

**CRUCIAL
to have
your say**

TOWER HAMLETS housing chiefs are urging tenants and leaseholders to make sure they respond in the current housing choice referendum.

Completed papers must be returned to Electoral Ballot Reform Services by 12 pm tomorrow (March 8), but it is also possible to vote by phone.

Tenants and leaseholders are being consulted separately, but housing bosses stressed they were "very keen" to hear leaseholder's views.

Any tenant or leaseholder who has not received a voting paper can call (020) 7531 0220, 7564 7062, or 7564 7192 for help.

David Edgar, Tower Hamlets lead councillor for housing, said: "This is a crucial referendum that gives tenants and resident leaseholders the chance to have their say on the future of their borough."

The borough's housing department is facing a £29m shortfall in its budget and continuing loss of income as homes are sold through the Right-to-Buy process. Whatever the outcome of the referendum, all estates will remain with the council for now.

East London Advertiser

Tuesday 07th March 2002. Page 04

The popular The Gun pub showing some of the charred debris on the pavement outside after the fire

two hose reels. Damage was caused to half of the

Notice on door to customers

Probe into alleged physical threat by council leader

Threat by Council leader



Clr Abbas: Denies claim

THE Leader of Tower Hamlets Council is facing an investigation after he was accused of allegedly physically threatening a female Labour Party activist.

Councillor Hehai Abbas was at a heated meeting to select Labour candidates to fight Shadwell ward in May's borough elections but tempers are believed to have frayed when a conclusion was not reached.

Liz Collins was part of the Local Government Committee (LGC) policing the meeting and when proceedings were closed without a conclusion the mood is alleged to have turned nasty.

Sean Gardner, chairman of the LGC charged with heading the selection process for the elections - said: "It was too late to complete the ballot, it was then passed on to the regional party to conduct a postal ballot."

He confirmed that there was an allegation that Clr Abbas had made a physical threat to Liz Collins and the LGC was investigating this.

Mr Gardner added: "There were a number of allegations, it was late and emotions were high."

Clr Abbas told the Advertiser: "I wasn't part of the meeting so I'm not aware of any such investigation."

news extra

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**EXCLUSIVE BY
PAUL MARINKO**

otherwise to anyone at that meeting. Manir Uddin Ahmed is believed to have topped the ballot but later votes to separate Clrs Michael Keith, Abbas Shukur and Bodral Alam were inconclusive.

The meeting is thought to have heated when proceedings were closed without deciding who were to be the other two candidates.

A Greater London Labour Party (GLLP) spokesman said Clr Keith, the lead member for regeneration and tourism, had made it through but there was a tie between the two other candidates for the final seat.

A postal ballot was then conducted by the GLLP to decide whether Abbas Shukur or Bodral Alam should be the final candidate and Clr Shukur is believed to have won.

But some party members are said to be fuming because the ballot asked them to vote for the candidate they DIDN'T want and there are fears that some confused voters plumped for the wrong one.

The GLLP spokesman said this was how they had conducted tied ballots in Tower Hamlets in the past and it was done again to be consistent.

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