• The effectiveness of the Act in reducing the number of out of control dogs/ dog attacks in Scotland;

Over the last few years, the number of complaints made to us has shown an increase but whether this is due to increased publicity surrounding the Act and interest driven by social media is unknown.

• How well you think local authorities are carrying out their duties under the Act;

South Ayrshire Council has had relatively few complaints compared to some other Local Authorities. To date we have issued 17 DCN’s and we are finding that the workload to effectively enforce the Act is beginning to have a detrimental effect on other work areas. Also, the fact that the number of complaints is increasing compounded with the added workload involved in monitoring existing notices means that it will become increasingly more difficult to carry out our duties fully in terms of the Act unless additional resources are provided (there were no new resources provided at the implementation of the Act).

• What challenges you feel local authorities face in carrying out their duties under the Act;

Main challenges are:

Lack of resources for dealing with the increasing workload. Lack of suitable training opportunities in dog behaviour

• If there are any weaknesses in the Act or any specific changes you would like to see;

  • Currently there is no offence for obstruction
  • Fixed penalty notices are not available for minor breaches (reporting to the PF is very time consuming and may not be proceeded).
  • Improved guidance on “monitoring” of DCN’s would be beneficial. Frequency of monitoring and what “monitoring” should involve requires clarification

• Any other issues relating to the Act you wish to bring to the attention of the Committee.

A close working relationship with the Police is essential so an information sharing protocol would be welcomed.