

SNP demand answers from Lib-Dems on Biomass – and we have them!

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP (Lothians)(SNP) is calling on local Lib Dem politicians to make clear their position on Forth Energy's proposals for a biomass plant in Leith. Her call comes after the local Lib Dem party distributed a "newspaper" with a front page story on the biomass plant but in which no councillor, MSP or candidate from the party actually expresses any opinion at all. On Saturday it was revealed that the Lib Dem Councillor for Leith Ward, Marjorie Thomas, advocated building the plant a couple of miles away in Seafield.

Ms Somerville lodged a motion in the Scottish Parliament before Christmas calling for a moratorium on large electricity-only biomass plants. It received backing from all parties except for the Tories. There was no support from Lothians Lib Dems for the motion.

Ms Somerville said:-"Between the newspaper and Cllr Thomas's comments I have to question where the Lib Dems stand on this issue. Their newspaper is completely devoid of any opinion – it looks like they're putting on a show of being involved, but ducking the big question of whether they support the biomass plant or not.

Cllr Thomas seems to suggest building the massive biomass plant at Seafield, which is extraordinary. Yes, there are major problems with the current proposed location for the plant. But there are also fundamental problems relating to size, inefficiency, pollution and many more which cannot be fixed simply by moving it along the road – that just moves the problem. I think we're entitled to know what Lib Dem

politicians are really thinking about this issue”.

Commenting, Liberal Democrat Edinburgh Northern and Leith candidate, Dan Farthing, said:

“We took the view that we should ask local people what they thought and not to presume to know better. People are fed up of politicians taking a high handed attitude and assuming they know what the public think.

“Our volunteers delivered thousands of leaflets across the constituency by hand to let people know about the consultation and our own online survey.

“It beggars belief that the SNP are criticising us for making people aware of the consultation. They are seeking to score cheap political points rather than build a local cross party campaign.

“Using the results of our local survey I made a submission to the consultation making it clear that while biomass does have a role to play in Scotland’s energy mix this scheme is not right for Leith.

“By listening before we shouted we have been able to raise a wide range of the specific concerns of local people.

“Our next leaflet will report back to local people about the details of my position. I would suggest the SNP look to their own local inactivity during the consultation period before they start throwing stones.”