



Press Statement from Chief Probation Officer Gerry Marshall on behalf of Thames Valley Probation Board

Issued: June 19, 2009

'On Monday, June 15, Thames Valley Probation held an open day at Oxford Town Hall, where we had detailed discussions with West Oxford residents and representatives of the WOCAMP group about our proposals to open an office on the former Gillman and Soame site, Trajan House, at the end of Mill Street, Oxford.

'This site had been identified for us as the most suitable in Oxford to meet the needs of our service, within criteria agreed with the Ministry of Justice.

'Since then, we have revisited the proposals with the Home Office Property General (HOPG), who are responsible for identifying and developing properties for the probation service nationally, and we have had a full meeting of Thames Valley Probation Board, which was addressed by three Mill Street residents.

'In the light of these lengthy discussions, we have made the decision to temporarily freeze current negotiations with the developers of Trajan House. The purpose of this freeze is to enable agents on behalf of HOPG to thoroughly review all the alternative sites that were initially rejected and to identify any new ones that have since become available.

'Because of the time constraints on Thames Valley Probation to move out of our existing Oxford property, Albion House, this freeze can only be for a limited period but Thames Valley Probation is serious in its wish to explore any possible preferable site that meets our needs within the search criteria. The freeze starts on Friday, June 26 and will last for six weeks.

'However, we must also make it clear that Trajan House remains in the frame, alongside the other properties identified within the six week timeframe. If, at the end of that period, it still proves to be the most suitable within the criteria, then we would intend to press ahead with our plans for an office on that site.

'In the meantime, we are keen to work with community representatives to ensure the search is comprehensive and explores all possible avenues open to us.'

ENDS

Notes for Editors

Additional information

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.

For more information, visit our website at: www.thamesvalleyprobation.gov.uk or contact Fiona Tarrant, Communications Manager, fiona.tarrantr@thames-valley.probation.gsi.gov.uk