

## Nimbyism 'hardening' in Britain

Flemmich Webb, PlanningResource, 9 March 2009

**Planners face an increasingly difficult struggle to get public acceptance of development projects, according to an annual survey of public attitudes.**

The UK Saint Index found that the percentage of people that have objected to a development project in the past year has increased to 21 per cent of the population, up from 13 per cent in 2007.

General opposition to development is running at 85 per cent, down one percentage point from last year, while the percentage of the population who actively favour developments remains at six per cent.

People's responses do depend on what type of project is under consideration. Schools (43%) and windfarms (21%) are the most popular, ahead of private housing (19%), new roads (17%) and convenience food (12%).

People seem to be less negative towards supermarket plans but are more opposed to power stations and quarries, the survey of 1,000 people showed.

It also found that nearly three quarters of people were unhappy with their council's performance on planning, an increase from two thirds last year, while half the population think they don't have enough say in the planning process.

The study also revealed some confusion about the new Infrastructure Planning Commission, with people saying that planning decisions should be made locally, not nationally, but should be made by experts, not elected politicians.

"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 nationwide.

"And it's bad news for everyone involved: the property industry, developers, central government and local authorities."