

Quarry Management

Quarries now most opposed sector in the UK

Issue date: March 18th, 2009

BRITISH attitudes have hardened against various types of land development, particularly quarries, even in the midst of economic recession and with the promise of new jobs that such projects can bring, according to the latest UK Saint Index – an annual survey on public attitudes to development.

The 2009 survey carried out by The Saint Consulting Group in January/February found that quarries have reached a new all-time low, for the first time beating casinos and power stations as the most disliked form of development in the UK.

Each year the Saint Index survey asks 1,000 members of the public across the UK whether they support or oppose development across a wide range of industries, in order to produce a NIMBY (not in my back yard) 'hate list', which ranks the projects most opposed, and a NIMBY 'approval rating', which produces a net finding of support or opposition.

According to the latest survey, the aggregates industry's NIMBY approval rating has dropped from – 61% in 2008 to –80% this year, leading all other property sectors by six percentage points as the most opposed type of land use. This deterioration is despite efforts by the industry to make the link in public perception between quarries and the essential nature of the products they produce.

In the 2009 report, the greatest opposition to quarries was found to be in eastern England (91%) and the South East (90%). The survey also found that the older the age group, the more against quarries people tended to be, while social class and voting intention had no major bearing on the level of hostility.

According to Saint Consulting, it appears that overall general opposition to development may have reached a plateau at 85% of the population, but Britain's hardcore contingent of active NIMBYs (ie those who have actually objected to a development project in the last 12 months) has increased to 21% of the population.

'MIMBYism in hardening in Britain,' commented Nick Keeble, 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 that's bad news for everyone involved.'