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**CRIMINAL BAR CHAIR WARNS THAT SPEED
MUST NOT OVERRIDE DUE PROCESS**

Max Hill QC, Chairman of the Criminal Bar Association (CBA), which represents criminal barristers in England and Wales, has welcomed plans to increase the efficiency of the criminal justice system, but has warned that cost-cutting must not stand in the way of justice.

The Government has today published a White Paper on reform of the criminal justice system, which makes a number of proposals in relation to the administration of the criminal courts.

Max Hill QC said:

“The Criminal Bar Association endorses the Government’s view that the criminal courts need to become more efficient, and we welcome many of the proposals contained within this White Paper, but others risk undermining justice and due process.

“We are particularly concerned about the increased presumption that cases will be run in the Magistrates’ Courts based purely on the financial value of the case. This is a blunt instrument which may not properly reflect the severity of the offence, and demonstrates the Government’s commitment to cheap justice.

“We cautiously welcome efforts to increase transparency by allowing cameras into courtrooms for sentencing remarks. This must, however, be carefully monitored to ensure that tight judicial scrutiny is maintained and that the parties in the case are consenting.

“Late and weekend court sittings enabled the criminal justice system to manage its vastly increased workload following the summer riots, but longer hours are not the answer to inefficiency. They place a strain on the courts and on court workers, and may lead to delays and poor outcomes.”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

1. For further information, please contact the [Bar Council Press Office](#) on 020 7222 2525.

2. The [Criminal Bar Association](#) exists to represent the views of the practising members of the criminal Bar in England and Wales.