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### **PUBLIC PROCESSIONS COMMITTEE, 3 JUNE 2019**

A proposed procession by the organisation County Grand Orange Lodge of Glasgow was considered by the council's Public Processions Committee on 3 June 2019.

The organiser had notified the council of its intention to carry out a procession, with around 950 participants, between Corn Street and Glasgow Green at 1100 hours on Saturday 8 June 2019.

You can read the full report that went to the Public Processions Committee here.

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=93529>

THEREFORE the said Council hereby orders that the procession held by the County Grand Orange Lodge of Glasgow ("the Organiser") should proceed on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2019, but imposes the following amended route as a condition: Corn Street, Garscube Road, St. Georges Road, Charing Cross, Sauchiehall Street, Pitt Street, West George Street, Nelson Mandela Place, West George Street, George Square with a stop to lay wreaths, George Street, High Street, Saltmarket and into Glasgow Green via McLellan Arches to disperse.

The reasons for the imposing these conditions are:

1. The Committee concluded that, on balance, if the procession were allowed to proceed as originally proposed there would be a clear risk to public order and of disruption to the life of the community. The Committee considered it necessary to place proportionate conditions on the procession to mitigate the risks.
2. The approach adopted by the Committee recognises the Organiser's right of freedom of assembly and balances it against the risks, including the risks to the participants in the procession.

In reaching this decision the Committee placed reliance on the opinion of Superintendent John McBride of Police Scotland as stated in his written submissions on behalf of the Chief Constable (appendix 1 to the Report by the Director of Governance and Solicitor to the Council). The Committee also placed reliance on the submissions Chief Inspector Murphy made during the Committee meeting.

The submissions of both officers indicated that the events of 7<sup>th</sup> July 2018 were still very much in the minds of those opposed to a procession passing St Alphonsus and that the risk of a confrontation between those opposing such a procession and those supporting it remained high. The Superintendent and the Chief Inspector had no reason to doubt that a significant gathering to protest the procession would occur if the procession were to go past St Alphonsus Church as proposed. The risk of disruption would result from the meeting of those protesting the procession and those gathering in support of the procession. This was evidenced by the events of 18 May 2019.

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On 18 May 2019 a procession by Orange and Purple District 50 passed St Alphonsus Church. Persons protesting against the procession were gathered outside the Church. Those following in support of the procession were heard by police officers to shout 'Fenian bastards' and 'paedos' at the protestors. Both the Superintendent and the Chief Inspector were of the view that a more serious incident was prevented only by virtue the large police presence outside St Alphonsus.

Both the Superintendent and the Chief Inspector were of the view that the situation had deteriorated since 18 May 2019. That opinion was based on the language being used by both the opponents and the supporters of the procession. That language had become more strident and polarised, including social media comments about burning vehicles and the use of pipe bombs. Consequently, both the Superintendent and the Chief Inspector were of the view that there was an increased risk of disruption to the life of the community should the procession pass St Alphonsus on 8 June 2019. Both officers expressed the view that at least 200 hundred officers, some of them specialist officers from other parts of Scotland, would be required to attend. Chief Inspector Murphy was of the view that this estimate would need to be revised as the date of procession approached and tensions increased.

Both the Superintendent and the Chief Inspector were of the view that the risk could be mitigated by routing the procession away from St Alphonsus.

The Committee was of the view that Superintendent McBride and Chief Inspector Murphy were officers with significant operational experience who had access to reliable information about local attitudes both for and against the procession. The Committee considered that these officers were in a position to give an opinion on the likely outcome of a procession passing St Alphonsus Church.

Accordingly, the Committee concluded that if the procession were to proceed past St Alphonsus as originally proposed, there would, on balance, be a clear risk of disruption to the life of the community. Furthermore, the Committee concluded that there would also be, on balance, a clear risk to public order.

The Committee therefore concluded that it was necessary to place a condition on the proposed procession to mitigate the serious risks mentioned. The condition imposed was to vary the proposed route to the route set out above. The Committee was of the view the condition was proportionate and recognised the organiser's right of freedom of assembly in holding a procession.

Finally, for the avoidance of doubt, the Committee placed no reliance on the representations from members of the public mentioned in the Report to Committee. The Committee had not had sight of the individual representations made by members of the public and could not be satisfied the representations contained any relevant material for the Committee's consideration. Furthermore, no copy of the representations had been intimated on the Organisers prior to the meeting.

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