

# The new new government of London

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# A long and winding road...

- 1855, 1888, 1965, 1986 and 2000
- Scale of London has created local and metropolitan interests
  - also the City of London's particular position
- Political parties have evolved different views about the 'metropolitan'
  - Conservatives often sceptical
  - Labour/Liberals generally enthusiastic

# Reform is against this background

- Different models of city-wide government have been tried
  - Joint board/s of local bodies/boroughs
    - MBW, 1986-2000 ‘Interregnum’
  - Powerful ‘core urban’ authority
    - LCC
  - ‘City region’
    - GLC, GLA
- Local vs metropolitan interests

# GLA more powerful than GLC

- Executive mayor has concentrated power in a single individual
  - as was intended
- Powers of GLA greater than GLC?
  - TfL is a significantly more powerful institution than LT (only with GLC from 1970-84)
  - MPA powers not granted to GLC
  - LDA powers probably greater than GLC
  - GLC stronger in inner London - ILEA

# Government's reforms strengthen the GLA

- Planning
- Housing
- Skills & Training
- Waste
- Functional body appointments
- Powers to make strategies; direct policy
- **80% of what the Mayor said he wanted?**

# Altering the balance of political power - 1

- DCLG has been more willing to devolve than DFES or DEFRA
  - similar pattern to when GLA was set up
  - more comfortable at the 'regional' than local level
- Overall, slight shift of power away from Whitehall
- Belief within government the experiment has worked

# Altering the balance of political power - 2

- Planning and housing reforms will move power from boroughs to City Hall
- ‘Tilting the balance’ from the local to the metropolitan
- Mayor will become more powerful than any ‘Greater London’ politician has ever been
- Unlikely to be the end of the process.....

# Consequences

- Friction between the Mayor and the boroughs?
  - if so, could create ‘abolitionist’ movement
  - as has occurred before
- Alternatively, a more powerful ‘London wide’ office capable of changing the city in line with demands of economy, migration, social change

# Public need to understand reasons for reform

- Government and Mayor of London will have to explain why change is taking place
  - better services? bigger city?
- 2008 mayoral election bound to pick up planning and housing issues
- Reform of London government could find its way into 2009 election manifestos
- The road to reform winds on and on.....

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