



**Corks Lane
Hadleigh
Ipswich IP7 6SJ**

**MEDIA RELEASE
28th February 2003**

BABERGH BRINGS MORE FRAUD CASES TO COURT

Babergh District Council has issued 4 summonses for failure to disclose information as required by the Social Security Act 1992. The cases will be heard by Sudbury Magistrates at 10:00am on 7 March at Acton Lane, Sudbury.

Babergh's Head of Revenues Bob Southgate, commenting ahead of the cases of alleged fraud said "people think that because the summons has been issued by the Council, this is simply a bureaucratic procedure".

"That is not the case, we grant Housing Benefit because people are in need. Not being open and honest with the information we need to assess any entitlement means that benefit is overpaid".

"We go to great lengths to make it clear to people that they must always give us full details of their income and circumstances. Yet we still find, when we cross check against other records or receive information, that some of their income has been left off a form or their circumstances have changed since they applied for help" explained Mr Southgate.

Having signed a declaration to say everything on the application is true and they will let us know if their circumstances change, if that is not the case, the consequence is a summons for fraud.

Fraud is a criminal matter just the same as stealing money. It's no good saying 'I'll pay it back'. By then it's too late" Bob Southgate concluded.

The amount of benefit overpaid is recovered separately, if necessary, using the County Court to obtain a judgement. ENDS

For further information, please contact Bob Southgate, Head of Revenues on (01473) 825789