

the RAZ

five years on



South Holland - the first Rural Action Zone

RAZ Beacon lights the way Good Luck CAZ!

The South Holland Rural Action Zone (RAZ) is the first rural action zone in the country. It is a concept to promote partnership working and is our route to shaping the future of rural life. We have found new ways of working together through integrating service delivery. We are achieving successful regeneration and addressing "deep" rural problems. The RAZ was launched in 2001. Since then rural issues have risen up the national agenda.

To reach our vision every RAZ activity follows two guiding principles:

- to test innovative ways of working through projects which are of national and regional significance
- to develop the reputation of the RAZ nationally and regionally to obtain government recognition

RAZ partners welcome the Coastal Action Zone initiative, which is building on the successful RAZ model. The CAZ will highlight the special conditions of more remote coastal districts, and set up pilots to find new solutions for the coast.

The distinctive features of a RAZ are:

- a way of working in partnership to shape and improve rural life
- a high profile initiative to keep the spotlight on rural issues through a single brand
- an intention to move beyond partnership working to the integration of service delivery
- a governing structure which includes a forum for key service providers to share ideas and develop activities
- agreed aims and pilot projects.

Build your own RAZ

Since the national launch in November 2000 the Rural Action Zone has achieved widespread recognition for its innovative approach to partnership in rural areas. The Countryside Agency commissioned action research into the RAZ over two years, so that best practice could be shared with other rural partnerships. As a result a Toolkit for a RAZ was produced. It is available on the RAZ website www.ruralactionzone.com

Bespoke Excellence - Beacon mentoring programme

The eight rural economy Beacon Councils were awarded funds by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to provide mentoring services to other councils who wish to learn from our experience. Five authorities are being mentored - Newark & Sherwood, Suffolk Coastal, Penwith, Purbeck and East Lindsey, until March 2005. The Centre for Rural Economy at Newcastle University are evaluating the effectiveness of the programme and an application has been made for more funds to extend it to more authorities next year. The project is continuing to promote the RAZ nationally.

We are the champions

The RAZ Steering Group embraced the role of the LSP back in 2001 and has successfully delivered the 8 priorities and 39 promises highlighted within 'Our Community, Our Future the Community Plan for South Holland' until 2011, published in January 2002.

Having recently undergone a health check, the partnership is now 'fit for purpose' to face the challenges of the second phase of the Community Plan.



Residents' priorities change - In 2005, once again everyone will have the opportunity to participate in an extensive community consultation. Their feedback will be turned into a 'living' Action Plan 2006-09; prioritising today's main issues.

Oiling the wheels of rural revival

The LGA rural revival inquiry found that local authorities are at the heart of facilitation - co-ordinating and delivery services that will secure rural revival. This 'facilitation' role does not lend itself to quick definitions. However, research commissioned by the rural economy Beacon Councils defines it as:

'the empowerment of rural communities by getting the maximum resource to the point of delivery'

The report highlights the partnership between SHDC and LCC in the RAZ. 'These two authorities have developed an embedded partnership to such an extent that the Social Inclusion Programme features core delivery staff employed by one authority operating as a part of the operational team of the other. A similar culture has extended from the District Council to community groups and has maximised the impact of external funding, allowing the local groups to concentrate on delivery.'

Sally Hewitt of the South Holland RAZ has used the research to produce a diagnostic toolkit for local authorities. The toolkit provides a means of assessing other rural councils' readiness to deliver similar benefits to their own communities.

For enquiries about the toolkit contact
Sally.Hewitt@lincolnshire.gov.uk
or the IDEA 'knowledge' website.



RAZ top 10

1. EMDA provides £540,000 to fund the SIP for three years - a package of eight projects to tackle social inclusion and raise expectations - for achievements see inside pages.
 2. Vitality - a national showcase project with £200,000 of Sport England funds.
 3. £8.5million of European funding under the Objective 2 transition programme - the action plan and priorities have been determined through the RAZ. So far endorsed projects forecast to create 232 new jobs, and safeguard an additional 222.
 4. RAZ provided the focus for encouraging local partners to submit a successful LEADER+ bid worth £4.4million. Projects include the pumpkin festival, now in its third year and the winner of a national award, Spalding Gardeners Markets and links between schools and nurseries including Gleed Boys School and Bridge Farm Nurseries.
 5. The Rural Academy pilots the Extended Schools and Excellence Clusters for the DfES. In 2001 and 2003 the percentage of pupils within the Rural Academy achieving 5+ A*-G exceeded the Lincolnshire average. This indicator for the Academy exceeds the National average every year.
 6. Two year pilot funded by the Countryside Agency, the Active Elderly, has trialed a home visiting service and promoted older people's forums. 64 volunteers attracted to the project.
 7. Fenscape, a unique interactive visitor experience about Fenland history, people and landscape, at the new Springfields Outlet Shopping and Festival Gardens. The centre opened in May and Fenscape, which was unveiled three months later, has already attracted over one thousand visitors from all over the country.
 8. Multi-million pound investment in a food technology park and higher education facilities at the former Holbeach Agricultural college to support the area's food industry 'cluster'.
- Coming soon**
9. A Food Heritage Centre in Spalding to celebrate local food.
 10. £253,000 in funding towards tailored support for migrant workers.

for more indepth RAZ information visit www.ruralactionzone.com

or contact: South Holland District Council on 01775 761161 or Lincolnshire Development on 01522 550506

The road to success - An ambitious experiment

From April 2000	Partner discussion to shape the RAZ	September 2002	RAZ Steering Group evolves into the LSP. Partners sign up to the integration charter
October 2000	Sport England announces a national pilot in the RAZ (Vitality)	November 2002	First national Rural Affairs Forum conference held in Spalding
November 2000	RAZ launched at Westminster Cited in the Rural White Paper 'Our Countryside: the Future'	December 2002	Community Plan document, 'Our community, Our Future', published
December 2000	Chief Executives Commissioning Forum meets for first time	January 2003	RAZ features in the LGA inquiry into rural revival
January 2000	Pilot projects under the Social Inclusion Programme funded by EMDA start	April 2003	Lincolnshire County Council and South Holland District Council awarded Beacon status for 'supporting the rural economy' together with six other English Local Authorities
February 2001	RAZ Steering Group inaugural meeting and Ministerial visit First 'visioning' workshop for the Rural Academy	June 2003	Nick Raynsford MP, Minister for Local Government, witnesses the signing of the first two Rural Residents Compacts in the country
June 2001	Business in the Community hold first rural 'seeing is believing' visit in the RAZ. George Adams employees start working with Raindrops Countryside Agency recognises the RAZ as a national demonstration project, and provides funding for Active Elderly and Rural Academy pilots. Visioning Day held to consult on future scenarios for the district as the start of the Community Plan	October 2003	RAZ toolkit launched at Beacon Council Open Day
October 2001	Rural Academy launched Rural Residents Compact pilot starts	January 2004	www.ruralactionzone.com launched. The site itself reflects the spirit of the RAZ aspirations and allows the work of the RAZ to be shared with a much wider audience.
		March 2004	The rural economy Beacon Councils commission research to distil the essence of rural facilitation, as promoted in the Haskins Report
		September 2004	Pumpkin Festival given national Countryside Agency/Action for Market Towns award
		October 2004	'A toolkit for facilitating rural delivery - how to oil the wheels of rural revival' launched at the LGA regeneration conference

Our Partners - The South Holland Rural Action Zone

Here at South Holland District Council (SHDC) we do not work alone. We are fortunate to be part of a very successful partnership known as the South Holland Rural Action Zone (RAZ). These RAZ partners make up our Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and are as follows:

Lincolnshire County Council	Children's Links	Business Forum	QV Foods
Lincolnshire Development Partnership	Voluntary Sector	Lincolnshire Police	East Midlands Development Agency
Lincolnshire Enterprise Connexions	Spalding and South Holland Area Learning Partnership	Business Links	Rural Academy Steering Group
East Lincs Primary Care Trust	Spalding Town Forum	Environment Agency	Crime and Disorder Partnership
Education Business Trust	South Holland Tenants Group	Learning and Skills Council	Parish Councils Forum
English Nature	Youth Forum	University of Lincolnshire	Spalding Town Centre Partnership
National Farmers Union	Objective 2 Transition Partnership Board	Job Centre Plus	Older People's Forum
Countryside Agency	Vitality Project Group	Trade Union Congress	LEADER+ Local Advisory Group
		Government Office for the East Midlands	Voluntary Sector Forum