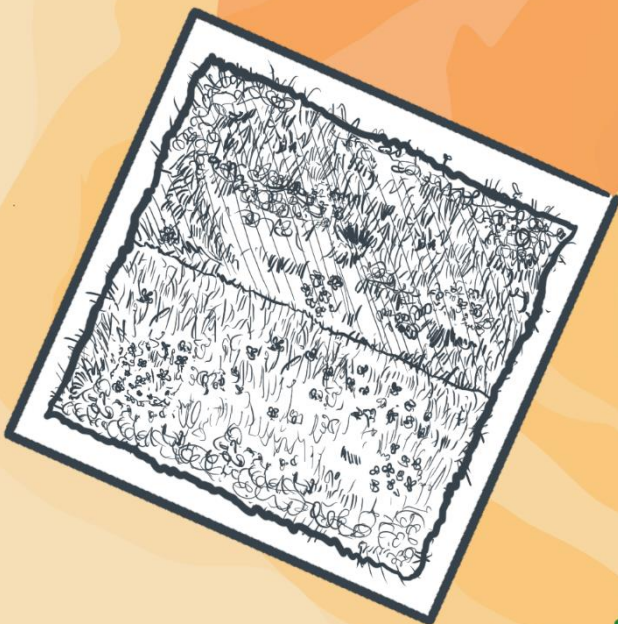


No Man is an Island.
How can we learn
differently, think
differently and act
differently within the
context of a changing
and challenging world?



Chapter 3: The Caplor House

3

THE CAPLOR HOUSE

“The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary can speak.” Hans Hofmann

Caplor Horizons is a unique organisation. It brings together a mixed community of individuals, with different backgrounds and specialisms, all of whom are driven by shared values and a desire to offer their skills and experience for the benefit of others. Within this community, everyone matters. Everyone has something they can contribute to our movement and everyone’s voice is heard.

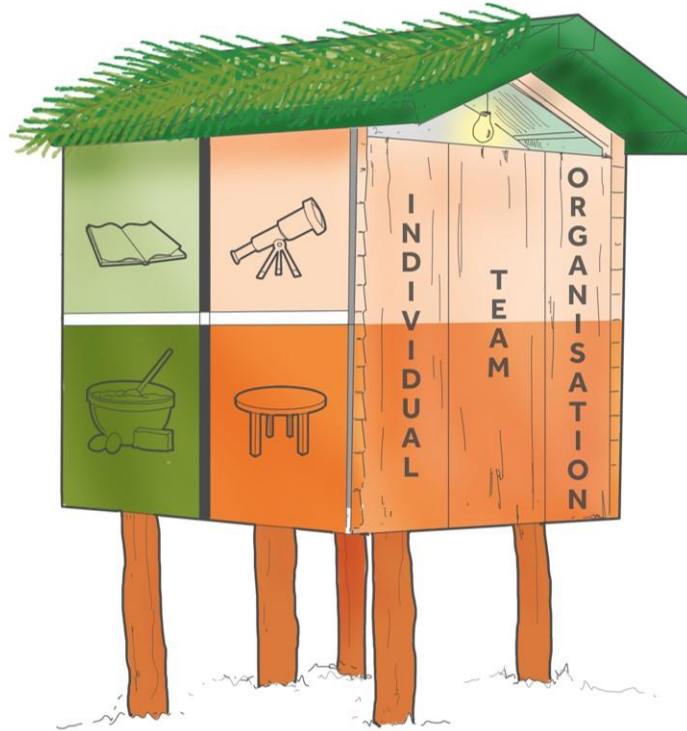
However, from the beginning, it was clear that the diversity of individuals, their cultural backgrounds, varied experiences and different learning and teaching methods (all the things that added strength to the community) could also carry risks. Would a Caplor Horizons programme or event be unique and recognisable? Would we be able to create a common, unifying thread that would run through this work? Would clients identify with individuals rather than the whole body of the Caplor community? The answer lay in establishing a strong identity, through a simple and memorable core model that all Advisors and clients could embrace that would provide the basis of our services and programme offerings.

The model that emerged was the “Caplor House”. The Caplor House developed organically, nurtured by the whole team, and now provides security and a common language to everyone involved within our organisation.

Why is the model based upon a house?

The metaphor of the house or the home is universal. Although everyone’s home might look different, a four-walled fixture on a permanent foundation, a hut fashioned from straw and mud, a snowy sanctuary, a hidden cave, or even a floating boat, the concept of having a shelter exists across the globe.

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The Caplor House in 3 dimensions

A place to live is aspirational but it is also a fundamental human right. A home provides shelter, safety and a sense of belonging. The Caplor House offers all those involved with Caplor Horizons a shared, familiar and comfortable place to inhabit and a secure base in which to return. It allows them to leave, to work and influence others in the wider world, returning home in order to make sense of external experiences.

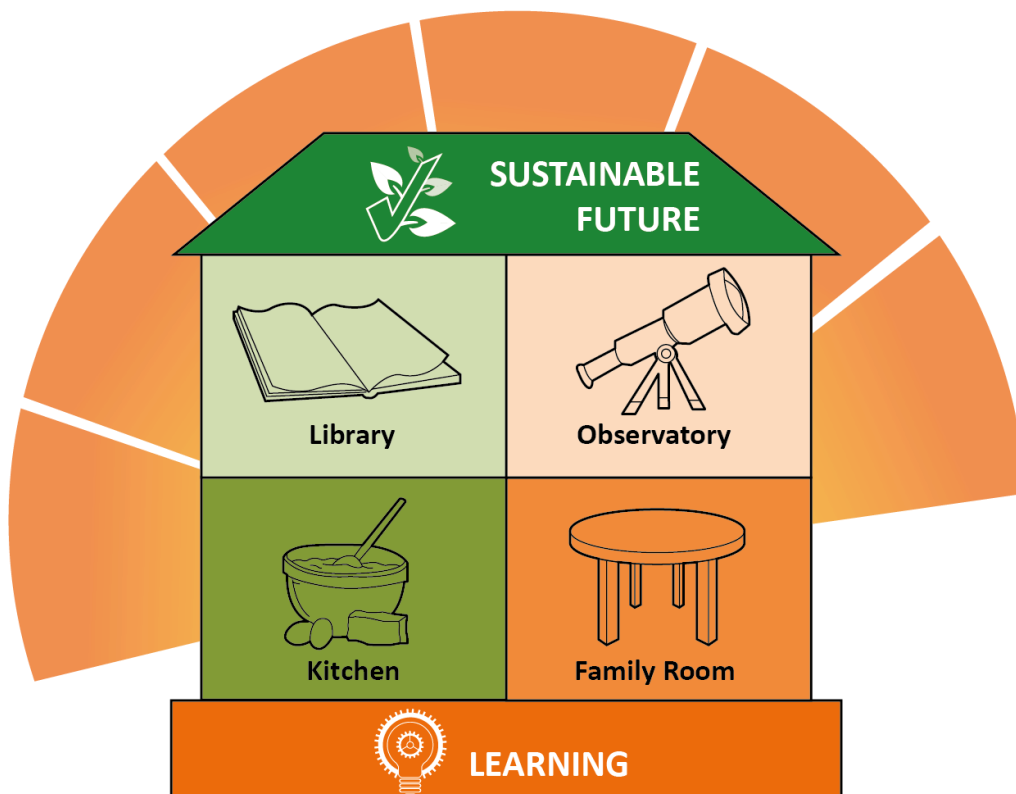
At Caplor Horizons we now use this powerful metaphor as a key component of our work to inspire and enable leaders to deliver a sustainable future. The Caplor House is an integrative organisational effectiveness and leadership model that is underpinned by learning.

What is the Caplor House model?

The Caplor House is a representation of different aspects of the way in which we think and behave. It explores responses to different situations and offers a deeper understanding of individual preferences, prejudices and choices. It is built upon a firm foundation, has a protective roof and four distinct rooms. The rooms are linked by staircases and corridors.

- **The foundation of the Caplor House is learning.** Caplor Horizons aims to initiate and support change that requires learning. We do not believe that leadership capability and performance are sustainable without the ability to learn. All our work starts from this premise.
- **The roof of the Caplor House represents our overarching vision:** working towards a more sustainable future. The roof tiles contain four overlapping and balancing principles concerning purpose, people, planet, and prosperity.
- **The four rooms of the Caplor House** are places in which different aspects of individual thinking and behaviour are explored. They can be “visited” in order to see issues from different perspectives, understand other people’s points of view, recognise and challenge assumptions and explore different solutions to problems. A metaphorical walk around the house offers a holistic view of any issue and the potential for satisfying and considered decision-making.

When you put all of these elements together, here is what you get:

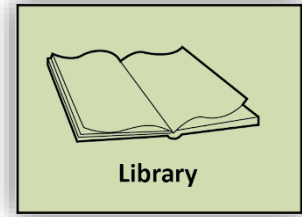


The Caplor House

The Four Rooms of the Caplor House

The Library

The Library (represented by an image of a book) is the focus of activity around reason, logic, critical and analytical thought.



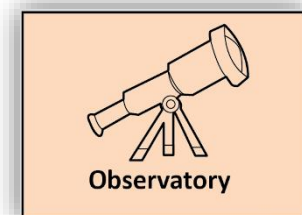
When do we visit the Library? We go to the Library to identify and define problems. It is the place we go to work towards meaning, understand cause and effect, evaluate ideas and solve technical problems. It is where we build rational arguments, seek evidence and test and prove hypotheses.

We also go there to analyse and evaluate opportunities and options, against criteria such as the return on investment, short- and long-term benefits, efficiency and impact. Here we work on data analysis and measurement, creating the models and metrics that will enable us to measure success. We work with investors and stakeholders on issues of value and performance. We develop systems and plans here, as well as the operating guidelines and rules that will allow others to implement them.

The Library may sometimes feel cool, impersonal and academic – it is a space in which hard choices have to be made and the implications of these evaluated, without distractions or emotion. The Library is equipped with tools for measurement, calculation, data analysis and research.

The Observatory

The Observatory (represented by an image of a telescope) is where we work with vision, new ideas and the use of the imagination.



When do we visit the Observatory? We go to the Observatory to look to the future. We scan the horizon for new opportunities, possibilities and innovative approaches. We look beyond the house to new markets, new business models and new challenges. We use this form of thinking to imagine what the future will bring and seek the inspiration that will form a new vision. It is a strong part of our search for purpose: the vision and direction that gives meaning to our lives.

In the Observatory, we work on generating new ideas, seeking inspiration from multiple sources. We challenge assumptions and the status quo. We take risks and are prepared to fail, as part of the innovation process. We collaborate with others, seeking connections and bringing together disparate parts into new wholes.

It is a space that is open, light and expansive. The windows are open, bringing in sounds and smells from the outside environment. A breeze blows through the room changing the shape of the shadows on the walls. The room is equipped with the tools of the artist and the inventor.

The Family Room

The Family Room (represented by an image of a table) is the social centre of the house. It is a place where people go to communicate, discuss, share and feel.



When do we visit the Family Room? We go to the Family Room in order to build relationships, partnerships and networks. We work there to develop the empathy and understanding that enable us to motivate and support other people. In this room we open dialogue across boundaries and communicate our values. We seek to inspire commitment and build trust and confidence, through authentic sharing of our emotional responses.

In the Family Room we aim to build the social networks and partnerships that support and sustain us and we rehearse the interpersonal skills needed to mediate and resolve conflicts. At other times, we may go there as a safe retreat from the stresses and pressures of the external world. It is a place of emotional memories and feeling, where children have grown up and values and beliefs have been discussed and developed. There is a feeling of warmth but there may be echoes of anger or sadness. There may be music, poetry, stories and books in evidence.

The room is equipped with the communication tools that bring different and diverse perspectives to the house and where guests are welcomed.

The Kitchen

The Kitchen (represented by an image of a mixing bowl) is the operational centre of the house. It is where plans are followed, and routine daily tasks carried out. It is busy, functional and practical.



When do we visit the Kitchen? We go to the Kitchen when we need to implement something: to carry out the maintenance tasks that will keep us safe, alive and on track. These tend to be routine and administrative tasks that require attention to detail, the correct application of rules and procedures and the accurate repetition of processes and procedures.

In organisational terms, these may be “business as usual” tasks: the things we must do to keep the organisation alive and functioning, even when it is going through change. They may be tasks of compliance or safety, such as the servicing and maintenance of equipment.

In modern day Kitchens, it is as if we have translated our basic survival instincts into an instinctive drive to protect ourselves and to keep ourselves safe from the pressures around us – perhaps summarised as “keeping on top of the job”!

In the Kitchen we follow rules, using the materials and guidance that have been developed over time. The experience of being in the Kitchen may involve an instinctive and intuitive awareness, passed through generations, of what to do in response to challenging situations. The Kitchen is equipped with recipes, familiar tools and well-practised procedures.

How are the different parts of the Caplor House connected?

Links between the rooms – connecting doors and staircases – allow easy movement between the rooms and opportunities to explore. Effective individuals, in any type of leadership role, have the capacity to work well in each of the rooms, knowing when it is time to move from one to another and how to take people with them. This “movement around the house” enables us to explore aspects of leadership thinking, behaviour and influence.

How does the Caplor House help us to understand leadership?

Leadership is about innovation, responsiveness to new challenges and demands, the development of strategy and the ability to engage with others and take them into an uncertain future. Leadership involves working with the unknown, embracing change and risk and enabling people and organisations to set ambitious new targets and achieve them. In this way, leadership becomes transformational. In order to transform anything – in a society, a community, an organisation, a business, a family – we need a number of things:

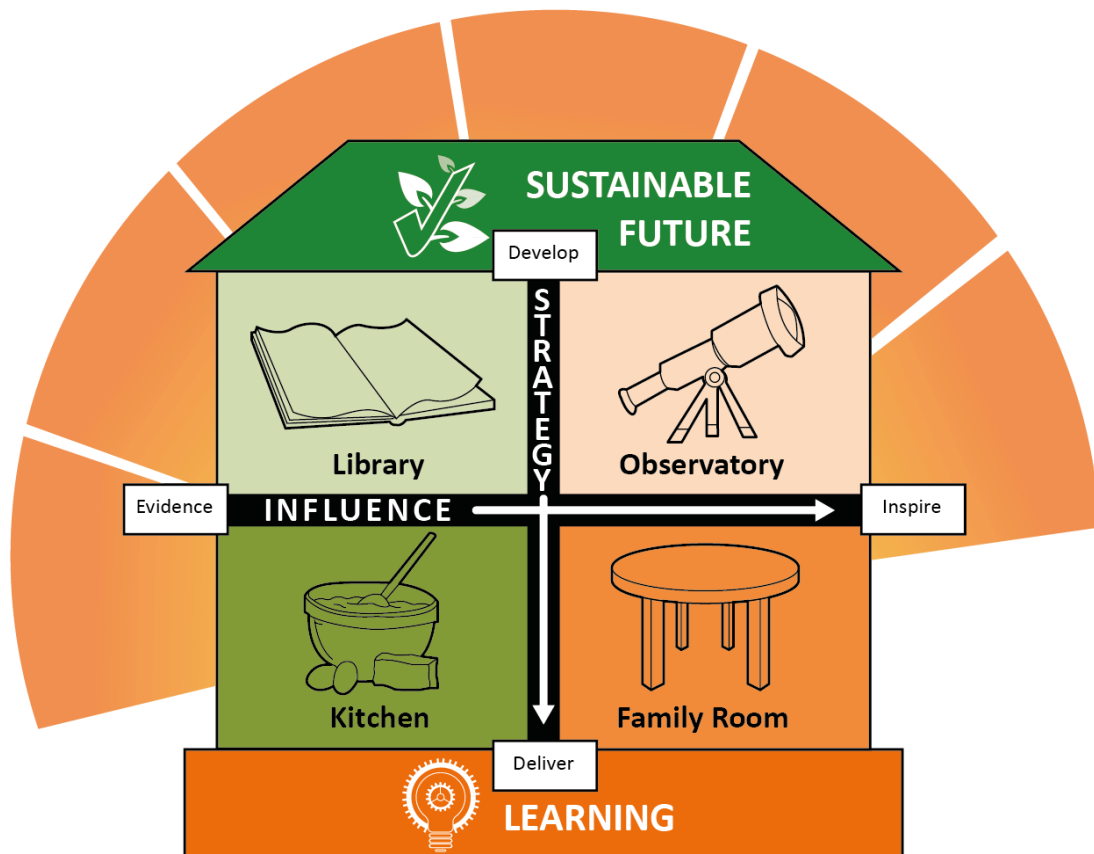
- **Firstly**, we need recognition of the need to change – a driver that is powerful enough to make us recognise that a current pattern isn't working for us or that an opportunity exists that it is vital to grasp.
- **Secondly**, we need a vision of a transformed future – a clear and compelling sense of the change we want to bring about and what that would look and feel like if it was achieved.
- **Thirdly**, we need to develop a strategy to achieve the change and the criteria to know if we have been successful
- **Fourthly**, we need to influence others to engage them and take them with us on the uncertain journey that lies ahead.
- **Fifthly**, we need to ensure that those charged with the delivery of the strategy are resourced and supported, so that they are confident and capable to deliver their part.
- **Finally**, we need to create a process for monitoring progress and assessing impact, to ensure that our transformation project achieves what it set out to achieve and generates new learning in the process.

Effective leaders, whether in a formal leadership role or not, take their power and authority not from their position but from their ability to have a positive impact when it is most needed. In order to manage effectively, individuals must overcome personal preference and become comfortable operating in each room of the Caplor House.

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However, to move from management, of themselves, tasks and other people, into real leadership, leaders must utilise the thinking and skills from different rooms in combination. Key to this is in developing and delivering strategy, influencing others and assessing impact.

Using the Caplor House to work with Strategy and Influence



The central pillar and crossbeam of the Caplor House

Strategy: The Central Pillar

In the Caplor House, the structure of the Roof is supported by a central pillar of strategy. From strategy development at the top, to strategy implementation at the bottom, the pillar is a constant reminder that strategy is, in reality, a top down *and* bottom up process, one that is deliberate and yet responsive to change at the same time. The central pillar represents the informed choices we make about what we will do to achieve our vision and goals and how we will do this.

In order to *develop* a new strategy, we need to bring together thinking and activity from the two upper rooms of the Caplor House: the Library and the Observatory.

Strategy, once developed, must be *delivered* by people. In order to empower people to take the responsibility of implementing strategy, leaders need to ensure that they are well supported and resourced and capable with the capability to achieve the targets they have been set. Thus, delivering a strategy occurs in the Kitchen and Family Room.

Influence: The Crossbeam

The crossbeam that runs from right to left in the centre of the house is influence. Influence is a combination of multiple factors, all related to encouraging others to “go with you” in your desired direction.

Influencing often starts in the left-hand side of the Caplor House: the Library and the Kitchen. It requires you to gather evidence, both through research and through practice. However, the most important part of influencing is gaining commitment. It is about ensuring not only that people will follow your lead but that they will do so willingly and with commitment. Therefore, in order to influence effectively, we need to bring together activity from the two right rooms of the Caplor House: the Observatory and the Family Room.

Demonstrating Impact

None of our strategic decisions, or ability to influence, engage and empower others to deliver strategy, has real value unless the chosen strategy achieves the aims and goals it was developed to achieve. In order to know the impact of our efforts, we need to bring together activity from the Kitchen and the Library.

In the Kitchen we create reliable systems of measurement and assessment, through which we can record and collate data. We can monitor standards and check that systems and processes are fully operational.

However, all of this information and data gathering is only of any value if we can analyse it, make judgments and determine whether the plans and procedures we have in place remain fit for purpose and continue to deliver against our overall objectives. This critical thinking

takes place in the Library, where we ensure that we understand the meaning and ongoing relevance of the activity we undertake.

How does the Caplor House help leaders to know what to do?

Leaders can use the model of the Caplor House to check or change the interactions that they are having with those they lead or seek to influence. Every leadership action should be about one of the four key elements outlined earlier: the development of strategy, influencing others to adopt it, enabling strategy to be delivered through people and assessing the impact of activity against the original strategic goals. Leaders can ask themselves at any point in any process, “Which of these leadership interactions is needed and what do I need to be thinking about or doing right now?” (i.e. where in the house do I need to be?)

What else does the Caplor House enable us to do?

The Caplor House enables us to look at any issue through a lens provided by the foundations, the roof, a specific room, a corridor or a staircase. This helps to focus on one aspect of an issue or problem and, as we move from place to place, to use these to build a deep and thorough understanding of the whole issue. A “walkabout” in the House opens up different perspectives, asks new questions and highlights gaps in our existing thinking or activity.

Different places generate different questions. Different places elicit different types of response and different emotions. Different places may lead us to a better understanding of what we have to do next to make our organisations more exciting, sustainable, proactive, respectful communities.

Each chapter that follows in this book uses the Caplor House to give it its internal structure:

- **The External Environment:** Looking at organisations (and organising) in a broad context, taking into account the external environmental factors and “contextual” background
- **The Observatory:** Identifying future possibilities and new ideas
- **The Library:** Understanding and researching options and building robust systems and plans

- **The Family Room:** Valuing people and considering organisational culture
- **The Foundations:** Valuing learning and exploring how learning can be embedded in organisational action
- **The Roof:** Keeping a focus on the future and identifying long-term opportunities to be more sustainable
- **The Kitchen:** Offering practical suggestions and next steps to “move to action”, including key messages, reflection questions, action and impact questions and further reading

In addition, each different chapter is there because it represents a different perspective on how future organisations could be:

- Connected and Reflective (Observatory)
- Human and Reflective (Library)
- Human and Soulful (Family Room)
- Proactive (Kitchen)
- Learning (Foundation)
- Worldly and Sustainable Futures (Roof)
- Influencing (Crossbeam) towards New Horizons