

## Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission: Hackney Carnival

Report by Lucy McMenemy, Cultural Development Manager, 8 January 2020.

### Item 5 - Benefits of the Hackney Carnival

#### 2.1. A Social and Economic Impact Assessment

The council commissioned a partnership of Social Life, Hatch Regeneris and Kaizan Partnership consultants to produce a Social and Economic Impact Assessment of the Hackney Carnival during 2019. The aim of the research was to provide the council with a better understanding of the benefits, opportunities and challenges that the carnival brings to the borough, and to provide meaningful and significant qualitative and quantitative evidence which can help inform decision making and future plans for the future.

##### 2.1.1 Methodology

Primary research comprised the following:

- Face to face and online survey of 551 carnival attendees
- Face to face survey plus focus groups with 53 local businesses
- A survey (both face-to-face and by telephone) of 22 Carnival traders
- 16 in depth discussions with stakeholders including venue partners, carnival performers, and participating organisations

Secondary research involved reviewing the following data:

- Review of Hackney Council's relevant strategies
- Data audit of Census data, crime statistics and ONS datasets (providing business and employment intelligence)
- A review of Hackney Carnival's social and print media presence
- An analysis of Hackney Council's Carnival budget
- Analysis of approx 40 emails Hackney Council received at [carnival@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:carnival@hackney.gov.uk) and inclusion of the council's report of phone calls received on the day

#### 2.2 Key findings: who benefits from the Hackney Carnival?

##### 2.2.1 Key statistics

- 59% of attendees are Hackney residents
- 90% of attendees are from London
- 9% are from the rest of the UK
- 1% are from outside the UK

2.2.2 Hackney Carnival is an established tradition for many Hackney residents, and its reach has been growing in recent years, attracting visitors from across London and internationally. Over half of the Carnival attendees interviewed were Hackney residents, the other 41% were

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visitors to the borough. Half of survey participants came with friends and a third with their family, including 12% with children under 12 years old.

The majority of visitors travelled from neighbouring boroughs, including Newham (36%), Haringey (13%), and Tower Hamlets (11%). In total visitors came from 22 London boroughs.

Nearly half of attendees noted this was their first time coming to HackneyCarnival. 20% come every year or have been at least a couple of times (31%). Of those who had participated in Hackney Carnival before, two thirds started coming after 2010. The other third of attendees were long-term participants, with a few remembering taking part in the 1970s and 80s.

Hackney Carnival attracts a diverse crowd, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religious background, and sexual orientation. Researchers aimed to reach a broadly representative section of attendees on the day, however this was difficult as there was no benchmark from previous events. The profile of all attendees surveyed is below:

- Gender: 59% female; 41% male; 0.4% transgender
- Disability: 9% described themselves as having a disability; the majority (88%) had no disability; 3% preferred not to say
- Religion: 53% atheist or no religious belief; 32% Christian; 5% Muslim; 2% Buddhist; 1% Jewish; 1% secular beliefs; 5% described themselves as having an 'other' religion
- Age: 4% under 18 years old; 44% aged 18-34; 40% aged 35-54; 11% over 55 years old
- Sexual orientation: 89% heterosexual; 5% bisexual; 5% gay or lesbian; 1% other.

2.2.3 Demographic information of resident attendees has been compared with existing secondary data to explore whether residents attending Hackney Carnival reflect the demographics of the borough. This analysis suggests that while Hackney Carnival attracts people of all ages, abilities, ethnicities, sexualities and backgrounds, there are lower participation rates among certain Hackney Communities.

2.2.4 A small number of attendees feel the event excludes certain cultural groups. When asked why, comments included that Hackney Carnival “does not capture the breadth of culture in the borough”. Another attendee noted, “There are other communities who don't understand why we celebrate carnival and would like to”.

A few carnival groups and stakeholders also felt that Hackney Carnival could achieve greater cultural diversity and become more inclusive of Hackney's local communities. Some stakeholders expressed the desire to make the event more inclusive of underrepresented groups who make up a significant portion of Hackney's population, for example the Turkish, Kurdish and Orthodox Jewish communities, which do not currently have a visible platform at Hackney Carnival.

### 2.3 Key findings: what draws people to the Hackney Carnival?

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2.3.1 The procession and costumes were identified as the main draw for participants, with 64% of attendees saying they came to 'watch the procession'. Nearly half of attendees noted they came for the sound systems (49%) and live music stages (55%). 35% came for the food stalls. The majority of families with children came to enjoy the dedicated children's areas, which offered events and activities for children of all ages.

2.3.2 Over half of attendees heard about Hackney Carnival through word of mouth. Other attendees learned about Carnival through posters and flyers (14%) and social media (13%). A smaller number of people heard about this year's event through Hackney Today (3%), local organisations and community groups (6%), and some from simply passing by and being drawn in by the festivities (5%).

2.3.3 Most visitors (87%) said they were only in Hackney on 8th September 2019 because of Hackney Carnival. 69% said as a result of visiting Hackney Carnival they would be more likely to visit Hackney in the future.

### **2.4 Key findings: Social Impacts of the Hackney Carnival**

#### **2.4.1 Community reputation and pride in place**

- 88% of residents surveyed said Hackney Carnival makes them feel proud of Hackney.
- 84% of attendees said Carnival is what makes Hackney a special place
- 89% of attendees said Carnival improves Hackney's reputation
- 69% of residents who attended also said Hackney Carnival makes it more likely that they will remain a resident of Hackney for a number of years.

Overall, the majority of attendees and stakeholders noted that Hackney Carnival is a celebration of all that is Hackney and everyone that makes up the identity of Hackney. Attendees (particularly residents), performers and participating organisations take great pride in being involved in Hackney Carnival and they value the Carnival as a growing cultural event for Hackney.

A small number of attendees and stakeholders did note, however, that moving away from Ridley Road Market signalled a move away from those who are "at the heart of Carnival." There were also concerns that the borough's increasing popularity, which is boosted by events like Hackney Carnival, could fuel more social and economic changes, pushing out those on lower incomes.

#### **2.4.2 Cultural diversity and intercultural understanding**

- 93% of attendees believe that Hackney Carnival celebrates the cultural diversity of Hackney.
- 79% attendees believe that Carnival increases understanding of other cultures

The research shows that Hackney Carnival presents an exciting and colourful platform to celebrate the cultural diversity of the borough. It also succeeds in increasing cultural understanding amongst participants and attendees and supports community life by offering a much-loved tradition for all those involved.

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While opportunities are available for members of different communities to engage, some groups are still underrepresented, for example the Turkish, Kurdish and Orthodox Jewish communities.

There are also some tensions in the two aims of maintaining Hackney Carnival as a primarily African-Caribbean event and making it a culturally representative celebration for the borough.

### 2.4.3 Social integration

- 95% of attendees believe that Carnival is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together
- 90% of residents said Hackney Carnival makes them feel more comfortable with people from different backgrounds living in their local area.
- 92% of attendees believe that Carnival brings the whole community together
- 75% of residents who attended believe that Carnival increased their levels of belonging
- 66% of attendees interviewed said they spent time with people who are different from their usual social network at Hackney Carnival
- 63% said that they talked with people from different backgrounds to themselves (not including the people they came with) while at Hackney Carnival.

Hackney Carnival encourages social integration and presents opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to come together around a common vision. The Carnival helps build positive relationships and interactions amongst Hackney residents, which in turn encourage a greater sense of unity within the borough.

### 2.4.5 Safety, inclusivity and accessibility

- 95% of attendees felt that Hackney Carnival is accessible to them, their family and friends
- Organisations and community groups representing children, older people, people living with disabilities, BAME, LBGTQI+ and other equalities groups said Hackney Carnival was inclusive and, for the most part, the Council had accommodated their needs appropriately during the event.
- 71% of attendees felt 'very safe' while attending Hackney Carnival, and 24% 'fairly safe'. Only 4% felt 'a bit unsafe' or 'very unsafe'.

Hackney Carnival provides a safe and inclusive event, which is accessible to people from all backgrounds and abilities. Many attendees indicated that it was important that the carnival stay "free". Affordability is a cornerstone of Hackney Carnival and contributes to the community feel, accessibility and inclusivity of the day overall.

A number of businesses employed their own security on the day, as precaution, but the majority of businesses did not experience any crime. Some attendees reported conflicting opinions on the heightened police and security presence in the area; with some feeling safer and others feeling less safe.

### 2.4.6 Health, wellbeing and quality of life



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Hackney Young Futures Commission, a youth-led initiative independent of Hackney Council but organised and funded by the council, has been undertaking research with young people between the ages of 10 to 25 about their lived experience of Hackney. One of the open-ended questions they are asking young people is, “what is your favourite thing or place in Hackney and why?” In response to this, a number of young people specifically listed Hackney Carnival. Their reasons varied from its cultural diversity and inclusivity to its fun and non-judgmental atmosphere that brings everyone together.

*“Hackney Carnival, it shows we can all be as one and enjoy ourselves.”*

*“I like carnival and stuff like that because you’re with your friends dancing. It’s fun.”*

*“Carnival!!!! A break from the negatives of being young in a grown up environment.”*

### 2.7 Key Findings: Economic impact

Hackney Carnival has delivered a diverse range of economic benefits to the local economy and the wider London economy. Surveys of attendees, traders and local businesses helped understand the level of spend that occurred on the day, with a focus on whether this expenditure was ‘additional’ and directly linked to the event.

#### 2.7.1 Direct Monetary Benefits

- Visitor spend

It is estimated that visitors to the Carnival spent over £1.07m with Carnival traders (stalls) and local town centre businesses.

Around 88% of spend by those attending the Carnival was on food and drink, meaning that these businesses were the most likely to benefit from the Carnival. Three-quarters of town centre businesses offering food and drink reported an increase in turnover. Of non-food related businesses, only 30% reported an increase in turnover. Turnover varied considerably from trader to trader, with reported incomes ranging from £200 to £4,000, with an average of £1,060 per trader.

- Supply chain

Supply chain impacts came from a range of different sources. Hackney Council spent £558,400 (at the time of the Hatch Regeneris report being written) in delivering Hackney Carnival across a range of services. Nearly a third of the spend was within Hackney. Visitor spend with Carnival traders and town centre businesses will also have resulted in supply chain benefits locally and across London.

80% of supplies for Hackney-based traders originated from Hackney. Having local traders

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present at the Carnival helps to increase the economic impact of the Carnival locally.

As a result of increases in visitor spend and supply chain activity, there is a strong economic benefit for the area, even considering some of the negative impacts on local businesses. In total, the Carnival generated an additional £3.24m of gross value added (GVA), with £934,000 of this within Hackney and £2.36m of indirect (supply chain) and induced impact.

This represents a return on investment of £5.80 GVA created for every £1 of the council's investment and £1.70 GVA created in Hackney for every £1 of the council's investment.

### **2.7.2 Wider Benefits**

In addition to these monetary benefits, the Carnival generated a wide range of socio-economic benefits for the borough:

**Local Employment:** The Carnival generated a range of employment opportunities for local people. From an operational perspective, it is estimated that 823 people were involved in the delivery of the Carnival on the day itself (though most are probably not new employees). Many local businesses and traders also took on additional staff for the Carnival to meet increased demand; this is estimated at nearly 200 additional jobs supported on the day (although in some cases this may have been family supporting rather than new staff). The stalls at the Carnival provided a significant source of employment, these opportunities were accessed by a diverse range of people with just over half of the additional employees from Hackney and three quarters from BAME backgrounds.

**Skills and Training:** The Carnival provided an opportunity for local people to participate in the economy and develop skills which can enable them to access employment opportunities in the future. These 'softer' skills, such as communication and leadership, and increased self confidence were most notable amongst carnival groups and their members.

**Business Investment:** Businesses were largely positive about the wider benefit of the Carnival from a broader reputation perspective. Two thirds of businesses surveyed felt that the Carnival will lead to a longer-term benefit for their business, helping to attract new people to the borough and to elevate the profile of Hackney Central as a diverse and vibrant town centre.

### **2.7.3 Economic impact on carnival groups**

Apart from the small grants available from the council for Hackney's carnival groups (the average of which is under £1000), groups and performers have to self fund which has the potential to limit Hackney Carnival's accessibility to certain performers and dampen some of the longer-term positive impacts.

## **2.8 Summary of impact**

The outcomes of the carnival broadly align with Hackney Council's Inclusive Economy Strategy (2019-2025), which recognises that all in the community will benefit from a fairer, more inclusive local economy. The strategy outlines the desires for greater economic opportunities, fairer access, skills and training and making it easier for anyone, whatever their

background, to fulfil their potential.

The council recognises that at a time when the borough is experiencing rapid social and economic change, community events like Hackney Carnival can play a pivotal role in supporting Hackney's communities to be stronger, healthier and more cohesive.

The carnival is constantly developing and whilst it already has a positive impact upon Hackney's communities there is room for greater inclusion, stronger learning outcomes and better opportunities for Hackney's businesses, as outlined in the recommendations below.

### 2.9 Recommendations

#### 2.9.1: Making Hackney Carnival more inclusive and diverse

- **Increase community outreach**, to actively target and engage groups currently underrepresented, particularly the Turkish, Kurdish, Orthodox Jewish, and Asian communities, and to understand whether barriers to their participation can be overcome.
- **Develop a communications strategy** that showcases the Carnival's diverse carnival groups and audience members, to support outreach to groups who are currently less involved.
- **Develop an "access" strategy**, which could include hiring an "access" manager and stewards, offering ear defenders, providing wheelchair access areas, and more signage and wayfinding to improve the legibility of the event to ensure people of all abilities can attend and participate.

#### 2.9.2 Strengthening educational, learning and employment outcomes

- **Increase young people's engagement, for example offering work experience** opportunities in traffic management, carnival set-up or information kiosks, and proactively encourage local traders to employ local young people.
- **Develop a Carnival Skills Strategy**, which ensures employment opportunities are inclusive and equally accessible to all residents. This could include a programme of more formal opportunities for residents to find employment and build skills in the lead up to the Carnival with pathways for sustained employment in Hackney's creative industries.

#### 2.9.3 Increasing the economic impact and leveraging private investment / public sponsorship

- **Encourage local procurement of Hackney-based businesses to supply and work at the Carnival** by offering stalls at lower cost to Hackney residents and setting targets such as 75% local traders and 50% Hackney suppliers.
- **Create a Hackney Carnival panel**, which would have elected community representatives, or a group of Hackney Carnival advocates to **run regular fundraising events and help build public and private support for the council.**



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The full report on the Social and Economic Impact of the Hackney Carnival in 2019 is appended.