Environmental Services are responsible for enforcing this legislation within South Lanarkshire Council and offer the following comments in relation to the areas that the Committee has requested information:

- **Effectiveness of the Act in reducing the number of out of control dogs/attacks.** The number of complaints received rose after the introduction of the Act and since 2013 the annual figure has remained fairly static. Whilst not all complaints are justified, the introduction of the Act has not reduced the number of complaints regarding control of dogs.

- **How well local authorities are carrying out their duties.** Officers within Environmental Services received training at the time the Act was introduced and refresher training was provided in 2015. South Lanarkshire Council feels appropriate training is key for the effective and consistent enforcement of the Act and is satisfied that Environmental Services are undertaking their duties effectively in relation to the Act. South Lanarkshire is aware that other local authorities may not have provided training for their enforcement staff and would suggest that the Committee may wish to gather information on the nature of training provided to enforcement staff.

- **What challenges local authorities face or suggested changes.** South Lanarkshire Council would suggest that the lack of a national database is a challenge that Scottish Government should give consideration to providing. A national database would assist in tracking dogs which move from one local authority area to another. Another challenge relates to proactive monitoring of Dog Control Notices once they have been issued. No additional resources were provided for local authorities when the Act was introduced and a consistent level of complaints creates a burden and pressure on existing resources. In relation to changes South Lanarkshire Council would recommend that consideration is given to the introduction of fixed penalty notices for minor breeches of Dog Control Notices. This would improve the effectiveness of enforcement and provide an intermediary step before reporting contraventions to the Procurator Fiscal.
• Any other issues to raise.

The Committee will be aware that there is a national protocol for the enforcement of dog control legislation. It has been South Lanarkshire Council’s experience that Police Scotland does not always follow the protocol and have on occasions asked Environmental Health to lead on incidents where a person has been bitten by a dog. South Lanarkshire Council would therefore suggest that consideration is given to bringing the protocol onto a more formal basis and making it binding on all enforcement agencies.

South Lanarkshire Council would also recommend that the transfer of information and statements is considered when Police Scotland passes dangerous dog cases to local authorities, in instances where there is insufficient evidence for Police Scotland to proceed. This would avoid duplication of effort and speed up the local authority investigation at the early stages.