



# **“Gold Standard Agenda Planning”**

**Diocese of Bath & Wells Clerks’ Conference**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**11.15am to 12pm**

**Delivered by: Bella Byrne, Governance Lead at SAST**

# Workshop Focus:

1. Why do you need an agenda?
2. Who writes it?
3. What to put on, what to leave off?
4. A tool for discussion & decision-making
5. Standing items
6. Format & calendars
7. Questions and answers

## Meeting Agenda

Date: Feb 22, 2024 Time: 9:00 am Location: Room 42

### Topic 1: Title of First Topic

- Discussion point list with bullets
- Second talking point
- Third talking point

### Topic 2: Title of Second Topic

1. Discussion point list with numbers
2. Second talking point
3. Third talking point

### Topic 3: Title of Third Topic

- A. Discussion point list with letters
- B. Second talking point
- C. Third talking point

### Topic 4: Title of Fourth Topic

- I. Discussion point with roman numerals
- II. Second talking point
- III. Third talking point

### Notes and Action Items

# Why do you need an agenda?

## The Governance Handbook 2020

*“agenda-setting is a key part of developing an effective governance team. It forms the basis of a well-structured meeting and must be retained as a legal record of each meeting.”*

## Competency Framework for Governance 2017

*“Effective boards provide confident, strategic leadership to their organisations; agenda setting is the first step in ensuring meetings and decisions are led by strategy”.*

## The Clerking Competency Framework 2017

“The Clerk is responsible for drafting an accurate and efficient agenda for each meeting with support from the Chair”.

# Why do you actually need an agenda?



It sets out the business of the meeting and nothing else

It reminds the board of the statutory procedures to be carried out

Preparation before the meeting facilitates productivity and constructive, timely decision-making

It facilitates continuity between meetings in terms of school development

It sets the tone of the meeting and supports the desired dynamic between attendees

It's also common sense

# Who writes the agenda?

The Chair?

The Clerk/Governance Professional?

The Headteacher?

**What are the pros and cons of each person taking the lead on agenda-writing?**

# What to put on and what to keep off?

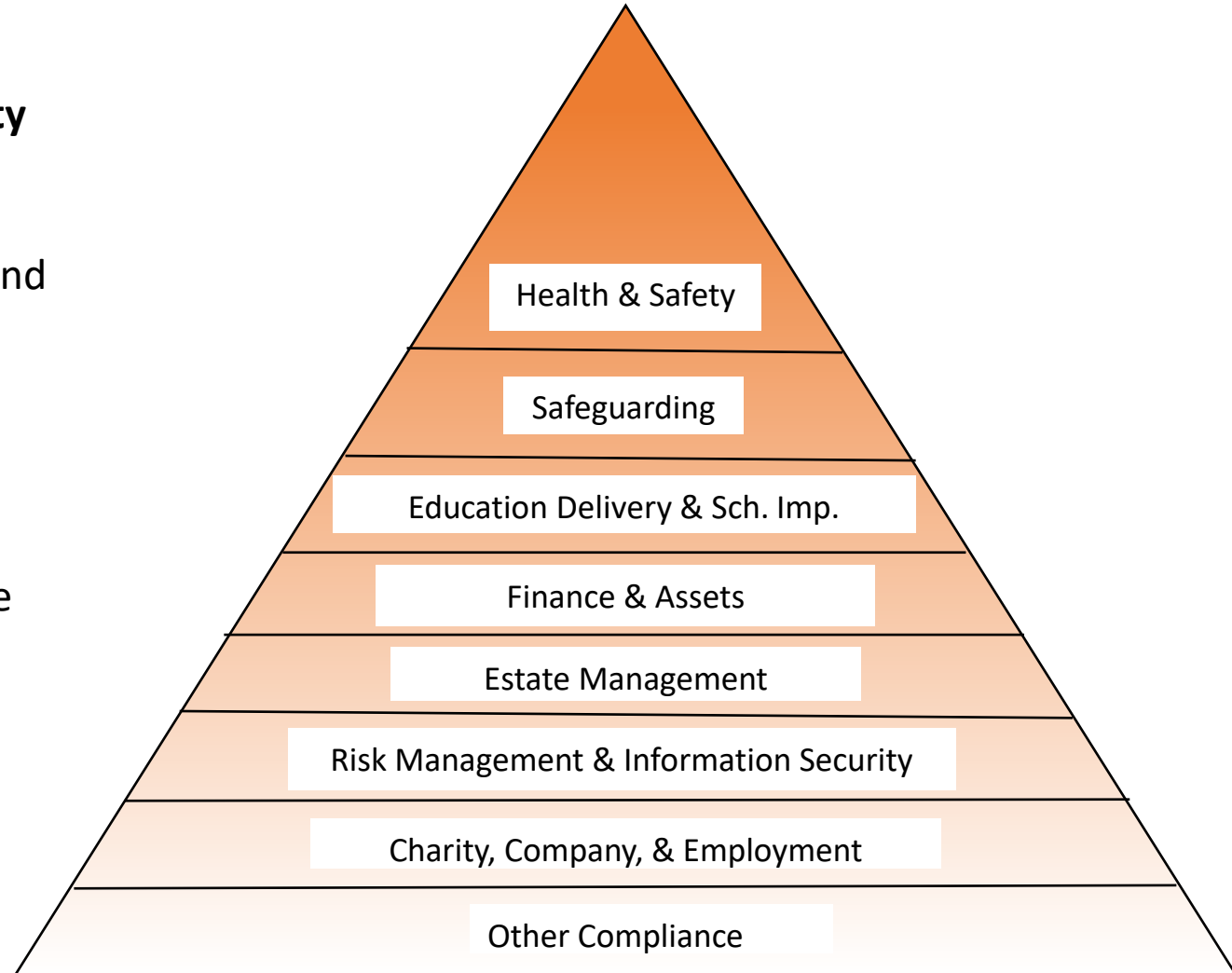


- How can you make the best use of the time you have?
- Focus on the decisions you absolutely have to make
- How can you scaffold the decision-making process? (the meeting pack)
- Put standing items in first then rationalise what time there is left

# What to put on and what to keep off?

## Using time wisely and ensuring quality of discussion/decision-making:

- Insist members read papers and send in questions **in advance**
- Governors report **before** the Headteacher
- Get **help** if the Chair is not effective
- If time is short, consider the “**hierarchy of need**” in school



# A tool for discussion & decision-making

- Add the outcome of the discussion to the agenda (Kaizen style)
- Keep track of actions and send them with the agenda
- Minute decisions formally and include a timescale and who is responsible – “ board resolved to:....”
- Use the agenda as a template for the minute-taking
- Add hyperlinks to meeting pack information in the agenda (and embed documents too if helpful)
- Set a read-receipt out with the agenda via email to check who is opening the agenda well ahead of time (and who isn't)
- Encourage the Chair to rotate and share the lead role on some agenda items to support succession-planning
- Add the vision of the school to the top of the agenda and ask a question at the end “*How has our meeting been impactful today?*”
- *Consider providing the agenda in electronic form online rather than on paper so attendees can annotate it*



# Standing Items

Those present (including in what capacity)	Correspondence	Governor training
Apologies for absence	Headteachers Report	Urgent business (not AOB)
Register of Business interests	Other reports (SENDSCO, SLT, etc.)	Confidential items
Minutes of the previous meeting	Committee reports	Next meeting date
Matters arising	Governor Visits	Skills matrix?
Actions from the previous meeting	Policies for approval	Election of the Chair/VC?

# Format & Calendars

- *There is no obvious guidance on format*
- *Ofsted expect “challenge” to be evidenced – various techniques*
- *Standing items need to be there (which change through the year)*
- *Try to diarise key policies for review on a three-year cycle to ensure they are spread evenly*
- *Draft agenda well in advance – 3 weeks is ideal*



# Questions & Answers