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Dear Dennis,

Further to the debate on infrastructure in which we both spoke on 2 July, and to my letter of 4 July, I wanted to write in more detail in response to your suggestions for improving transparency and scrutiny of major infrastructure projects.

The Government is very clear on the importance of transparency. As you rightly said during the debate, the IPA's Annual Report on the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) is a key tool for enabling Parliament, the public and others to scrutinise the performance of major projects. Since the debate, the 2018/19 Annual Report has been published on GOV.UK¹.

You proposed that Departments should respond formally to the IPA's Annual Report on the GMPP. At present, alongside the Annual Report, a spreadsheet² is published which contains more granular detail on each project in the portfolio. The data originates from the responsible Department themselves, as reported to the IPA. Importantly, this information also includes commentary from Departments on the actions that they are taking or planning to address any delivery concerns raised by the IPA.

The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC)'s first National Infrastructure Assessment also urges Government to do more in this area³, recommending that the forecast costs and benefits of major infrastructure projects are published at key points, and that work is done to ensure that costs can be benchmarked between sectors.

HM Treasury is working closely with the IPA and with Departments across Whitehall to consider Government's response to this recommendation. As announced at Budget 2018, the Government is planning to respond in full to all the National Infrastructure Assessment's recommendations through a National Infrastructure Strategy, to be published later this year.

¹<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infrastructure-and-projects-authority-annual-report-2019>

²https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817652/Annual_Report_on_Major_Projects_2018_to_2019_consolidated_data_and_narratives.xls

³National Infrastructure Commission (2018). *National Infrastructure Assessment*. Available at: <https://www.nic.org.uk/publications/national-infrastructure-assessment-2018/> (data and transparency discussed on pp.101-102)

In this context, your call for improved transparency is particularly timely. Ahead of the publication of the Strategy, I hope that this note provides some assurance that the Government is looking closely and actively at this issue.

I will also place a copy of this letter in the House library.

With all good wishes

Dianne -

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