
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir David Norgrove

Lewis Macdonald MSP
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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12 March 2020

Dear Mr Macdonald,

Thank you for your letter of 20 February about the use of figures in a recent press release by Transport Scotland concerning the new Aberdeen bypass. You were concerned that the data used in the press release were selectively chosen and not published in a secondary source. I share your concern about this selective use of unpublished data.

Transport Scotland is a producer of official statistics and as such should handle and use all statistics and data in line with the expectations set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics. We welcome Transport Scotland's plan to publish an Initial Evaluation report in the coming weeks¹ and recommend that Transport Scotland review its internal process for overseeing data used in press releases.

The Office for Statistics Regulation will continue to work with Transport Scotland to ensure that support is provided as it develops its practices and increases its awareness of the Code of Practice.

I am copying this letter to Andrew Paterson, lead statistician at Transport Scotland, and Roger Halliday, Chief Statistician in the Scottish Government.

Yours sincerely,



Sir David Norgrove

¹ <https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-27500>