Further Education Strategic Leadership Programme

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BHASVIC

Organisational Resilience
An Analysis

Organisational Resilience at BHASVIC

Introduction

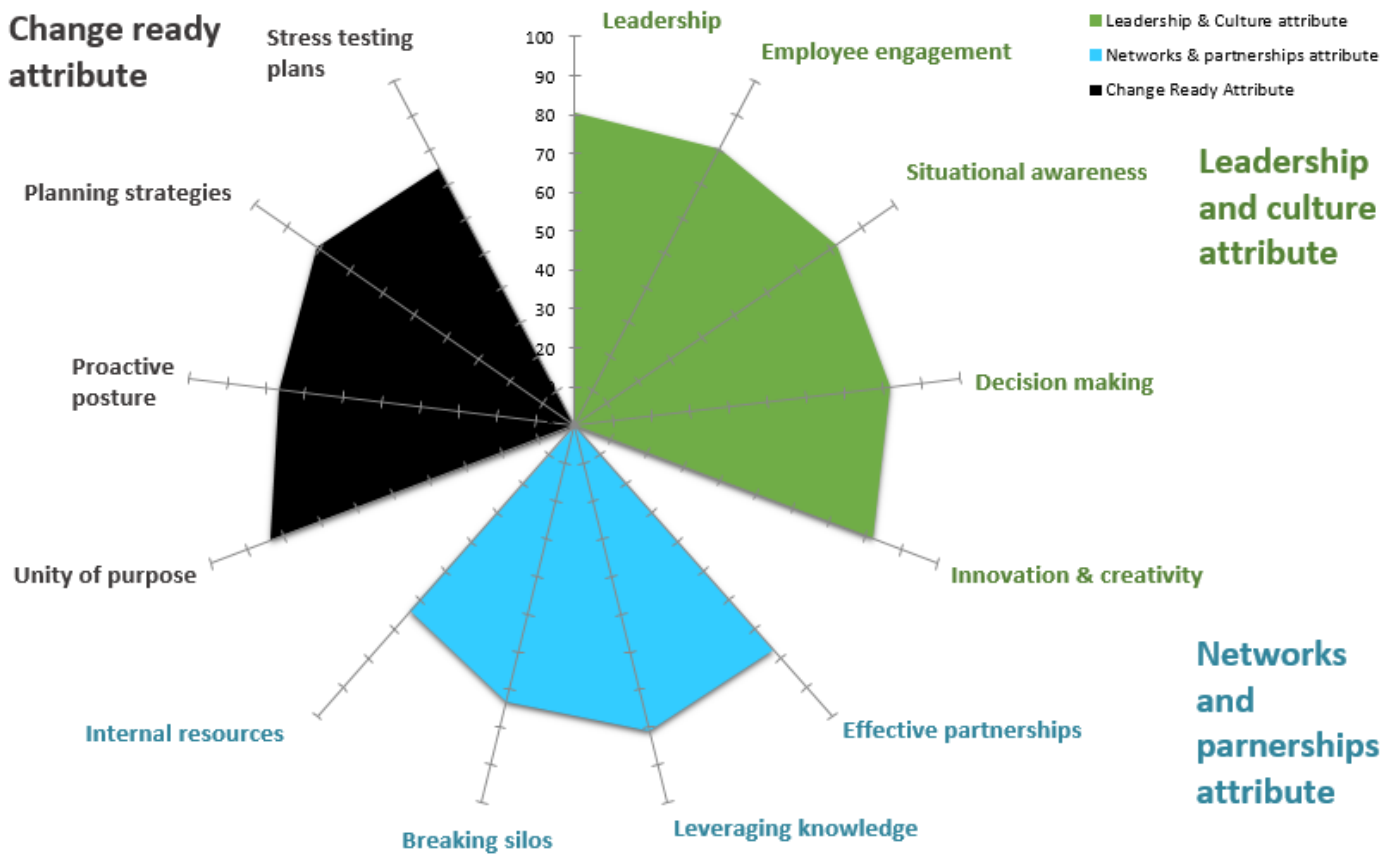
Managers at BHASVIC completed an Organisational Resilience survey during a session of the Managers Away Day in March 2018. The survey was developed as part of the Principal's participation on the Further Education Strategic Leadership Programme delivered at the Oxford University Said Business School. Tutor groups within each cohort were tasked with developing an asset for the sector. Using a tool developed by the Australian Government to provide organisations with a resilience Healthcheck, the group refined it for the FE sector and completed the survey with managers within their Colleges. The full survey can be seen in appendix one.

There is plenty of research on how individuals bounce back from adversity - but less on what makes organisations resilient. Given the accelerating pace of change in the sector, and the increasing pressure on the students we serve, this is a good time to consider how Colleges can demonstrate agility and resilience in "bouncing forward".

The survey (which can be seen in full in appendix 1) assesses people's views of the organisation in three attribute areas; Leadership and Culture, Networks and Partnerships and Change ready attributes. Results from the survey are presented in spider graph format where the further out a score (%) is on the axis, the more resilient the organisation is in that area. In this instance, we compare whole college outcomes with the views of different management areas of the college and results are analysed overleaf. Possible treatments and inhibitors for where improvements may be made are identified in appendix 2.

Whole college management perspective

The graph below shows the aggregated scores of all mangers at BHASVIC.



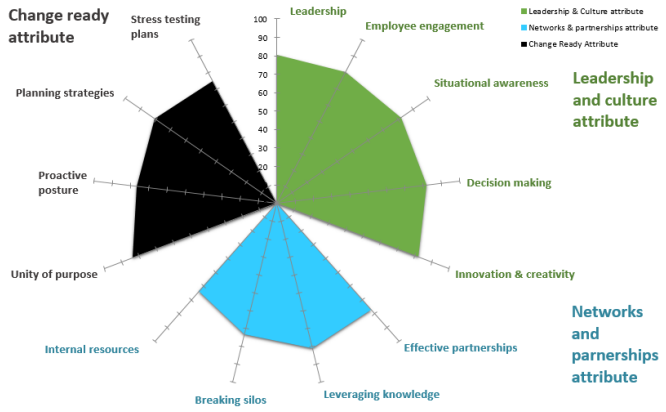
Our overall score for all attributes and indicators averaged across all managers is 79%. **Leadership and culture** scores 81.2% which puts us in a healthy position with this attribute with little variance between the five indicators which scored between 80-82% individually. By looking at individual questions in this attribute we are able to look at a wider variance in the range of scores. The highest scoring question in this area agreed that strategic planning explores emerging threats and opportunities (SA6). The lowest scoring questions (L6 and EE4) were around leaders feeling empowered to make decisions without permission from SMT. This is something that had previously been flagged by SMT and we are discussing how to address this.

The average score for **Networks and partnerships** is 73.8%. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the current funding pressures, the lowest scoring indicator in this attribute was Internal Resources at 64% (IR1,3) suggesting that we are under-resourced and lack capacity – our ability to effectively deal with this is limited, having already endured over 5 years of efficiency savings. At 81%, 'Leveraging knowledge' scores highest in this attribute area demonstrating that knowledge is shared effectively with an openness to learning and drawing on internal and external expertise. The highest scoring question was LK3 which asks about the validation of information used for decision making.

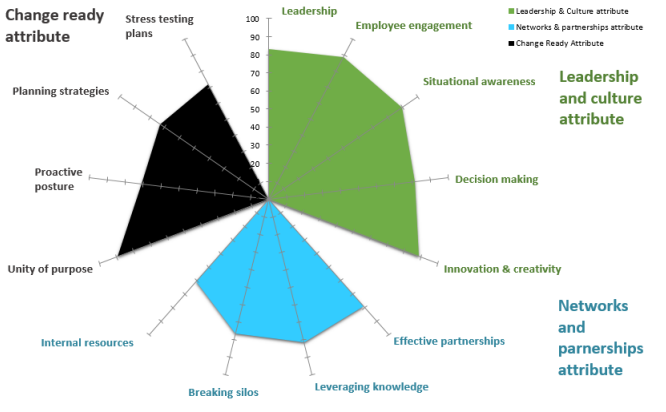
In terms of the **Change ready attribute**, the average for this is 79.3% with the unity of purpose indicator scoring highest at 84% which suggests that our strategic objectives are clear and effectively communicated and employees have a strong unity of purpose (UP1). The lowest scoring indicator in this attribute was 'stress testing plans' scoring 75% (ST4) which shows we need to think more about testing and exercising plans across the College and with other organisations.

Comparison of management groups

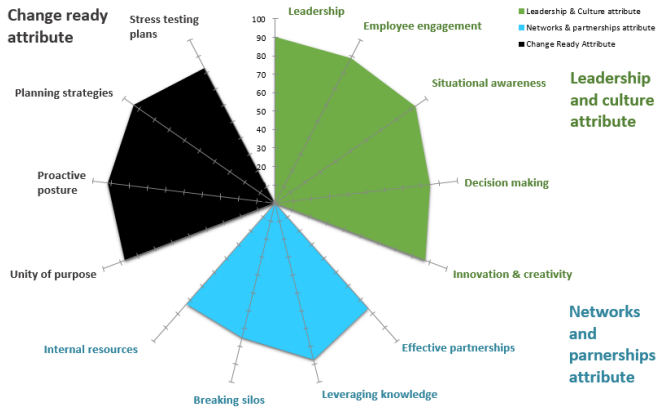
Whole College Management



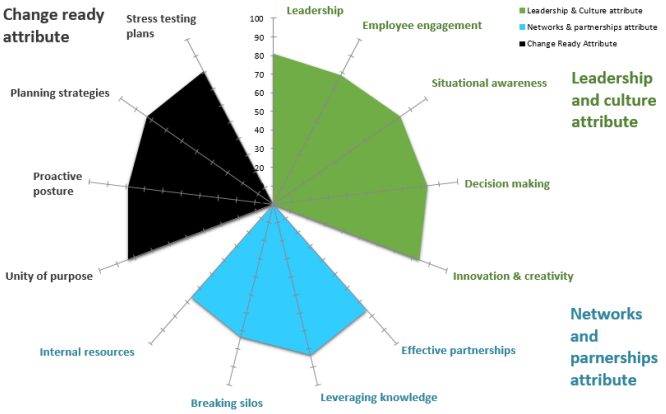
Senior Management Team



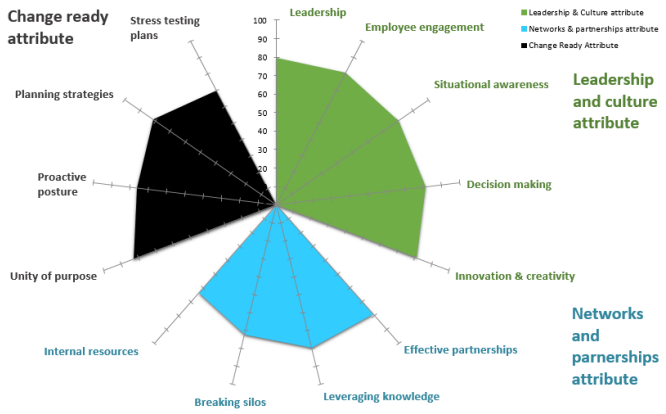
Heads of Faculty



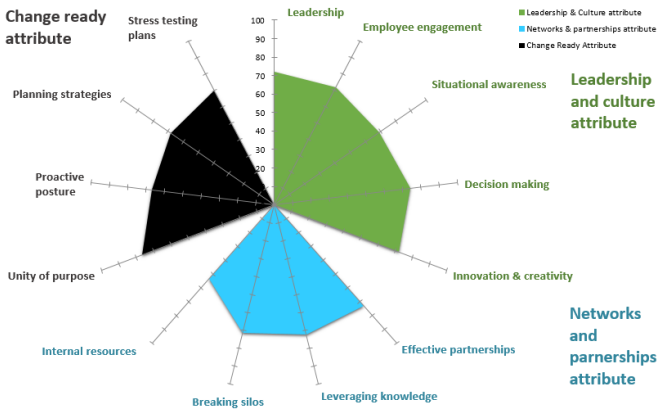
Heads of Department



Support Staff Managers



Guidance Managers



As you can see, the patterns created by the graphs for different management groups are broadly similar – especially so for leadership and culture. In terms of networks and partnerships, SMT, SSMG and GMs record lower scores for internal resources. For the Change ready attribute, whilst the pattern is broadly similar across groups, HOFs provide the highest score for unity of purpose. To help discriminate further, a more useful representation of this data can be found overleaf.

Summary of % indicator scores by management group

Attribute	Indicator	ALL	SMT	HOFs	HODs	SSMG	GMs	Trend
Leadership & Culture	Leadership	80	83	90	81	80	72	
	Employee engagement	80	89	89	78	81	72	
	Situational awareness	82	90	93	83	80	69	
	Decision making	82	81	85	84	81	74	
	Innovation and creativity	82	89	88	84	81	72	
Sub-total		**81**	**86**	**89**	**82**	**81**	**72**	
Networks	Effective partnerships	77	79	76	76	79	73	
	Leveraging knowledge	81	81	88	83	79	73	
	Breaking silos	73	77	75	73	72	71	
	Internal resources	64	60	73	67	63	53	
Sub-total		**74**	**74**	**78**	**75**	**73**	**68**	
Change Ready	Unity of purpose	84	90	88	84	83	77	
	Proactive posture	77	71	92	79	76	67	
	Planning strategies	81	73	94	83	81	68	
	Stress testing plans	75	72	83	81	70	70	
Sub-total		79	77	89	82	78	71	
	% Total	**79**	**80**	**86**	**80**	**78**	**71**	

Note: Each management area was not weighted in the average – therefore 16 HODs and 5 GMs had the same weighting when averages were aggregated.

Individuals can assess the information here for themselves and it would be useful for management meetings to discuss the results of their groups in relation to the whole college and other group scores.

Appendix 2 shows the thoughts of groups of managers on the rationale behind the scoring in these areas along with possible treatments and inhibitors for where improvements can be made to help with these discussions.

Overall using this tool to assess the organisational resilience of BHASVIC has been a useful activity and I hope it generates further discussion on how we can improve our resilience to cope with the certain change that this sector has to navigate.

Appendix 1 – Organisational Resilience Healthcheck Questionnaire

Organisational Resilience Healthcheck	Role:

Indicator		Low Resilience Indicator	ANSWER				High Resilience Indicator
		Low	1	2	3	4	High
1. Leadership and culture attribute							
1.1 Leadership Strong leadership to provide good management and decision making during times of challenge and adversity, as well as continuous evaluation of strategies and work programs against organisational goals.	L1	Leaders display behaviours fearful of adversity					Leaders display decisive leadership, innovation and seek opportunity, including in times of adversity
	L2	Leaders do not 'walk the talk' nor demonstrate behaviours aligned with the organisation's values					Leaders 'walk the talk' and demonstrate behaviours aligned to the values of the organisation
	L3	Leaders are reactive and act under duress					Leaders are balanced and strategically focussed to ensure the organisation is acting with control and foresight
	L4	Leaders are compliance driven, process focused					Leaders are outcome driven / results focused
	L5	Leaders are oblivious to the needs of people working below them					Leaders care for the wellbeing of their people and their ability to thrive in times of adversity
	L6	Leaders are afraid or unwilling to make decisions without permission from senior management					Leaders are empowered to make decisions and are supported in doing so by senior management
	L7	Lack of visible executive and management buy-in to the need for resilience					Highly visible executive/senior management resilience champions and leader advocacy of the resilience agenda
1.2 Employee engagement The engagement and involvement of employees who understand the link between their own work, the organisation's resilience, and its long term success; employees are empowered and use their skills to solve problems.	EE1	Organisation is unaware or not focused on employee morale					Organisation recognises the importance of high employee morale and considers this in planning and response
	EE2	Organisation is only interested in the bottom line or its own survival, regardless of the impact					Organisation demonstrates authentic 'care' for employees
	EE3	Employees are anxious or unwilling to contribute					Employees have high sense of 'teaming' and collaboration, pulling together in adversity – 'one in, all in'
	EE4	Employees wait to be told what to do					Employees are very clear about decision making ability and feel empowered and supported to take action
	EE5	Employees feel little sense of long-term connection to the organisation					Employees feel strongly connected to the organisation and are likely to go out of their way to support it in times of adversity
1.3 Situational awareness Employees are encouraged to be vigilant about the organisation, its performance and potential problems; employees are rewarded for sharing good and bad news about the organisation including early warning signals and these are quickly reported to organisational leaders.	SA1	Leaders hide incidents and delete failure from corporate memory					Leaders capitalise on incidents and retain lessons from past incidents and failures
	SA2	Employees feel they need to hide bad news or the truth and only report on good news					Employees feel comfortable to raise an issue with senior management and are positively recognised for driving continuous improvement
	SA3	Change is implemented carelessly, disruptions result from change					Change is formally managed with care and control, improvements result from change
	SA4	Organisation has little or poor communication with key internal and external stakeholders					Organisation engages in regular trusted communication with stakeholders
	SA5	Organisation has few sources of information and is very insular in terms of where it sources facts and insights					Organisation seeks out, utilises and coordinates external and internal sources of information
	SA6	Emerging threats and opportunities are not considered as part of strategic planning					Strategic planning explores emerging threats and opportunities

1.4 Decision making Employees have the appropriate authority to make decisions related to their work and authority is clearly delegated to enable a rapid response. Highly skilled employees are involved, or are able to make, decisions where their specific knowledge adds significant value, or where their involvement will aid implementation.	DM1	Organisation displays indecision and is non-communicative during adverse events					Organisation possesses clear and communicative protocols for mobilisation during adverse events
	DM2	Organisation engages in top down decision making					Solutions to problems are encouraged at all levels in the organisation, displaying rapid adaptive behaviour
	DM3	Unclear who in the organisation has the mandate to make decisions					Organisation possesses clear and transparent processes for escalation
	DM4	Employees are penalised for making independent decisions during an adverse event					Employees are encouraged to use their authority to make decisions in an adverse event
	DM5	Decision making is emotionally reactive					Decision making follows a clear and transparent process
	DM6	No record keeping or ability to document key decisions made					Key decisions are recorded and well documented
	DM7	Decision making is in conflict with customer, employee, shareholder, stakeholder expectations					Decision making is congruent with organisation's purpose and values to meet expectations

1.5 Innovation and creativity Employees are encouraged and rewarded for using their knowledge in novel ways to solve new and existing problems, and for utilising innovative and creative approaches to developing solutions.	IC1	Organisation does not look for opportunity in times of adversity					Organisation seeks out opportunity in times of adversity
	IC2	Organisation discourages innovative thinking					Organisation recognises and/or rewards innovative thinking
	IC3	Organisation discourages employees from challenging and improving workplace processes					Organisation actively encourages employees to challenge, identify and develop workplace process enhancements
	IC4	Organisation is reactive to change					Organisation is a proactive change-leader
	IC5	Employees approach problem solving and assessments with a conservative, risk-averse mind-set					Employees display courage in assessing risk, and innovation and creativity in problem solving

2. Networks and partnerships attribute							
2.1 Effective partnerships An understanding of the relationships and resources the organisation might need to access from other organisations during challenges and times of adversity, and the necessary preparatory planning and ongoing management to ensure this access.	EP1	Organisation tries to solve and control problems on its own					Organisation actively collaborates and works with others in partnership
	EP2	Organisation has few links to employers					Organisation has strong links with employers
	EP3	Organisation has few links with the community in which it operates					Organisation is active in the community in which it operates
	EP4	Organisation has predominately transactional relationships with local schools and colleges					Organisation works hard to develop trusted relationships with local schools and colleges
	EP5	Organisation has adversarial relationships with regulators/authorities					Organisation has constructive relationships with regulators/authorities

2.2 Leveraging knowledgeKnowledge is captured and shared effectively throughout the organisation, with a strong focus on ensuring critical information is always available, with succession planning for key roles, an openness to learning, and drawing on internal and external expertise and lessons learnt.	LK1	Organisation has significant key person dependencies					Organisation invests in strong succession planning and redundancy
	LK2	Organisation has no roadmap to the reserves of knowledge available to the organisation					Organisation knows where to find the knowledge and expertise to respond to a challenge or adverse event
	LK3	Organisation has a tendency to base decisions off rumours and hearsay					Organisation continuously validates information to ensure its quality and reliability
	LK4	Organisation's adversity capability is stand-alone and rarely utilised					Organisation leverages business as usual capability in times of adversity
	LK5	Corporate knowledge and lessons learnt rarely survive beyond personnel changes					Corporate knowledge is proactively retained and lessons are recognised, captured and shared
	LK6	Organisation has limited networks to tap for knowledge					Organisation has extensive and established networks to acquire and refine knowledge, including drawing on its supply chain partners

2.3 Breaking silos Minimisation of divisive social, cultural and behavioural barriers, which are most often manifested as communication barriers creating disjointed, disconnected and detrimental ways of working.	BS1	Risk identification and resilience building is performed independently within each area of the organisation					Approaches to risk and resilience are performed from an entire / integrated organisation perspective
	BS2	Organisation has silos, with little informal communication across the organisation					Highly integrated, transparent communication across all functions of the organisation
	BS3	No responsibility taken for end to end process					Individual business functions seen as integral components of the end to end process
	BS4	Departments contain rigid teams not used to working collaboratively together					Departments units unite to achieve objectives – 'one in, all in'

2.4 Internal resources The management and mobilisation of the organisation's resources to ensure its ability to respond to challenges, operate during business as usual, as well as being able to provide extra capacity during times of adversity.	IR1	The organisation is under-resourced even under business as usual conditions					The organisation has the ability to rapidly scale up or reallocate other business resources (such as finance, premises, plant, equipment, supplies) if required
	IR2	The organisation's rigid structures and systems provides little capacity to evolve and adapt					The organisation's structures, systems and processes are designed to maximise operational flexibility
	IR3	Organisation does not have the financial capacity to support operational change					Organisation has strong liquidity and cash flow position and can absorb the impact of modifying operations to respond to challenge or adverse event

3. Change ready attribute							
3.1 Unity of purpose An organisation wide awareness of what the organisation's priorities would be following a challenging or adverse event, clearly defined at the organisation level, as well as an understanding of the organisation's minimum operating requirements.	UP1	Employees are not clear about the organisation's objectives and goals, and have little unity of purpose					The organisation's objectives and goals are clear and effectively communicated, and employees have strong unity of purpose
	UP2	The organisation's values are not aligned, shared or supported					Organisational values are aligned, shared and supported
	UP3	Little appreciation across the organisation of the organisational priorities, minimum acceptable service levels, and the potential vulnerabilities and breaking points					Broad awareness of organisational priorities, minimum acceptable service levels, and the potential vulnerabilities and breaking points

3.2 Proactive posture A strategic and behavioural readiness to identify and respond to early warning signals of change in the organisation's internal and external environment before they escalate into a major challenge or adverse event.	PP1	Leaders have little regard for reputation impacts					Leaders have a good record at building and maintaining trust
	PP2	Disruptions are feared and employees remain wary of challenge					Disruptions and challenges are recognised as an opportunity for improvement, to build strengths and capitalise on the incident
	PP3	Organisation is reactive, maintains status quo and resists change					Organisation is proactive, leverages lessons learnt and opportunities, and embraces change

3.3 Planning strategies The development and evaluation of plans, strategies and capabilities to manage vulnerabilities in relation to the business environment and its stakeholders.	PS1	Plans are weak and lack maturity in adapting to changing contexts					Plans show a depth of understanding in social, environmental and physically changing contexts
	PS2	Limited or no planning and preparation for challenge and adversity					Planning and preparation for challenge and adversity is highly integrated into the business planning cycle and systems of the organisation and regarded as a priority
	PS3	Organisational criticalities and vulnerabilities unknown or poorly understood					Planning demonstrates an understanding of organisational criticalities and vulnerabilities
	PS4	Planning does not factor in potential impacts on people					Planning strategies are approached with a 'people' focus / clear understanding of and mitigation of employees vulnerabilities and impacts
	PS5	Planning does not factor in potential community impacts					Planning strategies are approached with a community focus and allocates resources appropriately
	PS6	Criticalities and vulnerabilities of changes to the organisation's assets and resources unknown or poorly understood					Criticality and vulnerability of changes to organisation's assets and resources understood and planned for

3.4 Stress testing plans The participation of the leadership and employees in simulations or scenarios designed to practice response strategies and arrangements to validate plans and capabilities, and demonstrate the advantages of agility and flexibility.	ST1	Plans are not exercised or tested to a sufficient level to validate adequacy and actual capability					Plans are rigorously tested to confirm capability with adequate resources available to implement plans and make continuous improvements in line with organisational changes
	ST2	Exercises are designed to tick the box for compliance purposes					Exercises are designed to identify weaknesses and opportunities for improvement, as part of quality assurance and continuous improvement
	ST3	Testing of plans address typical disruption scenarios					Plans are regularly stress-tested against a variety of scenarios relevant to changing contexts and environments
	ST4	Plans are exercised or tested in isolation, without involving other business areas or organisations					Plans are exercised and tested with other business areas and organisations on a regular basis

Appendix 2 – Evidence for rating and possible treatments or inhibitors

In groups, managers had to justify ratings and think of possible treatments or inhibitors for where things could improve. Results of this exercise are detailed below.

Indicator	Evidence / rationale for rating		Possible treatment actions	
	Does	Does not	Treatment	Inhibitor
Leadership	L1 Response to financial difficulties - clear strategy involving growth (taking on some risk) L2 Authentic leading Hands up if mistakes are made (humility with confidence) L5 Work-life balance Flexible working L6 We go to Senior Managers for advice, support, etc. And also to share risk Not because we're not trusted to make decisions	L1 Some are more fearful / less innovative than others. (You don't necessarily want everyone innovating simultaneously!) L7 Until today, this was more implicit than explicit	More time – how? Training / encouragement / coaching Taking advantage of people's skills Feels like we're at the start of something	A lot of current change is forced, coming from outside (curriculum change, etc), which can inhibit innovation due to uncertainty and workload. In other cases, it has been a spur to innovation. Very diverse departments can mean leadership is spread thin - more reactive? Profession orientation / motivation / personality of leaders.
Employee engagement	SWELL Activities Christmas Lunch/ Easter Eggs Teacher Autonomy - departments can be creative - valued as professional BITESIZE INSET Culture of sharing ideas There is a culture of giving treats and praise We are encouraged to try new things and take risks	Some staff feel undervalued and taken advantage of Culture of praise does not reach all staff Sometimes like managers can't enact change of make a difference (even if they hear of difficulties) Some staff are not protected by increase of student numbers - support services for example Finance is still a limiting factor	Ensuring support and non-teaching staff feel as valued as others (in other words, not all staff feel as valued and treasured)	Finance Time Resources Flexibility/… Structures Priorities Size of college

Situational awareness	SA4: Communication - Growth and Finance situation, funding methodology, HOD decisions / CQT decisions, Timetable / Group consultations SA1: Failures not hidden but often not acknowledged, e.g., acknowledgement of the negative impact of lack of core time. SA3: Decision making is totally transparent as all parts of the process	Those managers who do raise issues run the risk of being perceived as 'agitators' or 'difficult staff'. Positivity recognized and rewarded at college, so those wishing to tackle difficult issues seen as problematic staff. Sometimes too much communication which tries to please all, but there is disappointment when a decision is repealed	Nothing provided	Nothing provided
Decision making	DM7 & DM5 - We strongly felt that decision making considered the students first and always followed a clear and transparent process	DM2: We had a good discussion exploring the frustrations with summative and formative consultations, and how these are communicated DM1: It was felt by some that adverse events were sometimes communicated inefficiently (found out by accident).	Annual communication of the difference between formative and summative. Consistent verbal explanation of difference when presenting and communicating consultations	DM1: Deciding on a 'need to know' basis is very subjective. DM2: Employees inconsistent understanding of difference between summative and formative consultations
Innovation and creativity	IC1: Building projects - Student growth as a strategy to survive and flourish IC1 + 2: Teachers trust teams to experiment	Nothing provided	Regular review of aspects of provision which can both validate what works and identify what doesn't. This normalizes self-evaluation and openness to change Proper risk assessment / work impact review	Fear of change - extra work load, pressures of time Complacency - it's going well - why entertain change Comfort Zone Fear of failure - (e.g. in departments where student outcomes might be a little concerning)
Effective partnerships	S7 Network EQR Partners Accord - local colleges OFSTED Grade I Auditors Governors Exam boards Online forums and peer networks Alumni networks UCAS Admissions Oxbridge, E+E, Medical careers, Visual Arts Positive relationships with students and parents (involved parents) Local and national Safeguarding, careers networks Enterprise Adviser Networks	Active collaborations which are consistent across departments We could have better relationships with schools Communication between staff across college areas could improve the parent/student relationships, e.g., Guidance and curriculum Better communication with parent networks to assess impact of our initiatives	Better working together and clear understanding of how teams can help each other out, e.g., Careers team supporting curriculum team in matching links with employees	Time to develop external relationships within the community

Leveraging knowledge	LK1: Cross-Over of expertise Creative solutions, e.g., paying for qualifications/training (aspiring HODs)	LK1: Some gaps in development of staff to act up to a leadership role Ideas like AHOD's, aspiring HODs programs might help to develop this and develop similar ideas for support staff	Nothing provided	LK3: Difficult to get data on a lot of areas we need to make decisions about LK4: Pressure on resources, e.g., Space LK5: Time pressures
Breaking silos	Lots of collaboration within teams Teachers are aware of what is happening in tutorial Time allowed for meeting. Cross college time, departments, managers away day, BITESIZE HODs meetings attended by GM's GM partnered with departments Support staff work closely with admissions, etc. Department away days	Not enough collaboration between teams, awareness of what teams are doing More info sharing	Build in / create time for collaboration Encourage the sharing of good practice Twice termly all staff meeting- not at the end of the college day. This will encourage sharing and collaborations. Each team to identify what needs to be communicated to who	Workload and time constraints Administration tasks Snow days Awareness of who should and not be involved in collaboration Fire fighting
Internal resources	Lots of grassroots opportunities are taken up Willingness and desire are present Understanding of benefits of network and extended partnerships Where it happens it is highly motivating Can be real driver and motivator	Can't always prioritise external/ additional work due to pressures of every day Rigid structures of delivery make the gearing of partnership work an extra challenge (for example, good intentions that never quite happen)	Research in PDRs - nurturing / encouraging Benefits and purpose clarified and shared and celebrated Strategic ambitions and will (SARAPs) Continuing to encourage grassroots Tireless focus on facilitating rather than inventing	Resource / time Financial pressure Compelling nature and expectation on current student outcomes Accommodation constraints Narrowing of focus (we are running at max capacity in delivering A levels)
Unity of purpose	Clear strategic plan 2017-20 values, mission Clear and simple - Building Plan communicated to staff We do know service levels SWELL and Wellbeing Day Christmas meal Bring staff together = unity of purpose	All staff may not be aware of vulnerabilities and breaking points May be aware as team Lack of understanding curriculum / guidance Very department focussed	Shadowing across staff Curriculum / guidance, etc Share when difficult / busy times for departments - communicate - staff news Understand pressures on staffing issues Respect for others 'positive intent' trust culture Opportunities for staff to work together, e.g., bite size, not just teaching	Time / budget Different times of working Poor communication

Proactive posture	Communicate and keep staff informed - give opportunity to express opinions Rationale for decisions clearly communicated - new build Innovation and creativity encouraged - 2 year classes Lessons learnt - new IT systems	More understanding and trust built and maintained within the local community Need to challenge perceived 'idea' of BHASVIC, particularly in schools	Continue lobbying Continue to maintain high standards in both quality and experience of the student More interaction with the local community	Finance Student numbers Space Government legislation Perception Complacency
Planning strategies	Planning is done well ahead and done well, good consultation with range of staff and opinions Financial and strategic planning always good, e.g., new build, future student numbers Governors/SMT are advanced in thinking compared to 'old way' - lots of Qs Financially the planning of resourcing, assets, modelling of a range of scenarios allow clear and understandable decisions to be made SMT heritage is very strong and their commitment to forward planning and thinking about the alternatives is very good	Planning is very good but following through to implementation and the review / evaluation of success in approaches can be lacking / take a long time and resulting changes slow to occur		External partnerships can be difficult (different priorities / understanding) Ambition and aspiration outstrips resource to change Sometimes in terms of planning for resources / use of resources, the right groups of people don't work together to plan OR no one person has a complete understanding / overview to be able to plan thoroughly
Stress testing plans	We consult, test, check, reflect on impact of change decisions and prepare, trouble shoot problem solve, etc., to try to implement change well A culture of sharing challenges, big picture explaining and bringing people with to get through change	Sometimes a bit cautious, perfectionist or concerned Clarity over voice around consultation Not always aware or stress testing enough on impact of change decisions	Prioritising - consensus on this Planning of resource implications for change	External change pressures Lack of understanding / drivers or rationales Not involving everyone in problem sharing