



**Corks Lane
Hadleigh
Ipswich IP7 6SJ**

**MEDIA RELEASE
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**BABERGH CONSULTS ON WAYS TO DEFEAT 'THE DESPERATE
PROBLEM OF LOCAL HOMELESSNESS'**

Babergh District Council is hosting a special conference on Thursday April 10th aimed at stepping up the fight against local homelessness. The conference will consist of a number of practical workshops, a review of the impact of the new Homelessness Act and an address from a representative of SOLO Housing – a charity for the single homeless.

In combination with its partners, Babergh has a proud track record of tackling homelessness, including having facilitated the building of 54 homes with registered social landlord partners since 2000. However, it is recognised that there are further benefits to be had from even closer working arrangements. Therefore, Babergh has invited over two dozen local organisations concerned with the issue of homelessness – with bodies such as Age Concern, Suffolk Probation Service and the Richmond Fellowship (which focuses on housing for those suffering from mental health problems) having confirmed their attendance.

“ The 2002 Homelessness Act imposes a legal duty on district councils to carry out a review of homelessness within their areas and then prepare a strategy to tackle the problem” explained Councillor Sue Wigglesworth, Chair of Babergh’s Housing Task Group “Although Babergh has been working hard, for many years, to tackle this problem, this conference will help to identify the full extent of the issue and to agree our priorities in tackling both the causes and effects of being without a home. Our aim is nothing less than to defeat the desperate problem of local homelessness.”

Babergh has currently 59 residents on the Homeless Register – with another 1400 on its waiting list for a council house. Hadleigh provides a good example of the extent of the problem. The market town has 74 families looking for a bungalow, 116 for flats, 27 for sheltered bungalows and 35 for sheltered flats.

David Clarke, Babergh’s Housing Support Manager and organiser of the conference explained “Hadleigh is particularly short of 3 bedroom houses for young families. The despair and worry that all residents on the housing waiting list – but especially those with young children – go through is very distressing indeed. Babergh is committed to ensuring that there is suitable and appropriate accommodation for all – and this conference is a first step in making that aim a reality”. ENDS

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