



# THINK OUTSIDE THE BIG BOX

**Looking elsewhere** Demand for sheds from traditional sources is weak in Yorkshire so landlords, facing large empty rates bills, are having to think creatively to find alternative uses and occupiers. By *Daniel Cunningham*

You are a Yorkshire-based landlord with a vacant shed on your books, a hefty empty rates bill in the post and a few industrial occupiers knocking on your door. What do you do?

For an increasing number of landlords in Yorkshire, the answer is to find alternative uses for their stock, rather than relying on traditional demand from manufacturers and distributors.

“It’s definitely a growing trend,” says Rupert Visick, partner with Leeds-based industrial specialist Gent Visick. “It is driven in part by landlords considering the natural life cycles of their buildings, but also by the market.

“Landlords are forced to think in terms of ‘I have an industrial building, but I don’t have a host of occupiers knocking at my door, so whose door

**Where there’s muck: the waste-to-energy sector is a growth area for industrial landlords – but sites need consent for change of use**

should I be knocking on?”

Several options are open to landlords, say agents. For some, the priority is simply to avoid empty rates liability by paying firms to store merchandise temporarily (see box), or allowing charities to make use of space for free and foot the reduced rates bill that charities benefit from. Others are seeking longer-term alternatives, by either signing a

