

1. Before we start I want to say a couple of things. Firstly, we had a long session on compensation. I have heard today from the Under Secretary of State for Transport, Mr Goodwill. He is going to supply the Committee with the Need to Sell draft guidance but it will be in confidence before Christmas because it is not yet a public document. The Committee will be briefed by department officials early in the New Year. The plan at the moment is for the launch of the scheme sometime in the middle to end of January on both the Need to Sell and the Voluntary Purchase Scheme. At least that should give us an opportunity to look at it and to have some input before final decisions are taken.

2. I shall also give a Committee decision on Washwood Heath. On Washwood Heath we were impressed by the submission from AXA and our colleague, Liam Byrne. We sympathise with the need to address high unemployment in and around his constituency. We