

# Memo

2 December 2019

To: All Devonport-Takapuna Local Board members  
cc: Eric Perry – Relationship Manager, Local Board Services  
From: Tristan Coulson – Senior Advisor, Local Board Services  
Kevin Walker – Senior Sports Maintenance Delivery Coordinator, Community Facilities

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**Subject: Response to Notice of Motion – Onehunga weeds at Devonport Domain, Devonport**

The purpose of this memo is to respond to the Notice of Motion (NoM) titled *Onehunga weeds at Devonport Domain, Devonport*, to be considered at the 10 December Devonport-Takapuna Local Board business meeting. This NoM has been moved by the Deputy Local Board Chair, and seconded by Member O'Connor.

## Background

At the June 2019 Devonport-Takapuna Local Board Community Forum, the local board received a deputation from the North Shore Cricket Club (the club) about Onehunga weeds flowering at Devonport Domain. The local board resolved and requested staff to investigate this matter, and develop options to address the issue. The NoM raised by the Deputy Local Board Chair is as follows:

- a) *seek dialogue with the representative of Auckland Council who is involved in this project and planning for the northern connection for this AWHC; and*
- b) *requests that the D-T LB have more frequent meetings with representatives of NZTA to enable this board to get a good understanding of the impact of transport projects in this area.*

## Response

### *Management of sports fields in the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board area*

The following sports fields in the local board area use a herbicide application called Bow and Arrow (the application) for weed control:

- Bayswater Park;
- Becroft Park;
- Stanley Bay Reserve;
- Sunnynook Park;
- Taharoto Park;
- Barry Point Reserve; and
- Dacre Park.

The only sports fields in the local board area where council does not use the application to spray is Devonport Domain and Vauxhall Reserve, due to a no spray zone. It is important to note however the application is currently used at Devonport Domain and Vauxhall Reserve on the

cricket wicket. This is maintenance to deliver the wicket to premier cricket standards and specifications.

### *Information on the Bow and Arrow application*

Council uses the application on sports fields after the winter season has come to an end (typically in September). The application is used once during the cross over period from winter to summer on sports fields to attack weed content in the turf.

During the application process, council are fully focused on applying all the right steps to minimize risk to the public, with signage, early morning applications, correct weather conditions. This is all recorded within the portal of our contract to review, at this stage council has not had any complaints or raised issues in the past from the general public.

Council are currently using a boom spray as a machine to do this application, this is one of the safest machines on the market, and it is generally applied between 6am and 7am. The application takes around 1 hour or more to apply, after this it takes around 3 hours (weather dependent) on how fast this will dry and be completed.

More information on the Bow and Arrow herbicide product is included as Attachment A.

### *Issues with Onehunga weed at Devonport Domain*

The challenges council faces are a heavy weeded profile on the Devonport Domain with Broadleaf and Onehunga weeds, this has created problems to control the weed and leaving council with a poor surface. The most dominant weed is Onehunga weed, which leaves prickles during the summer months and continually seeds throughout summer. The prickles create a sub-optimal playing surface, which has been noted by park users.

Since the recommendation from the June 2019 Community Forum meeting, staff from the Community Facilities and Parks, Sport and Recreation departments have met to identify the respective issues, risks and implications, and agree to discuss the best approach to resolve the weed problems.

A key issue that arose and is agreed by all council staff is that neighbours of Devonport Domain and wider local residents must be informed and understand the application, and how risks are mitigated and minimised when using it. This is suggested because the Devonport area has a long-standing 'anti-chemical spraying' position in council parks and reserves, and no prior notification or information will likely create a negative reaction in the community and criticism towards the local board and council.

Staff have spoken with the contractors and all agree that there is little that can be achieved to eliminate Onehunga weeds in the short-term. Applying the application at Devonport Domain not have an immediate effect, however will commence long-term improvements to the sports field and create a better playing surface.

Other operational challenges council are facing from this is transferring the contamination from the weeds to other parks after mowing the fields as this is transferred from clipping and machinery from park to park.

Staff advise that the most appropriate mechanism to manage the weeds moving forward is to work with the local residents, and apply some the application to stress these weeds out and encourage the summer grasses to grow within the field.

### *Summary*

Staff support measures to enable the application to be used on the sports fields at Devonport Domain and Vauxhall Reserve. Allowing the application to be used, which is consistent practice with other sport fields in the local board area will commence a long-term approach to minimise Onehunga and other weeds from Devonport Domain and Vauxhall Reserve.

It is also recommended that council staff and the club inform the wider community of this matter by holding a community meeting and distributing fliers to surrounding residents.

**Attachment A: Information on the Bow and Arrow application**