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NIMBYism hardens in Britain – UK Saint Index[®]

British attitudes have hardened against development, even in the midst of economic recession and with the promise of new jobs that such projects can bring, reports the latest UK Saint Index[®], the annual survey on public attitude to property development.

Overall general opposition to development may have reached a plateau at 85% of the population, but Britain's hardcore contingent of active NIMBYs (those that have actually objected to a development project in the last year) has increased to 21% of the population.

“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.”

In the only survey of its kind, the UK Saint Index[®] questioned 1,000 people throughout the UK in January and February 2009. Please consult the separate Headline Results for more details. The top 10 findings are:

- NIMBYism has potentially peaked at 85% (2008 - 86%, 2007 - 83%, 2006 - 84%) but hardened NIMBYs have increased from 13% in 2007, to 17% in 2008 and now to 21% in 2009. Meanwhile, active support for development continues to plateau at 6%
- Despite economic hard times, 51% of the public believe that planning gain packages should not be reduced to help improve project viability
- In the NIMBY Approval Rating, wind power is one bright spot on the development front. Wind farms are the second most popular project with 23% support, behind schools at 43%, but ahead of private housing (19%), new roads (17%) and convenience food (12%). People are now less opposed (but still negative) towards supermarkets but more opposed to power stations and quarries
- Private residential projects are most actively opposed (51% compared to 40% last year), for consistent reasons – traffic 25%, protection of green space/ environment 23%, protecting community character 21%, proximity to one's home 17% and protecting one's property value 5%

- Government housing targets continue to take a pounding. 74% now believe three million homes by 2020 is unrealistic and eco-towns are seen as the most ineffective way to tackle the housing crisis
- Heathrow is the least favourite location for further airport development
- This has been a better year for food retailers. Convenience food store development has become more popular and, whilst still viewed negatively, supermarkets have also climbed up the NIMBY Approval Rating. However, the public clearly supports the Competition Commission's attempts to introduce the fascia test with a clear 65% majority
- The public seems confused about the new Infrastructure Planning Commission. Most say decisions on such projects should be made locally, not nationally, but should be made by experts, not elected politicians. At the same time, the Government's new Community Infrastructure Levy lacks clear-cut public support. While 55% say they would support a new tariff-based system, 65% still support a case by case negotiation between councils and developers
- In advance of the local elections in June, councillors should beware: 71% of people are not satisfied with their council's performance on planning, compared to 65% in 2008. In addition, half the population think community views are not listening to adequately in the planning process, while only 25% think they are

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

“The UK is by far the most opposed to development based in our regular surveys across the US, Canada and the UK, and curiously the British public is far less inclined to help developers in the throes of economic recession. While there are differences in 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.”

Ends

Notes to Editors:

Nick Keable is available for interviews at MIPIM in Cannes, 10-12 March, and in London during 16-20 March. Contact Paul Mindus at Saint Consulting (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 10 offices around the US and international offices in London and Toronto. As management consultants specialising 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: residential, retail, commercial, quarrying and mining, windfarms, oil refineries, nuclear, rail freight, hospitals, waste and mixed-use.

The UK Saint Index© annually quantifies and tracks the politics of land use, spotlighting who actively opposes and supports real estate projects and why.