

Group calls for 'blunder' investigation

BY ANWEN HUMFREY

A PLANNING 'blunder' has forced an eco village project back to the drawing board, according to the team behind the north Pembrokeshire proposal.

Lammas say its plans for a hamlet of nine eco dwellings in Glandwr have been dealt a further blow, following the second rejection of the application by county planners in September.

The applicants appealed to the Welsh Assembly, but have now been told that the application is invalid and cannot be considered because an access statement was not included.

Lammas blames Pembrokeshire County Council for the omission, which it describes as a "technical blunder", and says it will now have to start the planning process from scratch.

The group says the county council advised that an access statement would not be needed. An access statement provides detail of how sites will be accessible for disabled and non-disabled people.

A council spokesman said the original application was submitted before access statements became a requirement in 2007.

He said: "There is an onus on an applicant to submit a valid application.

"While there was some discussion at the time with the agent about an access statement, this was ultimately not submitted.

"The council is unaware that, according to Lammas, it was advised by the authority that an access statement would not be required.

This allegation will be investigated further.

"Consideration is being given to how this issue can

be resolved. It is not clear yet whether a new planning application will need to be submitted," the spokesman added.

Lammas has written to Jane Davidson, minister for environment, sustainability and housing, asking her to intervene.

Lammas co-ordinator Paul Wimbush said: "This amounts to gross negligence on the part of the planning authority and is totally unacceptable.

"We have bent over backwards to work within the planning system and time and time again have been obstructed by the planners."

He added: "If sustainable development is the overarching objective of the planning system, as is often claimed, then Pembrokeshire County Council planning department needs to be asked some serious questions."