**SITUATIONAL UPDATE BY POLICE SCOTLAND TO THE GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL CHIEF EXECUTIVE RE PRIDE OF GOVAN FLUTE BAND NOTIFICATION 21 SEPTEMBER 2019**

The following is provided by way of situational update regarding the procession notification in consequence of certain concerns having been intimated about the forthcoming processions on 21 September 2019.

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 Pride of Govan Flute Band to hold a public procession on Saturday 21 September 2019 commencing at 1000hrs. I understand there will be seventeen bands totalling some 800 persons in number and that the procession will commence in Edmiston Dr, Glasgow. The route as intimated has been voluntarily changed by the procession organiser to steer away from Craigton Road and will now form up on Edmiston Drive (between Broomloan road and Copeland road) and make its way Broomloan Rd, Orkney St, Govan Road (Lay Wreath at Cenotaph) Golspie St, Govan Rd, Orkney St, Vicarfield St, Dunsmuir Street, Summertown Road, Copland Road, Edmiston Drive, Paisley Road West, Harvey Street, Govan Road, concluding at Lorne Street.

There is intelligence in respect of this parade which is detailed further in this report.

**Previous Events**

The Chief Executive 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 and 07 September where processions were targeted.

It has now been well documented the unprecedented scale of disorder generated by a counter-protest to James Connelly Republican Flute Band. 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.

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. A police officer was hospitalised after a pyrotechnic exploded next to him.

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 criminality by removing their anonymity. As a result of this operation there were 10 arrests.

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 at Craigton Rd to protest against the Govan Flute band parade taking place on 21 September.

Following a sitting of the parade committee, a number of parades scheduled for Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 September were prohibited. Whilst a protest against this decision was held on Saturday 14 September in George Square, no issues around this protest were experienced. The prohibitions of the parades were adhered to by all of the parading organisations concerned.

**Competing Demands and Events**

Saturday, 21 September 2019 will be an exceptionally challenging day for Police Scotland and, in particular, Greater Glasgow Division and there are a number of separate events which merit consideration.

Independent Loyal Orange Order

At 1030 hours, another scheduled procession being organised by Independent Loyal Orange Order. I understand Independent Loyal Orange Order to be a Loyalist Organisation who will hold a procession in the City Centre of Glasgow finishing at Abernethy Street. Police Scotland currently has no information or intelligence which would suggest a protest against this parade.

Drumchapel Orange & Purple District 57

At 1100 hours, another scheduled procession being organised by Drumchapel Orange & Purple District 57. I understand Independent Drumchapel Orange & Purple District 57 to be a Loyalist Organisation who will hold a procession in the Drumchapel area of Glasgow finishing at Kinfauns Drive. Police Scotland currently has no information or intelligence which would suggest a protest against this parade.

Springburn Campsie Apprentice Boys of Derry (ABOD)

At 1200 hours, following the Drumchapel Orange & Purple District 57, another scheduled procession being organised by Springburn Campsie ABOD. I understand Springburn Campsie ABOD to be a Loyalist Organisation who will hold a procession in the Keppochill area of Glasgow finishing at Millarbank Street. Police Scotland currently has no information or intelligence which would suggest a protest against this parade.

Hope over Fear Rally

At 1200hrs a pro-independence rally takes place in George Square. Its very nature is low risk with a minimum policing deployment. Police Scotland currently has no information or intelligence which would suggest a protest against this rally.

**Potential Public Disorder**

The Police Scotland intelligence case with regard to processions and any counter protest on 21 September is developing. Intelligence is growing with regard to possible numbers and locations involved in any counter protest, however at this time, in respect of the Pride of Govan parade the intelligence assessment indicates that the parade route as originally notified, would have provided for a significant protest by republican groups. The voluntary re-route has mitigated somewhat the risk, given Craigton Rd and its environs are no longer referenced, however a protest is still expected. Given recent experiences, in all likelihood any such protest will have an element of violence and/or disorder. Our assessment is that any protest against the parade could potentially number approximately 200.

Intelligence has also been received that many of the loyalists groups taking part in the planned parade have travelled some distance and incurred costs around accommodation. It also indicates if the parade is prohibited there will be extreme anger and significant potential for disorder from the loyalist community. Given the parade as planned consists of 800 persons, our assessment is that many, if not all, will take to the streets in some form of protest against any prohibition. Again, and based on recent experiences there would be a likelihood of violence and/or disorder at any such protest.

**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 but this will require a significant and prolonged commitment from a high number of police resources and I have commented further on this below.

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

The events of Friday 30 August 2019 and Saturday 07 September 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. There is no reason to expect Saturday’s events will be as severe as experienced previously given the voluntary reroute of the parade. There does exist a risk to disruption to the community from disgruntled loyalist supporters should the parade be prohibited. In any event, regardless of the parade going ahead or not, a suitable policing operation is in place and able to intervene and which will require deployment of significant resources.

**Impact on Policing**

The current policing operation planned for Saturday 21 September 2019 will be significant including those with specialist training ready to respond to incidents at the parade irrespective of whether it takes place or not.

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 Pride of Govan Flute Band procession may be significant but remains achievable and is within the overall capacity and capability of Police Scotland.

A parade which goes ahead, given the timings of the parade and its route are known can be controlled and managed. While the site for any counter protest is at present unknown, it stands that it is reasonable to surmise it would be at or near part of the parade route as it passes, which allows the police to proactively deploy along the route and take mitigating action should it be required.

If the parade is prohibited, that tactical advantage is lost given locations/timing for any loyalist protest, which would be expected to be significantly larger in number, would be unknown with little time or scope to develop the intelligence picture in this regard.

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 Chief Executive 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 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 Chief Executive to provide additional information if required.

**Hazel Hendren**

Divisional Commander

Greater Glasgow Division