

Thames Valley Probation

Head Office, Kingsclere Road, Bicester, Oxon. OX26 2QD
Tel: 01869 255300 / Fax: 01869 255355
www.thamesvalleyprobation.gov.uk



Ref: MF/NBM

For the attention of Derek Holmes

Editor
Oxford Times
(by email)

14 September 2009

Dear Sir

The campaign against locating the Oxford probation office in West Oxford, and specifically in Trajan House, Mill Street, has made four main claims, which have unfortunately been accepted at face value. Every one is false.

CLAIM 1: that crime increases near a probation office. FALSE. Detailed investigation shows that around Kitts Green, Birmingham, the campaigners' chosen example, crime has actually fallen slightly since a probation office opened there in 2007.

CLAIM 2: that Trajan House would be "unique" and residents would become "guinea pigs for a social experiment". FALSE. We have identified over 20 probation offices of similar size in similar residential areas in southern England, for example in Cambridge, Crawley, Colchester, Eastbourne and Maidstone. Indeed, it is important that the probation service is not kept apart from the communities it serves.

CLAIM 3: that we are planning a huge, fortress-like "Mega-centre". FALSE. Trajan House will be an ordinary medium-sized office block. Our office will employ around 100 staff and will have a conventional entryphone security system. We simply need a local office for Oxfordshire, one of 12 probation offices in Thames Valley.

CLAIM 4: that the office would exacerbate existing drug problems in Mill Street, along the Thames towpaths and in Osney Cemetery. FALSE. Probationers with drug issues will not be managed from this office. A probation office in Trajan House would more likely deter the dealers and users residents complain about.

The WOCAMP campaign has created genuine and damaging fears, without justification and against the public interest. Our website www.thamesvalleyprobation.gov.uk provides reassurance and evidence that the campaign's claims are simply not true.

Our work to protect the public and reduce re-offending is vital to a healthy and safe society. We are sorry to have lost Trajan House, but look forward to being good neighbours in another building.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Malcolm Fearn".

Malcolm Fearn
Board Chair