OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

PERFORMANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Friday, 12 June 2026 commencing at 10.01 am and finishing at 1.09 pm.

Present:

Voting Members:	Councillor Glynis Phillips - in the Chair Councillor Ian Middleton (Deputy Chair) Councillor Brad Baines Councillor Ron Batstone Councillor Liam Walker Councillor Evans (as sub for Councillor Mallon) Councillor Roberts (as sub for Councillor Shiri) Councillor Smith (as sub for Councillor Greenaway)
Other Members in Attendance:	Councillor Neil Fawcett (online) Councillor Dan Levy Councillor Laura Gordon
Officers:	Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services Rob MacDougall, Chief Fire Officer and Director of Community Safety Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance Verity Royle, Planning and Reporting Manager Nicholas Glover, Head of Future Economy Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Manager

The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

24/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS
(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from the following:

- Cllr Greenaway (for whom Cllr Smith was substituting)
- Cllr Mallon (for whom Cllr Evans was substituting)
- Cllr Shiri (for whom Cllr Roberts was substituting)

25/26 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS
(Agenda No. 2)

There were none.

26/26 MINUTES
(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meetings of the 17 April 2026 and 12 May 2026 were **AGREED** as a true and accurate record.

27/26 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS
(Agenda No. 4)

There were none.

28/26 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT (FOCUSING ON THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE)
(Agenda No. 5)

Cllr Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Resources, and Cllr Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services, Rob MacDougall, Chief Fire Officer and Director of Community Safety, Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance, and Verity Royle, Planning and Reporting Manager attended the committee to present the Business Management and Monitoring Report with a focus on the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Head of Corporate Finance introduced the report which brought together finance, performance and risk updates for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue and Community Safety as part of the Committee's rolling updates.

The service reported a small overspend of £0.5m against a budget of £32.6m for 2025/26, driven by a £0.6m overspend in Fire and Rescue, partly offset by a £0.1m underspend in Trading Standards. Reserves of £3.4m were held at year end, largely earmarked for vehicles and equipment.

Performance across all measures was reported as strong, with indicators rated green and continued delivery against key priorities, including community safety, health and tackling inequality. Capital expenditure of £1.3m on fleet and equipment was also noted, funded primarily from service reserves.

Speaking to the financial aspects of the report, members sought more information on the Carterton Community Safety Centre. Robin MacDougall, Chief Fire Officer and Director of Community Safety, explained that the service was operating from a temporary fire station. A site had been secured through a Section 106 agreement for a new permanent fire station, with plans developed and some capital funding identified. However, insufficient funding was in place to begin the project, and the service was exploring options to secure the additional capital required. This remained challenging and had to be balanced against maintaining the current fire crew response. The service was keeping the project under review, including ways to reduce build costs and increase available capital funding.

Members also sought explanation of the firefighters' New Dimension grant. The Chief Fire Officer explained that a national resilience function had been established across UK fire and rescue services, covering capabilities such as urban search and rescue, hazardous chemical incidents and major flooding. Oxfordshire hosted two units: a high-volume pumping unit at Banbury and a detection, identification and monitoring team at Bicester serving the Thames Valley. It was confirmed that the funding did not support Kennington fire station but was adequate for the work undertaken.

For context, the Chief Fire Officer gave a presentation on performance and proposed changes to the service's delivery model. The Fire and Rescue Service cover model was intended to better align resources with demand, which was concentrated during the day and early evening. Fire engine availability did not currently align with the busiest periods, and response times had been increasing nationally and locally, making change necessary.

He reminded the Committee of the breadth of activity undertaken by the service, noting that during 2025/26 it had attended more than 6,000 incidents. These included nearly 1,500 fires, 140 flooding incidents, 83 animal rescues, more than 118 incidents assisting other agencies, almost 350 road traffic collisions and over 50 hazardous chemical incidents. Although there was no statutory duty to respond to flooding, the Council had taken the decision nearly two decades ago to provide that service and fund it accordingly.

There remained a mismatch between demand and on-call fire engine availability, with daytime and early evening demand almost two and a half times higher than at night. The service required 15 fire engines for adequate countywide cover, with additional measures when availability fell below that level. Daytime availability often came close to this threshold, and bank holidays and school holidays created particular pressure, recently requiring significant overtime to maintain cover.

Changes proposed through the Fire and Rescue cover model were considered essential to create a more sustainable service and improve response times. Although overall performance remained strong in several areas, current response times were below target. The service aimed to reach 80% of incidents within 11 minutes and 95% within 14 minutes, but current performance was 70% and 84% respectively. Average response time was 9 minutes and 15 seconds and had steadily increased over four years. Oxfordshire was also performing below comparable rural services, which was a concern.

In relation to the consultation, recommendations had been made not to close the three fire stations originally identified. Further work was instead being brought forward on the final design of shift pattern changes, intended to move more resources into daytime periods to meet demand and improve response times. Staff working groups involving the service and the Fire Brigades Union had begun that day, aiming to agree a new shift pattern over the coming months. The timescales suggested proposals coming to Cabinet in autumn 2026 and implementation in 2027.

On the overall adequacy of funding, the Chief Fire Officer said the cover model aimed to move away from a traditional approach heavily reliant on on-call provision and frequent operational intervention. The current model created daily challenges, with officers continually addressing the symptoms of an arrangement that was no longer effective enough. The proposed changes were intended to use resources differently, creating a more sustainable model, reducing reactive adjustments, lowering overtime costs and releasing financial capacity for further improvement.

The Chief Fire Officer also reiterated his view that fire and rescue services would benefit from greater funding, noting that additional investment would provide more flexibility and support further improvements while maintaining resilience. However, he emphasised that there was always a balance to be struck between efficiency and resilience, as removing too much capacity from the system could reduce the service's ability to respond to pressures.

Members asked about budget planning for the forthcoming year and whether savings targets had been set for the directorate or Fire and Rescue Service. Officers explained that the directorate was involved in wider budget discussions and, like other services, was considering efficiencies. However, the Fire and Rescue Service faced particular circumstances because local government reorganisation (LGR) could require it to move out of the County Council in future, as had happened in Northamptonshire and Cumbria.

The Director of Financial and Commercial Services confirmed that, while all directors were contributing to work on savings options, no specific savings target had been set for the Fire and Rescue Service. He said that work was under way to assess the likely financial envelope for the service if it were to leave the County Council on 1 April 2028, including the costs, potential burdens and opportunities that might arise, and that this would inform more detailed planning in due course.

Members asked whether the service benchmarked Oxfordshire's incident profile against comparable fire and rescue services and whether local trends reflected wider patterns, particularly house fires, lithium-ion battery fires and fires involving e-bikes or vapes. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that benchmarking was undertaken nationally and against similar services, including Warwickshire, Gloucestershire and Buckinghamshire. Dwelling fires had reduced, and Oxfordshire's rate, measured against population, remained very low compared with other areas.

The service was seeing increased challenges associated with lithium-ion battery fires, particularly at recycling and waste sites, and recent incidents had been linked to inappropriate disposal. There were growing concerns around scooter fires, often associated with products not meeting required safety standards or being charged unsafely. Work to raise public awareness of these risks was being undertaken both locally and nationally.

There were no unusual trends in Oxfordshire compared with similar counties. However, he noted that benchmarking on response times needed to take account of local geography and funding, as Oxfordshire's rural nature created different operational challenges from more densely populated metropolitan areas.

Based on the fact BMMR performance data did not suggest a need for a new operating model, whilst other data did, the adequacy of the BMMR measures was queried by members.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that the service monitored a broader range of performance indicators than those included in the BMMR to assess overall performance and identify changes needed for improvement. There was a balance between providing sufficient Fire and Rescue information and maintaining a manageable set of measures within the wider corporate performance framework. More detailed information was reported to the Cabinet Member, while the published measures reflected the aspects most relevant to the public, particularly response times and prevention work.

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety acknowledged the point and agreed it would be helpful to reflect more clearly that the published figures resulted from considerable operational work to move resources around the system to maintain cover. Without these interventions, performance would have been significantly worse, and such action had cost implications, including increased overtime. These issues formed part of constructive discussions with staff and the Fire Brigades Union on improving the operating model.

Members asked whether response times were monitored in more granular detail than simply the countywide average, including by district, urban and rural areas, type of appliance and type of incident, and also enquired how far the service took account of heritage assets in planning and response arrangements.

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the service monitored response times in greater detail, including by on-call and whole-time appliances, district and incident type, such as dwelling fires and road traffic collisions. These differences were reflected in the annual report, which showed, for example, quicker response times in Oxford due to greater whole-time staff availability. While crews would take account of an incident's nature when responding, the service did not formally categorise incidents in the same way as the police and did not hold data showing intentionally different response speeds by incident type.

In response to a question on heritage assets, the Chief Fire Officer recognised that heritage risk was significant and was included within the Community Risk Management Plan. This involved assessing risks to important buildings, ensuring fire protection and prevention measures were in place, and making sure crews were familiar with those sites. A strategic risk group with the University had been established to ensure a shared understanding of the highest-risk heritage buildings and that training and planning reflected this.

Members asked whether closure of Rewley Road and Kidlington Fire Station remained under consideration.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that, as part of the consultation, the service had considered whether a new fire station could be developed that would enable closure of Rewley Road and Kennington. This remained one of the options under review and that potential sites for a new station were still being explored. Another option was to redevelop the existing Rewley Road site as a smaller station.
The service was continuing to assess whether a larger site outside central Oxford might provide a better long-term solution. While acknowledging that this could have implications for response times into the city, he emphasised that major incidents in

Oxford would require a wider weight of response, and that effective risk information, specialist training and an understanding of the city's specific risks would remain central to the service's approach.

Following questions about the granularity of information and future plans, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that work on the next Community Risk Management Plan had already been undertaken, although discussions were ongoing about its format and timescale in light of LGR. He explained that, whether through a shorter interim plan or an adapted version of the current arrangements, there would continue to be a comprehensive plan in place to direct the service's work.

For major heritage assets such as Blenheim Palace, the service had specific plans in place covering a range of fire scenarios, supported by regular training exercises. These included arrangements for water supply and salvage, as well as for protecting heritage items alongside the preservation of life and property.

Members asked about the challenges arising from LGR. The Chief Fire Officer explained that Government devolution proposals indicated that, where a mayoral authority existed, fire and rescue services would sit alongside policing under the mayoral structure, rather than being disaggregated across unitary councils. If LGR in Oxfordshire resulted in two or three unitary authorities, the Fire and Rescue Service would continue to operate across the wider geography as a standalone service. Surrey provided a relevant example, as it was preparing for its County Council fire and rescue service to become a separate combined authority serving new unitary areas. In places without a mayoral authority, this type of combined authority model was already well established, with Royal Berkshire cited as an example.

In response to questions about two-unitary or three-unitary models, particularly if a new council geography crossed existing fire authority boundaries, he acknowledged potential governance and transition complexity. Officers were discussing options with neighbouring fire and rescue services, including Royal Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, and with Government officials. No final clarity had been provided on the governance model, including whether future strategic authority arrangements might encompass fire and rescue responsibilities. However, the service was working through planning scenarios and was confident that workable arrangements could be developed once the final local government structure was known.

Members asked about the ongoing discussions with the Fire Brigades Union and the risk of potential industrial action, as well as the financial position facing the directorate in the context of wider budget pressures.
The Chief Fire Officer said the risks associated with significant transformational change affecting terms and conditions had been recognised from the outset and reflected in risk registers. However, Fire Brigades Union representatives and the workforce had engaged constructively, understood the service's challenges and were working with management to identify solutions that would avoid industrial action. The joint working groups were intended to find an approach that met the new operating model's needs while taking account of staff views and concerns.

The Committee **AGREED** to make recommendations to Cabinet around:

1. More routine reporting on the Fire and Rescue Service
2. Further attention to heritage buildings within response modelling
3. Better information on firefighter recruitment
4. Greater transparency on LGR costs
5. Earlier scrutiny input into the next Community Risk Management Plan

29/26 COMMERCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

(Agenda No. 6)

Cllr Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, and Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services, presented an update report on the progress of the Council's Commercial Strategy.

Introducing the report, the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation explained that the strategy had been intended to ensure that the Council's commercial activity added value to the organisation, supported wider policy objectives, and generated income where appropriate. He highlighted the importance of ensuring that contracts delivered financial and social value, supporting community and environmental priorities through procurement, and identifying commercial opportunities that could support the delivery of services.

The Director of Financial and Commercial Services reported that reasonable progress had been made since the strategy had been approved, although progress had been slower than hoped because of the need to undertake foundational work. The Council had reviewed its operating model, redesigned relevant service structures, strengthened commercial and procurement capacity, and begun to improve contract management arrangements.

Committee members questioned the rationale for the acquisition of the Castle Quarter, noting that many members had been unaware of the initiative because of commercial confidentiality. Questions were asked about the total cost, the source of funding, the relationship between the acquisition and the sale of County Hall, and the consistency of decision making in relation to property assets in the same area.
Officers explained that the opportunity to acquire the leasehold interest had arisen and had been assessed from both a place-shaping and commercial perspective. The Committee was advised that the total capital investment approved by Cabinet was £34 million, covering the acquisition and associated capital requirements. Officers stated that, after borrowing and operating costs, the acquisition was expected to generate a minimum net surplus of £550,000 per year, with the potential for this to increase through commercial management of the asset.

Members asked about the risks associated with the acquisition, including reliance on footfall, rental income, occupancy levels, and the performance of existing and future tenants. Officers explained that due diligence had been undertaken, that market advice had been received, and that a reserve would be established from expected early-year surpluses to provide a buffer if income levels were lower than anticipated. The Committee was advised that four vacant units were expected to be occupied within 18 months and that the Council had protection in relation to income from those units for the next two years.

Members expressed concern that the projected annual surplus represented a relatively low yield against the level of investment and questioned whether the Council was becoming a significant commercial landlord. Officers clarified that the Council was not permitted to borrow solely for commercial gain and that the acquisition had been justified by its wider place-shaping purpose. The business case had needed to demonstrate that the investment would pay for itself and would not become a burden on the revenue budget.

Members also sought further detail on the Council's vision for the Castle Quarter, the proposed letting profile, the approach to asset management, and the governance arrangements for decisions involving significant levels of expenditure. Officers stated that the acquisition fitted within the wider place strategy for Oxford, including the development of the West End and the role of the Castle Quarter as a gateway into the city centre. In addition, external asset management and property management expertise had been secured to support the operational management of the site.

The Committee discussed how the Council balanced commercial thinking with wider social, environmental and economic considerations. Officers explained that value for money was the key driver and that this included the outcomes the Council was seeking to achieve, rather than simply reducing costs. Members noted the importance of social value, support for small and medium-sized enterprises, environmental impacts, and the wider local economy.

Members asked how the commercial strategy would influence the Council's approach to LGR. The Cabinet Member stated that the Council could not bind any future authority or authorities, but that councils across Oxfordshire were moving in broadly similar directions by seeking commercial approaches that were financially sensible and delivered social value. Members requested greater clarity on how the strategy would inform the Council's contribution to LGR discussions and future decision making.

Members welcomed the emphasis on continuous improvement and efficiency but asked whether the use of technology, including an internal AI agent, would lead to internal savings as well as savings from third-party spend and contracts. Officers explained that investment had been made in the commercial and procurement team to establish the operating model and strengthen contract management. It was reported that, as processes became embedded and technology developed, opportunities would be considered to reduce administrative demand and make better use of staffing resources through natural turnover and attrition.

The Committee asked for examples of improved contract management delivering financial or service benefits. Officers explained that the Council had developed a contract management framework and was assessing platinum contracts against it. Examples given included work with the M Group contract and the System C adults' and children's social care line of business systems, where relationships and contract management arrangements were being strengthened.

Members asked how collaboration with services, district councils and other partners had progressed. Officers explained that the new operating model had supported closer working with services through a business partnering approach and that collaboration with district and city councils had been strengthened through LGR discussions. The Committee was advised that work was taking place to review contracts and future procurement activity across local authority partners ahead of vesting.

Members expressed disappointment that the commercial dashboard had been delayed, noting that it was important for monitoring performance against key performance indicators. Officers acknowledged the delay and stated that the dashboard was expected to be delivered within the current financial year, although a firm date was not yet available.

The Committee **AGREED** to make the following recommendations around the following to Cabinet:

1. Better balance between the need for commercial confidentiality with the need for transparency and effective scrutiny, particularly in relation to significant commercial decisions.
2. Provision of explicit information on collaboration with district and city council partners, including how this work supported procurement, contract management and local government reorganisation.
3. The development of the commercial dashboard to be brought forward as soon as possible and that a clear timetable for delivery was provided to the Committee.
4. Practical examples of how implementation of the Commercial Strategy had improved the quality, performance and value for money of Council contracts.
5. Greater clarity on how the Commercial Strategy informed the Council's approach to LGR and the options being discussed with partner authorities.

The Committee also requested:

- That, where appropriate and subject to commercial confidentiality, further information was provided on the Castle Quarter acquisition, including the Council's vision for the site, letting assumptions, risk profile, governance arrangements and opportunities for earlier scrutiny of major commercial decisions.

30/26 SHAPING OXFORDSHIRE'S FUTURE ECONOMY

(Agenda No. 7)

Cllr Gordon, Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy, and Nicholas Glover, Head of Future Economy attended to present an update report on Shaping Oxfordshire's Future Economy. The Head of Future Economy highlighted to members his interest as Interim Managing Director of Enterprise Oxfordshire.

Introducing the report, the Head of Future Economy explained that Oxfordshire had a strong economy, highly significant research and innovation assets, a skilled workforce, and extremely high employment rates. However, he advised that productivity remained a key challenge and that the benefits of innovation-led growth had not flowed evenly across the county. Persistent deprivation in some areas, pressures in the foundational economy, difficulties in retaining and scaling businesses, and misalignment between housing, employment and transport infrastructure were highlighted as key challenges for the county's economy.

The Committee heard that, given the uncertainty created by LGR, devolution, the proposed development corporation and wider institutional change, officers were not proposing a traditional long-term economic strategy . Instead, the focus had shifted to an investment plan for the short to medium term, intended to support businesses and residents while longer-term governance and spatial decisions were resolved.

The Head of Future Economy stated that the emerging investment pipeline was approximately £150 million, although no final decisions had been taken. He suggested that Enterprise Oxfordshire could provide a platform for delivery and for convening public, private and academic partners, but that some interventions might be better delivered by local government or other partners. The intention was to take proposals to Cabinet in July, with further development of interventions expected in September and beyond.

Members sought more detail about the leadership of Enterprise Oxfordshire. The Head of Future Economy clarified that he had been appointed Interim Managing Director of Enterprise Oxfordshire following the departure of the previous Chief Executive. His interim contract was due to end in July, although it was likely to be extended. Recruitment for a Managing Director was underway, with final interviews expected on 29 June and a recommendation due to be considered by the shareholder committee on 14 July. The Committee was advised that a candidate had also been identified for the role of Chair of Enterprise Oxfordshire and would be recommended to the Shareholder Committee for approval.

Members asked for greater clarity on the competing views referred to in the report around economic development, particularly in relation to the statement that developing a traditional economic strategy was exceptionally challenging. The Head of Future Economy explained that there were differing views across Oxfordshire about the appropriate economic model, including spatial questions around housing, commercial development, growth locations and the extent to which the benefits of Oxford's universities and spin-outs should be spread across the county and beyond. Members emphasised the importance of transparency and asked that the specific views of organisations be made clear where possible. The Head of Future Economy referred to LGR submissions as public documents that set out different perspectives on the county's future economic model. The Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment added that the Council was operating in a challenging sequencing environment, with LGR and devolution processes running in parallel, but notwithstanding that, immediate action was still required to support inclusive growth and address persistent deprivation.

The Committee sought tangible examples of interventions that could improve productivity. The Head of Future Economy identified housing and public transport as major determinants, alongside inward investment, business support, high street support, support for high-growth businesses, and upskilling programmes. He noted that improving access to training, including through satellite provision with further education providers, could help address skills barriers. He cautioned, however, that local interventions would represent a relatively small proportion of the wider economy and that national policy would remain a significant factor.

Members asked about the impact of a previous £500,000 investment in mapping mobile phone signal across the county and whether any concrete steps had followed to improve productivity and connectivity. The Head of Future Economy advised that he was not aware of the detail but would take the question away and provide a written response to the Committee. It was confirmed that the response would be shared with all Committee members.

Members raised concerns that housing and transport decisions had not always aligned with employment opportunities. The Committee discussed the example of the former X35 bus service, which had connected communities including Faringdon and Stanford in the Vale with employment sites such as Harwell and Didcot. Members considered that the loss of such services made it harder for residents in growing communities to access good employment opportunities. The Head of Future Economy accepted that the point was fair and advised that these issues were live officer-level discussions within the Economy & Place teams. Members similarly raised concerns that rail and bus planning appeared insufficiently integrated and noted the need for greater synergy between public transport planning and economic development objectives.

Concerns were also raised that the Science Vale Movement and Place Plan had given limited attention to buses and that there was no equivalent bus plan integrated with the rail strategy. Members also discussed bus franchising and considered that it could be important for developing an integrated public transport approach. The Cabinet Member advised that decisions such as bus franchising might be best taken by the authority that emerged from the devolution process. She noted that the Council's ability to plan was complicated by LGR and devolution running in parallel, and that the productivity and investment plan was intended to focus on what could be achieved within the remaining lifetime of the current Council. The Head of Future Economy advised that some housing and spatial planning issues were unlikely to be resolved in the immediate future and would be influenced by LGR, the establishment of any development corporation, and the development of a spatial development strategy. International investors would take comfort from the Council's rail plans and secured investment, but acknowledged that more work was needed on transport integration.

Members raised concerns that the report appeared to assume that growth was essential, without sufficiently testing whether this remained appropriate in a climate-constrained world. It was suggested that sustainability and climate resilience were treated as constraints rather than fundamental limits, and that greater attention should be given to total emissions, resource consumption, climate adaptation risks, wellbeing, health inequality, biodiversity recovery and carbon reduction.
The Cabinet Member stated that the Council considered growth to be essential, provided it was the right kind of growth: good, inclusive and green growth that enabled residents who had not shared in Oxfordshire's prosperity to benefit from it.

The Head of Future Economy acknowledged that productivity and growth had sometimes been conflated, and clarified that the intended focus was economic development: improving residents' quality of life and standards of living rather than pursuing growth at any cost.

The Head of Future Economy advised that environmental sustainability, biodiversity net gain and related workstreams were important and had their own processes and resource bases. He stated that principles such as doughnut economics and future generations considerations should be applied when designing specific interventions, including business support and skills programmes. The Cabinet Member added that the approach aimed to address the way housing and employment patterns had contributed to long commutes, affordability pressures and exclusion from opportunities, and that the environmental and wellbeing benefits of this should be made more explicit.

Members expressed concern that economic development had not always appeared to receive sufficient priority or resource within the Council, and that reports needed clearer substance, measurable objectives and accountability. Examples were raised including the A40, RAF Brize Norton, Bicester Motion, rail connectivity, tourism and major local economic opportunities. The Head of Future Economy agreed that economic development was under-resourced across the county and that capacity, data and intelligence needed to be strengthened. He advised that Enterprise Oxfordshire had identified capacity to recruit a Head of Inward Investment and sector leads, and that the investment plan should include clear objectives, key results and measures so that progress could be monitored and challenged.

Members noted that farming and the rural economy had not been referenced by the report in line with its contribution to the local economy. Agriculture occupied a significant proportion of Oxfordshire's land area and was important to productivity, even if not always framed in terms of growth. The Committee considered this a significant omission.

The Committee **AGREED** to make recommendations to Cabinet in relation to

1. Giving greater priority to economic development, supported by stronger use of data and intelligence, clearer objectives, and measurable outcomes.
2. Including in the forthcoming Oxfordshire Investment and Productivity Plan specific examples of how productivity related to local residents' lives, including practical examples of green growth and inclusive economic development.
3. Addressing the misalignment between public transport and employment locations, and consider whether rail and bus planning required greater integration and synergy.
4. Ensuring the forthcoming Oxfordshire Investment and Productivity Plan explicitly evaluated alternative economic frameworks, including wellbeing economy, community wealth building and post-growth approaches, and demonstrated how any proposed growth would be compatible with Oxfordshire's climate, biodiversity and nature recovery commitments.
5. That the Oxfordshire Investment and Productivity Plan addresses farming and agriculture issues

The Committee supported the proposal to convene a group of existing elected members to agree delivery principles and mechanisms for economic development across Oxfordshire, and suggested that this should have appropriate status within the Council, such as through a Cabinet advisory committee.

The Head of Future Economy agreed to provide a written response on the outcomes and next steps following the previous investment in mapping mobile phone signal across the county. The response was to be shared with all Committee members.

31/26 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN
(Agenda No. 8)

The Committee **AGREED** the proposed work programme but, in the event that Council gave it power to consider LGR issues and the government announced its 'minded to' decision in July, the Committee requested to replace the BMMR item with an LGR update.

32/26 RESPONSES TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS
(Agenda No. 9)

The Committee **NOTED** the Cabinet responses to the reports on:

- The Business Management and Monitoring Report (Public Health)
- Parking Permits
- Draft Social Value Policy

.... in the Chair

Date of signing ....

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