

**EMBARGO: until 11<sup>th</sup> Mar 2008**

## **Annual barometer of public attitudes to development released**

The third annual survey of public attitude to property development in the UK carried out by The Saint Consulting Group has been released.

In the only survey of its kind, the Saint UK Index<sup>®</sup> questioned 1,000 people throughout the UK in February 2008. An overall summary of their responses is that:

- Government policy and public opinion are pulling in different directions over development. 68% of Brits say the goal of building three million new homes by 2020 is unrealistic
- 86 percent of British public can now be classified as NIMBYs, and one in four households has actively opposed a planning application in the past year
- In advance of the local elections in May, councillors need to think hard about planning; 65% of people are not satisfied with their council's performance on planning
- The growing NIMBYism across Britain is being driven by the late baby boomers, a generation who were the first rebellious teenagers and who are now rebelling against the planning system
- Despite two billion pounds being spent on planning gain in England by the development industry (2006 University of Sheffield/Halcrow Group Study), 69% of people cannot identify any planning gain in their community
- Residential development is becoming less and less popular
- Food store development – both convenience and supermarkets – is becoming more unpopular
- Casinos are still the poster child of hated development

The survey is a wealth of information – please consult the attached headline results. It records attitudes to different types of development, provides a breakdown by country/region, shows people’s attitude to the planning system and tackles public opinion on topical issues like planning gain, the carbon footprint of hauling aggregates to new homes, waste treatment and eco-towns.

Mike Saint, Chairman and CEO of Saint Consulting, commented:

“What we have found in our regular surveys across the US, Canada and the UK is that, despite there being differences between culture, land values and economic cycles, the issues remain the same: a growing tide of NIMBYism is frustrating all manner of property development and thus hurting economic growth.”

The results also provide a NIMBY Hate List and a NIMBY Approval Rating, which show which type of development is the most popular and unpopular.

Nick Keable, UK Managing Director of Saint Consulting, added:

“The results of this year’s Saint UK Index are even more interesting than last year. We are seeing NIMBYism increasing and local community activism against development spiralling upwards. Driven by the late baby boomers, what one might call the ‘invested generation’, this activism bodes badly for the Government’s flagship policy of massively increasing residential development; yet more bad news for Gordon Brown.”

Other interesting findings were:

- Almost a quarter of all households have objected to a planning application in their local area in the last year – a dramatic increase from last year (24% in 2008 compared to 16% in 2007)
- Eco-towns are widely supported – despite home building on this scale and to such a high eco-standard never having been achieved before, 66% of the public agree with the eco-town concept
- Public consultation – the current approach to public consultation on development projects is fundamentally flawed as only 9% of the public say public consultation had any positive effect on a project

Nick Keable added:

“With opposition increasing and support for development draining away, it is no great surprise that local authorities are frustrating developers’ planning application ambitions. The multi-million-dollar question therefore remains: how can the development industry identify and motivate its supporters to counteract councils’ negativity?”

**Note to Editors:**

Nick Keable is available for interviews at MIPIM in Cannes, 11-13 March, and in London during 17-21 March. Contact Paul Mindus at Saint Consulting ([mindus@tscg.co.uk](mailto:mindus@tscg.co.uk) or 07990 56 8667)

The Saint Consulting Group began operations in 1983 and today is the global leader in land use political consultancy. Saint has 11 offices around the US and international offices in London and Toronto. As experts in land use politics, Saint Consulting provides political campaign expertise to win complex or controversial planning decisions. Among the property sectors that use its services are: aggregates, food retail, shopping centres, hospitals, landfill, mixed-use developers, housing, and utilities.

The Saint UK Index<sup>®</sup> research quantifies and tracks the politics of land use, spotlighting who actively opposes and supports real estate projects and why. It was first conducted in the US in autumn 2005, in the UK in March 2006 and in Canada in April 2007.