

Rt Hon John Healey MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

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

10 December 2013

Dear Andrew

Page five of the December update to the National Infrastructure Plan states that "Treasury estimates now indicate that average annual infrastructure investment has increased to £45 billion per year compared to an average of £41 billion per year between 2005 and 2010". This statistic is re-enforced by a graph on the following page.

Infrastructure investment plays an essential part in the economy and an important part in political debate, so it is therefore imperative that these statistics are robust and reliable. A footnote to the quoted passage admits that there were "challenges when collecting this data", that the figures do not derive from consistent source material, and that they are not comparable with the other data presented in the document.

Despite these admissions, the methodology by which the figures were produced is not made clear, nor are the timeframes which have been selected for comparison – 2005-10 and 2011-13 – explained or justified.

The figures appear to be Treasury-generated statistics, rather than National Statistics which, of course, are required to meet established standards of accuracy, integrity and clarity. Instead, both the sources and the methodology for producing the statistics are obscure. In light of these concerns and of the importance of such statistics to economic policy, I would be grateful if you would:

- 1 confirm whether or not these figures are National Statistics, the quality of which is overseen and guaranteed by the UK Statistics Authority; and
- 2 agree to review the sources, methodology and publication of these data against the standards set for National Statistics to assess the integrity of the Treasury's data and presentation in the National Infrastructure Plan.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Healey', written over a horizontal line.

John Healey MP