

Public distrusts developers either side of Atlantic

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LONDON (Reuters) - Some truths it seems are universal. A new survey published on Monday shows that on both sides of the Atlantic people distrust property developers.

The survey by the Saint Consulting Group, a leading land use political consultancy, found that 83 percent of people in Britain, 75 percent in Canada and 73 percent in the United States opposed new developments on their doorsteps.

At the same time 75 percent of Americans, 60 percent of Canadians and 58 percent of Britons believed that there was an unhealthy close relationship between their local politicians and property developers leading to such developments.

Photo

"Developers need to question how to operate in this climate," said the group's UK vice president Nick Keable. "It is not about how good your project is. It's about the politics."

More than 90 percent of Americans, 87 percent of Canadians and 70 percent of Britons said the candidates position on developments influenced the way they voted in local elections.



Britain is in the throes of completely overhauling its heavily bureaucratic planning system to streamline the permission process for major infrastructure projects like roads, power stations and retail parks.

The survey found that, not surprisingly, opposition to developments was more active and organised than support for them.

But the overriding theme was NIMBYism -- the Not In My Back Yard syndrome -- with people not opposed in principle to major building projects, but just not wanting them in their neighbourhood.

Pet hates were local landfill projects, casinos, powerplants, quarries, offices, and supermarkets -- although that latter was strongly opposed by Britons but found to be only marginally objectionable by Canadians and Americans.

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