

What's been useful

bm320	SWBM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The diversity of RSL's involved and the discussion at meetings on the benchmarking data. Helped me to report to the Co-op Board on how the Co-op's own data compares and what lessons can be learnt from this information. There is much more work and learning that can be achieved however. • Providing comparative data on colleague associations for the Board. • The opportunity to compare performance with peer associations = same size (roughly) and same area of operation. Plus opportunity to discuss good practice etc., not just look at figures. • Net-working; value for money; sharing good practice; and of course reviewing performance. • Networking • The chance to compare each other's performance and to start looking at best practice to see what we can learn from others. • Networking and discussion of issues with others in similar roles who face similar challenges, particularly with similar sized organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to share good practice. We often found that raw results for the members were very different, but this led to conversations about why they were different and the sharing of good ideas. • Provided a cost effective and useful benchmarking platform. Very easy to use web site, Created a very useful network of contacts for mutual support. • Networking. Finding out how others operate. Swapping ideas and information especially policies. Exchange of ideas. • Information sharing; mutual support. • The Networking, sharing information, making comparisons. • Contact with others in the same line of work, being able to share documents, processes, etc. and sharing of PI information

Impact

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think it's still too much in its infancy to have had much of an impact. However, it is great to be able to have access to the shared knowledge base and views of our colleagues on BM 320. • Merely getting the information and data inputted and making sure that we all report on the same basis has been important in the learning process. Working together with other housing professionals is also helpful in day-to-day working and understanding the information. • It has provided an evidence base for some of the assumptions the Board has made about the Association. • It has worked well as 1 above, but other initiatives are beginning to flow. E.g. salaries survey, tenant satisfaction survey. • Organisation focus on value for money and measuring performance. • For me it is still a bit early, but I am hoping that this will help BECHA to be more efficient. • Too early to tell – not changed anything with significant results. Have adopted some changes, specifically (re voids), but too soon to report on outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helped the Association to set more realistic internal KPIs. • Focused the board's attention on the areas where improvements are possible. This has kept the momentum going in areas where we are behind our sector. • Increased to collection and analysis of data in the organisation. Easier to source information. • Provided a wider network for information sharing; mutual support. • For the organisation to be able to evaluate how it is being managed. It has also helped the organisation work efficiently by comparing good work practices. • Saved us time by being able to share information, PIs have given us re-assurance that our performance is good and also give us targets to aim for.

Barriers

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only barriers I can think of are the relative sizes of the member RSLs. I very much value my peer group but realise that we are not true peers. We are only one third the size of the biggest members, we also have very different geographies – we are only in one borough, others cover the country (even countries). • It is fair to say that we are now only slowly coming together as group and breaking down the barriers; also getting or making a commitment to the group has been slow in coming but as time as progressed we are beginning to see the benefits that could accrue! • We think that some of the financial data appears to be potentially 'wonky' and raises questions about whether we are all using the same accounting rules perhaps. • I wasn't around from the very beginning, but getting data definitions right inevitably took a time (and even now, need checking in some instances). • These things a little time to get them right particularly when people might want slightly different things from it. That said I think that we are making good progress. • Time! Being a CE of a small HA I find that I am having to stretch myself and at times I therefore do not have enough time to put into this. • No specific barriers. Need to be more focussed on issues rather than drifting into general discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main barrier is the distance between the members meaning that we cannot meet up that often. The best information comes out of face to face discussions about the benchmarking material. • I would like to bring someone with me to each session from the relevant department. So if we are looking at repairs I would like my maintenance mgr to be there but this is of course logistically difficult. • Variation in size of the organisations in the group. • Lack of time. • I have to date not come across any barriers. • Time (I have found it difficult to respond to some requests for information due to time pressure) and distance (I will not unfortunately be able to attend all meetings due to our location in the Channel Islands and I am keen to get the maximum value from meetings which I do attend).

Improvements (Skills & Projects)

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a good price to take over the running and chasing of the data because most of us smalls do not have any surplus capacity to do this. • Ensure that the Group operates at its most effective with helpful hints and tips, an overall co-ordination role keeping all the members updated and ensuring that the group is moving forward and introducing new ideas and contact with other bm groups. • We could collectively look at getting auditors to have a drill down on the accounting practices we all use. • Perhaps a more proactive role on data definitions and analysis? • Not allowing drift and keeping group more focussed on performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So far the website has worked fine and most of the amendments have come from within and been adjusted by Mark Stuart. Perhaps we would need more input from Skills & projects if he were not around. • Pass on ideas of best practice from the London group so we can learn from them and visa versa. • Keep evolving as the group evolves. • If we didn't have someone in the group who was good at doing the analysis then I would say the provision of that type of service. • It would be interesting if at some point we could do a comparison with g320 Group. • Not sure there is anything.

Improvements (Self)

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing unless I can clone myself or get additional staff – sorry, • Keep my commitment to the group, be more proactive where possible ensure that the data is meaningful to the Co-op and its Board and how this information can be used to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Co-op's operations by learning from other RSL's ideas and achievements. Keeping up to date is important. Also encouraging other small RSL's to join the group so that the Co-op has RSL's that can be compared to the Co-op. At present, the Co-op is very much on its own within the group we are small and the there is no relevant comparison. • I think our meetings work very well as we know and trust one another well. We could possibly do more to plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are trying as a group to refine the information input to SWBM to make it more relevant to the members. • I am trying to make sure the meetings end up with a list of positive ideas rather than just being a time to share our challenges. • Carry out more of a critical appraisal of the results. • Do better at prioritising more time to it. • I arranged for training to follow the last meeting which was held at my offices. It was a useful way to arrange training and as some people have a distance to travel wherever the meeting is held it made full use of their time. It has been agreed to do this again. • Aim to deal with the time issues (I realise that time invested in SWBC is likely to be well spent).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agendas in advance and prepare for meetings? • Attend meeting, reply to request promptly and provide accurate data. • Find ways to work more efficiently!! • Provide information more promptly, more proactive about providing info and initiating topics for discussion. 	
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Additional comments

bm320	SWBM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I look forward to investigating joint commissioning (like with our survey) and joint procurement (maybe with EPCs etc). • It has been enjoyable and worthwhile exercise to be part of from its inception. I have learned much about benchmarking and its operations and significance of the components of the data input etc. • We are looking at expanding numbers from existing membership of 10 HAs. But if this happened, meetings would have to split into groups of no larger, or they would lose their usefulness of discussion, feedback, sharing good practice, coming up with new ideas etc. • I think that possibly more could be obtained from benchmarking if there were more associations involved. If this happened there would need to be a second 'club' in London and then periodically the two clubs could come together to share. This may be something that Skills & Projects may be able to promote and market. • Need to monitor results, perhaps annually. Networking, sharing and supportive environment is very positive but need to place more emphasis on action and measuring impact. • A fine body of men and women! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been great to carry out an organised form of benchmarking. I am hoping that it will be also be useful to meet up with the London group. Cost has also been very favourable. • It has been a really positive experience for me. • Good group off to a good start. Need to make sure that we have a clear agenda so that the group stays focused. • It has been (and continues to be) a worthwhile project which has exceeded my expectations, principally because of the commitment of the individual members. • It is important that the group keeps focused and discussions add value to the meeting. • The agenda is very full and there are times when I would like to spend more time on certain issues. I think the plan to allot minutes to each item is good as it will give us the chance to say in advance that we would like more time spent on certain items.