



## Press Statement from Thames Valley Probation

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Issued: February 24, 2009

### Possible merge of Thames Valley Probation's Oxfordshire offices

In response to speculation about the closure of Thames Valley Probation's Banbury office, the Chief Officer for Thames Valley Probation, Gerry Marshall, said today:

'it is true that we are looking at ways to restructure our Oxfordshire offices, including a merger of the current office sites within the county into one central location.

"This is a development that has been under consideration for some time. Funding for this merger has been made available centrally and options are actively being considered. The rationale is to increase efficiency of probation operations, ensuring that all services and offender programmes are able to be delivered in one place rather than being dispersed.

"I should however say that it is likely such a development would still require one or more local reporting centres to be retained where travelling distances are great.

"I would also like to stress that Thames Valley Probation remains committed to reducing re-offending and protecting the public. Any changes that are made will not alter that commitment."

ENDS

### Notes for Editors

Gerry Marshall has also commented today on a future reduction in posts within Thames Valley Probation. He said:

"In line with all probation areas and other public sector bodies, Thames Valley Probation will have a reduced budget over the next few years. For Thames Valley, this equates to a cut of about £3.5m from our current budget of approximately £26m per annum. These cuts are entirely unrelated to the possible restructure of Oxfordshire offices.

"We have had full and frank discussions with the trades unions and have told them we expect to have fewer posts at Thames Valley Probation over the next three years. We do, however, expect this to be less than the 140 being quoted and that sufficient numbers will be lost naturally through staff retirements, by not replacing some staff when they leave and allowing existing staff to train into different roles."

### **Justice Minister David Hanson MP said:**

"The Ministry of Justice must make savings and this includes the Probation Service. We want to provide the most cost-effective route to help rehabilitate and punish offender, using tax-payers money sensibly. Central savings have been maximised to ensure there is a minimum efficiency saving of 2.2% across operational budgets in Probation. This is in the context of a 70% increase in Probation funding in real terms over the last 10 years and a significant increase in staff.

"Public protection is the main priority of the Probation Service and it will not be put at risk - offenders who pose the highest risk receive more intensive contact, with other resources being directed accordingly."

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### **Thames Valley Probation**

Thames Valley Probation works with adult offenders, supervising them through their Community Orders and assisting with rehabilitation. We also supervise offenders released from prison on licence and work with victims of serious crime. The main aim of the service is to increase public protection and reduce the re-offending rate. Community Payback is the

name and logo used for the Unpaid Work that offenders carry out. It has been designed to highlight the work of offenders to put something back into communities in which they've offended.