



The Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities (Outside London)

Chair: Councillor Sir Stephen Houghton CBE
(Barnsley MBC)

Vice Chair: Councillor Lord Peter Smith
(Wigan MBC)

Rt. Hon. C. Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Date: 1 November 2017
Contact: Frances Foster
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Dear Minister,

I am writing to you as Chair of SIGOMA¹ to express our concern following your statement in a [commons debate](#) on the Shipley Eastern Bypass on 19/10/17, in response to a question asked by MP for Hull North Diana Johnson.

As you are aware, we represent 46 local authorities (including Hull), based in regions that, according to HM Treasury figures on current and planned transport infrastructure investment, will continue to be severely underfunded compared to London.

However, the debate in question included the following exchange, confirmed as a correct record by Hansard, in which you appear to imply that this is not the case:

Diana Johnson (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab)

“As a Yorkshire MP, it is always good to see promises of investment in places such as Shipley. Nevertheless, this summer the Secretary of State said to The Yorkshire Post:

“The success of Northern transport depends on the North”.

Will he explain how, with London getting 10 times as much money for transport investment as Yorkshire and the Humber gets, that is going to happen?”

Chris Grayling

“I am afraid some of the figures bandied around by think-tanks in the north are simply inaccurate. We are putting more investment into transport in the north of England than there has been for decades and decades—into the road system and the rail system...”

The [figures in question](#), as quoted by the Rt Hon. Member for Hull North and implied by your reference to “*think-tanks in the north*”, would appear to be those originally produced by the think tank IPPR north.

¹ The Special interest Group of Municipal Authorities

Those figures are, in turn, based on the [National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline Autumn 2016](#), a dataset produced by HM Treasury and encompassing a range of planned projects and programmes including public investment in transport infrastructure, broken down by ONS region.

Our own analysis of the dataset, replicating IPPR North's methodology and discounting data for which no regional analysis was provided, matches their interpretation of the data closely.

As I'm sure you will agree, transparency in the allocation of public money is crucial to the Government's democratic accountability. We would therefore ask you to provide timely clarification of:

- 1) the specific organisation and data to which your statement in the house was directed
- 2) in what way specifically you understand the figures to be inaccurate
- 3) what your own Department's calculation of the ratio would be

If your Department believes that it is the underlying Treasury data that is inaccurate, could you please make this clear and provide data to exemplify your understanding of the regional split in publically funded transport infrastructure investment, including details of how this was arrived at.

I am sure you will appreciate that perceived lack of fairness in the allocation of transport investment remains a major and contentious issue across the country and that a solution that works for everyone can only be established following an accurate diagnosis of the problem.

I look forward to your response.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Houghton', written in a cursive style.

Sir Stephen Houghton

SIGOMA Chair