ORR Business Plan 2026 to 2027

Our purpose

To protect the interests of rail and road users, improving the safety, value and performance of railways and roads, today and in the future.

Introduction from Chief Executive John Larkinson

This year ahead will be one of considerable change for ORR, as we begin a major programme of transformation to support the UK Government's ambitions on reforming the railways, reforming regulators and driving economic growth.

The Railways Bill will lead to changes to what we do and how we do it. We will recruit to improve our capabilities in new areas while preparing to transfer some of our work to Great British Railways.

In parallel, we must continue to support the UK Government's wider reform of regulators, identifying more ways to reduce administrative burdens on business and create the right environment for growth. An independent review of ORR is also expected to be published in the Spring and we will respond constructively to its findings.

We have, however, already started our transformation process, with changes to our Rail Safety Directorate to speed up decision-making and improve assurance processes. We will step up our deployment of AI across ORR following successful trials and optimise its use for better productivity.

This year we also expect to take on new and significant regulatory roles for the Lower Thames Crossing and in providing assurance on Transport for London's capital programme.

And alongside all of this, we must remain focused on our essential 'day job' of frontline work to support the road and rail industries.

This is my final business plan as I retire after 20 years at ORR and seven as Chief Executive. I am immensely proud to have had the opportunity to lead the organisation and to build on its core strengths of being independent, expert, trusted and transparent. We are evolving as an organisation, reinventing the ways we work to have a more focused impact while minimising burdens.

It has been a real privilege working with colleagues and stakeholders across the road and rail sectors, and I thank everyone for their support, professionalism and engagement over the years.

I am pleased to confirm that my interim successor will be Feras Alshaker and I wish him the very best for the future.

John Larkinson
Chief Executive

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