

Major debate asks what can an elected mayor do for a city and region?

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People in some of the UK's biggest cities including Birmingham, Coventry, Bristol and Liverpool will vote in May on whether they want and elected mayors – with the possibilities of polls six months later to choose an individual to be entrusted with the leadership of these cities.

But what does having an elected mayor really mean for a city and region? On Wednesday 29th February at the University of Birmingham a specially invited panel made up of Lord Heseltine, Lord Adonis, Petra Roth, Elected Mayor of Frankfurt and Catherine Staite, Director of INLOGOV, will discuss what having an elected mayor really means for a city and region.

The panel will discuss some of key questions surrounding the role of an elected mayor and the impact on local government:

- What does having an elected mayor in a major city like Birmingham or Manchester mean for the wider city region?
- What does an elected mayor mean for the roles and responsibilities of elected councillors, and for the strength of local representation in the future?
- How will elected mayors' work with other important new local roles like elected Police and Crime Commissioners?

The full panel for the event is:

- Patrick Wintour, Political Editor, The Guardian (Chair)
- Petra Roth, Elected Mayor of Frankfurt and President of the German Association of Cities
- Lord Michael Heseltine, Chairman, Regional Growth Fund
- Lord Andrew Adonis, Director of the Institute for Government
- Catherine Staite, Director, Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham

Catherine Staite, Director, Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham comments, *"The majority of the debate around elected mayors has focused on whether local people want an elected role of this sort. However, given that elected mayors already exist in local authorities from Hartlepool to Hackney and are a central plank of the coalition's localism agenda, a better question is what having an elected mayor really means for a city.*

Advocates argue that having a strong leadership figure can galvanise a city and drive forward change, but will the new breed of mayors really have the power to enact change given the amount of power which still resides with central government

Elected mayors have been a demonstrable success in some areas but in others there have been real problems. So what are the factors that deliver success or failure?"

ENDS

For further information or to register to attend the debate, contact Ben Hill, PR Manager, University of Birmingham, Tel 0121 4145134, Mob 07789 921163

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