Complex London

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London:

- Successful over the long term despite a long-criticised and much-reformed government system
- Rapid 19th century economic growth took place against a backdrop of weak and often failed government
  - Metropolitan Board of Works a fragmented joint committee to retro-fit sewers, roads, etc.
  - Paris, by contrast: Haussmann
Evolution of government in London

- London
  - City of London
  - City, parishes, district boards, ad hoc commissions
    - Metropolitan Board of Works
  - London County Council + metropolitan boroughs/City
  - Greater London Council + 32 boroughs + City
  - Interregnum + boroughs/City
  - Greater London Authority + boroughs/City
    - ‘strong’, executive Mayor, weak upper tier
...and Manchester

☐ Manchester

- Commissioners for local improvement
- Borough within Lancashire
- County Borough outside Lancashire
  - periodic boundary extensions
- Greater Manchester County Council + 10 metropolitan districts
- 10 Metropolitan districts
  - AGMA ‘city region’
Systems of government have responded to change

- Population
- Employment
- Industrial base
- Physical scale
- Infrastructure needs
  - TfL; GMPTE
- Development of the State
- Latterly an ‘economic development’ role beyond ‘planning’
Cities and development

- Government systems, the provision of infrastructure and delivery of services have facilitated city economic expansion
  - Structure/strategic/spatial and land use planning evolved after 1947, to include industrial and residential zoning etc
    - also, latterly, conservation
  - Economic development has evolved as a local government activity since mid/late 1970s
    - Britain’s changed economy has led to dereliction and unemployment in many cities, including parts of London and Greater Manchester
London’s ‘complex’ approach to economic redevelopment - 1

1970s: emergence of economic development challenges for London

☐ The decline of London Docks
  ■ and collapse of manufacturing

☐ Sharp rise in level of unemployment

☐ Decay and dereliction in inner London
  ■ London boroughs qualify for Urban Programme grants

☐ Population fell from 7.4m to 6.6m
  ■ Lowest for Greater London since 1906
  ■ Inner London’s population had halved since 1921 – down 25% between 1971 and 1981
London’s ‘complex’ approach to economic redevelopment - 2

1980s: Mrs Thatcher vs New Left...a national political event represented in London government’s approach to the economy, eg

- GLC – London Industrial Strategy (1985)
  - Greater London Enterprise Board
  - But, abolition of GLC in 1986

- Boroughs start to evolve economic policies, especially in east London
  - But much of decade spent in conflict over finance and policy
London’s ‘complex’ approach to economic redevelopment - 3

**1990s**: Major government and the evolution of a concerted approach to regeneration and renewal

- City Challenge and many other funding programmes
  - new, moderate, boroughs engage with new, moderate, Heseltine-led DoE

- London First/London First Centre
  - Created in 1992 – major companies and inward investment:
    - London Pride initiative – private and public sector
    - Weak ‘growth coalition’ achievements
London’s ‘complex’ approach to economic redevelopment - 4

2000s: The Mayor, the London Plan and other mayoral strategies

- GLA created with spatial planning powers and a requirement to produce economic and transport strategies
  - London Development Agency
  - ‘Growth Coalition’ recedes

- Boroughs required to set their own plans to conform with London Plan

- Ken Livingstone evolved economic ‘world view’ through London Plan
Government and London’s economy today – three levels

- Whitehall
  - Competition
  - Taxation [City of London]
  - Immigration
  - Public spending

- The Mayor
  - London Plan, LDA (not for long); LEP?

- The boroughs and the City
  - Local planning
  - Sub-regional economic groupings, LEPs?
How complex? How competitive?

- **Complexity**
  - Two levels of ‘London’ government
    - Regular friction between tiers
  - Many centrally-appointed governance bodies, eg CAA, PLA, English Heritage, Network Rail, ODA, Environment Agency, Homes & Communities Agency etc etc
  - Four business lobbies (First, CBI, LCCI, FSB)

- **Competitiveness**
  - Boroughs are to some extent competitive, eg:
    - City v Tower Hamlets (F&BS); Westminster v City (Skyscrapers, now retail); H&F/Westfield v West End (retail); Croydon v Merton (back offices)
    - London/GSE’s integrated labour market
    - In future: tax base competition...
Conclusions

- History explains much of London’s complexity.
- The Mayor acts as a (relatively weak) economic leader for the city, with a limited growth coalition.
- Boroughs to some extent compete for economic development.
- London’s relative GVA growth does not imply complexity is a fatal impediment.
  - But can’t know what would happen with a different system of government.
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