

Planning and decision-making in your organisation

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agenda – quorum – minutes – business plan – strategic plan



**MEMBER
RESOURCE**

What is to be decided at each meeting?

Had advance notice been given of each decision to be made? Does each matter for decision appear on a document that's been circulated? Does the meeting allow adequate time for each decision to be discussed and resolved within the scheduled time, and taking into account the alerted departure time of key decision-makers? This is the principle of an *agenda*.

Who makes decisions at meetings?

Does a simple majority make the final decision at a meeting, or does at least one office-bearer need to be involved? What if the matter for decision has been left undecided once the scheduled time for the meeting is over? When not everyone's there, or when people need to leave a meeting, can the business of the group continue with a minimum number of people? Who and what is that minimum? Is it an absolute number, or a percentage of the group, or the office bearers plus a number of others? This is the principle of a *quorum*.

How do we know what's been decided?

Have decisions been recorded? Are actions clearly documented, with dates and deadlines and who's responsible? Has that document been circulated within days of the meeting, to reinforce decision-making and authorise actions? This is the principle of *minutes*.

How do we prioritise the work and the decisions of this group?

Has work been done to list what needs doing this year, against an external context analysis and internal resource allocation? Has this prioritisation reached a documented agreement? Can those priorities then guide the content of meetings in a helpful way? This is the principle of a *business plan*.

How do we define the scope of the group as an organisation?

Have the board and all committees come together to understand, analyse and reaffirm what the organisation is for? Have we analysed our operating environment, our opportunities and threats, against our resources and commitments? Have we developed a high-level representation to guide everything we do, including all of the above? This is the principle of a *strategic plan*.