

Jonathan Athow,
Deputy National Statistician,
Office for National Statistics,
Drummond Gate,
London,
SW1V 2QQ

Richard Hughes
Chairman

102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

obr.uk

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Dear Jonathan,

November 2020 *Economic and Fiscal outlook* and the 2020Q3 GDP dataset

As you are aware, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has never sought regular pre-release access to statistics. We have periodically sought and received exceptional pre-release access to specific releases to facilitate production of our forecasts ahead of Budgets and other fiscal statements. In these cases, the forecasts that have benefitted from the pre-release access are not published until well after the data in question. We do not use pre-release access to comment on data at the point of publication.

We provide the Chancellor with successive draft forecasts (termed 'rounds') ahead of each fiscal statement. The November 2020 forecast timetable requires us to deliver the final round of our economic forecast to the Treasury on the morning of 17 November. The GDP first quarterly estimate for Q3 2020 and GDP monthly estimate September 2020 releases will be published on 12 November. These datasets will be crucial to our understanding of how coronavirus has affected the economy so far and provide the starting point for our economy forecast which underpins the official forecast for the public finances. The OBR is therefore requesting 22 hours exceptional pre-release access to these releases.

We would limit the number of recipients to the minimum necessary. This would consist of the three members of the Budget Responsibility Committee, the OBR's Chiefs of Staff, and nine OBR officials. In broad terms, the pre-release access will allow one working day for processing and analysis by staff, one working day for discussion with the BRC and for judgements to be taken, and two working days for those judgements to be implemented in the economy forecast before it is distributed to HMRC/DWP after the ONS has published the data.

Warmest regards,



Richard Hughes
Chairman