



**Corks Lane
Hadleigh
Ipswich IP7 6SJ**

**MEDIA RELEASE
20th March 2003**

**BENEFIT FRAUD PROSECUTIONS MAINTAIN BABERGH'S 100%
RECORD ON FRAUD**

Babergh District Council's drive to target Housing Benefit cheats has scored further successes with the outcomes of recent prosecutions against four residents.

On 7th March, Sudbury Magistrates dealt with the four after Babergh had issued summonses alleging Benefit fraud.

Three of the defendants pleaded guilty. All received a 12-month conditional discharge. Costs of between £50 and £225 were also awarded to the Council.

The Magistrates also issued an arrest warrant, against Dejemal Faris who failed to attend for the hearing. "This shows how seriously Magistrates take the issue of Housing Benefit fraud" said Bob Southgate, Babergh's Head of Revenues. "Mr Faris will now be arrested by the police and held in the cells until his case can be heard.

Mr Southgate continued, "Babergh is pleased that all of those cases heard on the day resulted in guilty pleas. This reflects the thoroughness with which our Investigations staff research and prepare for these prosecutions."

"These successful prosecutions should reassure those who stick to the rules and send a clear message to the cheats. You will be found out!"

Babergh maintains a 24 hour Fraud Hotline (01473 825797) and urges anyone who may suspect that a Housing or Council Tax Benefit fraud is taking place to call them on it.

ENDS

For further media information, contact Paul Simon, Communications & PR Officer
(01473) 826634