

PRIME MINISTER

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TIMING OF THE AUTUMN STATEMENT

I mentioned to you yesterday that the Chancellor wished to postpone the timing of the Autumn Statement to give himself some time to consider the presentation of the new economic forecast.

We had originally been scheduling the Statement for next Thursday 9 November following Cabinet endorsement of the public spending plans the same morning.

The Treasury initially proposed deferring for a full week until Thursday 16 November. That however causes problems for the Prorogation, which is scheduled for that morning. If we were to have Cabinet endorsement of the public spending plans on the morning of Thursday 16th, followed by the Autumn Statement delivered to the House in the afternoon, that would delay Prorogation until the end of Thursday. It would mean effectively a further full days Parliamentary business, including another Question Time for you.

So we have now looked at the other possibilities and provisionally arranged to have the Autumn Statement on the afternoon of Wednesday 15th. We shall bring forward the Cabinet meeting that week to the morning of Wednesday 15th. This will mean the public spending plans do not have to be endorsed by Cabinet until just before the Statement, so removing the risks involved in having a long gap between Cabinet endorsement and publication.

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PAUL GRAY

1 November 1989

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