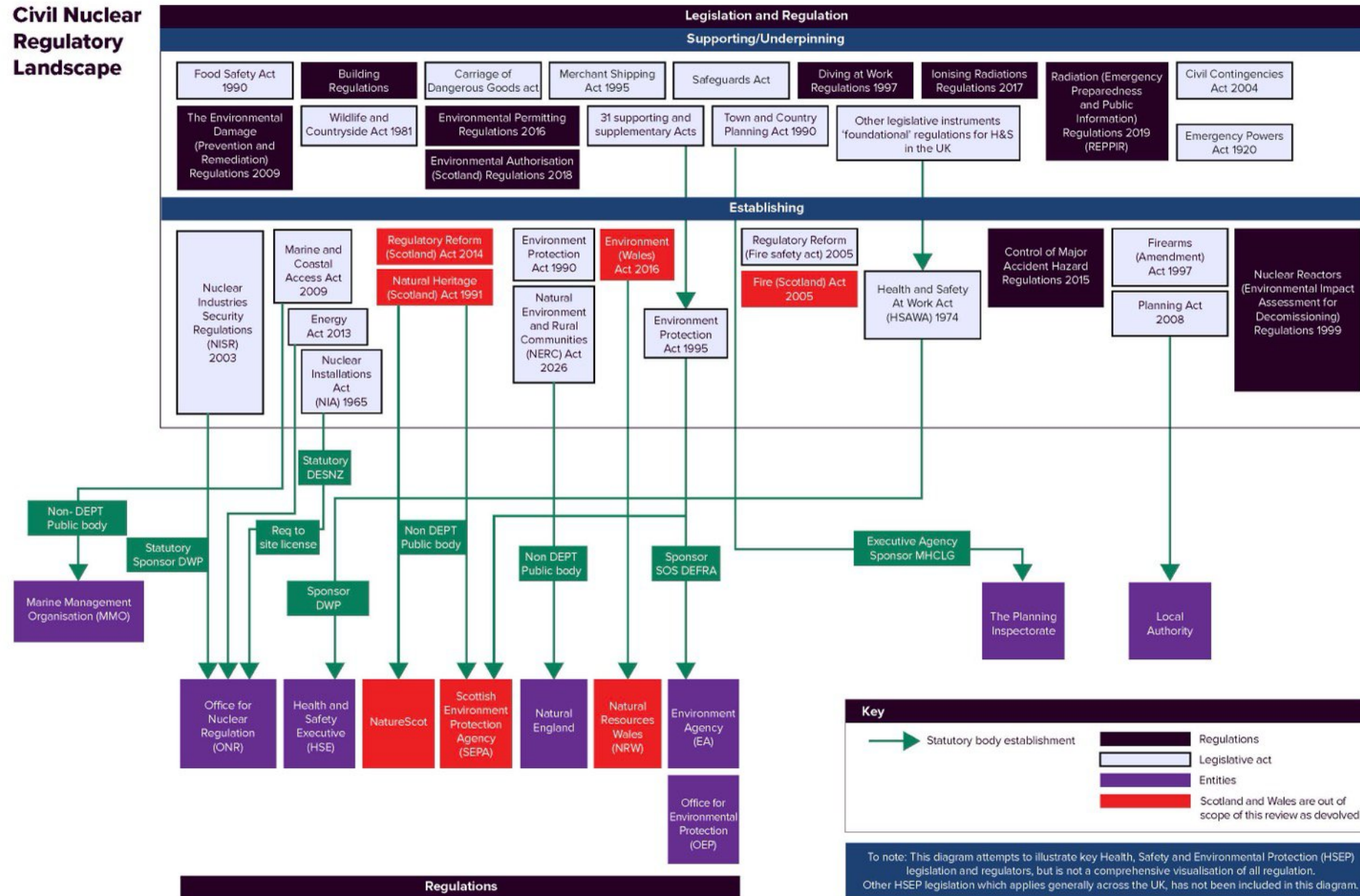
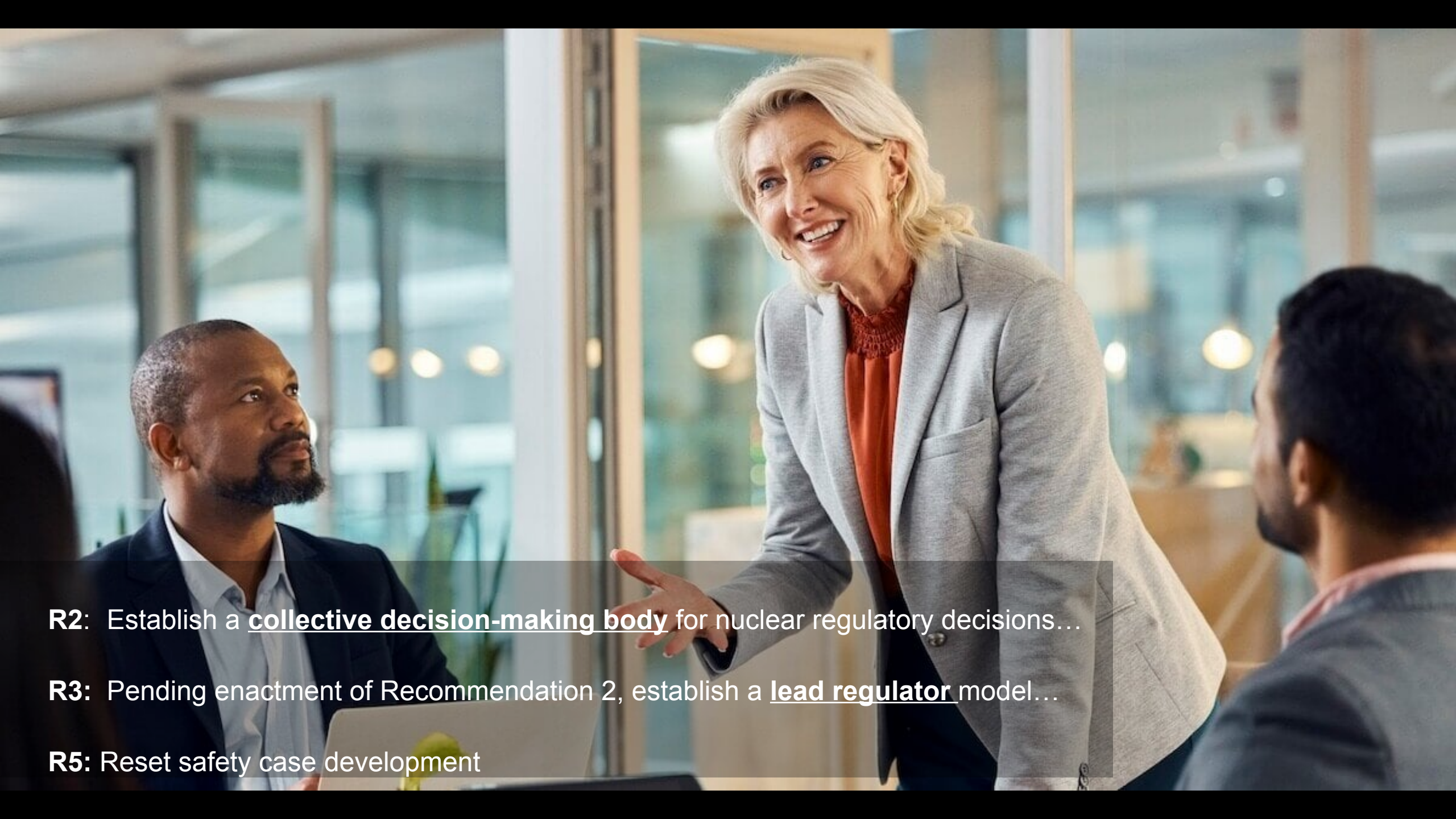


Figure 3 – The civil nuclear regulatory landscape



R2: Establish a collective decision-making body for nuclear regulatory decisions...

R3: Pending enactment of Recommendation 2, establish a lead regulator model...

R5: Reset safety case development



Risk Management and Proportionality



Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

1974 CHAPTER 37

An Act to make further provision for securing the health, safety and welfare of persons at work, for protecting others against risks to health or safety in connection with the activities of persons at work, for controlling the keeping and use and preventing the unlawful acquisition, possession and use of dangerous substances, and for controlling certain emissions into the atmosphere; to make further provision with respect to the employment medical advisory service; to amend the law relating to building regulations, and the Building (Scotland) Act 1959; and for connected purposes. [31st July 1974]

Extent Information

- E1** For the application of this Act to Northern Ireland see s. 84(1); Pt. III of this Act (except s. 75 and Sch. 7) does not extend to Scotland see s. 84(2).

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Act applied (15.12.1999) by 1996 c. 18, Pt. VIII, s. 72(4) (as substituted (15.12.1999) by 1999 c. 26, ss. 7, 8, 9, Sch. 4 Pt. I; S.I. 1999/2830, art. 2(2))
Act extended (11.10.1999) by S.I. 1999/2550, reg. 3
C2 Act applied by S.I. 1988/778, reg. 11(1)
C3 Act applied by S.I. 1990/13, reg. 11(5)
Act applied in part (1.9.1993) by S.I. 1993/1746, reg. 18(1)(a).
Act extended (1.1.1994) by S.I. 1993/2379, reg. 9(a).
Act extended (1.12.1993) by S.I. 1993/2714, reg. 9(4)(a).
Act applied (31.1.1994) by S.I. 1993/3050, art. 21(1)(a) (with art. 3).
Act extended (1.12.1993) by S.I. 1994/1806, regs. 3(1), 12
Act applied (with modifications) (29.7.1994) by S.I. 1994/1806, regs. 3(1), 12
Act applied (with modifications) (29.7.1994) by S.I. 1995/263, arts. 3-8, 10
Act applied in part (15.3.1995) by S.I. 1995/1629, art. 30(3)(b)(5)
Act applied (with modifications) (18.7.1995) by S.I. 1995/1629, art. 30(3)(b)(5)
Act applied (with modifications) (29.11.1992) by S.I. 1992/2415, reg. 4(1)
C4 Act: specified provisions applied (1.1.1993) by S.I. 1992/2997, reg. 6
C5 Act: specified provisions applied (with modifications) (E.W.S.) (1.1.1993) by S.I. 1992/3060, reg. 15(1)
C6 Act: specified provisions applied (with modifications) (E.W.S.) (1.1.1993) by S.I. 1992/3060, reg. 15(1)
C7 Act: specified provisions applied (E.W.S.) (1.2.1993) by S.I. 1992/3217, reg. 21(1)



Nuclear Installations Act 1965

1965 CHAPTER 57

An Act to consolidate the Nuclear Installations Acts 1959 and 1965. [5th August 1965]

Annotations:

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Act other than ss. 1-6, 22 modified (E.W.) by Atomic Weapons Establishment Act 1991 (c. 46, SIF 8), s. 3, Sch. para.6(1)
C2 Act extended (1.1.2000) by S.I. 1999/3232, regs. 4(3), 6(1)(b).
Act explained (E.W.)(N.I.) by Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liability) Act 1976 (c. 28), s. 3(2); extended (E.W.)(N.I.) by Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liability) Act 1976 (c. 28), s. 3(3); modified (E.W.)(N.I.) by Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liability) Act 1976 (c. 28), s. 4(4)
C3 Functions of Minister of Power under this Act now exercisable by Secretary of State: S.I. 1969/1498 and 1970/1537
C4 Functions of Minister of Technology under this Act now exercisable by Secretary of State: S.I. 1970/1537
C5 Act: certain functions transferred (E.W.S.) (15.11.1999) by 1999/2786, art. 2

Commencement Information

Act wholly in force at 1. 12. 1965

CONTROL OF CERTAIN NUCLEAR INSTALLATIONS AND OPERATIONS

Restriction of certain nuclear installations to licensed sites.

Without prejudice to the requirements of any other Act, no person . . . ^{F1} shall use any . . . for the purpose of installing or operating—
a) any nuclear reactor (other than such a reactor comprised in a means of transport, whether by land, water or air); or
subject to subsection (2) of this section, any other installation of such class or description as may be prescribed, being an installation designed or adapted for—

R6: Define tolerability of risk for nuclear...

R7: Review nuclear regulator guidance...

R8: Define meaning of proportionality in HSWA

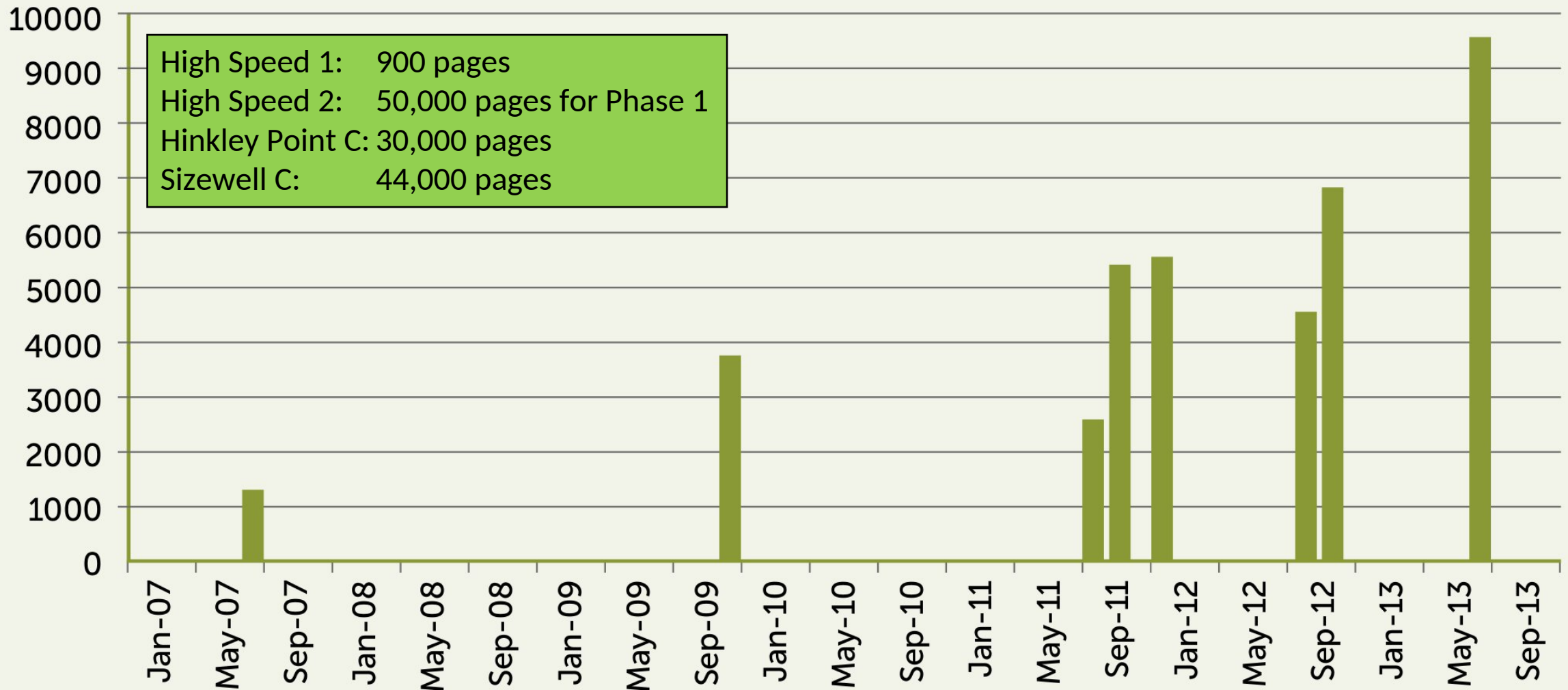
Ways of Working –
principles to guide the
application of ALARP and
BAT in the nuclear industry





Environment and Permitting

Figure 1: Growth in the length of UK Offshore Windfarm ES 2007 - 2013





R12: Alternative pathway to comply with the Habitats Regulations

R13: Proportionality in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regime.

R14: One and done assessments and reversal of the Finch judgment for low-carbon electricity projects

R16: Increase data-sharing, and transparency on environmental data

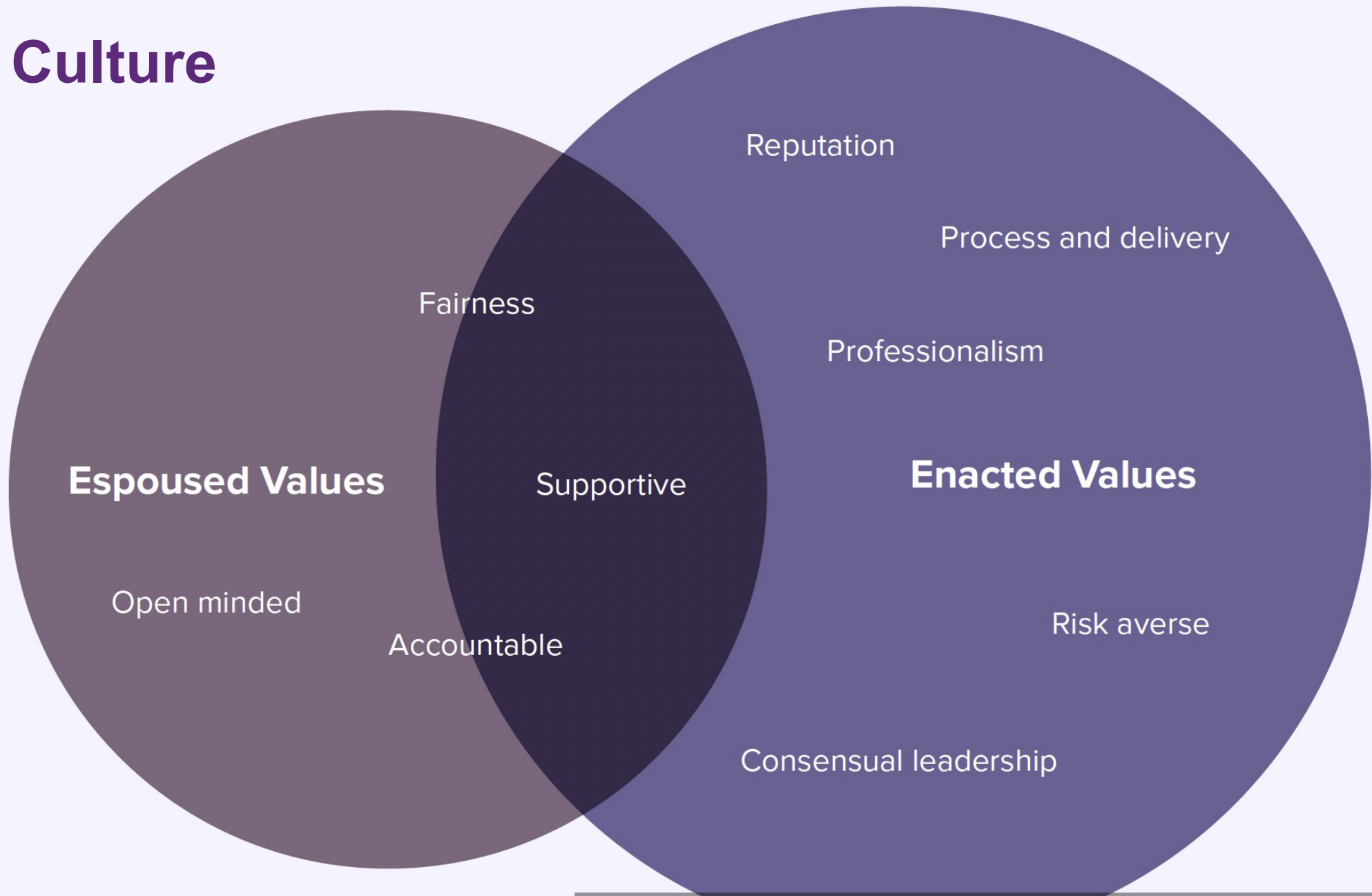
R20: Amend the cost cap for judicial reviews and limit legal challenges to NSIPs to a 'single bite of the cherry'

R32: Encouraging fleet approaches in EN-7



Culture and Capability

Culture





R38: Boards should assess their organisation's culture, including safety culture...

R39: Accelerate efforts to build knowledge and experience into a diverse workforce...

R41: Establish a nuclear digital programme to accelerate the take up of digital technologies...

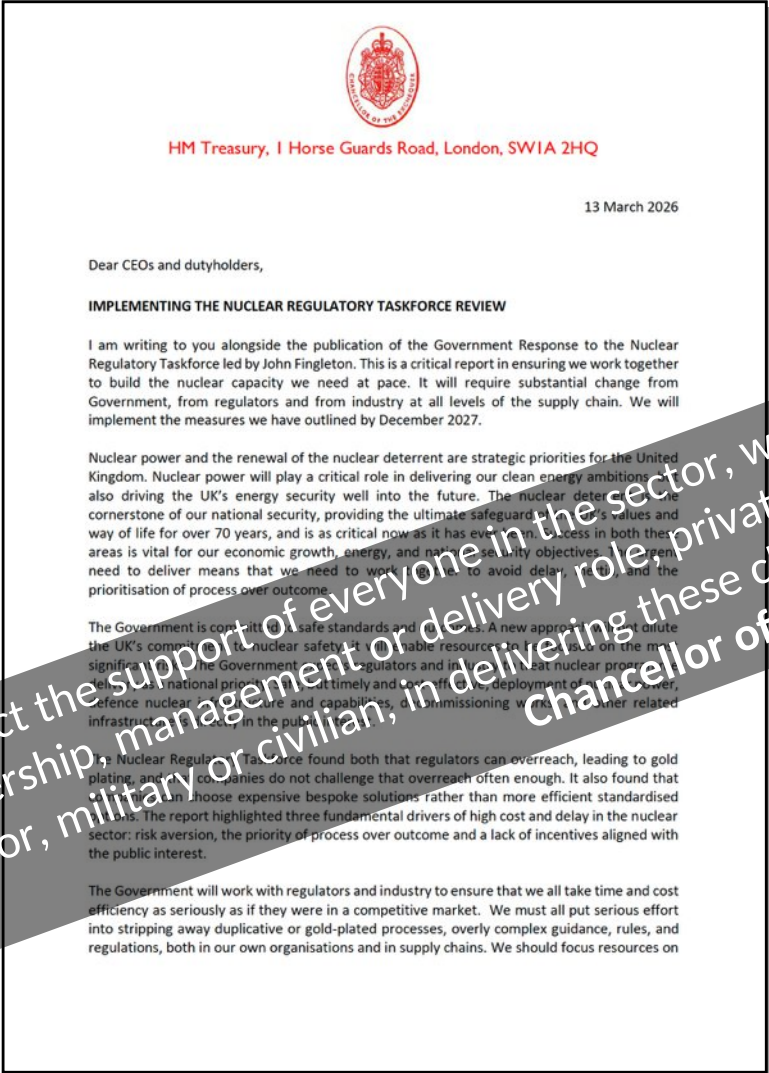
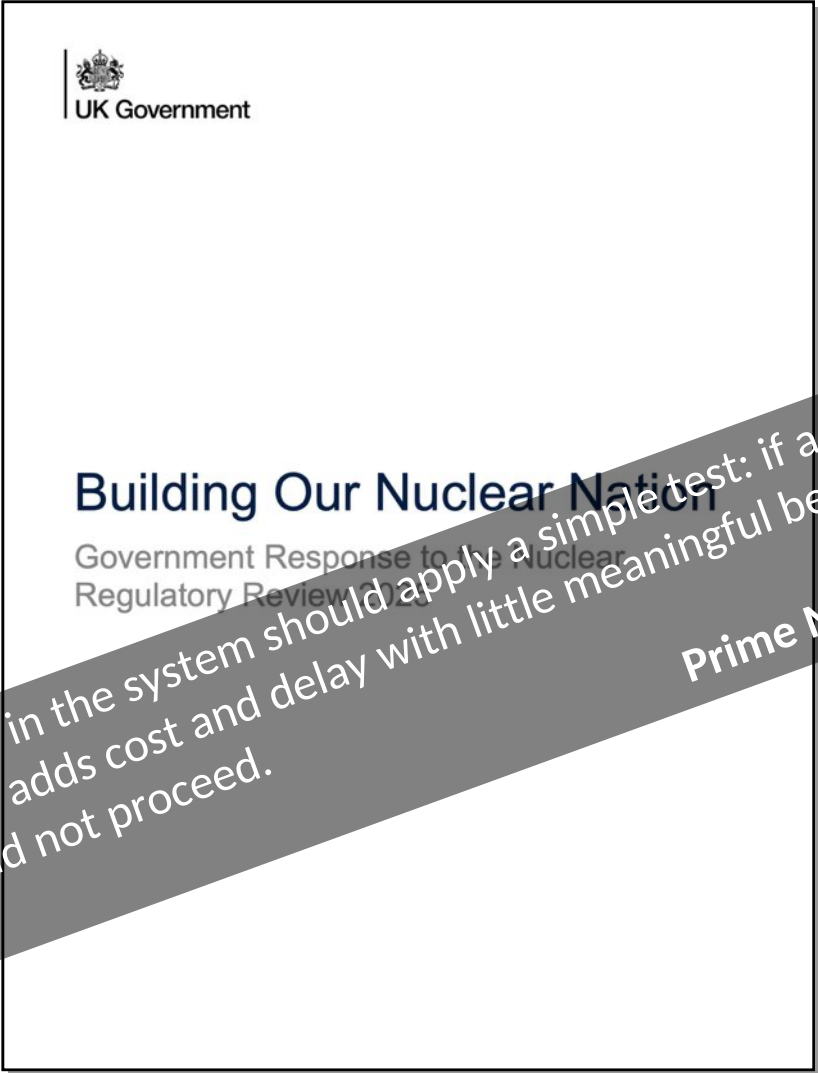
*“A mindset that favours **process over outcome** has made Britain the most expensive place to build nuclear power.*

*In addition to accepting the Fingleton recommendations, I’m asking the Business Secretary to apply these lessons across the **entire industrial strategy**”*

1 December 2025

R1: HMG Strategic Steer to the Nuclear Sector. The Government should set a clear strategic direction to nuclear policy, ensuring alignment across departments, regulatory agencies and dutyholders and their supply chains. This steer should set a national priority, emphasise urgency, and balance safety with delivery.

Government Response and Implementation Plan 13/3/26



UK Government Response (1)

- Prime Minister Foreword :
- In the late 1950s and 1960s Britain built 21 nuclear reactors in just under a decade.
- The UK has struggled to bring new nuclear power stations online at the pace, scale or cost required to meet our future energy needs.
- Our regulatory, environmental and planning processes have become too fragmented, too cautious and too slow, driving up costs. Projects are frequently delayed.
- The way we protect nature has deteriorated into an adversarial system with some participants that defend regulations not nature itself.
- The overall result is that we become bogged down in processes that do not actually deliver additional nuclear safety or protections for nature.

UK Government Response (2)

- Committed to implementing all these recommendations as quickly as possible, and implement everything by end of 2027.
- Strategic priority to move beyond fossil fuels.
- Expect regulators and industry to now treat nuclear delivery with that in mind.
- Not deregulation. It is smarter regulation. It focuses on real risk. It is rooted in evidence.
- Industry and regulators must now demonstrate leadership and ownership of their culture to make sure that we speed up delivery. That is safe, cheaper and more secure.

UK Government Response (3)

- Streamline the complex regulatory structures to enable faster, clearer decision-making and strengthen accountability across defence and civil nuclear.
- Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) to have a secondary statutory objective to further the delivery of our growth, climate and national security goals.
- Set up Nuclear Commission covering all safety, security, environmental and planning regulation, chaired by the UK Chief Nuclear Inspector.
- Already introduced a lead regulator. Where multiple regulators are involved ONR will function as the single point of contact for developers and operators. Working of this to inform workings of Commission.

UK Government Response (4)

- Government, regulators and industry to develop Proportionality Action Plan by Summer 2026.
- Safety standards to remain in line with international norms and applied proportionately.
- Streamline regulatory guidance to restore a genuinely nonprescriptive regulatory system
- Safety cases are excessively detailed and function as regulatory compliance tools. Government, regulators and industry to reset how safety cases are produced. Owned and understood by dutyholders, not developed by consultancies to tick boxes for regulators.
- Need to reset organisational culture ensuring efficient use of public money in government civil and defence projects.

UK Government Response (5)

- Chancellor open letter to the nuclear industry and regulators on sector-wide reset of organisational culture
- Boards across regulators, industry and public bodies to treat culture as a core strategic asset, integral to performance and risk management, rather than a narrow compliance obligation
- Examine entrenched behaviours – such as excessive risk aversion, proceduralism and an unwillingness to challenge – that are barriers to achieving safe, timely and affordable outcomes
- Expect their leaders to assess the way their organisation approaches risk management, address gold-plating in the implementation of regulations and to challenge themselves on whether those tasked to manage risk are properly empowered to make sensible judgements on tolerable risk

UK Government Response (6)

- Need for action to close the emerging skills gap, including in our regulators.
- To meet the emerging demand for skilled workers across the nuclear sector, expand Nuclear Skills Plan, which brings together government, industry, and education providers to deliver the diverse and skilled workforce and 24,000 additional jobs required in the nuclear sector by 2030
- Accelerate the use of advanced digital technologies. The Nuclear Digital Programme will drive the adoption of tools such as expert-led AI enabled safety analysis, digital twins and modern data centric engineering.
- Stronger collaboration with universities on digital nuclear research and structured opportunities to upskill both new entrants and existing professionals.

Some final thoughts from me

- The report has been well received in UK and internationally.
- I encourage you to read it. It is 160 pages, but the summary is much shorter !
- We held a mirror up to ourselves.
- Do you recognise those three fundamental drivers?
- Think about what it means for your country and your system. Although this is focussed on UK there are lessons for everyone. We learned the hard way.
- It is not just about nuclear law and the regulatory framework. And not just about regulators. It is a system issue. Get all parts of your system focussed on the right things.
- Where can you be more agile, innovative, outcome-focussed and less risk-averse to ensure safe, secure, cost-effective and on-time delivery?



Any Questions...