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Episode 12 Before You Sit Down

A standard one-page template for all Committee reports removes the confusion caused by different people writing in different formats. All key information on one page — purpose, overview, key messages and recommendations. The supporting detail goes in Attachments.

Committee Report Template	
Standard template for all Committee reports	
Prepared by	[Name] [Role]
Name of Subcommittee or Working Group	[Name]
Meeting Date	[Date of meeting at which report will be discussed]
Report Purpose	☐ Information only ☐ Decision required
Overview	Brief context and background. What is the topic, why is it being reported now, and what does the Committee need to understand before reading the Key Messages? [Overview text]
Key Messages	Each message should be a distinct and substantive point. Not padding. — [Key message 1 — the most important point] — [Key message 2] — [Key message 3]
Recommendations	Frame as motions — they can be moved directly at the meeting without re-wording. 1. THAT [recommended action 1] 2. THAT [recommended action 2]
Attachments	[List any supporting documents attached to this report]

The one-page rule: unless the circumstances are exceptional, everything above should fit on one page. A Committee member should be able to read the report and understand what it's about, what the key points are, and what they're being asked to decide. If it's seven pages long, it needs a rewrite.