Making better decisions in groups

“By pooling diverse information and different areas of expertise, groups can make better decisions than individuals.”

Unfortunately, social dynamics can undermine this. Committees can prevent this by:

- **Being diverse in terms of their background and expertise**
  A wide range of views allows a group to explore a problem space fully.

- **Looking beyond confidence**
  High confidence does not always imply greater knowledge. Less confident group members may be more knowledgeable. Consider fixed speaking times and no-interruption rules.

- **Avoiding the impact of social influence**
  Group decisions can be more valuable if members have independence from one another. If hierarchies exist, opinions may be more useful if collected anonymously.

- **Challenge the status quo**
  Standard practices often work well, but may not always deliver the best decisions. Be prepared to tackle problems in new ways.

- **Recognising expertise**
  Judgement by an individual with relevant specialist knowledge should carry more weight than judgement by an individual without such knowledge.

- **Establishing checks and balances**
  Committee chairs should ensure members agree on the nature of the problems they are addressing. Everyone should be encouraged to monitor for unconscious bias.

- **Finding hidden information**
  The sharing of information held by the minority, not just the majority, should be encouraged. This can prevent essential details from being overlooked.