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HAKO SHOWS TRUE GRIT FOR BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

As the extreme winter weather hits the UK one council that will not be left out in the cold is Belfast City Council after the timely purchase of gritters and forward throw snow brushes that attach to its fleet of Hako Citymaster 1200 sub-compact sweepers.

On the European continent, sweepers have a dual role and when the cold weather sets in, it's off with the sweeping brushes and on with the snow brush and gritter. "This is what made the 1200 so appealing to Belfast City Council," says Sam Moore, Managing Director of SP Plant who supplied the five machines in November 2007. "In a little over 90 minutes, the Hako Citymaster 1200 can have its brushes and suction box removed and the snow brush fitted. This was one of the features that helped secure the order. No other manufacturer could effectively offer the versatility that the 1200 could."

The gritter is mounted on the rear of the Hako Citymaster in locating pins and can hold up to 150kgs of salt or grit. As it is hydraulically powered, when the Citymaster 1200 starts to move, the gritter turns and when the machine stops, so does the gritter. With a spreading width ranging from one to six metres, it can also be used with the public in close proximity due the 'path dependent' feature on the gritter, which just allows salt to drop straight onto the floor behind the Citymaster.

In addition to this, SP Plant in conjunction with Hako Machines Ltd can claim another first – not only in Northern Ireland but also in the UK. Newry & Mourne District Council approached SP Plant about adapting two Hako Citymaster 1200 sweepers to accommodate a disabled driver who had a prosthetic left leg.

After taking a Citymaster 1200 to the council depot for a demonstration and following an in-depth discussion with the driver and the Health and Safety representatives, it was found that by changing a foot pedal to a hand operated lever and also by replacing the windscreen with a scratch resistant polycarbonate (which enabled the driver to extend his left leg into a small enclosed box constructed into the window) all the driver's requirements could be accommodated. This has all been achieved with no loss of ergonomics or performance and means that the machine is still easy to operate by able-bodied drivers.

Press Release



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"The Hako Citymaster 1200 was the only machine that was capable of being adapted due to its simple and robust construction," adds Sam. "Now the machines have been in operation for over a year and have proven themselves, Newry & Mourne are in the process of placing an order for a third machine – making them the second largest user of the Hako Citymaster 1200 in Northern Ireland."

Hako UK is part of the Hako Group, one of the leading manufacturers, worldwide, of technology for indoor and outdoor cleaning and grounds maintenance. The company has factories throughout Europe. For more information on Hako and its range of machines, visit www.hako.co.uk.

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