

**THAMES VALLEY
PROBATION**

Strategy

2009 to 2012

December
2008

**FOREWARD TO TVP
STRATEGY REPORTS**

2009-2012

Thames Valley Probation developed its three year strategy through from April 2007 until its formal launch in March 2008.

As we now develop our three year plan for 2009/12 it is right to review the strategy and refresh it in the light both of our own progress and developments that have taken place nationally.

Nationally the most significant development has been the creation of the new NOMS agency, creating a single correctional services agency encompassing the separate traditions and functions of the National Probation Service and Her Majesty's Prison Service.

Internally the most significant achievement has been the steady and sustained improvement in operational and organisational performance which was recognised by the Director of Probation in his decision to remove Thames Valley Probation from its "Directed Improvement" status.

More significant however than both these developments is the financial context in which NOMS and Probation in particular has to operate over the rest of the current Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period and beyond. Having expected three years of flat cash last year we received some additional money for offender management, and then the investment to support the plan to Reduce the Prison Population (RPP). Early indicators suggest our efforts to contribute to the RPP have had a positive impact on the use of imprisonment locally, have helped us to improve compliance, and have supported our strategy to restrict demand. But we now know that we will have to sustain this on a significantly reduced budget, which will reduce even more significantly in each of the two subsequent years. Achieving value for money whilst maintaining even similar levels of service delivery will pose a major challenge.

As a result, the recently published criteria for acceptance of Probation Areas to become Probation Trusts places a greater emphasis on efficiency and economy than was the case for first wave trusts.

We believe that this refreshed strategy will deliver not only acceptance of Thames Valley Probation as a Trust in good time for April 2010, but also confidence of successful and effective operation as a Probation Trust thereafter.

In 2008 we still looked back at the hurdles Thames Valley Probation had faced since its creation in 2001. In this refresh we are able to look forward with confidence based upon real improvement and success.

We have proved that performance can be turned around, but now we need to use that progress as a springboard for further improvements and for changes in how we do business. This is against a background of :

- The requirement of the Offender Management Act 2007 that all areas should achieve Trust status by April 2010
- Broader and more rounded appraisal of success for Trusts published in October 2008
- A tough financial environment for the next three years and the efficiency and economy tests that will determine the acceptance for Trust status
- An increasing demand for our services
- The need to consolidate and enhance the reputation of Thames Valley Probation through demonstrable improvement in performance
- The legacy of high staff turnover and the lack of experience and confidence of staff
- The need to ensure that value for money is achieved in all that we do or commission/through the rigorous application of Best Value criteria.

THESE ARE OUR CHALLENGES

- We must fully implement end to end offender management as the various phases come on stream, applying consistency, continuity, commitment and consolidation.
- We must consolidate and enhance the reputation of Thames Valley Probation through demonstrable improvement in performance and through engagement with local partners and stakeholders
- We must reduce staff turnover, and thereby improve our overall level of experience and confidence, and
- We must achieve efficiencies and economies that demonstrate value for money to government and to the communities of Thames Valley

WHAT SUCCESS MEANS:

- Effective provision of end to end offender management and development of integrated offender management arrangements with the police and with other agencies
- Our staff in a position to prescribe and provide services to reduce the likelihood of reoffending.
- Recognition to operate as a Trust, with the freedoms associated with the new status.
- Thames Valley Probation being seen as the lead provider of choice for offender management services in Thames Valley.
- Greater public confidence and recognition for what we do.
- A more experienced, competent, innovative, diverse and balanced workforce.
- The ability to manage our workload and priorities
- Clarity about resource allocation to provide or commission services and
- Enhanced status and leverage in our dealings with local authorities and other local statutory and voluntary services and agencies, evidenced in our contribution to Local Area Agreements and forthcoming Comprehensive Area Assessment

We have much more that we wish to do. This strategy outlines what needs doing and how we intend to do it.

MISSION

Our job is to protect the public in the Thames Valley and turn offenders away from committing further crime.

Working together with our criminal justice partners, local authorities, statutory and voluntary sector partners, faith and private sector organisations, we tackle offending behaviour by providing effective community sentences and by working with offenders released from prison on licence.

Our work to **reduce reoffending** involves supervision, managing unpaid work as community punishment, intervention programmes and enlisting appropriate support to enable improved outcomes for offenders. Our approach is based on individual assessments which actively recognise and respect diversity.

To **protect the public**, suitably experienced, supported and trained staff use rigorous risk management processes. We effectively enforce orders and licences to required, measurable standards. We work with local partners to support and protect the victims of crime.

In the **Thames Valley community**, by informing and working inclusively, we seek to retain the confidence of the local population and the support of community leaders, elected representatives, judges and magistrates. We work with commissioners and local providers to make the most efficient use of our collective resources in all aspects of our service delivery.

In essence, our mission is:

Less Re-offending, Fewer Victims

VISION

Thames Valley Probation will be a Trust which is recognised as high performing both by The Ministry of Justice and by other agencies

This means that :

- we will work effectively with other criminal justice agencies and partners to make our community safer
- we will make an integral contribution to the Thames Valley Local Criminal Justice Board's target of reducing crime by 10% by 2010/2011
- we will be the lead provider, commissioner and the partner of choice for other agencies in delivering local services to offenders and their victims
- we will achieve high standards of quality and performance throughout the whole organisation
- we will deliver value for money services
- our results will demonstrate our effectiveness and improve public confidence in everything we do
- our diverse staff will have confidence and pride in the organisation and their individual and collective achievements

CURRENT POSITION

In 2008 we said:

We have made significant improvements in performance and operation but this remains variable and therefore vulnerable to changes of policy or environment.

Investment in training of staff and their managers has had an impact on confidence, competence, accountability, but the employment environment and changes to training arrangements mean that further investment is necessary.

Management of the highest risk offenders and MAPPA is much enhanced, but this level of progress needs to apply to the management of medium risk offenders.

In 2009:

We recognise that we have made progress in all three areas but sustaining that progress and reaping its rewards remains a longer term process.

STRENGTHS:

- Management of the highest risk cases

- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
- Approved Premises – again a high self assessment, externally validated
- Innovation : Restorative Justice, Double Waking Night Cover, Victims' Manual, Alcoholics Anonymous training, Reducing the Prison Population, non Accredited Programmes
- Relations With Courts and Sentencers – demonstrated at Sentencers' Conference in October 2008
- Commitment And Values of Staff
- Programme Delivery and Retention
- Drug Rehabilitation Requirement number and completeness
- Compliance – and the use of the Reducing the Prison Population money to enhance compliance
- Enforcement of orders and licences
- Prolific and other Priority Offender Tracker Arrangements – as the basis for enhanced compliance and integrated offender management
- Victim Liaison
- External communication – including Local Crime Community Sentences
- Ability to turn round poor performance – end to end enforcement, Pre-Sentence Report timeliness
- Our “Bridging” service to employment or training provision
- Measured impact on rates of reoffending
- Budgetary control

WEAKNESSES:

Progress has been made to address our weaknesses and this list is shorter than was the case one year ago. But progress needs to be continued and sustained in these areas :-

- Inconsistency of delivery
- Risk Management at Tier 3,2 and 1
- IT & Systems: Performance Information & Data
- Assessment of offender needs and addressing them
- Sentence Planning & Review
- Lines & breadth of accountability throughout the workforce
- Confidence, training and support to staff
- Unpaid Work stand-downs
- Victim perspective in Offender Management

KEY PRIORITIES

Our priorities have not changed significantly since March 2008, and we have demonstrably worked at these priorities in the last year. But none of them was going to be “achieved” in one year as they are priorities for the medium to long term.

In the light of developments over the past year we have re-ordered our priorities somewhat, but we will continue to make:-

- **INVESTMENT IN REPRESENTATIONAL CAPACITY** : we want to be instrumental in improving the collaboration between the criminal justice agencies and our other local partners and stakeholders. We will continue to play our full part in Local Area Agreements to secure provision, leverage and access to meet the needs of offenders. We will develop integrated offender management with the police to achieve investment from partners. We will reinforce representation to fulfil our local commitments and reflect proposals in the KPMG report to NOMS about Local Delivery Units.
- **INVESTMENT IN VALUE FOR MONEY WORK** : by investment in process management and in support of effective local commissioning. The financial context means a necessary greater priority for economy and efficiency. We have appointed Business Process Improvement Managers who will ensure that we have lean processes that push our staff investment towards front line delivery and contact.

We are participating in regional best value work in relation to both Community Payback and Accredited Programmes.

- **INVESTMENT IN PERFORMANCE** : data on reoffending rates in the last year demonstrates the impact that we are having on offending; we continue to achieve that through processes and targets that are reflected in the Integrated Probation Performance Framework. We are now out of “Directed Improvement” but we want to make high performance “business as usual” in Thames Valley Probation and we need to achieve a “green” rating to be assured of a successful application to become a Trust.
- **INVESTMENT IN QUALITY IMPROVEMENT** : our Quality Improvement Process QuIPS, has operated for one year and is providing feedback to staff on good and less good practice and recording. This is supporting staff, providing confidence and identifying areas for further training and development.
- **INVESTMENT IN TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT** : uncertainties remain about the future national training requirements for front line delivery staff. We

have appointed a new Training and Development Manager; we have continued to invest disproportionately in the Trainee Probation Officer programme; we have tested new induction arrangements for Probation Service Officer grades; and we have provided a broad but systematic raft of training for the assessment and management of risk.

- **INVESTMENT IN MIDDLE MANAGEMENT** : the need to lead and support delivery and ensure accountability is undiminished, and we have appointed a significant number of new middle managers; the investment in their management skills and their leadership qualities will remain; and we have identified further investment for specialist managers not necessarily involved in direct service delivery.
- **INVESTMENT IN INFORMATION AND DATA QUALITY** : the quality and applicability of information for managers to use has improved considerably (including that on disproportionality and on the impact of our plan to reduce the prison population) and work has taken place in parallel to improve the entry of data and to clean up legacy data; we have also for the first time provided “needs” data to support our local discussions about priorities against national indicators for Local Area Agreement negotiations.
- **INVESTMENT IN USER AND STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK** : we have re-introduced the European Excellence Model self assessment process annually to support feedback from staff, users and other stakeholders. Surveys of sentencers, unpaid work offenders and beneficiaries and other groups of offenders have started to influence service design and provide material for scrutiny by the diversity monitoring group. A regional survey of women offenders is planned.
- **INVESTMENT IN DIVERSITY** : our new arrangements for the management approach to diversity have started to operate but they will need to demonstrate their impact over time. The refreshed Race Equality Scheme is now in place. The Women Offender Strategy has been launched and champions are identified; our proportion of BME staff has been maintained and progression

has improved. User feedback and improved data will help identify and address shortcomings.

- **INVESTMENT IN COMMUNICATION AND BRANDING** : Thames Valley Probation's brand is now recognised and accepted, as is the mission statement of "less reoffending, fewer victims". We have had some notable publicity coups in the year and will feature in television coverage in the New Year. We need greater investment in internal communication (which is supported by the intranet) to parallel our external achievements and recognition.
- **INVESTMENT IN SENTENCER LIAISON** : in the context of the national plan to reduce the prison population we have been able to talk to sentencers about our need to manage demand, target resources, improve compliance and propose positive community sentences instead of custodial ones (immediate and suspended). Following our successful conference we have agreed topics for liaison in the coming year which reflect these priorities. There is some early trend data to suggest PSR authors and sentencers are changing their behaviour.

WHAT IS CHANGING:

- How we manage and hold all staff to account for their work
- How we decide what services to provide for offenders and what are the best services
- How we make the sentence plan the core of the work with the offender, so that interventions are identified, delivered and received
- How we prioritise our work, how we control demand, and so how we manage workload
- How we train and develop and support staff
- How we recognise best work and address the worst
- How we engage at Thames Valley and local levels to champion our work and represent the needs of offenders effectively

WHAT WILL BE DONE:

√√√ Accomplished Fully

√√ Significantly

√ Partly

❖ Implement the recommendations of the OMI of August 2007 by:

- fully delivering on the OMI action plan √√√

- introducing and embedding a quality improvement system to drive best practice and monitor its impact ✓✓
- ensuring that sentence planning is at the heart of service delivery and meets quality standards, especially in relation to victims and to risk of harm assessment and management plans ✓

❖ **Manage workload and demand to ensure that resources truly follow risk by:**

- developing a proactive demand management strategy ✓✓✓
- reviewing concordance between proposals and sentences ✓✓
- improving the targeting of programmes ✓✓✓
- reviewing our processes to maximise effectiveness and value for money ✓

❖ **Provide staff with the confidence, competence and management tools and processes to do their job properly by:**

- engaging staff to ensure a clear focus on business process improvement ✓
- ensuring a closer match between staff resource and expertise and the expectations made of staff ✓✓
- ensuring that the career development part of the appraisal is integrated into training plans for the following year ✓
- providing investment in training to support business priorities ✓
- seeking to influence the design and delivery models for future Probation Officers' (PO) and Probation Services Officers' (PSO) training ✓
- reviewing staff supervision arrangements in line with revised middle management arrangements ✓✓
- continuing to encourage innovation and the spread of good practice through staff awards and incentives ✓✓✓

❖ **Improve managerial capability and expertise by:**

- reviewing middle tier management to ensure concentration on our service delivery priorities and the support and development needs of staff ✓✓

- developing fuller representation of Thames Valley Probation at key events to maximise our leverage, reputation, and contribution and therefore our outcomes for offenders and victims ✓✓
 - continuing to develop management training and refining and adapting the programme that has been successfully delivered over the last two years ✓✓
- ❖ **Ensure integration and interdependence with partner agencies providing criminal justice, local government and health services by:**
- supporting joint services to fulfil, for example, end-to-end enforcement, PPO provision and Unpaid Work Requirements ✓✓✓
 - supporting partner goal achievement by providing localised analyses of re-offending ✓✓
 - developing new joint services to reduce the impact of crime and re-offending caused through substance misuse and mental health disorders ✓
- ❖ **Apply value for money criteria to all that we do – or commission by:**
- initiating projects to review areas of the organisation identified through business planning that will ensure that the quality and value of work is competed at the correct cost and within a controlled environment ✓
- ❖ **Improve Thames Valley Probation brand reputation and communication processes with users, staff and stakeholder by:**
- implementing and embedding a new corporate identity ✓✓✓
 - improving internal communication processes and tools via intranet development and team briefings ✓
 - improving community confidence in Thames Valley Probation through positive publicity ✓✓✓
 - aligning communication resources with the strategic three-year priorities, including Local Area Agreement (LAA) developments and other commissioning opportunities. ✓
- ❖ **Ensure offenders needs are fully met in a timely manner by:**

- rigorous, comprehensive, accurate and timely assessment and review of need, demand, risk of harm and likelihood of re-offending ✓
- thorough and appropriate targeting and matching of initial need with provision in presentence and parole reports ✓✓
- effective management of workflow with minimal delay between offender management and interventions ✓✓
- meticulous performance forecasting, monitoring and remedial action ✓✓

SUCCESS CRITERIA - EXTERNAL:

- Confidence of Ministry of Justice to have Thames Valley Probation as the local lead provider
- Recognition from Sentencers and the Parole Board – for quality and timely reports and assessments

- Recognition from Local Authorities/Health/Offender Learning and Skills Service, that they need our access and insights and collaboration if they are to deliver their goals
- Increased voice in decisions and resource allocation – so that offenders needs are recognised and addressed
- Increased ability to provide information - and so evidence need, success and achievement
- Confidence of the local Criminal Justice partners

SUCCESS CRITERIA - INTERNAL:

- Greater recognition of good work and good staff
- Greater pride and confidence and satisfaction for staff
- Safety of being fairly, transparently and soundly managed
- Confidence that priorities and workload are being successfully managed
- Expectation that underperformance will be managed or managed out
- Improved professional development
- Greater knowledge of our caseload of offenders, their needs and how to address them confidently
- Greater knowledge of the impact of what we do

- More effective use of time, effort and money

RISKS

HURDLES/CONSTRAINTS:

- Capacity to identify, train and retain a good middle management tier in the context of a history of difficulties in the recruitment and retention of skilled, experienced and specialist staff.

- Constantly increasing demand for our services with no corresponding increase in resources.
- Changes to Probation Officer/Probation Services Officer training at national level, especially if Thames Valley Probation has constraints or extra demand locally that is not encouraged/assisted centrally
- Limitation of Integrated Case Management System, loss of National Offender Management Information System, changes to Integrated Probation Performance Framework and to new reoffending measure which undermines our knowledge base
- Complacency/loss of urgency following positive risk of harm score in Offender Management Inspection and successful end to Directed Improvement
- Criminal Justice/policy/sentencing changes which impact on demand management/prioritisation/ workload initiatives
- The complexity of Thames Valley in terms of geography, local governance, house/pay costs, lack of coterminosity, multiplicity of partnership bodies – which is not going to go away
- Organisational instability as the National Offender Management Service agency develops

IMPACT OF FAILURE

- Loss of good staff at all levels
- Deterioration in staff morale
- Uncertainty about offender need – poorly targeted services

- Reduced effectiveness of risk management and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, so public less well protected
- Increased re-offending due to bad practice or inadequacy of interventions
- Loss of confidence of Criminal Justice agencies and other local stakeholders and partners
- Deterioration in reputation/possible external intervention

⇒ Non achievement of Trust status

STRATEGIC AIMS

By 2011/12 Thames Valley Probation commits:

- To be a high performing Probation Trust to protect the public and reduce re-offending
- To maximise the benefits of working with external partners to manage demand, increase income, improve access to services and demonstrate efficiency

- To deliver effective processes, liaison and systems across the whole organisation
- To develop a confident, skilled, enthusiastic and diverse workforce with the capacity to innovate to achieve the mission
- To become a nationally recognised lead provider of choice
- To ensure all work is value for money driven
- To have the high quality support services required to achieve organisational aims
- To work to a strategic direction with effective supporting business planning processes, quality management and sound leadership

TIMESCALES/MILESTONES

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|--|
| <u>October 08</u> | : | - | Offender Management Inspection Action Plan follow-up report signed off by Minister |
| | : | - | Sentencers' Conference |
| | : | - | Wave II applications due |
| <u>November 08</u> | : | - | Publication of KPMG report and new criteria for Trust applications |

- December 08** : - National Director removes Thames Valley Probation from Directed Improvement
- Business Planning for 09/10
- January 09** : - Scope for collaborative work with Hampshire to be agreed and planned
- : - Service Level Agreements to be agreed for 09/10
- : - European Excellence Model Self Assessment to Board
- : - 09/10 Budgets notified to Areas
- February 09** : - Quarter 3 Integrated Probation Performance Framework published – indicative for year end status (only green areas can apply as Trusts)
- : - Wave III applications due
- March 09** : - Publish 3 year Strategy for Thames Valley Probation (refresh)
- : - Draft Trust application to Thames Valley Probation Board for challenge and scrutiny
- : - 3 year Business Plan agreed by Thames Valley Probation Board
- April 09** : - Wave II Trusts established
- : - Thames Valley Probation draft application subject to external challenge and scrutiny process
- May 09** : - 2008/09 end year Integrated Probation Performance Framework published
- : - Deadline for intended submission of application for Trust status for Thames Valley Probation (Wave IV)
- June 09** : - Application reviewed for Panel interview (or Performance Improvement Plan)
- : - Ministers advised of outcome

- July 09** : - Potential move to shadow Trust status (if application endorsed)
- : - Wave V Trust applications due
- August 09** : - Wave V Trust Panels held
- : - Quarter 1 Integrated Probation Performance Framework published
- September 09** : - Wave VI trust applications due
- October 09** : - Final interview panels for Trust applicants and Ministers advised
- November 09** : - Quarter 2 Integrated Probation Performance Framework published
- December 09** : - Business Planning for 10/11
- January 10** : - European Excellence Model Self Assessment to Board
- February 10** : - Quarter 3 Integrated Probation Performance Framework published
- March 10** : - Publish refreshed Thames Valley Probation Strategy
- : - Business Plan 10/11 to Thames Valley Probation Board
- April 10** : - Successful Waves III to VI applicants formally established as Trusts

