

A toolkit for rapid improvement in decision making

Have you set the right priorities?

RAND Europe created an evaluation matrix and toolkit to assess the impacts of Local Authority activities

BACKGROUND

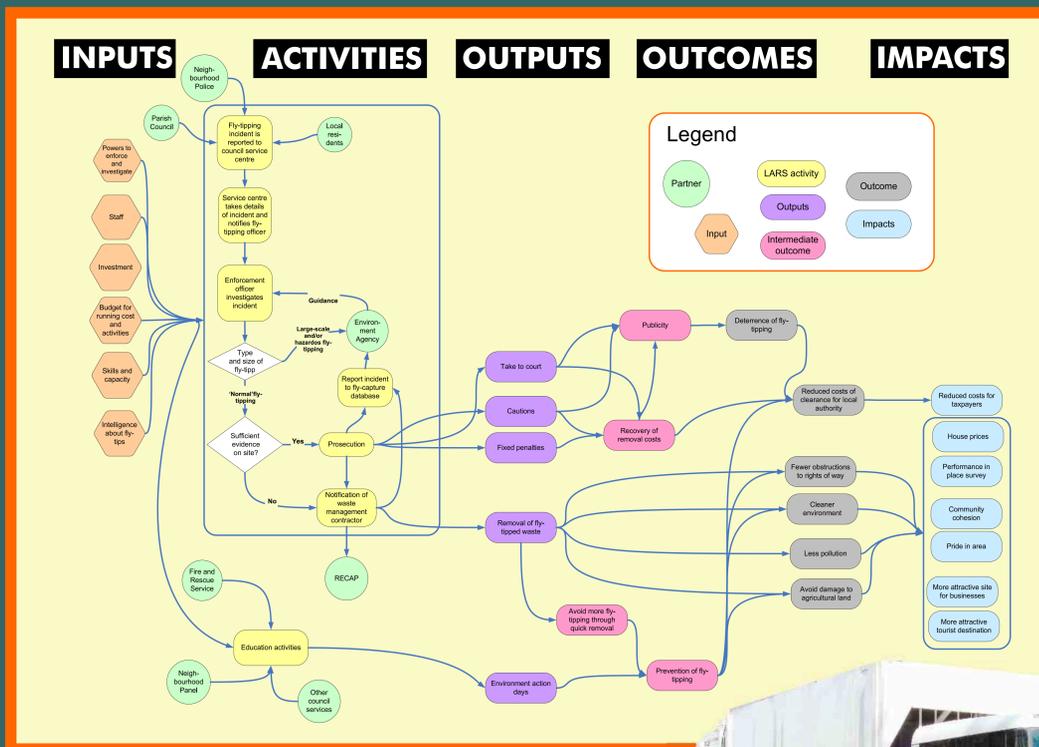
Local Authorities in the UK and elsewhere are increasingly expected to demonstrate the benefits of, and added value generated by, their work and local regulatory services (such as fire safety, food standards, trading standards and environmental health). However, when surveyed only 55% of Local Authorities stated they would be able to measure the impact of their activities. RAND Europe was asked by the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) to create an evaluation matrix and toolkit to assess the impacts of Local Authority activities and their relative value to the community.

RESEARCH APPROACH

For this project RAND Europe examined Local Authority activities dealing with: fly-tipping, alcohol and smoking harm reduction, health and safety and trading standards. The aim was to help develop a robust evidence base to demonstrate the added value and benefits of these services. The methods proposed had to be easily applicable to all local regulatory services, and be practical enough to be of direct relevance and use to Local Authorities themselves.

The work is based on a theory of change approach. It combines evaluation methods, such as logic modelling and process mapping, to create a new practical tool that can be used by Local Authorities and other services. It allows them to explore impacts and demonstrate the values of their activities – and so set priorities more effectively.

PROCESS MAPPING YOUR ROUTE TO IMPROVEMENT: THE CAUSAL PATHWAY

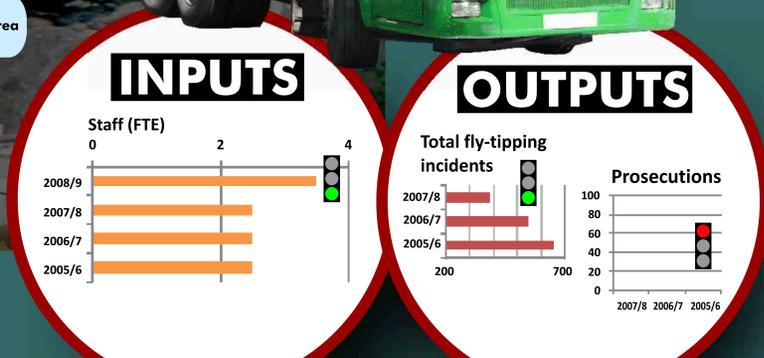


EXAMPLE: FLY-TIPPING

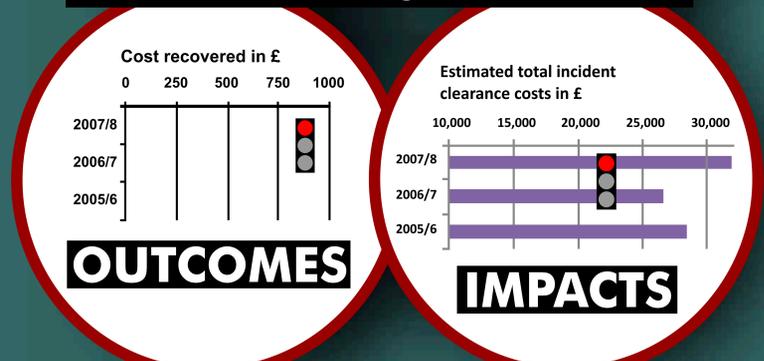
The chart below illustrates one 'branch' of the causal pathway from activities through to outcomes. This section of the pathway alone sends a strong message to local regulators: act quickly to remove fly-tips in order to prevent dumping in the first place, and create pride in the local area.



Once the causal pathway has been worked out, an impact dashboard such as the one to the right is developed to present a small set of performance measures which will provide an overview of current performance. These performance measures will identify areas of particular success (green traffic light) or concern (red traffic light) for more detailed examination.



Local Authority dashboard



IMPACT

- This project produced the first-ever tool for identifying, measuring and managing quality of life impacts from local regulatory services, including anti-social behaviour, crime and violence.
- "It is a management truth that you cannot properly manage what you cannot measure. For the first time Local Authorities have been given the tools they need for priority planning, profile raising and budgeting" Clive Grace, Chair of LBRO
- A set of "Train the Trainer" workshops was delivered to show national and local regulators how to use the toolkit in their organisations, and help them teach others to use it.
- More than 100 Local Authorities are now using this new tool designed to show the benefits of local regulation to business, consumers and communities. This impact continues to grow as budget constraints demand greater demonstration of value for money.



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