

Important Information

ANNEXE 18

The enclosed summons has been issued by Brighton & Hove Magistrates' Court on behalf of **Brighton & Hove City Council** for not paying your Council Tax.

The amount shown on the summons (including the cost of issuing the summons) should be paid before the court hearing date, to avoid the Council applying for a Liability Order against you, which will incur additional costs (details of what a Liability Order is, are given on the back of this letter).

If you are unable to pay the outstanding balance in full before the Court hearing date, you should pay as much as you can afford to reduce the debt. After the Council have obtained the Liability Order, we will send you a letter explaining about the Liability Order and enclose an information request form.

The information request form must be completed and returned to the Council within 14 days. There is space on the reverse of the form for you to make an offer of repayment. No offer will be considered unless a payment (of the amount you are offering) accompanies the completed information request form.

No arrangement can be agreed at Court, either by the Magistrates or the Council; therefore, there is no need for you to attend Court unless you are disputing that you are liable for Council Tax.

The two basic defences against a Liability Order being granted are: -

- i) The amount has not been demanded in accordance with the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992
- ii) You have paid in full.

If the Council prove that you are liable for the Council Tax, the Magistrates will issue a Liability Order.

Awaiting the outcome of a Council Tax Benefit application is not a defence against a Liability Order being granted. If you have any queries regarding your entitlement to Council Tax Benefit, you should contact the Benefit section on (01273) 292 000 without delay.

If you have any other queries regarding your Council Tax, you should contact the Council Tax department before the Liability Order hearing, so that your query can be investigated.

Details of how to contact the Council Tax Department, are shown on the back of this letter.

A Liability Order gives the Council the authority to: -

- a) Request information about your earnings and whom you work for etc.
- b) Instruct your employer to make deductions direct from your wages.
- c) Apply to the Department of Works and Pensions for deductions from your Income Support, Job Seekers allowance or Pension Credits (Guaranteed).
- d) Instruct Bailiffs to remove goods to the value of the debt.
- e) Start Bankruptcy proceedings against you.

