



Trustee Meeting Framework

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Our latest research, in conjunction with behavioural insight agency Behave London, has helped us to better understand how group dynamics can impact broader decision-making and planning strategy. Based on this research, we have developed our Trustee Meeting Framework.

Assign time for unplanned items

1

Long-term strategy

1. Review three-year goals
2. Explore all market opportunities
3. Identify training needs
4. Prioritise activities to explore

2

Strategy review

1. Discuss exploration team's report
2. Activity selection and set key measurables
3. Decision on next steps

3

Regular business

1. Routine and compliance items
2. Progress reporting on activities from strategic review

Tabled items for decision

- In order of priority
- With strict time slots

→ If time slot runs out →

Assign a flexi team and move to next item

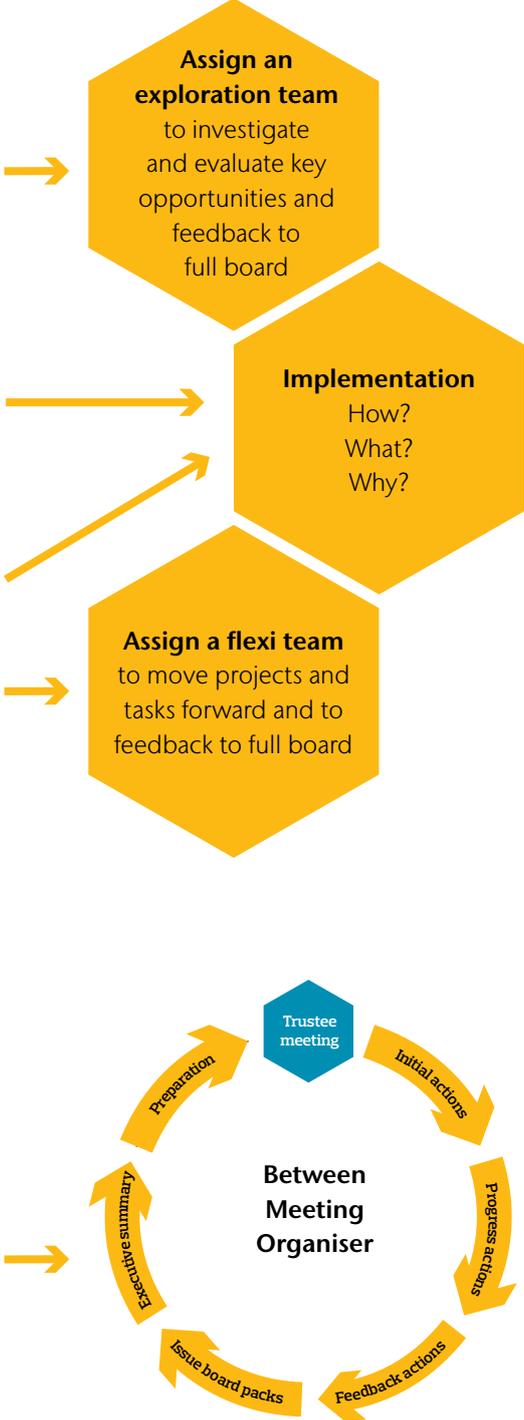
4

Any other business

5

Between Meeting Organiser

1. Recap on responsibilities between meetings



Behavioural biases – how to overcome them with a better meeting structure

Read on to discover the cognitive biases informing each stage of our meeting structure.

Assign time for unplanned items

We are all too optimistic – so plan for problems

Humans have a strong bias towards optimism which tends to flourish in groups. This leads to a **planning fallacy**: we underestimate how much time we will need. Keeping a space for emergency items is wise, and you can use that time elsewhere in the meeting if nothing unexpected arises.

1

Long-term strategy

1. Review three-year goals
2. Explore all market opportunities
3. Identify training needs
4. Prioritise activities to explore



Assign an exploration team
to investigate and evaluate key opportunities and feedback to full board

Cognitive-depletion leads us to get tired as the day rolls on

When we are hungry, or tired, we tend to make ‘default’ decisions. Strategy needs to be tackled early in the meeting, and routine items later.

Present-bias leads us to find payoffs now more attractive than those later

The further away the payoff, the more likely it is we will keep postponing a decision, e.g. LDI, long-term strategy.

2 Strategy review

1. Discuss exploration team's report
2. Activity selection and set key measurables
3. Decision on next steps



Implementation
How?
What?
Why?

Go hard

The **hard–easy effect** means we tend to overestimate the probability of succeeding at a hard task, and to underestimate how well we will perform on easy tasks. So get the hard strategy tasks out of the way first – you will roll through the easy ones quicker than you think!

3 Regular business

1. Routine and compliance items
2. Progress reporting on activities from strategic review

Tabled items for decision

- In order of priority
- With strict time slots

If time slot runs out

Assign a flexi team and move to next item



Implementation
How?
What?
Why?

Assign a flexi team
to move projects and tasks forward and to feedback to full board

Beat the status quo

An encouraging chair will lead more trustees to challenge the **status quo (herding)**. Providing psychological safety for trustees so they feel that they can air their concerns without criticism is vital.

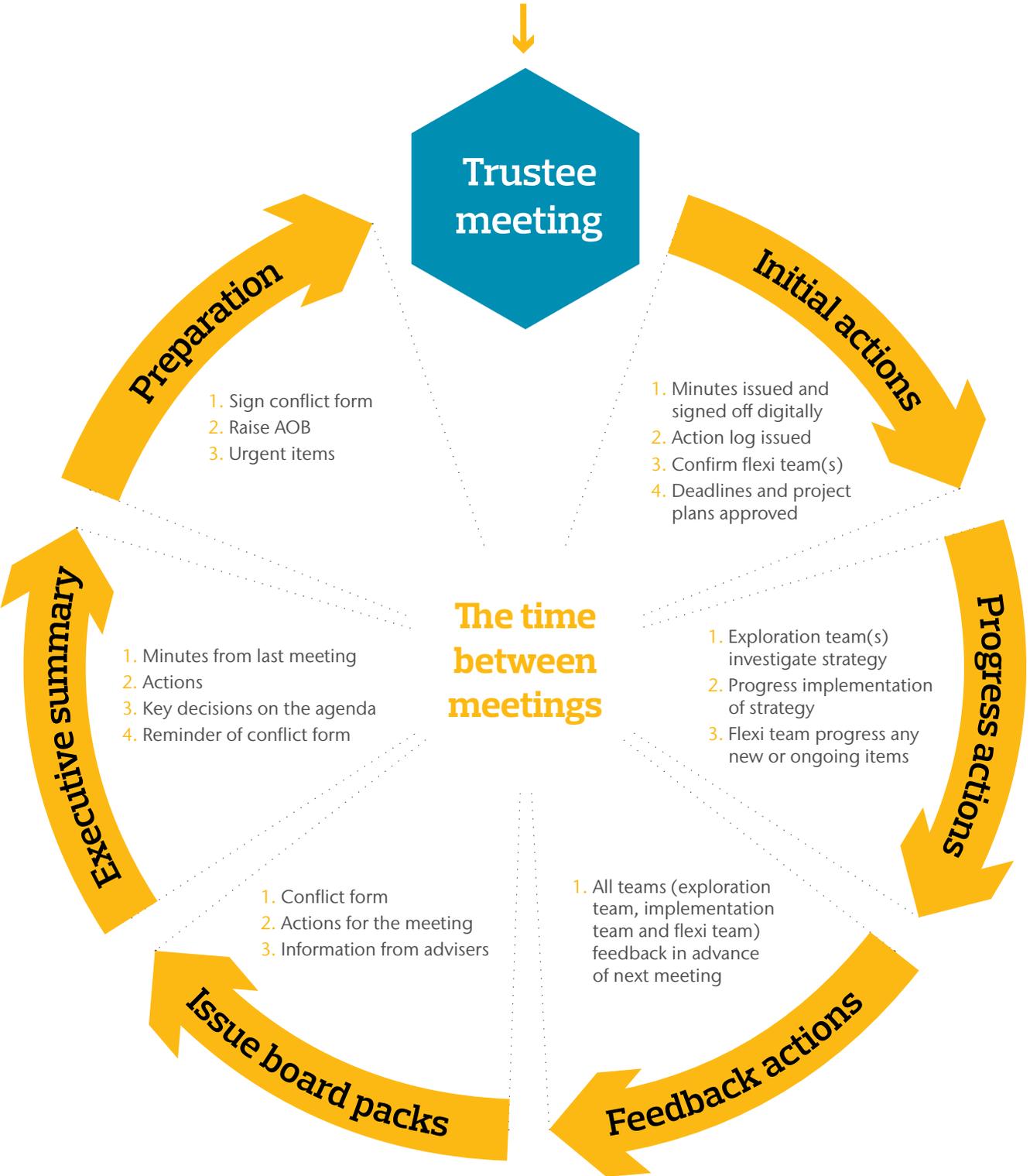
Watch how you frame it

Our research showed us that the way problems are framed impacts how trustees vote. The role of the chair is crucial in managing this potential bias. See our [checklist for chairing meetings](#).

4 Any other business

5 Between Meeting Organiser

1. Recap on responsibilities between meetings



Contact us

If your trustee board could benefit from taking a step back and considering how they work, get in touch to find out more about Aon's suite of Trustee Effectiveness tools. We can help you enhance your understanding of your current operational effectiveness and governance but also take tangible steps towards improvement. Contact your usual Aon Consultant or one of the contacts below.

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