

**Submission on Behalf of the Chief Constable of Police Scotland to the Public Processions Committee
West Dunbartonshire Council re Dumbarton Orange & Purple no 27. Annual Boyne Parade, Dumbarton Saturday 6 July 2024**

The following submission to the Committee/relevant officer exercising delegated powers on behalf of the Council is provided to assist in the local authority's decision making concerning the procession ('parade') intended to be held on **Saturday 6 July 2024**. It is fully acknowledged that any decision concerning the said procession is for the Council alone to make. This submission provides relevant and objective information, and – where appropriate – considered professional opinion, as an assessment of what may be reasonably expected.

The Chief Constable is a consultee in this context. As such, the Chief Constable seeks to support the Council in reaching an appropriate and fully informed decision. The Chief Constable endeavours to address the likely effect of holding the procession in relation to any or all of the following factors and to the extent set out :

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

The Council is respectfully invited to have regard, where appropriate, to the extent to which the containment of the foregoing 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 to address each relevant consideration in turn.

Introduction

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It is my understanding that a Procession Notification has been submitted by **Dumbarton Orange and Purple District No 27** to hold a public procession on **Saturday 6 July**.

Assemble 1715hrs, set off 1730hrs

Preferred Route: Start on Castle Road at Castle end, proceed forward and take a right turn into Castlegreen Street, continue forward to junction with A814, turn left.

Continue forward until reaching the traffic lights at Castle Street, turn left, proceed to Quayside following one way system to junction with High Street, turn left then left again onto bridge street.

Proceed over bridge and onto West Bridgend where at junction with A814, turn right.

Proceed along A814 and section of dual carriageway then on entering roundabout, take first left into Townend Road, under railway bridge then left onto Bankend to disperse at hall at end of road.

Band - Pride of the Rock Flute Band (Dumbarton)

The route passes a number of places of worship and cognisance need to be taken in relation to the code of conduct and the playing of music when passing these premises.

Previous Events

This annual procession takes place after the Glasgow Boyne Parade has finished and is therefore an evening event.

Last year 2023 it was highlighted the band clearly/deliberately slowed their pace and increased the volume both outside the Harp Social Club but also under the rail bridge on Townend Rd at the junction with Station Rd. The slowing of pace and increased volume outside of the Harp Social Club, High Street, Dumbarton, resulted in tensions escalating into disorder. One male, following the parade, was arrested for Sec 38 Criminal Justice and Licensing Scotland Act 2010 & Assault with a sectarian aggravation.

At last years event there was disagreement between persons on the parade and police facilitating the parade as to the agreed route. This appears to have stemmed from a breakdown in communication during planning. Should a parade take place steps have been taken to mitigate this risk.

Competing Demands and Events

Boyne events across the west are taking place on the same day as well as the Luss Highland Games

Potential Public Disorder

Given the violence and disorder from last year, if this parade is to be permitted, there is a risk of increased tensions in the area of Dumbarton Harp Social Club. This will require an increased policing presence.

Public Safety

This parade will take place in the evening, after many of the people involved in the parade have attended similar events in Glasgow. It is likely that many people involved in the parade will have consumed alcohol over the course of the day. Given the sectarian violence and disorder encountered on last years parade it is assessed that there is a high risk of tensions leading to further violence and disorder. The location of last years sectarian violence was at the entrance of Dumbarton Harp Social Club where a person following the parade assaulted patrons of the

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club. With Boyne events taking place across the West of Scotland there is a high demand placed on police resources, including specialist services. Whilst a police presence can act to mitigate the risk of disorder, this alone does not avoid the risk of violence and disorder as was demonstrated at last years parade.

Damage to Property

In recent years we have seen an increase in sectarian graffiti across the Division during the marching season.

Disruption to the Life of the Community

Social Tensions.

The parade often highlights sectarian divisions, leading to increased tensions between different groups. This can result in public disorder, confrontations and violence as demonstrated at last years parade.

Public Disorder.

Last years parade highlighted instances of anti social behaviour, violence and disorder.

Traffic Disruption.

The proposed route will necessitate road closures and the slowing of traffic. This will cause significant inconvenience to local traffic affecting the local community and businesses.

Impact on Policing

Given the violence and disorder from last year, if this parade is to be permitted, this will require an increased policing presence. Due to competing demands with other parades and events this will require officers to be recalled from rest days, impacting on officer welfare and causing a significant financial burden on police.

Possible Mitigations

(outline way(s) in which the foregoing risk(s) might be effectively mitigated: e.g. in re-routing the procession, of changing its start, stop time, etc.)

In balancing the rights and the safety of persons participating in the parade with that of the local community, I would not oppose this application on the following conditions;

- That once a route is agreed and approved a meeting is arranged with the parade organiser, police and council to review that route and ensure that there is no dubiety surrounding it.
- The initial proposed route is changed in order that it does not pass Dumbarton Harp Social Club, where there was violence and disorder last year. The proposed routes are similar in length to the initial proposal and provides a similar route, still incorporating part of Dumbarton High Street, without passing the Dumbarton Harp Social Club. Police are happy to discuss other options with event organisers.

A police presence on the parade will reduce the impact on the local road network.

Summary

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The policing operation required to police the procession in question may be significant but 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 all individuals to exercise their rights peacefully with regard to thought, conscience, religion and the freedom of expression and /or assembly.

I have carefully considered the Human Rights Act 1988 in this submission. I have considered this procession notification in its own right based on my professional experience and the information and intelligence available to me. I am satisfied that the submission made is relevant to the matter under present considerations. I respectfully submit that the possible mitigations I have invited the Council to consider are lawful, necessary and proportionate given the disorder and risk to public safety highlighted above. .

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