# City Hall Tories urge GLA to take control of Notting Hill Carnival amid safety fears



A report produced by City Hall Conservatives, titled On The Brink: Notting Hill Carnival, has proposed a radical overhaul of how London’s flagship street festival is governed and managed. The paper recommends stripping day‑to‑day control from Notting Hill Carnival Ltd (NHCL), recognising the Greater London Authority as the formal organiser, and converting NHCL into a member of a new advisory board to be held to account by the London Assembly. Alongside governance changes, the report urges contingency measures such as relocating the event to larger controlled spaces like Hyde Park, introducing capacity limits, and moving to pre‑registration or ticketing to manage numbers more tightly.

Those recommendations are framed by growing alarm among policing and civic authorities about crowd safety. The report highlights rising crime, ballooning costs and “deep concerns” from the Metropolitan Police that a crush could produce a mass‑casualty event. In testimony and committee papers, police witnesses have warned that known pinch points, high crowd densities and the demands of public‑order policing have left the force stretched and exposed during Carnival weekends.

The Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Mark Rowley, made the clearest public intervention. Speaking at the London Policing Board, he described the Carnival as “poorly run” and raised the prospect of a Hillsborough‑style crush if current arrangements persisted, saying the police repeatedly had to step in with mitigations because the event was not managed by experienced event operators. Organisers have pushed back: NHCL and its supporters point to the thousands of stewards deployed and say they work closely with statutory partners, while the Mayor has reiterated that City Hall is not the event organiser but will engage with stakeholders to improve safety.

That push and pull has been echoed within the elected oversight structure. The London Assembly’s Police and Crime Committee has urged an urgent, independent review of crowd numbers and safety, calling on the Mayor to commission detailed analysis of pinch points, stewarding requirements and crowd density so that steward numbers and route designs can be properly planned. The committee also recorded concerns about the scale of police abstractions to Carnival duties and demanded clearer, more reliable funding arrangements for policing the event.

An independent safety review has already been completed and its contents have been made public after disclosure by the Metropolitan Police. The assessment set out a range of operational recommendations — from increased stewarding and the introduction of safe‑space barriers to other changes intended to reduce crowding and improve flow — which have been used to inform policing and planning for the 2025 event. The Met’s release also noted the reviewers had initially intended not to publish their full conclusions, increasing political pressure for transparency around the safety case.

That pressure helped unlock emergency financial support: City Hall, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the City of Westminster announced a near‑£1m package — £958,000 — to implement urgent safety and infrastructure measures for Carnival 2025. NHCL said the funding followed the independent review and welcomed the partners’ backing as essential to protect the event; its chair, Ian Comfort, thanked the authorities and police while stressing Carnival’s cultural importance and economic contribution to the capital. City‑level statements and independent analyses have repeatedly pointed to the festival’s scale — organisers and commentators estimate attendances of up to two million across the weekend — and the substantial local economic impact that accompanies it.

Yet the emergency funding and short‑term fixes have not settled the question of long‑term stewardship. The Conservative report’s proposal that the GLA take the formal organising role and that NHCL be reduced to an advisory capacity has been met with warnings about unintended consequences: relocating Carnival to a different venue such as Hyde Park or shifting to tickets and strict capacities would alter the event’s character, affect local traders and residents, and prompt legal and logistical challenges. Critics argue such changes risk eroding the grassroots, community‑led nature of the celebration; supporters counter that only structural change will remove the risk of catastrophic incidents and create sustainable funding and safety models.

The debate therefore remains both practical and political. For 2025, the immediate outcome is that Carnival will go ahead with the emergency funding and a programme of changes driven by the independent review. Beyond that, elected officials, police leaders and community organisers remain at odds over who should hold ultimate responsibility, how to reconcile safety with cultural heritage, and who should pay for the manpower and infrastructure required. The independent review documents released via police disclosure now form part of the public record, and London’s civic institutions will be watched closely as they decide whether to accept the report’s sweeping governance recommendations or to seek alternative, community‑centred reforms.

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## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/notting-hill-carnival-city-hall-safety-b1242504.html), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/notting-hill-carnival-city-hall-safety-b1242504.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/notting-hill-carnival-city-hall-safety-b1242504.html), [[3]](https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-press-releases/review-notting-hill-carnival-crowd-numbers-mass-casualty-event-occurs)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c77xjv11lm8o), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/notting-hill-carnival-city-hall-safety-b1242504.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-press-releases/review-notting-hill-carnival-crowd-numbers-mass-casualty-event-occurs)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/metropolitan-police/disclosure-2025/july---2025/notting-hill-carnival-2025-safety-review/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2025/jul/09/notting-hill-carnival-to-go-ahead-this-year-after-1m-funding-boost), [[6]](https://nhcarnival.org/updates/funding-for-notting-hill-carnival-2025-confirmed)
* Paragraph 7 – [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/notting-hill-carnival-city-hall-safety-b1242504.html), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2025/jul/09/notting-hill-carnival-to-go-ahead-this-year-after-1m-funding-boost)
* Paragraph 8 – [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2025/jul/09/notting-hill-carnival-to-go-ahead-this-year-after-1m-funding-boost), [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/notting-hill-carnival-city-hall-safety-b1242504.html), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/notting-hill-carnival-city-hall-safety-b1242504.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/notting-hill-carnival-city-hall-safety-b1242504.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/notting-hill-carnival-city-hall-safety-b1242504.html> - An Evening Standard article reports on the City Hall Conservatives’ report “On The Brink: Notting Hill Carnival”, which recommends stripping day‑to‑day control from Notting Hill Carnival Ltd and recognising the Greater London Authority as the formal organiser. It says NHCL should become a member of a new advisory board accountable to the London Assembly, with City Hall scrutinising arrangements. The report also proposes moving the festival to larger venues such as Hyde Park and introducing capacity limits, pre‑registration and ticketing. It highlights rising crime, increased costs and fears of a mass‑casualty crush, while NHCL and the Mayor dispute some findings.
3. <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-press-releases/review-notting-hill-carnival-crowd-numbers-mass-casualty-event-occurs> - The London Assembly’s Police and Crime Committee report urges an urgent review of Notting Hill Carnival crowd numbers and safety, warning the Metropolitan Police’s repeated concerns about a possible ‘mass casualty’ crush should not be ignored. The committee calls on the Mayor to commission an examination of pinch points, stewarding requirements and crowd density to inform steward numbers and route changes. It highlights strains on the Met from increased public order demands and requests clearer funding for policing. The document records recommendations, the Met’s evidence on officer abstractions, and stresses the need for robust guidance to prevent public safety incidents.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c77xjv11lm8o> - The BBC reports Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley described Notting Hill Carnival as ‘poorly run’ and warned of deep concerns about crowd safety, likening the risk to a Hillsborough‑style crush. Speaking at the London Policing Board he said the event was not run by event management experts and that the police had to put mitigations in place. The article notes organisers’ rebuttal, claiming they deployed thousands of stewards and worked with partners, while the Mayor reiterated City Hall does not organise the carnival but will work with stakeholders to improve safety. The piece underlines the policing and crowd‑management debate.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2025/jul/09/notting-hill-carnival-to-go-ahead-this-year-after-1m-funding-boost> - The Guardian reports Notting Hill Carnival will proceed after a near £1 million funding package from City Hall, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster councils, totalling £958,000 to implement safety and infrastructure measures following an independent review. The review identified critical public‑safety concerns; its full findings were not made public. Ian Comfort, chair of Notting Hill Carnival Ltd, welcomed the funding as essential to safeguard the event, which attracts up to two million attendees and delivers significant economic benefit. The article notes policing demands—around 7,000 officers—and stresses persistent funding shortfalls and debates over long‑term sustainability and safety arrangements, and public debate continues.
6. <https://nhcarnival.org/updates/funding-for-notting-hill-carnival-2025-confirmed> - Notting Hill Carnival Ltd’s official update confirms £958,000 of emergency funding from City Hall, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the City of Westminster to support enhanced safety and infrastructure measures for Carnival 2025. The statement, dated 9 July 2025, explains the funding follows an independent safety review commissioned by NHCL and welcomed the partners’ support to ensure the festival can proceed. Chair Ian Comfort thanked the authorities and police for assistance, emphasising Carnival’s cultural importance and economic contribution. The page reiterates NHCL’s collaborative approach with statutory partners and notes ongoing work to implement the review’s recommendations promptly.
7. <https://www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/metropolitan-police/disclosure-2025/july---2025/notting-hill-carnival-2025-safety-review/> - The Metropolitan Police FOI disclosure confirms the existence of an independent safety review into Notting Hill Carnival 2025 and provides a downloadable PDF of that review. The response explains the review highlighted safety concerns and details the Met’s receipt of findings and recommendations. It notes the external reviewers initially intended not to publish their full conclusions, yet the Met released the document under the FOI. The disclosure document summarises recommended measures such as extra stewarding, safe‑space barriers and other operational changes. The page provides transparency around the safety assessment used to inform policing and planning for Carnival 2025 in London.