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**MEDIA RELEASE
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**BABERGH'S TENANT SERVICES GETS 'THUMBS UP' FROM GOVERNMENT
INSPECTORS**

Tenants, Councillors and staff at Babergh District Council's housing service have at least two reasons to celebrate today as a government report described their service both as good ('two stars') and having excellent prospects for improvement.

The report, produced by an inspection team from the Audit Commission, showed that tenants have high satisfaction levels with most parts of the service, as well as good access to those services. The inspectors highlighted the continued programme of improvements made to the housing stock, the active involvement of the Tenants' Forum and the successful introduction of innovations such as the new Estate Ranger.

At the same time, the inspectors identified areas for further improvements including debt advice and the need for changes to the existing council house allocations policy.

Babergh's 'two star/excellent improvement prospects' rating places it in the upper echelons of Local Authorities. As of January 2003, of the 342 tenant services functions investigated, only 27% had received a two star or better rating and only 14% were deemed to have excellent prospects for improvement.

"The findings of this report provide a clear and unambiguous 'thumbs up' for everyone involved in tenant services – including the positive contribution made by the Tenants' Forum" noted Chris Foti, Babergh's Head of Housing.

"However, we are far from being complacent and welcome the Audit Commission's suggestions as to how we can further improve the services we provide." ENDS

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