

Nuclear waste is a toxic question

HAVE you noticed, with the exception of the Green Party, how little mention is made in the main parties' manifestos about nuclear power generation and especially about their policies for dealing with nuclear waste?

Living in Cumbria this is of particular relevance as 70 per cent of the country's high level radioactive waste is already here at Sellafield.

The only party to even mention the word "waste" in its manifesto, albeit briefly, is the Liberal Democrats on page 32: "Accept that new nuclear power stations can play a role in low carbon electricity supply provided concerns about safety, disposal of waste and cost are adequately addressed and without public subsidy for new build."

The Conservative Party's manifesto states: "We need a Conservative Government to see through this long-term plan and secure clean but affordable energy supplies for generations to come. This means a significant expansion in new nuclear and gas; backing good-value green energy". There is no mention about waste.

The Labour Party's contribution is: "We will create an Energy Security Board to plan and deliver the energy mix we need, including renewables, nuclear, green gas, carbon capture and storage, and clean coal". Again no mention of waste.

UKIP's only mention of "nuclear" in its manifesto is: "To deliver secure, affordable energy supplies, we support a diverse energy market based on coal, nuclear, shale gas, conventional gas, oil, solar and hydro, as well as other renewables where these can be delivered at competitive prices". Yet again no mention of waste.

Considering that West Cumbria is being promoted as Britain's Energy Coast dominated by the nuclear industry, it seems remarkable that only two parties' election leaflets distributed in the Copeland constituency even mention anything to do with power generation - The Green Party's wish to phase it out and Jamie Reed's enthusiasm for the proposed new-build plants at Moorside.

It should be remembered that, if all goes to plan, Moorside will have been decommissioned long before the end of the century but the country's increased



TUCK IN: From left, deputy Mayor of Workington Carole Armst buying cakes from Lesley Jackson at a coffee afternoon in the care charity. The afternoon raised £350

stocks of radioactive waste will remain toxic for a further 100,000 years.

None of the leaflets mention anything about nuclear waste despite many constituents' concerns over the coalition Government's "Implementing Geological Disposal" policy.

This is widely seen as yet another attempt to get a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) constructed in West Cumbria despite the area's known geological shortcomings.

Talk of "volunteer communities" and "a show of public support" are all meaningless without clarification of what these terms mean. They are wide open to misinterpretation and manipulation to suit a government's objectives.

Added to this with GDFs now being classified as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (by a very dodgy/undemocratic parliamentary process) the Secretary of State for Energy can authorise exploratory drilling and construction work without seeking local planning permission.

As any decision to construct a GDF within Cumbria will affect residents and businesses throughout the county, the Cumbria Trust has sent a questionnaire to all Cumbrian General Election and Copeland Mayoral candidates to get clarification of their views.

So far only 10 out of the 34 candidates have responded. In respect of Copeland responses are still awaited from Jamie Reed (Labour) and Danny Gallagher (Lib-Dem).

If you or any of your reporters get the opportunity to speak to these and other Cumbrian candidates, you too might wish to get clarification of their views on the GDF policy and don't let them fob you off with gen-

eralisations such as "volunteer communities" and "a show of public support".

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