SUBMISSION FROM Aberdeen City Council

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

Within Aberdeen City all complaints of dogs acting in an out of control manner are investigated and any enforcement action taken in relation to the act. Several notices have been serves each year since the act was introduced and there have been reports to the Procurator Fiscal where a serious breach has occurred.

The authorised officers using the legislation are dog wardens and therefore, have the necessary experience and knowledge in relation to dog control and behaviour to ensure the appropriate conditions are set on any dog control notice and/or give competent advice to the owners.

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

The main challenge faced by Aberdeen City Council is the volume of resource which is required to fully investigate an incident of an out of control dog. An investigation or report to Procurator Fiscal regarding a breach can take up a large volume of officer time. No extra resource was made available at the introduction of the legislation and the duties were required to be absorbed into existing workloads. There is specific challenge in meeting the terms of monitoring a control notice after it has been served, this is not something which is realistic in terms or resource availability. Often it is relied upon for members of the public to report the dog continuing to be allowed to act in an out of control manner to allow a breach to be identified.

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

The consideration of issue of fixed penalty notices for a minor breach would be welcomed. At present only major breaches are being reported to the Procurator Fiscal due to the time resource required to prepare the report.

Consideration of use of section 8 Scottish dog control data base should be considered. This may assist local authorities to identify any dogs with dog control notices who move into their area if the owner fails to inform of a change of address.

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

Not at this time.