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I agree with the Chancellor about one thing. It is best if private conversations around the Cabinet table remain private. Every member should be able to put their case, and all come out telling us what was agreed. If we learn about everything that is said it makes it more difficult for Cabinet to consider awkward issues or unpopular views.

There seem to be two main arguments underway which are now the stuff of media speculation. There is the argument about public sector pay and spending levels. There is another argument about the nature of Brexit.

The pay round is now well advanced. The government did set guidance of a 1% overall payrise for the public sector. Individual Pay Review bodies can propose more in the light of supply/demand circumstances, current levels of pay and standards of living, comparability with other groups and the rest. Government is likely to accept the recommendations of the Review Bodies. I have suggested government give more consideration to productivity based deals where employees receive something for something, more money for working smarter. Government has plenty of scope to help employees work smarter with more technology back up and better training.

The issue of Brexit is meant to have been settled. The government reached a common position for the Article 50 letter and the White Paper. Apparently there are arguments about a transitional deal. We are still 20 months away from leaving, plenty of time to do a proper deal about our future relationship. Surely you would only consider an implementation phase near the end if there really are problems that will take a bit longer to work out. It will be no easier negotiating a transitional agreement than an agreement, so lets get on with the real thing.

There need be no cliff edge without an agreement. We know how WTO operates and what it looks like. There is plenty of time to put in place the landing rights, customs checks and the rest for continued EU trade. We should be doing that just in case there is no deal.