

# Case study:

## *Swansea Council's Spend Cut in Half Thanks to Long-Life Litter Pickers*

### The challenge

Due to shrinking budgets and increased responsibilities, Swansea Council found that they needed to find a way to maintain efficiency within their street cleansing operations team.

### Background

Swansea Council covers a sizeable portion of South Wales, including open moorlands, rural villages, the Gower, an Area of Natural Beauty, and urban areas surrounding and including the City of Swansea.

Helping Hand Environmental has supplied Swansea Council with litter clearance equipment for over 20 years, primarily supplying the council with Litterpicker Pro® grabbers alongside Street Boss® and HandiCart Duo litter carts.

### Tracking and monitoring

Swansea Council operates a check-in/check-out system for tools and equipment, and this system allowed them to quickly identify a problem – the budget litter pickers were breaking far quicker and more frequently than the Litterpicker Pro® that had previously been supplied by Helping Hand Environmental.

Swansea Council soon discovered a significant hidden cost associated with the 'cheaper' litter clearance equipment. Street cleansing teams were less productive in the field, and Store Managers were investing more time in unsuccessfully trying to repair and reissue the equipment. The issue was exacerbated by the fact that the competitor brand offered no spare parts for the tools, rendering them useless.



### Trial and error

In January 2023, due to pressure from reduced budgets, Swansea Council's Cleansing Operations Leader - Matthew Bolt, decided to explore alternative litter clearance equipment. The new supplier's product looked the same but was cheaper than the Helping Hand litter pickers that had previously been used. 1000 of the litter pickers were purchased and distributed to Swansea Council's Street Cleansing Operatives.

*“The new supplier's litter pickers had misaligned jaws, the strings were snapping, and they just felt flimsy.”*

**Matthew Bolt,**  
Cleansing Operations Leader,  
Swansea Council

## Finding a solution

Swansea Council sought assistance from Helping Hand Environmental due to ongoing concerns about the sustainability and durability of their new products. Matthew discussed the council's needs and the issues encountered with the competitor's litter pickers with UK Sales Manager Stacey Lovering.

Matthew's primary concerns were focused on the price and sustainability of the product. While the Litterpicker Pro® was superior in terms of durability and sustainability, its price made it unattainable for Swansea Council.

With guidance from Stacey, Matthew decided to purchase the Community Litterpicker – a budget-friendly litter picker that upholds the quality standards of all Helping Hand Environmental products, while catering to the needs of councils and community groups with limited funding.

- ✓ **55% cost savings through longevity beyond the budget year**
- ✓ **More operational time for teams in the field**
- ✓ **Responsive and personalised service**
- ✓ **Spare parts available**
- ✓ **Improved sustainability**



The case of Swansea Council serves as a testament to the importance of quality, reliability, and personalised service in supplier relationships. Price will always be a significant factor when making buying decisions, but investment in the long-term value and performance of products, represents more of a significant cost saving.

## How Swansea Council saved funds

The Community Litter Picker has proven to be of superior quality compared to the cheaper alternative. The availability of spare parts ensures an extended lifespan for the equipment, further increasing its value for money.

The council estimates that by working directly with Helping Hand Environmental, they saved 30% on the initial investment. With the extended product lifespan, they are buying fewer products per year, resulting in an overall savings of 55% per year by reverting back to using Helping Hand Environmental litter clearance tools.

Furthermore, the personal and dedicated service provided by the Helping Hand Environmental team played a significant role in restoring the business relationship. Offering this personal approach allows the team to ensure that customer's specific needs and concerns are addressed, and the most suitable tools are provided.

Swansea Council's street cleansing teams use the StreetBoss® and HandiCart Duo, in addition to Community Litter Pickers. These heavy-duty litter collection carts allow for the separation of recyclables from general waste in the field, increasing the productivity and comfort of operatives.

“ Swansea Council's experience with competitor products mirrors our findings during in-house reliability tests. We have found that competitor products do not withstand our durability testing, reaching failure after around 30,000 cycles, as opposed to 120,000 cycles for Helping Hand products.”

**John Walters**, R&D Manager,  
Helping Hand Environmental



“ Tailored support from the Helping Hand Environmental sales team made it so much easier to make a decision that I felt confident about.”

**Matthew Bolt**,  
Cleansing Operations Leader,  
Swansea Council