

London Borough of Hackney  
Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission  
Municipal Year 2016/17  
Monday, 20th January, 2020

Minutes of the proceedings of  
the Living in Hackney Scrutiny  
Commission held at  
Hackney Town Hall, Mare  
Street, London E8 1EA

**Chair:** Councillor Sharon Patrick



**Councillors in Attendance:** Cllr Sade Etti (Vice-Chair), Cllr Anthony McMahon, Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Ian Rathbone, Cllr Penny Wrout and Cllr Anna Lynch

**Apologies:**

**Officers In Attendance:** Polly Cziok (Director Communications, Culture and Engagement), Lucy McMenemy (Cultural Programme Officer), Tim Shields (Chief Executive) and Leanne Douglas (Service Development Manager (Events))

**Other People in Attendance:** Marva Antoine, Marvia Barrett, Lucia François, Leila Jones (Senior Relationship Manager (London, Combined Arts), Arts Council England), Marie Kerrigan (Children's Centre Manager, Morningside Children's Centre and School), Sindy Man, Rosana Müller, Councillor Guy Nicholson (Cabinet Member for Planning, Culture and Inclusive Economy) and Pax Nindi (Chief Executive Global Carnivalz Ltd and Artistic Director, Hackney Carnival)

**Members of the Public:**

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## Councillor Sharon Patrick in the Chair

### 1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 No apologies for absence.

### 2 Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 The meeting started with two children from Morningside Children's Centre and School – supported by Marie Kerrigan (Children's Centre Manager) – talking to their Commission about their experiences of the 2019 Hackney Carnival.

2.2 They made the following points:

- It was the first time the school and children's centre had been involved
- The carnival had had a very friendly atmosphere, and other community groups had been very welcoming.
- Participating as a children's centre and school had enabled children to do something they had never done before - either in this carnival or others.
- Taru Arts had supported the school's involvement by holding two workshops to help prepare the children. This had been invaluable - children had been able to learn and work with a number of experienced and high quality artist and musicians. The school sought to have a strong creative offer, but there were always limits to the specialist provision available. Children had thrived on the external support.
- Both children and parents had been really engaged with the carnival. This was evidenced through the numbers of children attending - 90 - from early on a Sunday morning. It was despite the event coming only one week into the start of the new school year.
- Those involved with the carnival had delivered their procession performance to the rest of the school the day after, which had stoked the interest of other children.
- One of the children liked how the costumes they used on the day had been made from recycled materials. The Children's Centre Manager added that teaching children about the need for sustainable approaches through the practical and fun activity of costume design, had been very effective.
- The children had been pleased with the certificates they received.
- Participating in the carnival and also the awards evening following it had enabled the school to build links with a number of community organisations. This included St Joseph's Hospice, with pupils having visited there in December to sing carols.

2.3. The Chair thanked the children and their parents for having presented to the Commission.

2.4 Moving onto the order of business for the meeting, she noted that item 4 considered the logistical aspects of managing the carnival. The running order would have then seen item 5 explore the benefits of carnivals and the experiences of those involved with Hackney Carnival, before item 6 looked separately at how the benefits of the Hackney Carnival could be fully maximised.

2.5 Papers had been provided by Officers for items 4 and 5 and were available in the agenda packs.

2.6 The Chair advised that following discussions with Officers she had agreed to change the order and running of the items. For the logistical review item (4), the paper would be noted.

- 2.7 Officers would then deliver two presentations - one for item 5 and the other for item 6. Following these presentations, there would then be a single discussion involving all guests, covering items 4 to 6.

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

### **4 2019 Hackney Carnival - logistical review**

- 4.1 The paper for this item was noted. Questions on this item would be delivered as part of the discussion in item 6.

### **5 Benefits of carnivals and experiences of Hackney Carnival**

- 5.1 Guests in attendance for this item were:

- Cllr Guy Nicholson, Cabinet Member, Planning, Culture and Inclusive Economy
- Tim Shields, Chief Executive
- Polly Cziok, Director, Communications, Culture and Engagement
- Lucy McMenemy, Cultural Development Manager
- Leanne Douglas, Service Development Manager (Events)

- 5.2 Before Officers delivered a presentation, the Cabinet Member for Planning, Culture and Inclusive Economy made the following substantive points:

- He wished to thank guests who had already fed into the meeting. They had helped illustrate the many successes of Hackney Carnival, despite there also being clear challenges.
- It was important to note that the challenges had emerged due to these successes, and to the huge growth in interest and engagement with the carnival.
- There had been a journey in terms of carnivals in Hackney; in the early 2000s two separate carnivals had been held on two separate weekends in September. This had been in reflection of fractious relationships within the sector.
- The major catalyst for Hackney Carnival as it now existed had been the 2012 Olympics, and thought given by the Council and its partners towards how they could contribute to the Cultural Olympiad. These discussions had led to creation of Hackney Carnival in 2012, which had successfully brought together the sector and the artists and performers within it. This helped lead to a professionalisation of a single main carnival in the borough, which was now drawing attendee numbers of close to 100,000 people, with no sign of interest retracting.
- The great success of the Carnival was in enabling a high numbers of people from a very wide range of people to want to be involved in a single event; be this as a performer, a designer, an observer or other. However, this also gave rise to a real challenge for the Council and its partners in ensuring that such a

large scale, open access event was delivered safely and successfully. This did include challenges around funding what was a very large operation.

- He welcomed a role for scrutiny in reflecting on the information which would be provided in the meeting – very much including the input of the community groups present. He hoped that through this the Commission would be able to contribute to the future approaches to Hackney Carnival. A key challenge was around maintaining the very special essence of the Hackney Carnival as a truly family event, where people of all ages felt welcome and safe.
- 5.4 The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Planning, Culture and Inclusive Economy. She invited the Director, Communications, Culture and Engagement to deliver her presentation.
- 5.5 The Director, Communications, Culture and Engagement advised that the Council's previous Group Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing had played a key leadership role in the management and delivery of the 2019 Hackney Carnival.
- 5.6 As part of this, she had asked for a social and economic assessment of the carnival to be commissioned. In a context where the carnival brought significant and increasing costs to the Council as the key funder and organiser, the assessment was aimed at gaining a fuller understanding of the return on this investment, and of the opportunities and challenges around its delivery. It was intended that this would help inform decisions around the future approaches to the Carnival.
- 5.7 The evidence used to inform the findings had been wide ranging – including substantial numbers of interviews, surveys, in depth discussions and focus groups with attendees, local businesses, carnival traders and stakeholders (including carnival performers and participating community groups). This was alongside a range of secondary research.
- 5.8 The findings had shown the social impacts of the carnival to be clear and substantial. They were reported across 5 areas as per below.
- On Community reputation and pride in place, 88% of residents surveyed said Hackney Carnival made them feel proud of Hackney
  - On Cultural diversity and intercultural understanding, 93% of attendees believed that Hackney Carnival celebrated the cultural diversity of Hackney.
  - Regarding Social integration, 90% of residents said Hackney Carnival made them feel more comfortable with people from different backgrounds living in their local area.
  - On Safety, inclusivity and accessibility, 71% of attendees felt 'very safe' while attending Hackney Carnival, and 24% 'fairly safe'. Only 4% felt 'a bit unsafe' or 'very unsafe'.
  - Organisations and community groups representing children, older people, people living with disabilities, BAME, LBGTQI+ and other equalities groups said Hackney Carnival was inclusive. That people felt

safe at the event - and that such a wide range of community groups felt welcome - really highlighted the inclusive approach the carnival had achieved.

- On Health, wellbeing and quality of life, 90% of attendees said that Hackney Carnival allowed them to spend quality time with their friends and family. Five per cent of attendees noted that by participating in Hackney Carnival they were able to improve their self-confidence, and nearly a quarter of attendees said that engaging with Hackney Carnival enabled them to form new friendships.

- 5.9 She was the Officer lead for Hackney's Young Futures Commission, which had been established to better connect children and young people with decision making in the borough. Feedback received in the Commission's engagement had shown the importance and benefits of Hackney Carnival to this group.
- 5.10 It was also important to also note the less positive comments received in the feedback, in regards to the extent of social benefits.
- 5.11 Some felt that the increasing popularity of the Carnival and its reputational impact on the area could further drive gentrification and the pushing out of people from the borough.
- 5.11 Others, whilst noting the Carnival's celebration of the borough's cultural diversity, felt that it tended to involve those with the loudest voices within the communities. The extent to which it was involving those who were disengaged from cultural activities (and those who may be isolated generally), was limited. There were specific challenges around the representation and engagement with Orthodox Jewish community.
- 5.12 Some felt that accessibility could be improved for residents with disabilities, including through providing parking permits. It was also important to note that an event of this scale would always bring unavoidable disruption; some had voiced concern that the parking suspensions and road closures in place had left them unable to leave their homes.
- 5.13 Moving onto the economic impact of the Carnival, the findings had shown the benefits to have been notable, but modest in relation to the financial investment involved. The Council itself had spent more than £558,000 on delivering the 2019 Hackney Carnival. Around third of this was spent in Hackney, with the rest being spent elsewhere.
- 5.14 80% of supplies to those trading at the Carnival originated in Hackney. This and the presence of local traders did help increase the economic impact of the Carnival.
- 5.15 It was estimated that visitors to the Carnival spent a total of just over £1 million, 88% of which was on food and drink. It was businesses in the town centre selling these items (both carnival stall traders and local businesses in the town centre) which were most likely to benefit from the Carnival.

- 5.16 Non food and drink-based businesses in the area had seen either no impact or (more likely) a negative economic impact carnival with people less likely to visit these on the day of the event.
- 5.17 With the 2019 carnival having been the first one to have been more concentrated in Town Centre, there was learning in regards to trading aspects. Some traders had felt that they would have benefitted more if all traders had been based in a single area rather than having been placed at various points. There were questions around whether the Council had got the numbers and profiles of traders right. Reflection would be given to these points.
- 5.18 There were expenses for those participating in the Carnival. The Council's small grants programme did provide some support, but aside from this performers and groups were required to self-fund their activities. This could impact on accessibility to participation. She suggested that the carnival and community groups in attendance might be asked questions around these barriers.
- 5.19 The assessment had sought to quantify the economic impact of Hackney Carnival. Gross Value Added (GVA) was an economic productivity measure used to determine the total contribution of something to an economy, producer, sector or region. The analysis had shown the Carnival to have created £3.24 million of GVA. This was split between direct impact in Hackney, impact within supply chains, and induced impact. Given the cost of delivery, this meant that £5.80 GVS was created for every £1 of the Council's investment. The analysis showed a return on investment created in Hackney of £1.70 for each £1 of the Council's spend.
- 5.19 The report made a number of recommendations, across a range of themes:
- One of the themes was focused on further **Developing Hackney Carnival's image and reputation**. One of the recommendations in this was to carry out community consultation with residents, businesses, carnival groups and community organisations to develop a "vision" for Hackney Carnival to generate greater community ownership. The service did already do significant engagement around the Carnival but would revisit this in light of the recommendation.
  - Another recommendation in this theme was to carry out an assessment of media portrayals of Hackney Carnival and to gain an understanding of the impact. This included considering the parallels being drawn with Notting Hill Carnival to understand if these were benefiting or harming Hackney Carnival's reputation. It was important to note that messaging around Hackney Carnival being the 'Notting Hill of the East' did not come from the Council, but from the wider London press. Her area worked to communicate the message that Hackney Carnival was a local, family event, rather than a large scale general party event for London. She did not feel that the wider publicity of the Hackney Carnival was damaging its reputation. However, it did bring a risk of the ethos of the Carnival changing. The ability to prevent this messaging was limited.
- 5.20 A Member agreed with this point. She did worry that as Hackney Carnival was becoming increasingly thought of – on a London level - as one of the parties and events of the season, that it could lose its local and family focus. The same

issue had occurred with a festival in Tower Hamlets, where greater shares of attendees were coming from outside of the borough. She appreciated the challenges around managing events with these types of profiles - including associated issues around anti-social behaviour. There was a need to continually review the benefits for local residents of Council-delivered events.

5.21 The Director, Communications, Culture and Engagement thanked the Member. The assessment carried out following the 2019 Carnival had found that 60% of attendees were from Hackney, showing that the event still had a local ethos. This was positive, but she agreed that there was a need to continually review the benefits of the Carnival with a focus on Hackney residents.

- Continuing with the presentation, the third recommendation within the theme of developing the image and reputation of Hackney Carnival, was the development of a communications strategy that showcased the Carnival's diverse carnival groups and audience members, to support outreach to groups who were currently less involved.
- Another set of recommendations were set within a theme of **making Hackney Carnival more inclusive and diverse**.
- The first of these was to increase community outreach through targeting and engaging groups known to be currently underrepresented, and to understand whether specific barriers to participation could be overcome. The second was to develop a communications strategy which harnessed the diversity of the carnival's participants and attendees to deliver outreach to those who were under represented. The third was for an Access Strategy to be developed, potentially incorporating actions including the hiring of an Access Manager and Access Stewards, the provision of ear defenders, wheelchair access areas on carnival day, and to improve signage and directions to make the event more accessible for all. The service was currently planning an accessibility audit, partly in response to this recommendation.
- A third set of recommendations were aimed at **improving Hackney Carnival's educational, learning and employment outcomes**. One of these was for funding for carnival groups to be increased, and for an allocation of affordable workspace for performers to be made in the months leading up to the Carnival. Again on funding aspects within this theme, another was for support to be provided with the grants application process and for other potential funding opportunities to be identified and harnessed.
- Another recommendation was to increase the engagement of young people through – for example - offering work experience opportunities in traffic management, carnival set-up or information kiosks, and proactively encouraging local traders to employ local young people.
- Another was for the Carnival be used as an opportunity to support micro enterprises by promoting it as a potential testing platform.
- The final recommendation in the theme was for the development of a Carnival Skills Strategy, which would aim to ensure that employment opportunities were inclusive and equally accessible to all residents.

- The next recommendations were based within a theme aimed at **increasing the economic impact and leverage private finance**. These focused on promoting opportunities for the involvement of local businesses, on ensuring that procurement arrangements supported Hackney residents and businesses (including through discounted stall rates of Hackney residents promoting use of local suppliers), creating opportunities for a wider range of businesses, and the better leveraging of private investment so that the Council was able to redirect funding from the logistical aspects towards community engagement and outreach.
- On the point around harnessing private investment for the operational aspects, she said that this was very challenging. In her experience from working with a number of sponsorship agencies, potential sponsors of events were generally reluctant to support these elements.
- Portaloos, stewarding and security costs accounted for high shares of the cost of delivering the carnival, but were elements that it would be difficult to get external contributions towards. There was potential for attracting a headline sponsor for the event. However, this would not solve the cost issue; the amount which could be raised would be likely to very small compared to total delivery costs. In addition, the willingness of sponsors to donate was often based on them funding an expansion of an event, for example with an additional stage in their name. It would also involve making pitches to potential sponsors, which would need senior officer resources. In practice, it was likely the Council would always find itself as the main and substantive funder of the Carnival, and of the logistical (and most costly) aspects in particular.
- The final recommendations were focused on **Developing Communications**. One was around the greater involvement of carnival groups and local businesses in conversations around logistics and event management, to ensure the event was accessible, safe and equitable. This could see performers take a greater part in planning for the event, and contractors liaising more effectively with carnival groups. The other was for engagement to be expanded with stakeholders – both those involved and those who did not participate but were impacted by the event. If enacted, this recommendation could raise awareness about available opportunities, whilst best managing potential negative impacts.
- The recommendations raised in the assessment were very strong, and contained excellent ideas. Full consideration would be given to each. This said, a cautious approach was needed, in the context of the resources available. It was important to make the point that each change or and new initiative brought to Hackney Carnival – alongside the general logistical delivery of the event – tended to bring very significant demands on Officer resources to support the event, which were limited.

## 6 Maximising benefits of Hackney Carnival for Hackney residents

### 6.1 Guests in attendance for this item were:

- Cllr Guy Nicholson, Cabinet Member, Planning, Culture and Inclusive Economy
- Tim Shields, Chief Executive
- Polly Cziok, Director, Communications, Culture and Engagement
- Lucy McMenemy, Cultural Development Manager



- Leanne Douglas, Service Development Manager (Events)
- Pax Nindi, Chief Executive Global Carnivalz Ltd and Artistic Director, Hackney Carnival
- Leila Jones, Senior Relationship Manager (London, Combined Arts), Arts Council England
- Marvia Barrett, Uprising
- Marie Kerrigan, Children's Centre Manager, Morningside Children's Centre and School
- Lucia François, Compassionate Neighbours Project Coordinator, St Joseph's Hospice
- Rosana Müller, Taru Arts
- Marva Antoine, Tropical Isles
- Sindy Man, Jun Mo Generations

6.2 The item started with the Cultural Development Manager presenting on the context around the Hackney Carnival's development since 2013 when it came under the management of the her area, and future plans in relation to the carnival and Hackney's wider Arts and Cultural Strategy. She made the following points:

- Since 2013, the Council had developed the carnival incrementally In terms of the Council-led developments of Hackney Carnival, the following had been delivered since this time
- In 2013:
  - Arrangements put in place for procession for the Carnival to start at Ridley Road
  - The commissioning of an event management company to deliver event
- Between 2014 and 2016:
  - The Commissioning of an Artistic Director for the Carnival.
  - 3 and then 4 sound systems, and a range of stalls put in place for after the procession, in Ridley Road.
  - A live stage and children's area introduced in Gillett Square.
  - Playbus at Town Hall Square
  - A community participation and application process introduced, where resident groups could apply to take part in a procession, bring a sound system, volunteer, or to express other ideas
  - The introduction of a resident and business décor competition along the route, ended after three years due to a lack of take up.
- In 2017:
  - In recognition Ridley Road was increasingly unviable as a starting point, the start was moved to Haggertson Park. This revised procession added some distance to the route.

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- A new Hackney Carnival Conference for existing and potential carnival stakeholders (community groups, residents and businesses) was found to be effective and useful.
- It helped lead to an ongoing partnership with Connect Hackney and St Joseph's Hospice, the commissioning of five carnival groups, and the ongoing representation of these at Hackney Carnival.
- A partnerships had been established with St Mungos, and a carnival group had been commissioned to engage and involve people experiencing homelessness in activities including the carnival procession.
- Through a new partnership Access All Areas, residents with learning disabilities were supported to be involved with the Carnival.
- Support provided to carnival groups in developing consortia bids to Arts Council England, some of which were successful. This was through the Artistic Director providing curation support.
- Establishment of the annual Carnival Awards Ceremony
- In 2018:
  - Two new sound systems including QTPOC in Bohemia Place
  - New partnership with Hackney Caribbean Elders Association
  - Successful bids for Arts Council England funding for:
    - Delivery of social media training for carnival groups
    - six-week programme in four Hackney schools, employing five carnival groups, culminating in the 'Kids Carnival' in Dalston Square
    - Live stream carnival project engaging young people (Hackney Live)
    - Creation space in a tenant community hall and a local arts venue for two groups
- In 2019:
  - Arts Council England training session for carnival groups
  - Successful bids for Arts Council England funding for QTPOC sound system
  - A new format for the event:
    - Procession from London Fields
    - Seven sound systems and stalls in various locations in Hackney Central
    - Two live music stages
    - Three children's areas and a Wellbeing area
  - New partnership with Uprising
  - New partnership with Morningside School and Children's Centre
  - Drive to reduce environmental impact of the event

- Increased communications including greater face to face meetings with residents and businesses
- 6.3 Plans for the future development of the carnival were shaped and informed around the Council's Arts and Cultural Strategy. The strategy was framed around a number of defined 'Dividends' which the Council and its partners would seek to progress. A number of these were relevant to Hackney Carnival, and plans had been made how the carnival could contribute to them, with projects and actions emerging to move this forward. This was helping to inform a Forward Plan of work in relation to the Carnival.
- 6.4 To give a detailed example, one of the Dividends in the Strategy was a Community Cohesion Dividend. The Carnival would help progress this aspect through a focus on inclusion.
- 6.5 The first broad aim for the Carnival identified under this was to further involve local communities in shaping the event. In turn, the two projects emerging from this were the development of a community panel of Hackney Central stakeholders, and of a shared sense of ownership of the carnival by reaching out to communities across Hackney.
- 6.6 Another broad aim emerging from this Dividend (Engage targeted groups) incorporated projects to engage with community groups under-represented in participation, to promote engagement opportunities to communities located on the route, to invite community groups and council services (youth hubs, museum, libraries, Kings Park Moving Together and others) to use the carnival as a platform, and to continue to deliver the older people's engagement programme
- 6.7 Other Dividends with carnival-related work to help progress them were:
- Education Dividend (with carnival work programme items to consult carnival groups about further training needs and to explore work experience opportunities with carnival contractors)
  - Employment Dividend (to be progressed by work to build on opportunities for carnival artists to work in community settings, to devise an outline Carnival Skills Strategy with Hackney Works in partnership with relevant networks and to build on opportunities for local residents to work at the carnival).
  - Economy Dividend (which the Carnival would progress through actions to promote the carnival as a testing platform, to explore ways for businesses outside of the direct footprint of the Carnival to benefit, to involve local businesses in planning processes, to create a 'market-place' of stalls, and to prioritise procurement of local traders and suppliers).
- 6.8 There was also significant focus on reducing the environmental impact of the carnival, and to showcase how events could be managed in sustainable ways. Reductions in impact would be sought through a range of measures, within an approach of wide-ranging community engagement. Actions being taken included:

- Reduce diesel fuelled generators by looking at cleaner energy power sources e.g. HVO / electric
- Reduce single use plastics used by traders and introduce returnable cup deposit schemes
- More waste recycling / food waste systems
- Promote use of new water fountains in the public realm and better signage for water bowzers
- Recycle existing and explore more sustainable promotional marketing opportunities
- Engage carnival groups, schools and community groups in developing and promoting good practices

6.9 The Chair thanked the Cultural Development Manager.

6.10 Invited to make any comments at this point the Chief Executive, Hackney Council firstly wished to put on record his thanks to the previous Group Director, Neighbourhoods Housing Kim Wright and the Officers she led who had delivered a successful event in 2019.

6.11 It was clear that there were challenges to meet related to the carnival's growth. The Council had already responded by strengthening governance arrangements around such a large event. The crucial priority and concern was around the safety of participants and attendees– that of both participants and attendees – and to ensure that those involved with the carnival enjoyed their experiences and felt safe.

6.12 Whilst the 2019 carnival had been delivered successfully, there was the need for ongoing learning. The Council would continue to liaise closely with partners both on the creative side, and the event management side through the Police, Transport for London and others.

6.13 The Chair thanked the Chief Executive. She had been very impressed with the levels of satisfaction with the event. She also welcomed the detailed learning which had been gained from the assessment.

6.14 A Member noted the proposed plan to engage a wider range of community groups, with a focus on Hackney Central. He asked if there were plans to engage schools, community groups and businesses outside of this area. As a Councillor representing a ward some distance from the procession route, he was keen to explore work going into engaging and encouraging participation by others.

6.15 The Cultural Development Manager said work was going on to involve people from around the borough in the engagement activities, and that more would be done around this. This included her team seeking to work closely with the Council's Resident Participation Team in order to identify where there were events where opportunities related to Hackney Carnival could be promoted.

- 6.16 Sindy Man, Jun Mo Generations came in at this point. Jun Mo Generations had been involved in Hackney Carnival for some years, even though they were based away from Hackney Central. They were a carnival group providing activities and workshops in the Woodberry Down area, including to enable participation in Hackney Carnival.
- 6.17 This highlighted that there were opportunities for people in different areas of the borough to get involved in Hackney Carnival. However, she did feel there were communication barriers to address. Some schools and Tenant and Resident Associations in the area were sometimes not aware of Hackney Carnival, nor of the local groups which could support them to be involved.
- 6.18 There was also sometimes a hesitance by schools to engage with external groups due to safeguarding concerns. She suggested there could be a role for Councillors of having full information around the recognised carnival groups in their wards, and communicating this to residents groups and schools. For organisations which were funded by the Council, this could include providing assurance that these had affective safeguarding arrangements in place.
- 6.19 Coming back on this point the Director, Communications, Culture and Engagement said that engagement with the sector during the development of the Arts and Cultural Strategy had highlighted the issue that many organisations – both carnival groups and others - wanted to work with a broader range of young people but that there were challenges in reaching them. Her service was exploring whether the Council could provide support to help link young people with the organisations. This was in relation to Carnival groups and other organisations.
- 6.20 A Member noted a point from the paper provided for item 4 around the police having advised the Council that they would not be able to support the event to the extent they did in 2019. He asked if this was a concern, and if plans were being put in place to mitigate any reduced capacity of the police.
- 6.21 The Director, Communications, Culture and Engagement clarified that the police had not stated that they would not support this event in future, but that they were keen to work with the Council to make the event more self-sustaining from a safety aspect.
- 6.22 This said, there would always be a crucial balance to be achieved between professional policing provision, and hired security. One of the great strengths of Hackney Carnival and carnivals generally were them being open access, without any fencing and or ticketing arrangements. However, this also brought one of the key challenges from a safety aspect. The Council would not deliver an event the police advised against. The police would continue to be a key stakeholder in the successful delivery of Hackney Carnival.
- 6.23 The Chief Executive agreed with these points. However, the Council did need to work to best ensure that the requirements put on the police by the carnival were not unreasonable, within an appreciation of the pressures they were under to respond to incidents across London. The police were a key partner for the Council in a range of areas.

- 6.24 A Member asked if there was representation from health partners on the Carnival board. She suggested that this could help ensure that providers in the borough were prepared for any impact of the carnival on service demand. She also asked if there were opportunities for health partners to deliver services and messaging at the carnival itself.
- 6.25 The Chief Executive, Hackney Council confirmed that the governance structure for the management of the carnival did secure the involvement of health partners. Adding to this, the Service Development Manager (Events) advised that this was achieved through close liaison with dedicated representatives. London Ambulance was a key partner, including in planning around safety and in ensuring that adequate medical provision was available onsite.
- 6.26 In terms of using the event for health promotion and advice, the Director, Communications, Culture and Engagement noted that a range of provision was in place at the carnival. Examples included smoking cessation and sexual health services.
- 6.27 A Member wished to thank all of those who had participated in the carnival, and also Officers. She appreciated that the delivery of an event on this scale was hugely challenging, and that significant work had gone into ensuring that it was delivered safely. She noted that the largest share of total spend on the Carnival (£272,618 / 47%) had been on services provided both by the Council directly and commissioned externally. She asked how many paid staff had been involved in the delivery of the carnival, and the number of volunteers. She asked whether there was any prospect of increasing ratio of volunteers to staff, which could give more people opportunities to learn new skills whilst also reducing costs.
- 6.28 The Member was aware from discussions with residents that many who lived on estates were not aware of the carnival. This brought a lost opportunity. She felt there was potential for much more involvement by those living on estates, including by Tenant and Resident Associations ( TRAs). She had a vision of the Hackney Carnival procession including floats from the different estates and TRAs in the borough. She suggested that participation by those on estates could be supported through applications to the Council's Community Development Fund. She was aware from previous items to scrutiny that there had been a lack of take up of this fund. She asked how timely the Council had been in communicating with TRAs on the carnival, on the opportunities for involvement, and on potential avenues to funding. She felt there was room for improvement in grass roots participation in the carnival generally.
- 6.29 The Chair agreed with the Member's points around room for greater involvement in the carnival. She also felt the suggestion around the greater use and of the Community Development Fund to help support this was a good one. She would welcome more funding for carnival participation and involvement generally. However, she also felt there was room for improvement in the Council's communications of participation opportunities to groups and organisations which had the capacity to participate within their existing funds and work programmes.
- 6.30 As an example, a youth centre she was involved with did dance sessions with young people over the summer holidays. This saw the young people prepare

and then deliver performances at a local festival in the Ward. They had not been aware there could be the potential for their involvement in the Carnival. She felt that if they had been made aware of this in advance of the summer, they could have used those dance sessions to prepare a performance for the carnival. She felt that stronger communications quite far in advance of the event could allow more organisations to shape their work programmes and projects around involvement and participation in the carnival.

- 6.31 Coming back on these points, the Director, Communications, Culture and Engagement fully agreed that there was huge potential for growth in the involvement of TRAs and estate residents in Hackney Carnival. The opportunities included joining the procession, but went much further, for example tenants and residents groups might decorate a section of the route, or be allocated a dedicated cheering section. She was very keen for the Resident Participation Team to get more involved in communicating these opportunities. She also agreed that any potential use of the Community Development Fund for carnival activities might be communicated more widely.
- 6.32 In terms of the engagement work around the carnival which had been possible in 2019, there had been some impact of the change of route, with Officers needing to have spent greater shares of their time on planning around this. Maintaining the 2019 route in 2020 would free up some resource for greater engagement.
- 6.33 The Artistic Director, Hackney Carnival said it was important to note that a lot of work did go into seeking the involvement of a wide range of groups in the carnival. This said, there were challenges around the resource available for this element, with it accounting for 7% of the total budget. He had spent significant shares of the time he was contracted (and more) making contact with community leaders of those under represented at Carnival. He appreciated that priority needed to be given to health and safety, but more could be done with a greater budget for outreach work.
- 6.34 The Cultural Development Manager added that alongside the Artistic Director's work to engage the community, he had also helped to achieve a very high artistic quality of carnival, within the limited budget available. The work to engage the community went hand in hand with that to ensure high quality artistic content, aided by the Creative Director and carnival groups. The quality of content had been recognised by Arts Council England.
- 6.35 Invited by the Chair to comment at this point, the Senior Relationship Manager (London, Combined Arts), Arts Council England made the following substantive points:
- The Arts Council funded a number of projects wholly or partly dedicated to Hackney Carnival
  - This made a precise investment figure difficult to quantify. The estimate was £45,702, but this did not include all elements.
  - The Arts Council would be releasing a new strategy in April. Two outcomes sought in this strategy were ones which Hackney Carnival could contribute to. These were Creative People (where everyone can express their creativity

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throughout their lives) and Cultural Communities (professional and voluntary sectors working together to shape stronger cultural provision)

- A key value of carnivals were their ability to engage people less likely to engage with other forms of arts and culture. Carnival was therefore an important strategic area for the Arts Council.
- Carnivals brought a wide range of opportunities for artistic involvement over a significant period of time; pre carnival participation could run for months in the lead up to a carnival itself.
- Hackney was bucking the trend nationally in increasing its investment in its carnival. This was in a context where the logistical costs associated with the delivery of carnivals were generally rising.
- The Arts Council wished to acknowledge the high quality of both the artistic content of Hackney Carnival, and the engagement practices followed.
- They saw Hackney as a national leader on a number of the initiatives in place at carnival, and on the extent of involvement of artistic organisations and volunteers. The national reach of some of the organisations involved meant Hackney Carnival could have a very wide impact.

- 6.36 The Chair thanked the Senior Relationship Manager (London, Combined Arts), Arts Council England. She asked the representatives from carnival groups and community groups to make any opening points about their experiences with Hackney Carnival.
- 6.37 Marie Kerrigan, Children's Centre Manager, Morningside Children's Centre and School said that one way that involvement had been made easier was the school's proximity to the carnival route. It had also been important to get parents on board and involved.
- 6.38 The Cultural Development Manager and the Artistic Director, Hackney Carnival had been invaluable in raising the interest of the school in getting involved, and in brokering creative support from Taru Arts, who had helped train and prepare the children.
- 6.39 The teaching experience had been hugely positive, and had highlighted the value which children could get from contact with arts professionals. Training had been delivered over three sessions, with little impact in terms of time taken out of the curriculum but real enrichment for those involved. It had given a real opportunity for children and their parents to become involved with something they had never done before, and to become part of a wider world.
- 6.40 Noting points made earlier around some community groups being less involved with the carnival than others, she was pleased that school children from a wide range of backgrounds had been involved. She hoped that the positive experiences they had had would help contribute to closing any wider barriers.
- 6.41 The Chair thanked the Children's Centre Manager, Morningside Children's Centre and School for the way she had driven the school's involvement with the carnival, and had enabled children to have such positive experiences. She felt she could play a very valuable role in seeking the involvement of more schools.



- 6.42 Lucia François, Compassionate Neighbours Project Coordinator, St Joseph's Hospice echoed points made earlier around the positive experiences gained from involvement with Hackney Carnival. The artists from Uprising who had supported their involvement, the Cultural Development Manager and others had been excellent. A number of patients and volunteers had engaged with activities (workshops creating flags and banners) prior to carnival and with the carnival day itself. This was partly made possible by sensitive support from Officers to ensure that the more vulnerable members were able to fully engage with the day. Feedback from members had been hugely positive, with a common view that the event had been a safe and fun community event. Moving forward, they were continuing to work with the contacts they had made through their involvement with the carnival, to deliver more activities for their members.
- 6.43 Marvia Barrett, Uprising said involvement with the carnival had had really positive impacts on the older people who the organisation supported. Some members were quite withdrawn from living quite isolated lives, and participating in the carnival had really helped in bringing them out of themselves.
- 6.44 Rosana Müller, Taru Arts advised that the organisation had been involved with Hackney Carnival since 2013. They worked with schools; teaching dance and costume making and preparing children to perform. One of the challenges was around gaining buy in from schools, and a reluctance in some cases to allocate teaching time to these activities. She felt that breaking down this barrier was a key way that greater community benefits could be gained from Hackney Carnival.
- 6.45 She had welcomed the enthusiasm of Morningside School in 2019, and the way that teachers and support staff had been keen to be involved. When they were able to, children really enjoyed and learnt a lot from preparing for carnival and the carnival itself. This included artistic expression and gaining an insight into a wide range of cultures. As demonstrated by comments by a Morningside pupil at the start of the meeting Taru Arts were also focused on using their activities with children to help teach environmentally sustainable approaches.
- 6.46 Sindy Man, Jun Mo Generations promoted and taught East Asian arts, delivering to schools and community groups. Over two days in a recent period they had delivered classes to 270 children. Whilst being focused on East Asian Arts, they also sought to help promote mixed cultures. For example for Hackney Carnival, they prepared a samba music dance, using Asian costume designs. They had received no funding from the Council.
- 6.47 Marva Antoine, Tropical Isles said her organisation delivered wide ranging programmes aimed at inspiring children and young people to learn and celebrate carnival arts.
- 6.48 Its Creative Learning Programme continued to provide arts education opportunities for schools, work placement schemes and other youth engagement initiatives. Their work covered dance, music, design, and health and well-being.

- 6.49 She noted points made earlier about an apparent lack of engagement by TRAs. She said that – actually - a lot of TRA members would be found to already be involved in the carnival, through carnival groups.
- 6.50 Sometimes there could be a view that the only young people who were involved with carnivals were those who did not have any difficulties. However, this was not the case. Members of Tropical Isles included young people who had been excluded and or were dealing with other challenges. The activities provided by Tropical Isles gave young people a safe space to express themselves in and enabled them to feel part of something. Tropical Isles had a strong focus on health and well-being, working to help ensure that when young people left them they were in a position to thrive. In this way, Tropical Isles and carnival groups provided real social benefits.
- 6.51 Furthermore, Hackney Carnival was the event members of carnival groups based in the borough most wanted to be involved with. It was the most important carnival on the calendar for them. They saw it as their event. This attachment to the carnival was one of the key reasons the artistic quality of the carnival was so high. This considered, it was important that groups and their members continued to feel owners of the Hackney Carnival.
- 6.52 Discussions like the one tonight would help with this. She was pleased that so my positive comments had been made about the carnival. Sometimes there appeared to be negative messaging about the event in terms of the cost and apparent low social benefits that it delivered. However, she knew that the event enabled lots of unengaged people to become involved with something. If Hackney was to stop delivering the carnival it would no longer be meeting the needs of its communities.
- 6.53 Tropical Isles reached out to schools, and schools sometimes approached them directly. However, funding was a crucial issue. There was not enough. She was committed to her organisation adding social value. Recently a group of young people from Waltham Forest had been referred so they could work on the carnival preparations. Tropical Isles had received no funding for this, but had supported the young people as it would better enable them to have careers in the arts at later points. However, there was a limit with what was possible with the levels of funding provided.
- 6.54 The Artistic Director Artistic Director, Hackney Carnival said he welcomed the points made by the Arts Council around Hackney Carnival allowing for quite long-term engagement in the arts, and the high artistic quality of the event. He felt the comments of the groups in attendance had helped highlight how the carnival helped to shape and give focus to the activities of a wide range of groups. He thanked the community groups for their work in supporting involvement by a wide range of people in the borough, and the carnival groups for having enabled participation in a high quality event.
- 6.55 A Member thanked the Artistic Director and the groups. She said it was clear from the discussions that Hackney Carnival delivered real community benefits. However, she also noted the need to consider the costs of the event. This was in the context of a very difficult financial environment, and the election of a new Government which might bring further constraint.

- 6.56 The total cost of £591,090 was very significant, with the majority being spent on work to ensure that the event was delivered safely. She also noted points around the police wishing to see the event being less resource-intensive for them, and worried that this could see security costs incurred by the Council increase further. She asked if options for future approaches were being developed and considered, which could contain costs whilst also seeking to ensure that the benefits currently delivered by the carnival (for example the fostering of relations between different community groups and organisations) continued. The hard truth was that the Council had a range of complex statutory duties which did not include Hackney Carnival.
- 6.57 Wishing to make a response to the cost of the event, the Senior Relationship Manager (London, Combined Arts), Arts Council England said that considering the total cost of the event against the estimated visitor numbers attending would leave the Arts Council with a view that it constituted an effective overall use of funds (in terms of the value for money of an event). Also noting the point around operational costs taking high shares of spend on an event, she said that it was common for half or more of total costs for cultural events being accounted for by this.
- 6.58 A Member noted earlier questions about the numbers of volunteers. He felt there could be more, including in security.
- 6.59 The Director, Communications, Culture and Engagement said that volunteers had and would continue to play a vital and valued role at Hackney Carnival. However, a balance between staff and volunteers was required; there was a high dropout rate amongst volunteers, and programmes were Officer-intensive to run. They could not replace professional security with volunteers.
- 6.60 In terms of the long term sustainability of the programme, the Council had committed to annual delivery in 2020 and 2021. There was a need for discussion around plans beyond that.
- 6.61 Marva Antoine, Tropical Isles said that her organisation found itself needing to fund its own SIA-licensed security at carnivals, in order to protect participants and costumes, as well as the public. She therefore agreed on the need for professional security.
- 6.62 This said, she felt that the stewards employed in 2019 had generally not provided a strong level of service, because they had not known the area. She felt that the Council should look to enable greater stewarding by people in the community, in liaison with carnival groups.
- 6.63 A Member said that it appeared that Hackney Carnival was bringing high cost to the Council, but that the social benefits were huge; including around civic pride, cohesion, and involvement of a very wide range of people. She noted that the benefits analysis presented did not quantify these benefits gained in monetary terms. She understood that the Arts Council had produced a methodology through which the monetary value of social benefits delivered by a cultural event could be quantified. She asked if the Council might liaise with them to produce an analysis of the social impact of the carnival in monetary terms. She felt this could help inform future discussions around the future of the

- carnival, and its relative value of money compared to that of other Council services and initiatives.
- 6.64 The Senior Relationship Manager (London, Combined Arts), Arts Council England said she would welcome exploring the potential for this with the Council.
- 6.65 A Member had been very pleased to see that 60% of attendees of the carnival were from Hackney. She was also pleased with the great success of the event. However, she worried that this success could lead to greater numbers of people travelling to the event from elsewhere, for this year's carnival. She would be keen to explore measures that could be taken to seek to maintain attendees from Hackney making up 60% or more of the total. Her own view was that early closures of the event could help keep its ethos as a more of a family event.
- 6.66 The Director, Communications, Culture and Engagement thanked the Member. She had requested and was awaiting full clarification on where the visitors from outside Hackney came from. If it was found that the majority of these visitors came from neighbouring or nearby boroughs, she felt that the event could be shown to still hold a local ethos. This compared to if it was found that large numbers of people were coming to the Carnival from further afield – as was the case with Notting Hill Carnival - which might give cause for concern.
- 6.67 Planning and programming for Hackney Carnival would continue to have a main focus on keeping it as a family event, albeit with a diverse offer. This included through having large areas for families, and stages which appealed to young children, in addition to the offers for other others such as sound systems. This was not to say there were not risks to the ethos being lost, and or visitor numbers continuing to grow exponentially. A free Christmas lights turn in another borough was now attracting visitor numbers which threatened its viability, despite that authority not having marketed event. Hackney would continue to give clear messaging around the Hackney Carnival being a local, family event, but it would never be fully in its control of the wider narrative. It would be an ongoing challenge.
- 6.68 As a final point, exact visitor numbers were difficult to capture. For the 2019 carnival the Council had sought to do this through commissioning an expert to analyse all information available to reach an estimated number. This had produced an estimated attendance ranging from 60,000 at the lowest to almost double this at 117,000.
- 6.69 The Chair thanked guests. She suggested the key themes coming out of the discussion were that there was a common interest in seeking to maintain the Carnival as a local event, to seeking to involve more schools and TRAs in the Carnival, to continue to support more vulnerable residents to be involved – across a range of activities - and to seek involvement from a wider range of community groups.

## **7 Minutes of the meeting 16th December 2019**

- 7.1 The minutes of the meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> December were agreed as an accurate record.

**8 Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission- 2019/20 Work Programme**

8.1 The work programme was noted.

**9 Any Other Business**

9.1 The Chair noted that the Scrutiny Officer had circulated the terms of reference for the Commission's review around housing associations to Members, in advance of the meeting.

9.2 Members agreed the terms of reference.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 9.40 pm