

# FINANCIAL TIMES

## Nimbies rise up against building projects

By Daniel Thomas  
Property Correspondent

Published: March 7 2009

Attitudes have hardened against new property development despite the promise of new jobs that could be created in the recession.

More than one in five people of those surveyed have objected to a project in the past year, according to Saint Index, an annual survey of public attitudes to property development in the UK.

The study says that Nimbyism - the acronym of Not In My Back Yard used to describe opposition by local residents - is on the rise across the country.

Some 85 per cent of respondents say they would oppose development in their local area, broadly the same level as last year's survey, but active Nimbyism has almost doubled in the past two years.

Almost 30 per cent have actively opposed applications in the past year, compared with 24 per cent in 2007 and 16 per cent in 2006. Meanwhile, active support for development is the same at 6 per cent.

"Nimbyism is hardening in Britain," said Nick Keable, UK vice-president of the Saint Consulting Group. "Although it is possible we may have reached the high water mark for general opposition, those that are against development are becoming more aggressively active in opposing schemes.

"It is bad news for everyone involved: the property industry, developers, central government and local authorities."

Private residential projects are most actively opposed for reasons such as traffic, protection of green space, community character and protecting property values. "Negativity towards office development is still inexplicably high," the report also says.

All airport expansion was viewed negatively, with Heathrow the least favourite location for further development, but the report found support for London mayor Boris Johnson's proposal to build an airport in the Thames estuary.

People were less opposed but still generally against large supermarkets but opposition has hardened against power stations and quarries.

There was widespread scepticism about government housing targets, with three-quarters saying the ambition to build 3m homes by 2020 was unrealistic, while the government's eco-town proposals were seen as the "most ineffective way to tackle the housing crisis".

The report says more than 70 per cent of people are not satisfied with their council's performance on planning, compared with 65 per cent in 2008. About half thought that community views were not listened to in the planning process.

Mike Saint, chairman of Saint Consulting, said the UK was by far the most opposed to development compared with similar polls it conducted in the US and Canada. The company questioned 1,000 people in the UK in January and February.

[http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/5145f602-0ab8-11de-95ed-0000779fd2ac.html?nclick\\_check=1](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/5145f602-0ab8-11de-95ed-0000779fd2ac.html?nclick_check=1)