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Letter to the Editor

Deal properly with rubbish and don't waste time

From: Andy Ives, Burton-in-Lonsdale.

HAVING worked on putting into place effective waste-management systems in the middle of the Sahara desert, once again I am left in despair at poor precedents in the UK.

I did the Great North Run this year, and was amazed at the amount of rubbish that was left for the local council to collect. I also attended the **RWM** waste and recycling show, in Birmingham, to promote zero waste, and how to achieve it.

I came back from the run tired and sore and I came back from the RWM somewhat frustrated.

I must have spoken to 50 groups of people about the possibilities of zero waste using processing at source, and while everyone thought the idea was great, when it came to suggesting a trial, I got the Gallic shrug.

Everyone agreed that the system of collecting recyclable materials and then transporting them around complete with what is essentially a lot of air, is a flawed concept. Clearly, it makes more sense to condense it down before you transport it.

The mobile Materials Recycling Facility I have been using in the desert is a fully functional recycling unit in a shipping container. Put it down, open the doors, start the generator and process waste. Simple.

Back to the Great North Run. Had there been a mobile MRF at 5km intervals, or near water stations, bottles could have been baled up on site, with lots of Cubs and Scouts collecting the bottles to squash. At least 150,000 of them.

Use the same MRF system at a supermarket, university, factory, outdoor event and, suddenly, you are making

huge savings.

Imagine not having big vehicles collecting waste and charging you or your company, but having a vehicle collecting already processed waste and paying you for it.

Why are we not doing so? Probably because we are not a nation happy to take the obvious solution if it means making changes... and we love complaining about, among other things, plans to reduce the frequency of refuse collections.