



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

# Reform For Better Governance

Paul Rowsell

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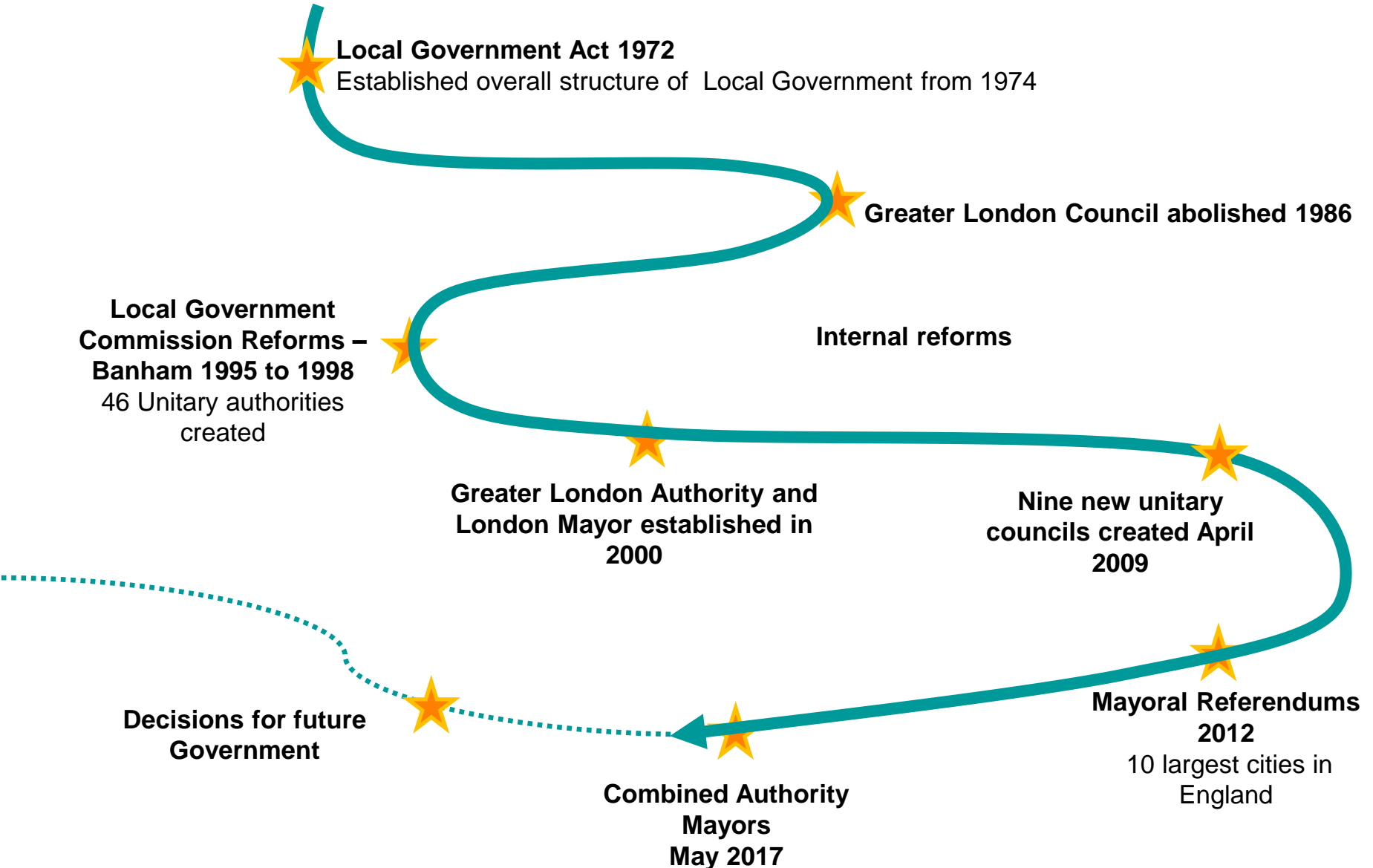


## CONTEXT FOR CHANGE

- ❖ By 1974, the broad overall structure of Local Government we know today was put in place
- ❖ Complicated pattern of single tier and two tier councils
- ❖ Since then around 7 different sets of reforms all aimed at improving governance in one way or another



# Reforms Since 1974





# Characteristics of change

- ❖ Changes driven by different processes
- ❖ Defined by three main characteristics
  - Top down approach – initiative from Government
  - Recommendations from independent body
  - Bottom up approach – proposals generated locally
- ❖ Processes include having regard to public opinion through eg consultation or referendum
- ❖ Regardless of process, Parliament is the final arbiter





## Approaches – Top Down

- ❖ Legislation enacted providing for accountability to Parliament and the electorate
- ❖ Examples include
  - Abolition of GLC in 1986 and transfer of functions to London borough councils - provisions in Local Government Act 1985
  - Abolition of 6 Metropolitan county councils and transfer of functions to Metropolitan district councils in their areas – provisions also in Local Government Act 1985



## Approaches – Top Down With Referendum

### ❖ London

- Referendum in 1999 on establishing a new London authority and an elected mayor
- Greater London Authority Act 1999 established Greater London Authority (GLA) in 2000 and elections for mayor and London Assembly

### ❖ Elsewhere in England

- Referendums in 10 largest cities in England required by Parliament in 2012
- Created first mayor for Bristol



## Approaches – Independent Proposals

- ❖ Local Government Commission For England – established 1992
  - First chair, Sir John Banham, followed by Sir David Cooksey
  - Role – make recommendations to Government on future of local government after local consultations
  - Ultimately led to establishing 46 unitary councils between 1995 and 1998



### ❖ Structural Change 2009

- Invitation issued by Government in October 2006 for areas to submit proposals for restructuring
- Twenty six proposals received including competing proposals from some areas
- Parliament approved creation of 9 new unitary councils from 1 April 2009

### ❖ Mayoral combined authorities

- Negotiation with Government by 6 local areas
- Creation of combined authority mayors and transfer of powers and functions to be exercised by mayors
- Approved by Parliament

### ❖ Locally generated proposals for unitary councils and council mergers

- Proposals received. Decisions for next Government