

Developer at end of tether

By **ELGAN HEARN**

BUSINESS leaders have labelled the island's planning authority as 'destructive', saying it needs to be more helpful rather than a hindrance.

However, the council said that whilst it always wishes to work positively with the private sector, "this will not be achieved at the expense of local and national planning guidance".

Geoff Davies, of St David's Park caravan and camp site in Red Wharf Bay, said: "Our major problems have been with the planning authority.

"We want to develop new spa leisure facilities worth £5m, but we've been in discussions on this for the last two to three years.

"We don't feel there's anyone in our corner and that we are just butting our head against a brick wall."

Martin Williams, of Cartio Môn, added: "I feel that many good business ideas get lost at the planning process.

"The planning department should be more pro-active than destructive."

Glyn Pritchard-Jones, chairman and chief executive of property company St Malo, is equally exasperated.

He believes Anglesey's planning chiefs are "fast tracking" projects

UNHAPPY: Chairman and chief executive of property developers St Malo, has lost confidence in Anglesey County Council's planning department.



'Destructive' planning department under fire

where the council or Welsh Assembly Government are involved – a claim which the council "totally refutes".

In recent weeks he has wanted to meet with interim managing director, David Bowles to discuss planning issues that he has with the department, but Mr Bowles has refused to meet him.

Mr Pritchard-Jones said: "I just feel that private businesses who want to invest in the island, create jobs, create wealth that will be good for the whole island, are being put off because of

problems with the planning department.

"I've spoken to many fellow developers who feel the same way but don't want to say it publicly in case they put some planning officer's nose out of joint.

"But I've come to the end of my tether.

"Like many others we've gone down the road of putting our land up for inclusion in the Local Development Plan, this has now been stopped.

"We've no real idea of what's going

on with it, when will it be finished and it's creating uncertainty.

"In the end we're coming to the conclusion, why bother investing on Anglesey?"

A council spokesman said: "The county council totally refutes allegations that it favours public sector applications over those of private businesses. Each individual planning application received is judged on its merits.

"The number of planning complaints received from private sector is very few in number.

"The Local Development Plan process, which the council is currently undertaking, will require very extensive public consultation and will include an opportunity for the business sector to have its say.

"We welcome business development which will aid economic development and job creation. Indeed, we are committed to encouraging worthwhile and realistic economic applications

which will bring benefits to the island community and its residents.

"However, council members and officers must always be careful in their deal-

ings with developers, given the significant financial benefits to developers which can arise from a successful planning application.

"Whilst always wishing to work positively with the private sector, this

will not be achieved at the expense of local and national planning guidance and we must always guard against those who would seek to bring inappropriate influence to bear on the authority."