



PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate use

## BAA ACCUSED OF PLAYING WITH RESIDENTS' LIVES OVER PROPERTY BOND LETTER

On 7th April 2009 BAA sent a letter to residents in the third runway demolition area saying that it hoped to soon activate the company's scheme to buy up their homes. However it now appears that BAA was nowhere near ready to go ahead.

Christine Taylor, Vice Chair of NoTRAG reacted to the news: "BAA said it aimed to end the uncertainty surrounding people's homes but this letter just increased their worries. If the scheme was not ready to be introduced, BAA should not have jumped the gun. Senior executives at BAA are playing with residents' lives."

Colin Matthews, BAA Chief Executive, stated in his letter that BAA was working with "airline colleagues" to finalise a proposal that they hoped to announce "in the coming period".

The airport operator was apparently in discussions with airlines to raise the money needed to purchase properties in the villages of Sipson and Harmondsworth.

Mr Matthews claimed the aim was "to give those residents who wish to end the uncertainty surrounding their homes, a chance to move on as soon as practically possible".

While some local people have suffered hardship because they need to move and cannot find buyers prepared to accept the BAA bond as a guarantee against property blight, the majority have no plans to leave their homes.

The letter, which had even been sent to council tenants, raised fears about the impact of the new scheme on the community and the likelihood that it would actually increase blight.

The Property Market Support Bond Scheme was originally intended to start when BAA applied for planning permission, not expected before summer 2010.

The letter generated so much concern that John McDonnell, MP for Hayes and Harlington, asked Hillingdon Law Centre to run several public group sessions specifically for residents in the bond scheme area.

Unfortunately, the sessions cannot be arranged because BAA has not indicated how the new scheme will work. It is thought that at least one of BAA's airline colleagues is reluctant, or unable, to release the funds needed to pay residents to move out.