

Council to decide on Orange Walk



The council's licensing committee will decide today on whether to allow the Orange Walk planned for the Saturday prior to the Independence Referendum as well as the Grand Lodge's proposed 75th Anniversary Parade on 30 August.

The two other items of business at today's Licensing Sub-Committee are the proposed Grand Black Chapter Marches on 9 August and the proposed SDL march on 23 August.

These are all planned to take place on city centre routes and are all of a contentious nature which has not been resolved through negotiation.

The Council proposes to alter the route of the Referendum Rally on 13 September by moving it away from the High Street. Police Scotland have recommended some conditions on the way the march is conducted, such as the composition of the parade by restricting the marchers to four people abreast rather than six, and a prohibition against using a megaphone, and no music is to be played outside churches where ceremonies are being conducted. It appears to have been agreed by the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland that the parade will move off at 11.00am.

The second march on 30 August will end at Saughton Park. The council officers recommend allowing this march and that to be held on 9 August by the Grand Black Chapter.

But councillors are recommended to ban the SDL march planned for 23 August. It is likely that as in the past the SDL will then hold a static rally rather than a march. Police Scotland have raised particular objections about this planned activity and in particular the lack of engagement by the group in

dealing with the police regarding organisation of the march. This is not in the view of Police Scotland the same as previous events where the organisers did cooperate with police in the planning process. The police are also worried that there are other elements in the SDL who deliberately seek confrontation and disruption to residents would be expected at a time of the year when the city and the police are already busy..

Councillor Gavin Barrie will chair the meeting and the other members of the committee are Councillors Blacklock, Aitken, Burgess, Cairns, Gardner, Bill Henderson, Heslop and Redpath.

The council can only decide whether to take no action allowing the march to proceed, or to impose conditions on its conduct. Only in limited cases does it ever ban marches.