

**SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF POLICE SCOTLAND TO  
THE PUBLIC PROCESSIONS COMMITTEE RE PARTICK ORANGE AND PURPLE  
DISTRICT 15 NOTIFICATION 15 SEPTEMBER 2019**

On behalf of the Chief Constable I welcome the opportunity to make this submission to the Public Processions Committee.

I understand that the Committee wish to consider the above Procession Notification in consequence of certain concerns having been intimated about the forthcoming procession on 15 September 2019, and have invited key stakeholders to submit a written submission in light of concerns having been intimated about the forthcoming procession.

As you will be aware the role of the Chief Constable in this context is to support the Council in reaching an appropriate decision by means of advice focussing on a number of considerations, namely the likely effect of holding the procession in relation to:

- Potential public disorder;
- Public safety;
- Damage to property; and
- Disruption to the life of the community.

The Council should also have regard, where appropriate, to the extent to which the containment of risks arising from the procession would (whether by itself or in combination with any other circumstances) place an excessive burden on the police. In this regard, the impact of the procession with regard to policing resources is a relevant consideration, as are competing demands, the impact of previous processions, and the conduct of band members and supporters are all relevant considerations.

I have therefore broken down this submission into the various considerations where possible, in order to provide as comprehensive advice as possible.

**Introduction**

It is my understanding that a Procession Notification has been submitted by Partick Orange & Purple District 15 to hold a public procession on Sunday 15 September 2019 commencing at 1345hrs. I understand there will be one band totalling some 60 persons in number and that the procession will commence in Beth Street, Glasgow. The route as intimated will make its way Beth Street, Rosevale Street, Dumbarton Road, Argyle Street, Sauchiehall Street, Radnor Street, Argyle Street, Dumbarton Road, Rosevale Street, concluding at Beth Street.

At this time the notification includes 1 band, Partick Protestant Boys Flute Band.

## **Previous Events**

To my knowledge, Police Scotland has not previously submitted advice to the Committee with regard to Partick Orange & Purple District 15.

The committee will be aware of recent tensions across the city in terms of parades which have been evident since July 2018 but have escalated in recent weeks following the events of 30 August 2019 where a procession was targeted.

In the days prior to the procession on 30 August 2019, intelligence was received which identified that there would be a significant counter protest centred on the Cenotaph at Govan and may involve up to 200 individuals. A proportionate policing operation was planned involving specialist policing resources from across the country as well as significant numbers of police officers on conventional policing duties associated with the procession. The operation involved approximately 45 officers on procession escort and 92 specialist officers.

The Committee will be aware of the unprecedented scale of disorder which was generated by the counter protest to this procession. Counter protestors numbering between 400 to 600 blocked streets and engaged in widespread disorder during which the Police Commander authorised the deployment of fully protected public order officers with protective shield and police horses to gain control of the situation.

The counter protest was fully intent on preventing the procession taking place. The disorder witnessed was significant and as serious as any witnessed in recent years. It is the first time in my recollection that fully protected public order officers have been authorised and deployed on the streets of Glasgow.

The procession itself was held at the start point for a significant period of time in Elder Park. During this time the participants and the police came under missile attack from groups of counter protestors who were intent on entering the park.

Given the level of disorder which was anticipated, police officers rerouted the parade. The procession eventually proceeded but was halted on two occasions due to significant disorder from counter protestors.

A full investigation into the events of 30 August 2019 is now underway involving a significant level of police resources to identify those involved in criminality. It is envisaged that this investigation will be protracted and the timescale for completion will be measured in months.

On Saturday 7 September 2019 there were a further 2 Republican Parades organised by Cairde Na Heireann and IRPWA respectively. Both parades were the subject of intense media activity in the week following the events of Friday 30 August and were the focus of a significant policing operation involving over 400 conventional and specialist police resources. There was a significant protest organised involving several hundred Loyalists.

During the Cairde Na Heireann parade the parade was stopped for a short time on Clyde Street whilst police cleared protestors from the area at the end of the parade route. There was evidence of sectarian abuse from both those who formed part of the parade and also from

counter protestors, these are the subject of further police investigation. The significant police presence and use of Section 60 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 to unmask many involved on both sides may have had the effect of reducing the abuse which was experienced as those involved did not have the anonymity which would usually have been afforded them under 'normal' circumstances.

At specific points on the parade route pyrotechnics were hurled towards the marchers and police resulting in a police officer requiring hospital treatment as a pyrotechnic exploded next to him. Whilst his injuries are not life threatening, the long term impact have still to be ascertained.

On the day of the parade there were 10 arrests directly in connection to the parades, 8 from counter protestors and 2 from those on the parades. There also enquiries which are part of the overall investigation which relate to small isolated pockets of disorder attributed to small groups of individuals who can reasonably be assessed as having taken part in the parade or counter protest which took place well away from the parade routes as individuals made their way home.

Whilst the three parades that occurred on the 30 August and 07 September were conducted by parading organisations that could be considered as republican in nature, it is clear to me from the developing intelligence that the actions of loyalist sympathisers at those parades could attract similar protest, possibly violent in nature from republican supporting groups in retaliation. Indeed, a social media campaign is already underway 'Calling on all republicans' to muster to protest against a Loyalist parade taking place on 21 September. Whilst that campaign references a specific loyalist parade, I cannot assume it will mean this will be the only loyalist parade to be the result of a protest by republican groups, particularly as there is an ongoing social media campaign for loyalists to protest against the Republican Network for Unity parade on 14 September.

### **Competing Demands and Events**

There are no competing events in Glasgow on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

### **Potential Public Disorder**

The Police Scotland intelligence case with regard to processions and any counter protest on 15 September is developing. Intelligence is growing with regard to possible numbers and locations involved in any counter protest, however none is directly targeted at this parade at this time and date.

What we can already see is a mustering of support from the various groups involved. There is social media calls from unknown Loyalists to continue to target all Republican parades until such time as they are banned as there is the perception that they all support the IRA. Equally there is now emerging calls from Republicans to target Loyalist parades which they perceive to support proscribed organisations such as the UVF.

## **Public Safety**

Public safety underpins everything that Police Scotland does. However, when large processions and protests take place which are likely to lead to disorder our ability to absolutely ensure public safety is reduced.

In the first instance, I have to consider the safety and well-being of those participating in, stewarding and supporting the procession. Other considerations include those who may put themselves at the risk of harm to protest and innocent members of the public who become caught up in any disturbance.

Maximising public safety will be my number one priority on the day given the lack of intelligence there will be a proportionate conventional policing operation.

## **Damage to Property and Disruption to the Life of the Community**

The events of Friday 30 August 2019 undoubtedly caused significant disruption to the life of the community along with damage to a number of vehicles and street furniture. The full value of this is still being ascertained.

Numerous media reports from the evening of Friday, 30 August 2019 in Govan have included witness testimonies of passing members of the public and those working in local businesses. These events were clearly a traumatic experience for them.

There can be no guarantee that damage and disruption does not occur. The role of the police will be to ensure that any disorder and disruption breaking out is minimised, localised and effectively dealt with.

## **Impact on Policing**

The current policing operation planned for Saturday 15 September 2019 will number in the hundreds of officers including those with specialist training ready to respond to incidents at any parade.

These officers will come primarily from Greater Glasgow and the West of Scotland but undoubtedly we will require officers from further afield. There is no doubt that the loss of on-duty officers from their routine deployments will impact on the communities we serve.

## **Summary**

The policing operation required to police the Partick Orange & Purple District 15 procession remains achievable and is within the overall capacity and capability of Police Scotland.

Police Scotland continues to monitor intelligence and community tensions in relation to the proposed processions and to consider its likely impact on the local community.

Police Scotland, like other public authorities has a positive duty to protect the rights of individuals to exercise their rights with regard to thought, conscience, religion and the freedom of expression and or assembly.

The Committee will be mindful that any decision taken to prohibit or impose conditions on the procession notification will, in all probability, have an impact on future processions across both Loyalist and Republican organisations.

I have carefully considered the Human Rights Act 1988 in this submission and in particular Articles 9, 10 and 11. I have considered this procession notification in its own right based on my professional experience and the information and intelligence available to me. My submission does not give consideration to future events.

I am satisfied that the submission made is necessary and proportionate given the increasing tensions and likelihood of serious disorder, disruption to communities, public safety and damage to property.

I have discussed this submission with the Assistant Chief Constable for the West of Scotland who supports its submission.

I trust this report is useful to inform your decision and I remain available to the Committee to provide additional information if required.

**Hazel Hendren**

Divisional Commander

Greater Glasgow Division