

# **LONDON**ASSEMBLY

## **Notting Hill Carnival: safer and better**



**Police and Crime Committee**  
January 2017

Holding the Mayor to  
account and  
investigating issues that  
matter to Londoners

**LONDON**ASSEMBLY

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The Police and Crime Committee examines the work of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and investigates issues relating to policing and crime reduction in London.

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# Steve O'Connell AM

## Chairman of the Police and Crime Committee



Notting Hill Carnival is recognised as an iconic London institution that has evolved over many years and is enjoyed by millions of Londoners and people from across the globe.

Unfortunately, the positives associated with Carnival—such as its celebration of the contribution of the Caribbean community to London’s economy and its community spirit—are overshadowed each year by the level of crimes that take place.

Despite the efforts of the Met and other organisations to prevent crime and protect the public from harm, this year over 400 arrests were made at Carnival. Any large scale event will experience disorder, but worryingly violent incidents, including a large number of knife attacks, appear to be on the rise. But my overriding concern, having listened to the organisations involved in running Carnival, is the very real risk to public safety. We must not shut our ears to the concerns being raised.

We need to improve the arrangements for safety and crime reduction at Carnival so that its success becomes the headline story, not its crime and disorder.

The answer lies in giving those in charge of Carnival greater responsibility, ownership, capacity and capability to make Carnival a success and make sure it remains what it set out to be: a celebration of an exuberant culture. The London Notting Hill Carnival Enterprises Trust (LNHCET) has come a long way but admits that it struggles. It cannot be right that the group organising one of London’s most high profile events is staffed by volunteers and is not receiving the support it needs.

The Mayor and MOPAC have the ability to rectify this. The previous Mayor stepped in to support Pride and to change the New Year’s Eve celebrations by making the firework display a safer event than it was in years gone by. Now it is time to lead the way to bring the change that is needed to take Carnival back to its roots and to make it as safe as possible.

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to contribute to our work and I look forward to working with all those who want to improve the safety and therefore the experience of Carnival for all involved.

“Unfortunately, the positives associated with Carnival are overshadowed each year by the level of crime that is reported to take place”

# Summary

Notting Hill Carnival is a standout event in London's cultural calendar. It is the largest celebration of Caribbean culture in Europe, visited by over a million Londoners and tourists each year. Carnival makes a significant contribution to London's economy and its status as a culturally diverse global city.

Making Carnival happen takes the hard work of a number of different organisations, which are faced with a series of challenges every year: getting people to and from Carnival; the provision of facilities; and the clean-up once Carnival is over. But perhaps most significant is the challenge of having a very large number of people in a confined public space and ensuring they are kept safe from harm.

## Safety and security measures

The sheer size of Carnival means that it draws heavily on police and other resources to keep it safe. This year, over 6,000 Met officers were deployed at Carnival on the Sunday and nearly 7,000 on the Monday. As well as providing officers for Carnival, the Met carries out preventive work ahead of Carnival to stop potential criminal activity. During Carnival, measures such as Traffic Management Orders and "sterile" zones are used to help with crowd management and the movement of emergency vehicles. Carnival also relies heavily on stewards to facilitate the safe movement of performance units around the Carnival route.

## Crime and anti-social behaviour

All of these measures are used to try and reduce the crime and safety risks associated with a big public space event like Carnival. Despite this, crime and disorder still took place at Carnival this year.

The number of crimes occurring at Carnival has risen slightly over recent years. Traditionally, the vast majority of offences have been related to theft and drugs. The number of violent incidents, however, is rising. This year there were 15 reports of violent injuries involving a knife or blade. Several of those were serious and nearly resulted in loss of life: something that has not happened at Carnival in over a decade.

Although the rise in serious violence might be a reflection of a wider problem across London, it nonetheless risks people's safety at Carnival and its reputation. The Met and partners are making determined efforts to prevent these types of crimes from taking place, but there is merit in looking at what

Traditionally, the vast majority of offences have been related to theft and drugs. The number of violent crimes, however, is rising.

more can be done to help them prevent crime both prior to and during Carnival.

## Public safety

One of the most obvious risks for Carnival is overcrowding. This is made all the more acute because of Carnival's high attendance figures and its street-based location. Very few other events in London are comparable to Carnival in this respect.

Overcrowding is a concern for many of the organisations involved in Carnival. There are a number of locations around the carnival footprint where every year significant crowd flow issues occur. We heard about issues at Ladbroke Grove and All Saints Road, for example. Crowd levels and geography also affect the emergency services' ability to respond should a significant incident occur.

## Reducing crime and improving public safety

Some steps are being taken to address the crime and public safety risks. MOPAC, for example, is commissioning a study to examine the 'Carnival blueprint' to see if there is more that can be done to keep people safe. We welcome the study but are surprised and disappointed that this kind of detailed work has not been undertaken before now.

Changes are being made to try and reduce the reliance on the police to allow them to focus on tackling crime. More stewards are being used to try and reduce the pressure on the police, for example in traffic management and staffing of safety zones. The London Notting Hill Carnival Enterprises Trust Ltd (LNHCET) hopes that more stewarding will help the event become more self-sustainable. But stewards at the moment have a limited role: to allow for safe passage of parade floats. To achieve less reliance on the police, the role of the stewards may need to be further developed.

The increase in stewarding, which is paid for by the GLA, will only save up to six per cent of the total policing budget for Carnival. If the pressure on policing, in terms of both numbers and cost, is to be reduced further, other and more significant changes to prevent and reduce crime may need to be considered.

## Change and ownership

Each year following Carnival there is a debate about the need for change. Some suggest that it has outgrown the area it takes place in and changes to the format are needed to help keep Carnival safe. Others cite its cultural and social significance for the Caribbean community and stress the importance of it remaining a street-based event. There are entrenched and polarised views on change, which has meant that very few, if any, significant changes have been made over the years.

There is acceptance from organisers that some change may be needed to bring Carnival back to its roots. But that can only happen on the basis of sound evidence and the buy-in of all the most important players. And none of the suggested changes can be seriously considered or acted on without a strong organising body that can lead the discussion and planning.

Unfortunately the LNH CET, as the organising body for Carnival, suffers from a lack of support and capacity to deliver. It is run by volunteers, with little funding or staffing resource. It has come a long way and we congratulate its members who work so hard to make Carnival happen every year. It admits, however, that it still struggles and it is now time to provide it with a greater level of support.

The Mayor should now provide advice and guidance to the LNH CET to help put it on a more formal and financially sustainable footing. This will in turn improve its ability to deliver a safer and more secure Carnival. Subsequently, the Mayor should, in partnership with the LNH CET, lead a short task and finish strategic review of public safety at Carnival building on the findings of MOPAC's crowd management review.

## Conclusion

For too long we have repeated the debate about what might need to change about Carnival, with little action taken. It is becoming more and more apparent that the status quo is not an option. The Mayor and MOPAC are well placed to help get a grip on public safety at Carnival and should support Carnival organisers to do so.

We have heard of a number of possible changes to Carnival which could both help return it to its roots as a celebration of Caribbean culture and enhance public safety. Organisers need to give serious consideration to any changes, big or small, that will improve both safety and the overall Carnival experience.

We want to see the Mayor and LNH CET consider all of them and report back on their preferred options by the end of May 2017, with an implementation plan setting out both short term and long term goals. We will be looking to the Mayor, LNH CET and its partners to move the debate forward and for action to be taken to improve the safety and quality of Carnival for all involved.



# Recommendations

<b>Supporting the delivery of Carnival</b>	<b>Recommendation 1</b>  The Mayor should now provide advice and guidance to the LNH CET to help put it on a more formal and financially sustainable footing. This will in turn improve its ability to deliver a safer and more secure Carnival. Advice and guidance could include, for example, helping it to capitalise on the commercial potential and the brand of Carnival.
<b>A safer Carnival</b>	<b>Recommendation 2</b>  The Mayor should, in partnership with the LNH CET, lead a short task and finish strategic review of public safety at Carnival, building on the findings of MOPAC's crowd management review. We expect to see a strong evidence base for any decision to change, or not change, the different aspects of Carnival that can pose a risk to safety and preventing crime. The Mayor should also commit to work with and help LNH CET to lead any discussion and consultation on proposed changes.

# 1. Introduction

## Key findings

- Notting Hill Carnival is a standout event in London's cultural calendar. It is the largest celebration of Caribbean culture in Europe, visited by over a million Londoners and tourists each year.
- One of the major challenges for Carnival is having a very large number of people in a confined public space and ensuring they are kept safe from harm.
- In this investigation we examined the issue of safety at Carnival. We wanted to reflect on policing at Carnival over recent years to determine whether it is as safe as it can be.
- We found that there are some practical steps that can be taken to improve the police's ability to tackle crime and disorder at Carnival. But more fundamentally, the structures in place to deliver Carnival need to improve.

- 1.1 Notting Hill Carnival is a standout event in London’s cultural calendar. It is the largest celebration of Caribbean culture in Europe, visited by over a million Londoners and tourists each year. Carnival makes a significant contribution to London’s economy and its status as a culturally diverse global city.
- 1.2 Making Carnival happen takes the hard work of a number of different organisations. These organisations are faced with a series of challenges every year: getting people to and from Carnival; the provision of facilities; and the clean-up once Carnival is over. But perhaps most significant is the challenge of having a very large number of people in a confined public space and ensuring they are kept safe from harm.
- 1.3 In this investigation we examined the issue of policing and safety at Carnival. We wanted to reflect on public order policing at Carnival over recent years to determine whether it is as safe as it can be. We have looked at issues such as the crime levels at Carnival; what safety planning takes place; how it is policed; and what the Mayor can do to support those responsible for keeping Carnival safe.
- 1.4 This report summarises our key findings. We have reflected on the concerns of many of the people involved in managing the event that there is very real risk of serious harm to a large number of people. The police warn of the risk of a “Hillsborough” scale tragedy; it would be foolish to ignore these voices.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.5 There are some practical steps that can be taken to improve the police’s ability to tackle crime and disorder at Carnival. But more fundamentally, there needs to be greater ownership of Carnival and the structures in place to deliver it need to improve, so that there are clear lines of accountability and those responsible are able to take a stronger lead on public safety.
- 1.6 There are entrenched and polarised views about what needs to change about Carnival. The debate has been going on for many years and a previous Mayor tried to bring about change for the same reasons that we are highlighting. This time, by working in partnership with the Mayor and the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), organisers will hopefully be able to make any changes that are needed to improve both safety and the overall Carnival experience, so that its success, rather than its crime and disorder, becomes the headline story.



Members of the Police and Crime Committee visited Carnival 2016

## 2. Carnival 2016: at a tipping point

### Key findings

- The sheer size of Carnival means that it draws heavily on police and other resources to keep it safe.
- Attention is given to the numbers of arrests made at Carnival. But it is the increase in violent incidents that is of grave concern.
- One of the most obvious risks for Carnival is overcrowding. This is made all the more acute because of Carnival's high attendance figures and its street-based location. There are a number of locations around the carnival footprint where significant crowd flow issues occur.
- We now appear to have reached a tipping point where the status quo is not an option. Carnival needs to be re-examined to ensure it remains a safe and positive experience for all.

- 2.1 Over one million people visited Carnival this year.<sup>2</sup> The celebration over the August bank holiday weekend included a street party on the Saturday; children's day on the Sunday involving a parade, static sound systems and steel bands; and a main event on the Monday, which included more than 60 bands and over 50,000 performers. Various food stalls were set up and workshops also took place across the weekend.<sup>3</sup> The vast majority of people attending Carnival did so on the Sunday and Monday.

## Safety and security measures

- 2.2 The sheer size of Carnival means that it draws heavily on police and other resources to keep it safe. This year, over 6,000 Met officers were deployed at Carnival on the Sunday and nearly 7,000 on the Monday.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the British Transport Police (BTP) deployed over 1,000 officers over the course of the Sunday and Monday to provide specialist assistance on the railway and London Underground.<sup>5</sup>
- 2.3 As well as providing officers for Carnival, the Met carries out preventive work ahead of Carnival to stop potential criminal activity. This includes raids on the homes of suspected drug dealers; weapon sweeps; Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) operations; and targeting of known gang members. This year these measures resulted in over 200 warrants, 55 arrests and the seizure of weapons and drugs.<sup>6</sup> The Met also introduced an anti-social behaviour dispersal zone and issued 47 dispersal notices, instructing identified people to leave the area around Carnival for a specified period of time.<sup>7</sup>
- 2.4 A range of other security measures are used at Carnival. These include Traffic Management Orders and identified safety or "sterile" zones to help with crowd management and the movement of emergency vehicles.<sup>8</sup> This year there were also extra security measures because of the current terror threat level.<sup>9</sup> It is likely that these extra measures will need to be in place for Carnival next year and possibly beyond.<sup>10</sup>
- 2.5 Carnival also relies heavily on stewards. This year, over 2,000 stewards were in place over the weekend to "facilitate the safe movement of performance units around the Carnival route."<sup>11</sup> This involved holding back crowds to allow vehicles and performers to pass through the parade route. Stewards are not responsible for any other aspect of security.
- 2.6 All of these measures are used to try and reduce the crime and safety risks associated with a big public space event like Carnival. These risks were summarised by Commander Dave Musker, Metropolitan Police, as "a catastrophic public safety incident or if we get violence that escalates into people losing their lives."<sup>12</sup>



## Crime and anti-social behaviour

**“What is different is the level of violence [...] Very rarely when I am policing an event will I have that level of serious violence.”**

Commander Dave Musker, Notting Hill Gold Command, Metropolitan Police<sup>13</sup>

- 2.7 Despite these measures, crime and disorder still took place at Carnival this year. Around 450 arrests were made over the course of the weekend.<sup>14</sup> Eleven offences were recorded by BTP in and around the nearby stations. In addition, some residents living in the Carnival area reported a high level of anti-social behaviour. This included, for example, littering, urinating on properties and aggressive behaviour.<sup>15</sup> This results in some residents leaving the area over Carnival weekend.
- 2.8 The number of arrests is the result of proactive policing and the number of officers present at Carnival. Met officers are told to focus on the most serious crimes that can occur. Dave Musker said that in preparing for Carnival, he “was very clear that our [the Met’s] job is to keep the public safe and to target people involved in violence and also people carrying weapons.”<sup>16</sup>
- 2.9 The number of crimes occurring at Carnival has risen slightly over recent years. In 2010, 343 offences were recorded over the Sunday and Monday of Carnival: in 2016, this figure was 396, a rise of around 15 per cent.<sup>17</sup> The number of offences fluctuated in between those dates, which can be attributed to things like bad weather reducing the number of people that attended.<sup>18</sup>
- 2.10 A lot of attention is given to the number of arrests made at Carnival. And compared to the number of people attending Carnival, crime appears fairly proportionate. But it is the types of crime taking place that is of grave concern.
- 2.11 Arrests at Carnival are made for a wide range of offences. These include public order; drugs; theft; and assault. Traditionally, the vast majority of offences have been related to theft and drugs.<sup>19</sup> The number of violent crimes, however, is rising. This year, there were 90 arrests for possession of weapons offences—compared to 57 the previous year—and 15 reports of violent injuries involving a knife or blade.<sup>20</sup> Overall, the Met recorded 151 offences of violence against the person over the Sunday and Monday of Carnival: an 86 per cent increase on the 81 incidents that took place in 2010.<sup>21</sup> Several of those violent incidents were serious and nearly resulted in loss of life: something that has not happened at Carnival in over a decade.<sup>22</sup>

- 2.12 The level and type of crime that occurs can paint a negative picture of Carnival. It is this that Carnival is regularly and publicly criticised for. But the wider context in which it is occurring should be noted. David Morgan, the Operational Advisor for Notting Hill Carnival, reflected that the level of violent crime at Carnival is “against a backdrop of a rise in knife crime across London.”<sup>23</sup> This does not diminish the seriousness of the crimes that take place at Carnival, but is a reminder that London as a whole is experiencing an increase in serious violence and knife crime.<sup>24</sup>
- 2.13 **Public concern about the level of crime at Carnival is nothing new. But we are now seeing a rise in more serious and violent crimes: this year four stabbings almost became murders. Although the rise in serious violence might be a reflection of a wider problem, it nonetheless risks people’s safety at Carnival and its reputation. The Met and partners are making determined efforts to prevent these types of crimes from taking place, but there is merit in looking at what more can be done to help them prevent crime both prior to, and during, Carnival.**

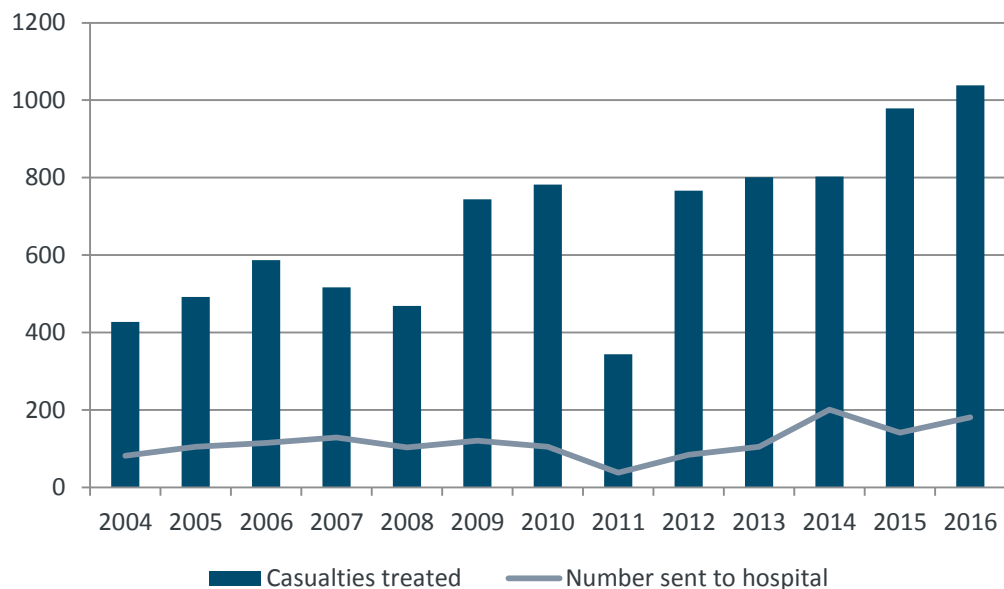
## Public safety

Yes, I am very concerned under my watch that something disastrous could happen in the Carnival [...] Ladbroke Grove worries me when we come up there on an evening, especially if we get there after 7.00pm, which I tend to try to not do, trying to get there before to make sure that we are all safe.”

Pepe Francis, Chairman, London Notting Hill Carnival Enterprise Trust<sup>25</sup>

- 2.14 Carnival, as with other big events, comes with a number of risks to public safety. These include, for example, public order and crowd management. One of the most obvious risks for Carnival is overcrowding. This is made all the more acute because of Carnival’s high attendance figures and its street-based location. Very few other events in London are comparable to Carnival in this respect.
- 2.15 The number of casualties recorded at Carnival is increasing. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) published data from the London Ambulance Service and St John Ambulance, which shows a significant increase in casualties treated this year: almost double the numbers treated a decade ago.<sup>26</sup> While it is not clear exactly what each of these casualties was treated for or how serious each was, we can see that the number of people suffering some sort of harm at Carnival is going up.

**The number of casualties dealt with by ambulance services at Carnival is rising**



Source: Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Public realm scrutiny committee, [Notting Hill Carnival 2016](#), November 2016

- 2.16 Overcrowding is a concern for many of the organisations involved in Carnival. Councillor Nicholas Paget-Brown, Leader of RBKC, noted how “there are potential risks to public safety because there is not enough detailed knowledge of where crowd pressures are building up unsustainably.”<sup>27</sup> Commander Musker told us that “each year, and last year was no exception, we came exceptionally close to a major catastrophic failure of public safety where members of the public would face serious injury”.<sup>28</sup>

**“It is a varied space. Some roads are extremely wide and can accommodate crowds relatively easily while others are relatively narrow and present more problems. Some parts are not residential, others are in areas of high density residential occupancy. Different sectors of the footprint present quite different challenges and different approaches are needed to deal with them.”**

Chris Boothman, former Director of London Notting Hill Carnival Ltd<sup>29</sup>

- 2.17 There are a number of locations around the carnival footprint “where every year well documented and significant crowd flow issues occur”.<sup>30</sup> Some of the examples of overcrowding issues and dangers highlighted to us include:

- Ladbroke Grove: overcrowding and crushing occurred when parade and support vehicles arrived, causing people to be pushed to the sides of the road. Commander Musker said that he had seen “officers who are on their

normal duties diving in to pull children out from those crowds and members of the public who are suffering crowd distress.”<sup>31</sup>

- All Saints Road: We heard that on two or three occasions, the safety barriers collapsed because of the number of people attending the static sound systems on that road.<sup>32</sup>
- Great Western Road: This passes one of the London Underground stations and crosses the judging point for the Carnival. It is suggested that “this confluence of different groups of people and parade traffic is the main reason why there are always very significant delays in bands getting around the route and past the judging point.”<sup>33</sup>

2.18 Crowd levels and geography also impact on the emergency services’ ability to respond should a significant incident occur. Commander Musker told us that “it is extremely challenging to try to deal with a major or critical incident in the middle of the Carnival when you have massive numbers of people [...] It would be foolish of me not to say that if we had a catastrophic incident or a major incident in the middle of the event, it would be extremely challenging to deal with.”<sup>34</sup>

2.19 Some suggestions have already been made as to how to improve overcrowding. In particular, several of the people we heard from said that “sterile areas” should be removed to free up space, as it is felt that road closures are “forcing more and more people into a smaller space”.<sup>35</sup> This is worth consideration, but there is an important balance to be struck between allowing crowds to disperse and the effective positioning of emergency services to respond to incidents. It has also been suggested that the Met and partners should take action earlier when crowding starts to occur. A criticism faced by the Met this year is that some crowding issues occurred because the police did not act fast enough.<sup>36</sup> We also heard about the app that is available to give Carnival-goers information on facilities and travel.<sup>37</sup> There may be potential to further develop this app to notify people about crowd congestion, advising them on alternative routes.

2.20 **Safety at Carnival is about much more than preventing crime. It is about ensuring that people can enjoy the Carnival experience without facing any kind of harm. The number of people attending Carnival, coupled with the public space it is set in, makes keeping people safe from harm difficult. If Carnival is to continue to be a success, overcrowding is an issue that will need to be dealt with effectively and immediately.**

2.21 **Taking the issues of crime and public safety together, we now appear to have reached a tipping point where the status quo is not an option. Carnival needs to be re-examined to ensure it remains a safe and positive experience for all.**

## Reducing crime and improving safety at Carnival

- 2.22 Some steps are being taken to address the crime and public safety risks. MOPAC, for example, is commissioning a study to examine the ‘Carnival blueprint’ and “see if there is more that can be done to keep revellers safe, given the continued popularity of the Carnival and the high numbers who take part.”<sup>38</sup> The work, which will be carried out by crowd management consultancy Movement Strategies, will look at issues such as crowd flow and density.<sup>39</sup> It is intended to be complete by February 2017 to support planning for the next Carnival and beyond.<sup>40</sup>

**“We would certainly be looking for some findings that we can implement next year [2017]. There may well be longer term findings as well.”**

Robin Merrett, Director of Operational Oversight, MOPAC<sup>41</sup>

- 2.23 **We welcome the independent review of crowd management at Carnival. We hope that it will provide a sound evidence base for improving public safety. However, we are surprised and disappointed that this kind of detailed work has not been undertaken before now. We should not have to wait until we reach a tipping point before action like this is taken.**

- 2.24 Changes are being made to try and reduce the reliance on the police and let them focus on tackling crime. Police numbers at Carnival are high, and have risen since a decade ago.<sup>42</sup> These officers do not just patrol the Carnival area, they take on a number of different roles including traffic management and staffing of safety zones: roles that might be more traditionally seen as stewarding tasks.<sup>43</sup> The number of officers required at Carnival results in a high policing bill of around £7 million.<sup>44</sup>

### **The cost of policing Notting Hill carnival is around £7 million a year**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Cost</b>
2014	£7,231,336
2015	£7,780,196
2016 estimate	£7,112,863

Source: Mayor's Question Time, Wednesday, 20 July 2016, Question 2016/2502

- 2.25 More stewards are being used to try and reduce the pressure on the police. This year 2,000 shifts were carried out by stewards over the weekend, compared to 900 the year before. This meant that the number of Met officers deployed at Carnival reduced slightly compared to the previous year.<sup>45</sup> Martin Jackson, Managing Director of McKenzie Arnold—which runs the stewarding operation at Carnival—said that as a result “at significant times throughout the Carnival the stewarding operation was robust enough that police officers



were able to stand back and not get involved in the stewarding operation.”<sup>46</sup> This was echoed by Westminster City Council, which says that the increase in stewarding allowed Met officers “to be proactively tasked away from static duty meaning incidents were responded to quicker and better.”<sup>47</sup>

**“stewarding the Carnival is not a police job and crime and disorder is not down to a private security company.”**

Martin Jackson, Managing Director, McKenzie Arnold Security<sup>48</sup>

- 2.26 The London Notting Hill Carnival Enterprises Trust Ltd (LNHCET), which organises Carnival, hopes that more stewarding will help the event become more self-sustainable. It made a successful bid to the GLA for increased funding for stewards as part of “a strategic plan to try to reduce, over time, the policing resource and costs”.<sup>49</sup> The GLA contributed a total of £340,000 this year for stewarding, an increase of £190,000 on the previous year. LNHCET estimates that the Met could save up to £430,000 as a result of the GLA’s additional investment into the Carnival stewarding plan. The Met has agreed that this is a realistic figure.<sup>50</sup>
- 2.27 It is important to be clear about what ‘less reliance on police support’ actually means. What increased stewarding aims to do is remove police officers from roles that can be carried out by a different organisation. This could help to reduce the number of officers needed to a small extent: it does not necessarily mean reducing the number of officers focused on tackling crime and disorder.
- 2.28 To achieve this, the role of the stewards may need to be further developed. It was notable in our discussions how limited the steward’s role is. Martin Jackson, Managing Director of McKenzie Arnold, told us that “in terms of what we do, very simply, when we see a vehicle, we pick up a rope and our team of stewards holds back the crowd as much as possible [...] That is the extent of our stewarding operation.”<sup>51</sup> We heard about the additional training being available for stewards to undertake different roles, but also heard suggestions that further work may be needed, such as “breaking up the stewarding contract and basing it on the nature of the stewarding operation to be performed at different locations.”<sup>52</sup>
- 2.29 **The driving philosophy around stewarding at Carnival is to reduce the reliance on the police. We welcome any steps that will release officers from tasks that can be carried out equally well by others. This will help the Met to refocus efforts on tackling crime and disorder, something that is increasingly important given the recent rise in serious and violent crime. But stewards at the moment have a limited role: to allow for safe passage of parade floats.**

- 2.30 The increase in stewarding, which is paid for by the GLA, will only save up to six per cent of the total policing budget for Carnival. If the pressure on policing, in terms of both numbers and cost, is to be reduced further, other and more significant changes to prevent and reduce crime may need to be considered.

# 3. Questions of change and ownership

## Key findings

- Each year following Carnival there is a debate about the need for change. There are entrenched and polarised views on change, which has meant that very few significant changes have been made over the years.
- There is acceptance that some change may be needed. But that can only happen on the basis of sound evidence and the buy-in of all the most important players.
- No change can be seriously considered or acted on without a strong organising body that can lead the discussion and planning. The London Notting Hill Carnival Enterprise Trust needs more support to help it meet the demands of today's Carnival.

**“I am open to any change that will improve the health and safety of people... If change has to come, change has to come. However, change has to come with proper dialogue and very good discussion and planning.”**

Pepe Francis, Chairman, London Notting Hill Carnival Enterprise Trust<sup>53</sup>

- 3.1 Each year following Carnival there is a debate about the need for change. Some suggest that it has outgrown the area it takes place in and changes to the format are needed to help keep Carnival safe. Others cite its cultural and social significance for the Caribbean community and stress the importance of it remaining a street-based event.<sup>54</sup> There are entrenched and polarised views on change, which has meant that very few, if any, significant changes have been made over the years.
- 3.2 One thing that there is agreement on is the need to “bring Carnival back to its roots”.<sup>55</sup> Residents of Notting Hill say, for example, that “it was a fun family event which was well attended by locals who all joined together to celebrate the best of a great culturally diverse area” but are concerned about how it is changing. It is felt that Carnival is increasingly seen as a free street festival rather than a cultural event. It has been suggested that raising awareness about the “history and social significance” of Carnival could go some way to addressing this.<sup>56</sup>

**“Artistic value to Carnival must be brought back. We are on the precipice of moving from a cultural event to a festival event. We want people to come and admire and want to understand the cultural carnival and how to be part of it. Education is very important in this event. It’s the greatest cultural event for London and we need to make sure it’s properly managed.”**

Lewis Benn, Company Secretary, London Notting Hill Carnival Enterprise Trust<sup>57</sup>

- 3.3 There is acceptance that some change may be needed. But that can only happen on the basis of sound evidence and the buy-in of all the most important players. LNH CET is open to discussion about changing aspects of Carnival to improve safety and reduce crime, but Commander Musker told us, “the way forward is in partnership and the way forward is evidence-based”.<sup>58</sup>

## Ownership of Carnival

- 3.4 None of the suggested changes can be seriously considered or acted on without a strong organising body that can lead the discussion and planning.
- 3.5 Carnival is organised by LNH CET. It coordinates the various aspects of Carnival including sponsorship, the parade floats and event media. It works alongside

its partners such as RBKC, Westminster Council, the Met, TfL and others.<sup>59</sup> In respect of safety and security, an Operational Planning and Safety Group (OPSG)—part of LNH CET—meets monthly. This group shares information on public safety arrangements between organisations. In practical terms the vast majority of resources for public safety come from the Met, Westminster City Council and RBKC.<sup>60</sup>

- 3.6 Unfortunately it is unclear where responsibility for the delivery of Carnival, or for its safety, sits. In relation to crime and safety, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Peter Terry told us that there is a “very big grey space because the OPSG is a group of people who come together but it is not a body corporate”,<sup>61</sup> meaning it is not a legal company.
- 3.7 Part of the reason for this is the lack of support and capacity that LNH CET has had to deliver. LNH CET is currently on its 13th organising committee, which aims to “keep the Carnival going and keep it as we knew it and try to improve it in every possible way so that it does not fail.”<sup>62</sup> It is however run by volunteers, with little funding or staffing resource.

**“We have all the challenges, but you must realise that Carnival is run by a Board of, say, five trustees and five Board members, who all have full time jobs and have other work to do. We do not have the capacity, which is what we are trying to build. We do not have the funding to bring in the right amount of staff that we need. We are relying on voluntary help at the moment.”**

Pepe Francis, Chairman, London Notting Hill Carnival Enterprise Trust<sup>63</sup>

- 3.8 This is not the first time that concerns have been raised about LNH CET’s capacity to deliver Carnival. The 2004 strategic review carried out by the GLA said that there was not the capability and capacity in the Trust to own the event. It has come a long way “from nothing to try to take over and manage an event which has in the past been far more chaotic than it is now”.<sup>64</sup> We congratulate Pepe Francis, Lewis Benn and the other volunteers who work so hard to make Carnival happen every year and they should be commended for the progress made to make LNH CET more professional in its operation. It admits, however, that it still struggles in terms of capacity and capability and it is time now to provide it with a greater level of support.
- 3.9 **To hear that Carnival is integral to the cultural tapestry of London, then to hear that those responsible for it are struggling with capacity and capability to deliver is troubling. This issue was raised as far back as 2004: it should have been dealt with before now. We commend the work of the Trust in improving its processes, but it needs more support to help it meet the demands of today’s Carnival.**



## Recommendation 1

The Mayor should now provide advice and guidance to the LNH CET to help put it on a more formal and financially sustainable footing. This will in turn improve its ability to deliver a safer and more secure Carnival. Advice and guidance could include, for example, helping it to capitalise on the commercial potential and the brand of Carnival.

## Recommendation 2

The Mayor should, in partnership with the LNH CET, lead a short task and finish strategic review of public safety at Carnival, building on the findings of MOPAC's crowd management review. We expect to see a strong evidence base for any decision to change, or not change, the different aspects of Carnival that can pose a risk to safety and preventing crime. The Mayor should also commit to work with and help LNH CET to lead any discussion and consultation on proposed changes.

# 4. Conclusion

## Key findings

- The Mayor and MOPAC are well placed to help get a grip on public safety at Carnival and should support Carnival organisers to do so.
- Serious consideration should be given to any changes, big or small, that will improve both safety and the overall Carnival experience.
- We will be looking to the Mayor, LNH CET and its partners to move the debate forward and for action to be taken to improve the safety and quality of Carnival for all involved.

- 4.1 For too long we have repeated the debate about what might need to change about Carnival, with little action taken. It is becoming more and more apparent that the status quo is not an option. The Mayor and MOPAC are well placed to help Carnival organisers get a grip on public safety at Carnival: there is proven success with enhancing public safety at events such as the New Year Fireworks.

**“The challenge for the Notting Hill Carnival and its future lies in the extent to which the views and sometimes competing interests of a diverse range of people, organisations and groups can be addressed and accommodated so as to achieve consensus on the solutions to issues that are by no means insurmountable if the will is there.”**

Lee Jasper, Chair of the 2004 Carnival Review Group<sup>65</sup>

- 4.2 We have heard of a number of possible changes to Carnival which could both help return it to its roots as a celebration of Caribbean culture and enhance public safety. Organisers need to give serious consideration to any changes, big or small, that will improve both safety and the overall Carnival experience. We want to see the Mayor and LNH CET consider all of them and report back on their preferred options by the end of May 2017, with an implementation plan setting out both short term and long term goals.
- 4.3 We will be looking to the Mayor, LNH CET and its partners to move the debate forward and for action to be taken to improve the safety and quality of Carnival for all involved.

# Appendix 1

The tables below summarise some of the suggestions that have been made about change at Carnival. It includes some of the comments from organisations and members of the public that we have heard from as part of this investigation.

Ticket the event	
Comments in favour	Comments against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Commissioner has said “a large number of people in a small area” gave the Met “great concern”, and that ticketing could provide it with “a layer of control”.<sup>66</sup></li> <li>• Ticketing has helped with safety at events such as the New Year fireworks. The GLA says that as a result of ticketing the number of 999 calls to the London Ambulance Service has fallen and the number of arrests by British Transport Police has fallen by 75 per cent.<sup>67</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Notting Hill Carnival is a street festival whose main performance stage is located within the public space of the boroughs of Kensington &amp; Chelsea and Westminster, hence ticketing to create a safer event and changing the days to cut back on policing costs are impractical suggestions.”<sup>68</sup></li> <li>• “Even if you could somehow cordon off the large Carnival boundary, ticketing would be a step towards making Carnival a commercial event, for which the Carnival Trust would have to pay full policing costs, and there seems no prospect of that possibility for the foreseeable future. Since this would effectively be the end of Carnival as we know it today and very probably finally divorce it from its roots of the Afro-Caribbean community’s reaction to the 1958 race riots, we believe this cannot be considered”<sup>69</sup></li> </ul>

Move some or all of Carnival elsewhere (suggestions included moving the sound systems, or ending the parade at an open space)	
Comments in favour	Comments against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“In Rio, when the Carnival grew into one of the biggest events in the world, its biggest parade, the Samba parade, was moved from the streets in downtown Rio to a purpose-built ‘Sambodromo’”.<sup>70</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RBKC said that it believed there would always be an element of celebration within Notting Hill, so a move of Carnival is unlikely to be viable.<sup>71</sup></li> <li>Residents at the Carnival debrief meeting in November 2016 said that problems should not just be “pushed down the road”.<sup>72</sup></li> <li>In respect of the sound systems, the British Association of Sound Systems says that sound systems “are very well organised, experienced and form an essential element of partnership with government agencies to ensure the safe and successful delivery of the Carnival event [...] Sound systems provide a crucial tool for public address assisting with crowd control, public information, emergency services, lost property and more importantly public safety at Carnival as a whole.”<sup>73</sup></li> </ul>

Change the route of the Carnival parade	
Comments in favour	Comments against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Without a fundamental route change to reduce crowd density and enhance the cultural spectacle, we do not believe that the Notting Hill Carnival can fulfil its economic and social potential as a ‘World Carnival’.”<sup>74</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The issue is not with the Carnival parade / masqueraders, but with the Sound Systems on the street corners and alleys [...] By holding up the flow of the Carnival bands you are forcing spectators / the public to move around the Carnival route to see the bands</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Many Carnivals have a parade that passes through or ends in a park or stadium that can be secured, where seating can be provided, where Carnival bands can cross a stage and be televised and where a charge can be made for entry etc. Consideration should be given to allowing the parade to pass such a facility and to site the judging point at such a location if possible”<sup>75</sup></li> </ul>	<p>instead of allowing the public to line the streets to watch the parade. Because there are such long gaps in between the bands, the spectators / public become impatient, get frustrated and start walking up or down the route to see what band they have missed.”<sup>76</sup></p>
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Hold Carnival only on Saturday and Sunday	
Comments in favour	Comments against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “This would significantly reduce the policing and security costs.”<sup>77</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Saturday is the key day of the week for the Portobello Market. To not have it functioning on the Saturday would be very controversial, very difficult and unnecessary. Sunday and Monday is fine, but it does need to finish at a reasonable time on Monday so that we can do all the things that have to be done in good time.”<sup>78</sup></li> </ul>

# Our approach

The Police and Crime Committee agreed the following terms of reference for this investigation:

- To reflect on recent Carnival events, including levels and types of crime and how it has changed; and identification of key risk issues and areas
- To consider the future of policing and security at Carnival, including improvements can be made to security arrangements; and what more can the Mayor do to support the agencies responsible for keeping Carnival safe

At its public evidence sessions, the Committee took oral evidence from the following guests:

- Chief Superintendent Jane Connors, Metropolitan Police Service
- Commander Dave Musker, Metropolitan Police Service
- Councillor Nicholas Paget-Brown, Leader, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
- Councillor Timothy Coleridge, Cabinet Member for Planning Policy, Transport and the Arts, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
- Dave Morgan, Operational Advisor for Notting Hill Carnival
- Deputy Assistant Commissioner Peter Terry, Metropolitan Police Service
- Martin Jackson, Managing Director, McKenzie Arnold Security
- Pepe Francis MBE, Interim Chairperson, London Notting Hill Carnival Enterprises Trust Ltd
- Robin Merrett, Head of Operational Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)

During the investigation, the Committee also received written submissions from the following organisations and individuals:

- Andrew Dismore AM
- British Association of Sound Systems (BASS)
- British Transport Police (BTP)
- London Campaign Against Police and State Violence

- Carnival Working Group, Steering Committee, Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum
- Chris Boothman, former Director of London Notting Hill Carnival Ltd
- Community Monitoring Project West London
- Council Members for Bayswater Ward
- Councillor Adam Hug
- Councillor Pat Mason
- Metropolitan Police
- Metropolitan Police Federation
- National Union of Students' Black Students' Campaign
- Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Labour Opposition Group of Councillors
- StopWatch and Release (joint submission)
- Westminster City Council
- Members of the public

Some members of the Committee visited Carnival on 29 August 2016 to observe the policing operation.

# References

- <sup>1</sup> Commander Dave Musker, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016
- <sup>2</sup> Councillor Nicholas Paget-Brown, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 7 November 2016
- <sup>3</sup> London Notting Hill Carnival Enterprise Trust website, [‘What’s on’](#)
- <sup>4</sup> Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Public realm scrutiny committee, [Notting Hill Carnival 2016](#), 14 November 2016
- <sup>5</sup> Written evidence from British Transport Police
- <sup>6</sup> Metropolitan Police, [Operation Vitality targets criminals ahead of Carnival](#), 24 August 2016
- <sup>7</sup> Metropolitan Police, [Statement from police commander for Notting Hill Carnival 2016](#), 30 August 2016
- <sup>8</sup> Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, [Notting Hill Carnival 2016 residents information](#)
- <sup>9</sup> The current threat level for international terrorism in the UK is ‘Severe’. It has been set at this level since August 2014.
- <sup>10</sup> Commander Dave Musker, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016
- <sup>11</sup> Martin Jackson, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016. A performance unit can be made up of four to six vehicles and 200-300 dancers
- <sup>12</sup> Commander Dave Musker, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016
- <sup>13</sup> Meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016
- <sup>14</sup> Metropolitan Police, [Statement from police commander for Notting Hill Carnival 2016](#), 30 August 2016; Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Public realm scrutiny committee, [Notting Hill Carnival 2016](#), 14 November 2016
- <sup>15</sup> See written submissions from members of the public
- <sup>16</sup> Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Public realm scrutiny committee, [Notting Hill Carnival 2015](#), 25 November 2015. It should be noted that this is not the perception of many members of the public, who suggest that there is

a disproportionate number of stops, searches and arrests of people suspected of low-priority crimes, such as cannabis possession.

<sup>17</sup> Metropolitan Police data, Notting Hill Carnival (CA flagged) Notifiable Offences

<sup>18</sup> See Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Public realm scrutiny committee, [Notting Hill Carnival 2015](#), 25 November 2015; and Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Public realm scrutiny committee, [Notting Hill Carnival 2016](#), November 2016

<sup>19</sup> Metropolitan Police, [Freedom of information request, count of crimes figures report for Notting Hill Carnival years 2012-2015](#), November 2015

<sup>20</sup> Metropolitan Police, [Statement from police commander for Notting Hill Carnival 2016](#), 30 August 2016

<sup>21</sup> Metropolitan Police data, Notting Hill Carnival (CA flagged) Notifiable Offences

<sup>22</sup> Commander Dave Musker, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016

<sup>23</sup> Dave Morgan, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016

<sup>24</sup> London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, Serious youth violence, September 2016

<sup>25</sup> Meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016

<sup>26</sup> Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Public realm scrutiny committee, [Notting Hill Carnival 2016](#), November 2016

<sup>27</sup> Meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 7 November 2016

<sup>28</sup> Commander Dave Musker, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016

<sup>29</sup> Written submission by Chris Boothman

<sup>30</sup> Written submission by Chris Boothman

<sup>31</sup> Commander Dave Musker, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016

<sup>32</sup> Commander Dave Musker, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016. It should be noted that there is some debate as to how that situation arose: see written submission from Councillor Pat Mason

<sup>33</sup> Written submission by Chris Boothman

<sup>34</sup> Commander Dave Musker, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016

- <sup>35</sup> See for example, Chris Boothman, or response 23 from member of the public
- <sup>36</sup> Written submission from Councillor Pat Mason
- <sup>37</sup> [Notting Hill Carnival App](#)
- <sup>38</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/city-hall-blog/notting-hill-carnival-crowd-dynamics-study>
- <sup>39</sup> DMPC Decision – [PCD 104](#), 12 December 2016
- <sup>40</sup> Robin Merrett, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 7 November 2016
- <sup>41</sup> Meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 7 November 2016
- <sup>42</sup> The 2004 strategic review notes that in 2003 over 10,000 officers were deployed at Carnival. In 2016 this number was around 12,000 over the weekend. See Greater London Authority, Notting Hill Carnival: A strategic review, June 2004
- <sup>43</sup> Martin Jackson, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016
- <sup>44</sup> Much of this cost is in overtime payments, given the need for police on the Bank Holiday Monday. See Mayor's Question Time, [Question 2016/2502](#), 20 July 2016
- <sup>45</sup> Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Public realm scrutiny committee, [Notting Hill Carnival 2016](#), 14 November 2016
- <sup>46</sup> Meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016
- <sup>47</sup> Written submission from Westminster City Council
- <sup>48</sup> Meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016
- <sup>49</sup> Mayoral decision, [MD2017](#), Notting Hill Carnival 2016, August 2016
- <sup>50</sup> Comments by Dave Morgan, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016
- <sup>51</sup> Meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016
- <sup>52</sup> Written submission from Chris Boothman
- <sup>53</sup> Meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 7 November 2016
- <sup>54</sup> Pepe Francis, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 7 November 2016
- <sup>55</sup> Lewis Benn, Residents meeting on Notting Hill Carnival, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, 26 October 2016
- <sup>56</sup> Written submission from member of the public (1)

- <sup>57</sup> Residents meeting on Notting Hill Carnival, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, 26 October 2016
- <sup>58</sup> Commander Dave Musker, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016
- <sup>59</sup> City of Westminster Council and RBKC, '[Notting Hill Carnival 2016: Residents' Information](#)', pg. 4.
- <sup>60</sup> Greater London Authority, Notting Hill Carnival: A strategic review, June 2004
- <sup>61</sup> Meeting of the police and crime committee, 7 November 2016
- <sup>62</sup> Pepe Francis, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016
- <sup>63</sup> Meeting of the police and crime committee, 7 November 2016
- <sup>64</sup> Dave Morgan, meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 3 November 2016
- <sup>65</sup> Greater London Authority, Notting Hill Carnival: A strategic review, June 2004
- <sup>66</sup> Get West London, [Kensington MP says Notting Hill Carnival 'bumbling' must end, and calls for major review](#), 12 October 2016
- <sup>67</sup> Greater London Authority, [New Year's Eve Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- <sup>68</sup> Evening Standard, [Notting Hill Carnival bosses reject plan to make people pay for tickets](#), 24 December 2015
- <sup>69</sup> Written submission from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Labour Opposition Group
- <sup>70</sup> Written submission from Westbourne Neighbourhood Association (WNA)/ Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum (NHENF)
- <sup>71</sup> Residents meeting on Notting Hill Carnival, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, 26 October 2016
- <sup>72</sup> Residents meeting on Notting Hill Carnival, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, 26 October 2016
- <sup>73</sup> Written submission from the British Association of Sound Systems
- <sup>74</sup> Greater London Authority, Notting Hill Carnival: A strategic review, June 2004
- <sup>75</sup> Written submission from Chris Boothman
- <sup>76</sup> Written submission from member of the public (13)
- <sup>77</sup> Written submission from British transport Police
- <sup>78</sup> Meeting of the Police and Crime Committee, 7 November 2016



# Other formats and languages

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