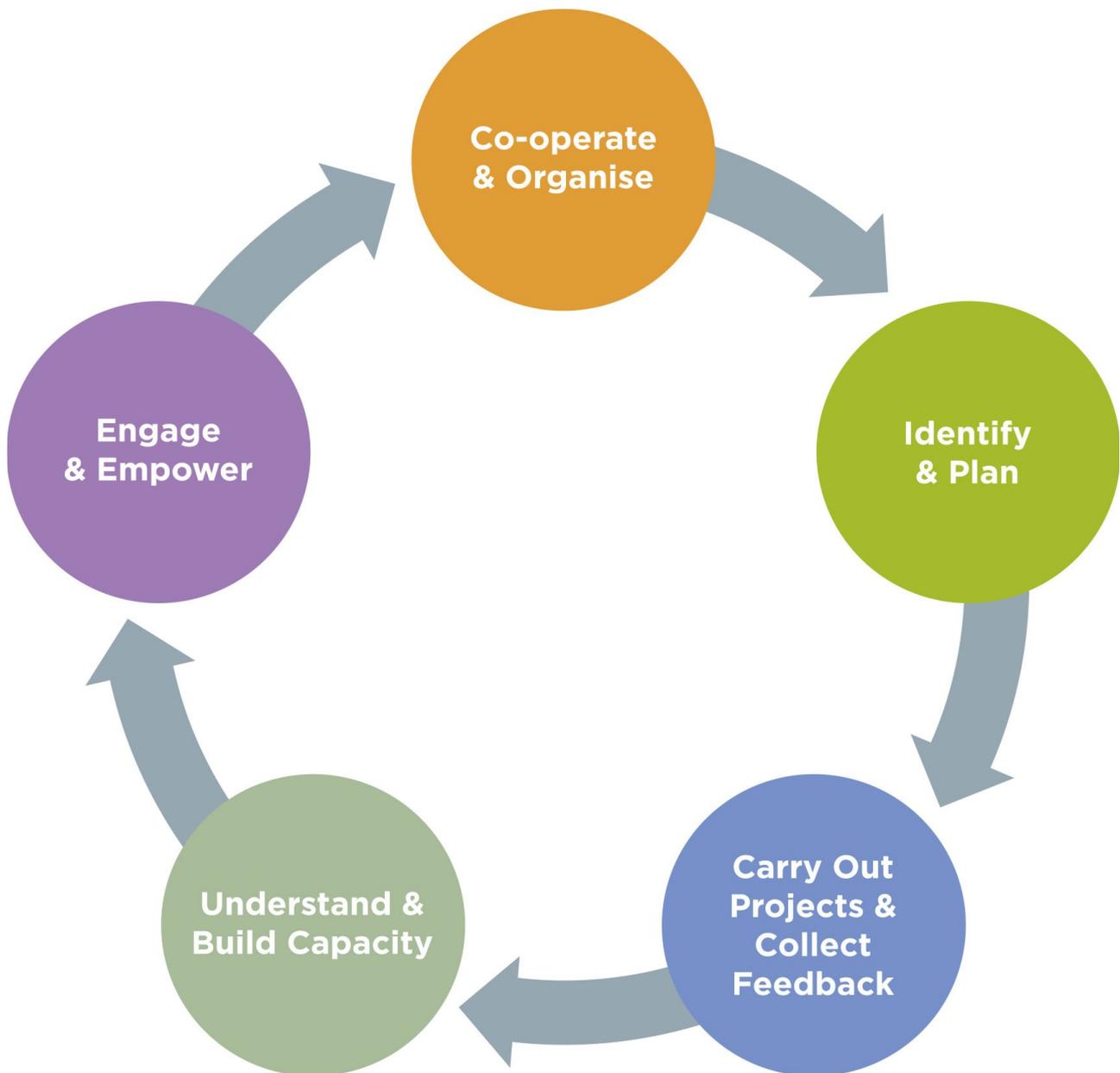


# Earth Protector Communities Town Framework



## Introduction to the EP Town Framework

The beauty of the EPC framework is simplicity. The design is a circle, and all elements can be worked on simultaneously. It is all inclusive meaning everyone, from school child to business CEO can be part of the change.

Communities are complex systems, and it can be a challenge to conceptualise how it all fits together to initiate the level of wide scale change that is necessary. [This graphical depiction](#) enables anyone to see how everything is linked and where change in one corner of the community affects the whole. Where there is already activity in certain areas, this method can breathe more life and energy into those projects or businesses through understanding and cultivating these links.

The framework intends to highlight what is causing serious harm to our communities, therefore what needs to be changed or stopped and what areas need to be regenerated. It is based on our experience of the pilot programme in Stroud.

The proposition is that we start with what we can do and with what resources we have at the present moment. This ensures we do not waste time, as we build up experience, engagement and capacity moving through iterative cycles.

The movement through the elements follows a clockwise direction and is a continuous interactive process. This process spirals upwards to higher levels of achievement as targets are identified and reached, thus overcoming existing barriers and building local capacity.

### How is change going to happen?

Change comes through repeating cycles of : engagement, capacity to work together, Identifying issues, supporting existing and new local projects, deepening our understanding, identifying gaps and building the community's capacity.

The change-maker is the community itself. A positively disposed local authority might facilitate and support through its own resources a Community Action Network group, however this will not always be the case. The key is for local people, active in the pursuit of a better future for the place, to start working together and co-ordinate their actions around the common purpose of addressing the present crises. This will usually involve a few people from local businesses, the youth movement, environmental & other civic NGOs (such as education, health and faith groups) in the first instance.

The aim is to involve as many groups as possible in the emerging projects, and to engage the community as a whole

### How is this approach different?

The framework is focused on two areas: *Stopping Ecocide* and *Regeneration*.

These are addressed through Projects that are co-created by the Town Core networking group and those that emerge through the working sub-groups. For example, projects related to Ecocide would be those seeking to reduce or capture CO2 and projects that help to reduce waste and use of plastic, moving us away from extractive practices.

Projects related to Regeneration would be those seeking to improve biodiversity, conservation, wildlife corridors, growing healthy food locally etc. Some projects would straddle both categories, for example growing local organic food would both reduce CO2 and increase biodiversity.

Regenerative development also refers to the way change happens, thus addressing the need to also shift our way of thinking and our ways of working together.

Health and wellbeing is a key part of all project aims, both in terms of people and ecosystems. It's important in our view to address issues of inequality, injustice and access for all, as these are part of the common root of our present crisis.

As a community practices acting together, so it becomes better at meeting its needs, both for the people and also for the ecosystems that support life for all beings.

The approach is not prescriptive, but rather aims at being developed by the people where they live, according to capacity and existing issues and/or opportunities.

## **The Community is the change-maker**

Needed cultural/social change happens at the local level. The aim is a movement of places rather than a movement of individuals or Institutions...

The key approach emphasises that:

Neighbourhoods, small towns, and villages are the scale at which local residents come to believe they can have an impact.

We all know that we need to *act now and work together* in order to achieve the change that is necessary to address this crisis. The framework is a useful tool for towns to identify gaps and opportunities by looking at the key areas of action that need to be addressed.

The outcome is the creation of a Local story that works to Stop existing links to Ecocide, and simultaneously Co-creates Regeneration for the local area, and for the planet.

# The Framework

## Summary

### Engage & Empower

*Required:*

1. Commitment: Vote on the Declaration

2. Create the first spark for the bonfire to draw people together through public event and invite sectors that need to be around the table.

We believe this should include: Environmental NGOs, Youth representation, Businesses, Food growers, and Community groups. Engage people/groups that are already active or ready to take action.

Do More:

Consider levels of engagement and appropriate pathways:

Neighbourhood - Community Hubs (Communities of practice), Compassionate Connectors.

Town - Town Community Action Network (put something on EPC website to create a link), Citizens Assemblies.

Engagement with Other Towns

Engagement with Other District

Engagement with Other County

Identify Barriers to engagement

### Co-operate & Organise

*Required:*

Create a Core Networking Group for Community Action

1. Establish principles of Working Together-for example:

Leave institutional (and individual) ego at the door.

No re-inventing the wheel.

Non-hierarchical Internal Organisation

Autonomous

Participatory: Seek early wide participation to address community needs and empower citizens

Power of co-creation. *The whole is more than the sum of its parts.*

2. Agree Common purpose: Establish Vision Mission Aims.

3. Co-create Memorandum of Understanding between partners in pioneer group (MoU).

Do more:

Create a Community Hub(s): Draw together community groups that are in position to interface with the community to co-create based on a physical space in the town.

## Identify & Plan: What needs to grow, what needs to change, what needs to stop?

Identify necessary changes in two areas: Those that will help to reduce the harm - **Stop Ecocide**, and those that will help ecosystems and community to thrive - **Regeneration**.

The first has to do with a shift away from fossil fuels and extractive industries, unnecessary consumption behaviour, giving monetary profit priority over community and ecosystem well-being. The second has to do with nature conservation and biodiversity gains, local economy development, skills, contribution to a more just society.

### *Required*

1. Map existing projects and seek synergy and partnerships to develop them further.
2. Identify the gaps - refer to VMA.

### *Do more:*

Examine new possibilities. Identify needs in engagement.

### *Required*

3. Co-create ideas and projects.
4. Create first sub-groups
5. Compile projects for Local Action Plan (LAP).

### *Do more:*

Engage wider. Bring in local expertise. Invite more groups/businesses to subgroups. Take a systems approach to identify key projects.

Create sub-groups to work in specific areas to meet local needs.  
For example: Transport&Energy, Materials&Reuse, Biodiversity&Conservation/Regeneration, Communications/engagement, Food&Agriculture.

Areas to address: Climate change & Ecosystems, Health&Well-being, Education, Resourcing, Local Economy, Social/Racial/Gender/Generational Justice

## Carry out Projects & Collect Feedback

1. Prioritise and initiate projects.
2. Widen engagement in order to go beyond existing projects. Use already established communication networks to draw in more participants (such as Climate Action Networks, Food growing groups, B Corps groups, Community groups, Hubs, Youth networks, Commerce chambers and LEPs etc.).
3. Create Information Hubs (physical or/and virtual). Collect feedback.
4. Share results back to the community to empower and engage - Earth Clock, Visible display for community.

### *Do more:*

Collect feedback and assess: Do we have human resources-financial resources needed? Consider engaging more local businesses, community groups, youth. [Are we having an impact?](#) ([Introduction to social impact](#))  
Consider alternative funding like SEEDS.

Ask: Are our actions meeting community needs? Ecosystems needs?  
Seek those projects that [address both](#), create synergy.

## Deepen Understanding & Build Capacity

1. Develop local understanding:

Identify gaps in community awareness, skills, knowledge base.

2. Connect with neighbourhoods, to understand needs and create engagement

*Do more:*

Co-create more local community hubs for: engagement, training, support, capacity building, ideas, education/awareness raising, Celebration!

Create Educational communications plan to raise awareness.

Seek opportunities/training programmes to develop needed local skills

Identify barriers to Change and generate Targets to overcome barriers.

Close the loop - Continue to Engagement

## Examples and links (from the pilot programme in Stroud & other places)

### Engage & Empower

Identify sectors that need to be around the table. Engage people/groups that are already active or ready to take action.

Levels of engagement: Neighbourhood - (Community Connectors). Town (TownCAN). Towns. District. County.

[Creating the first spark for the bonfire to draw people together](#)

Decentralised and inclusive. Community Hubs

<https://paganhill.org.uk>

<https://www.cashesgreen.org.uk>

<https://stroudtrinityrooms.org>

Participatory. [Citizens Assemblies](#).

[Identify Barriers to engagement](#).

Keep engaging throughout.

Interaction with all other aspects of framework.

Empowerment comes from early engagement.

Asset based Community Development

## Co-operate & Organise

Working Together.

Internal Organisation: very important to harmonise with spirit of endeavour  
Common purpose.

*Creating a Core Networking Group for Community Action*

Principles and guidelines. Vision Mission Aims.

Co-create MoU.

Making policies

Autonomous grouping of stakeholders.

Participatory.

Circle and decentralised and not hierarchical.

Power of co-creation.

The whole is more than the sum of its parts

Leave institutional (and individual) ego at the door.

Early wide participation to address community needs and empower citizens.

## Identify & Plan

Identify necessary changes in two areas: Those to reduce (Stop Ecocide) and those to help thrive (Regeneration).

*Stroud examples*

canals project

Edible Stroud

Seed Guardians

Pumpkin campaign

Transition Stroud carbon project

Stroud Brewery B Corp

Oakbrook Farm

Compile projects for Local Action Plan (LAP).

Identify who needs what by neighbourhoods and design projects to meet the needs accordingly.

Examine new possibilities.

SEEDS

Engage wider. Bring in local expertise.

Take a systems approach to identify key levers to pull.

Create sub-groups to work in specific areas: Transport&Energy, Materials&Reuse, Biodiversity&Conservation Regeneration, Communications, Food&Agriculture. (*StroudCAN, Amplify Stroud-Ben*)

## Co-create ideas and projects

[Youth voices](#)

[Trinity Rooms](#)

[Stroud District Action On Plastic](#)

[More than a freezer](#)

[Long Table](#)

Areas to address: Climate change & Ecosystems (*Transition*), [Health&Well-being](#), Education, Resourcing, Local Economy, Social/Racial/Gender/Inter-Generational Justice  
[Stroud Against Racism](#)

## Projects & Feedback

Create visible and clear reporting.

Share results. Back to the community to empower and engage

Create a visible display for community.

[Oberlin USA](#)

Do we have human resources-Financial resources needed? Consider alternative Funding like [SEEDS](#).

Are our actions meeting community needs? (*Community Connectors- deep listening*)

Ecosystems needs?

StroudCo

Stroud Brewery

Oakbrook

[Canals Group](#)

[Feed local understanding and Identify gaps in community awareness, skills, knowledge base.](#)

[Repair Cafes](#)

[Thoughtbox for schools](#)

[Curriculum for Life](#)

[Adult education](#)

[Evaluating Community Projects](#)

## Deepen Understanding & Build Capacity

Local Understanding

Local Skills. (*EPCs Economy project - work in progress, Alicia - Hawkwood*)

Connect with neighbourhoods, to understand needs and create engagement (*Community Connectors, More than a freezer*).

Co-create local community hub for: engagement, training, support, capacity building, ideas, education/awareness raising, Celebration!

[Trinity Rooms](#)

Identify barriers to Change and generate Targets to overcome barriers.

## How local actions feed Ecocide

[“Ecocide is serious loss, damage or destruction of ecosystems including climate and cultural damage”](#)

This serious damage is perpetuated by our support given to big extractive corporations through small cumulative daily impacts of lifestyle, where we choose to buy our food, what pension funds we invest in, how we chose to transport ourselves around, and where we buy our energy from that powers our homes and our economic activities. These decisions about our economic behaviour, material use, and local public policy all impact the global picture.

It is clear that it will take global and local efforts to address the crisis we face. So long as the law incentivises Ecocide by insisting that business decisions prioritise profit, and Governments continue to issue permits, our ecosystems are being destroyed at an increasing rate.

To stop the destruction (and give local efforts a chance for regeneration) a change in International Criminal Law is needed. This is an expression of the shift in moral values by which we live. This shift centres around our relationship with the Earth, from one of destructive resource use, to one of harmony. From an extractive model that leads to extinction and destruction, to regenerative evolution.

**EPCs IS FOCUSED ON MOVING FROM CURRENT STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS TO A WAY OF LIVING TOGETHER THAT IS IN HARMONY WITH THE EARTH’S ECOSYSTEMS - THRIVING COMMUNITIES BEYOND ECOCIDE**

*We recognise the appetite for change that is growing in all sectors. The EP Town Framework is a method of catalysing that shift by providing a way for a Town to address its contribution to Ecocide, and to Regenerate its local ecosystems. To build a bridge from the local to the global.*

## Becoming an Earth Protector Town (EPT): Overview

EPT is a co-created process involving partnership (initially but not necessarily) with the Town Council (TC) and key environmental NGOs already active in addressing the climate change and ecosystem degradation/destruction crises. Thus the first step after the Declaration by the TC (or other group if the local authority is not interested in participating in the process) is to form a core networking group.

A large amount of organisational ego shedding is part of this process as co-operation needs to be fruitful and harmonious to lead to the achievement of a commonly held purpose and taking into account principles of democracy, participation and inclusion.

We believe that it is necessary to embrace complexity from the start. We seek to bring some form of cultural change, not restricted to ‘tinkering at the margins’ as such marginal approaches are not going to be adequate to achieve significant gains in the time

period available to us. This involves creativity, an organic approach to evolution of the initial group, and an openness to new ways of thinking.

It is a holistic approach, i.e. engaging citizens, the youth, and key stakeholders such as NGOs, businesses, schools and other institutions as soon as practicable. It is an approach that recognises the inter-relationship between environmental and social issues.

EPCs does not make a 'claim' on the evolving organisational groupings arising from the EPT process, but rather encourages each group to 'own' their actions and plans in a local to global co-operative spirit.

EPT is a voluntary, ongoing process, not an achievement or a 'green badge' - thus there is no certification process attached to it. We (EPCs) keep a register of Towns that have 'declared' themselves on this path and retain the right to withdraw Towns from this register if they fail to demonstrate progress on the targets they have set or if they fail to set targets that are within proposed guidelines, including regular reporting of progress.

*You don't need a badge from us, the only way to prove yourself is to get the job done!*

## Other Resources

On Hope and Community:

[https://charterforcompassion.org/spreading-hope?utm\\_source=newsletter\\_431&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=which-will-it-be-hope-or-optimism](https://charterforcompassion.org/spreading-hope?utm_source=newsletter_431&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=which-will-it-be-hope-or-optimism)

One City Strategy: Bristol:

<https://www.bristolonecity.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/One-City-Ecological-Emergency-Strategy.pdf>

EU Toolbox for Cities:

<https://urbact.eu/toolbox-home>

One Planet Living Local Authority Actions:

<https://www.bioregional.com/resources/one-planet-living-outcomes-and-indicators-for-local-governments>

Food Resources:

<https://tabledebates.org/tour>

Sustainable Food :

<https://sustainablefoodtrust.org/>

Sustainable Farming:

<https://www.nffn.org.uk/>

Circular Economy:

<https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy/concept>

<http://www3.weforum.org/docs/>

[White\\_paper\\_Circular\\_Economy\\_in\\_Cities\\_report\\_2018.pdf](#)

**On Local Economy:**

<https://doughnuteconomics.org/>

**Alternative Funding Tools:**

<https://www.joinseeds.com/>

<https://doughnuteconomics.org/tools-and-stories/76>

**Who looks after your money?**

Pension funds and investments

<https://www.divest.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Divesting-to-protect-our-pensions-and-the-planet-Feb-2021.pdf>

<https://www.hl.co.uk/beginners-guides/responsible-investment>

**Climate Justice Playbook:**

<https://www.bcorpclimatecollective.org/climate-justice-bccc>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asset-based\\_community\\_development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asset-based_community_development)

<https://wellbeingeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/A-WE-Is-WEAll-Ideas-Little-Summaries-of-Big-Issues-4-Dec-2019.pdf>

**Community Power: Benefits of decentralisation, Evaluation:**

<https://www.newlocal.org.uk/articles/evidence-paradox/>

<https://www.newlocal.org.uk/articles/six-benefits-of-community-power/>

<https://www.newlocal.org.uk/publications/community-power-the-evidence/>

<https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/asset-based-community-development-local-authorities/>

<https://www.apm.org.uk/resources/find-a-resource/stakeholder-engagement/key-principles/>

**Useful ideas-what to do**

<https://actionclimateteignbridge.org/index.php/faqs/>