

Rt. Hon. Jeremy Hunt MP  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

**Richard Hughes**  
*Chair*

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27 October 2024

Dear Jeremy,

Thank you for your e-mail of 25 October regarding the OBR's review into the preparation of our March Budget 2024 public spending forecast.

The review is concerned with adequacy of the information and assurances provided to the OBR by the Treasury regarding departmental spending. As such, it reviews the quality and extent of information provided to us by the Treasury in the usual forecast preparation meetings held in advance of the Budget. The findings and recommendations solely concern the institutional relationship between the OBR and Treasury. It does not disclose advice provided to ministers nor comment on, or refer to, the conduct or decisions of ministers.

In light of the above, and after taking advice from the Cabinet Office, we therefore do not consider it necessary, or appropriate, given the possible market sensitivity of some of the information contained therein, to provide ministers of the previous Government with access to the contents of the report and its conclusions before publication.

In line with OBR policy, I will be publishing this reply, along with the content of your e-mail, on our website.

Yours Sincerely,



Richard Hughes  
**Chair**

**Annex**

**Friday 25 October 2024**

**From: Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP**

**To: Richard Hughes, Chair**

**By email**

Dear Richard,

It has been made aware to me that alongside the Budget next Wednesday, the OBR is also intending to publish its review into the preparation of the DEL forecast in the March 2024 EFO.

I must say that this comes as a surprise and a significant concern. In your letter to the Treasury Select Committee announcing the review on the 29th July, you stated that the review would cover 'the adequacy of the information and assurances provided to the OBR by the Treasury regarding departmental spending.' As this covers my time as Chancellor, as a matter of procedural fairness I would have expected to have been fully engaged with throughout the review and given the chance to address any criticisms made.

I was not informed in advance of the review before it was announced. As of today, I am yet to receive any communication from either the OBR or the Treasury with regard to its contents.

I am a strong supporter of the OBR and worked closely with you and the Budget Responsibility Committee when I was Chancellor. I believe having an independent fiscal watchdog is vital for the UK's economic credibility and I am proud to have served in the government that set up the OBR in the first place. But I do not believe publishing a review with criticisms of the main opposition party on the day of a Budget is consistent with political impartiality. Nor is doing so without asking for views on its contents from the people with whom political responsibility lay at the time. Proceeding in this way would cross a line which would be impossible to defend as anything other than a political intervention.

I had serious concerns about the way the report was announced on 29th July, done with no prior notice at the same time as a highly political statement from the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons. The comments alongside that announcement gave the impression the OBR had pre-judged the outcome.

I chose not to make public these concerns at the time and it is a matter of deep regret that I am having to write this letter to you now.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy Hunt

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP

Member of Parliament for Godalming and Ash