



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE  
Chair, UK Statistics Authority  
1 Drummond Gate  
London  
SW1V 2QQ

19 December 2013

Dear Andrew,

The Government's December update to the National Infrastructure Plan contains series of statistics and graphical representations of seemingly questionable veracity. Building on the concerns which I know have been raised with you in a letter from my colleague Rt Hon John Healey MP, I am writing to ask if you would consider investigating the reliability of the data and methodology used in this document.

Page 9 of the National Infrastructure Plan contains a graph showing the capital value of the infrastructure pipeline spread over communications, energy, transport, and four other sectors. I would like to draw your attention to the left-hand axis, which rather unusually uses a logarithmic scale. If recreated on a regular scale the visual impact of this chart is radically different. I am concerned about the skewed impression that the inclusion of such data representation gives.

The chart on page 6 of the document raises similar concerns. The representation of comparative infrastructure investment is accompanied by a heavily caveated footnote. Here questions are raised about inconsistent definitions of infrastructure investment in the source material used to compile the chart. The footnote goes on to acknowledge that the estimates used to construct the chart "are not comparable to pipeline data presented in this document". The acknowledgement by the Government that there were "challenges" in collecting this data is a cause for concern.

These are just two examples which raise serious questions about the veracity of this entire document, the sources of the statistics used, the methodology employed, and the presentation methods chosen, all calling into question the conclusions drawn.

Infrastructure investment is fundamental to strengthening our economy for the long-term, and an important element of current political debate. I am sure that you would agree with me that the



statistics on which conclusions about levels of infrastructure investment and associated political decisions are based, as well as the methodology and manner of presentation used, must be robust and reliable. I would be grateful if you were to investigate this document.

I look forward the hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris".

Chris Leslie MP

Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury