

Waste: prevention is better than cure

Sir,

I found the article "Construction needs more waste recycling facilities" (*CJ* 11 January) extremely interesting and it raised some valuable points.

However, the push to recycle waste seems to miss the glaringly obvious point – that rather than just expanding our capacity to recycle, why don't we reduce the amount of waste the industry produces in the first place.

The construction industry has traditionally taken far too passive an approach to waste reduction, focusing solely on the cost implications, rather than the environment. In today's world, where environmental impacts should be high on the agenda, we must take waste reduction seriously to prevent over-use of resources, wasted energy in production and problems with disposal.

Up-to-date technologies and building methods present an opportunity to remove vast

amounts of waste. Modern methods of construction can deliver a consistent, streamlined, efficient approach to building, meaning that from the manufacture of components to the end product, waste is reduced at every stage.

Recycling does play an important part in providing sustainable construction. Steel is the most recycled material in the world, with roughly 95% of the steel taken from redundant buildings being recycled or reused. The rest of the industry has some way to go to catch up and the government must do everything in its power to facilitate improved recycling facilities.

However, the industry cannot simply sit back and wait. We must all embrace the building techniques that cut waste, reduce costs and help the environment.

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