

MMCs outline plans in Ivory Park visit



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The City of Johannesburg has appealed to residents of Thabo Mbeki, Meriting, Baghdad among other informal settlements in Ivory Park, in the City's Region A, to manage and take ownership of their sewer infrastructure.

The plea was made following an oversight visit to the three informal settlements by the City's Members of the Mayoral Committee (MMCs) to assess the levels of service delivery as part of its Bua Le Setshaba (Talk to the Nation) campaign.

The squalid conditions under which residents of these informal settlements lived came under sharp scrutiny. Illegal electricity connections, blocked toilets, sewer and waste mismanagement were some of the major challenges the committee identified.

MMC for Environment and Infrastructure Services Cllr Matshidiso Mfikoe said the conditions in wards 80 and 110 called for the communities to be engaged and educated on how to deal with waste and manage sewer infrastructure.

"There's a lot of cleaning up to be done. We saw grey water that needed to be stopped from flowing into the streets. We saw a lot of overflowing sewer manholes. Illegal electricity connections are also a big problem in these areas," said MMC Mfikoe.

"We will compile a report, which will also include Diepsloot and Kaya Sands. The report will state some of the

things we need to do to improve the living conditions of people in the areas.”

The MMC said some of the immediate interventions to be implemented included the provision of waste bags by waste management entity Pikitup to keep the areas clean. Johannesburg Water will also come in to replace and fix leaking taps and pipes. MMC Mfikoe, however, stressed the need for communities to manage their own sewer infrastructure.

“The problem is the relationship that people have with their sewer systems. We need to educate them on how to manage waste, and how to relate to sewer infrastructure,” she said.

She announced that the Thabo Mbeki informal settlement would be moved to vacant land about a kilometre away. The move is expected to take place before December.

“As we do that we still need to come back to the communities and talk to them. Ultimately it’s about our work and them benefiting from it and helping us to manage ourselves properly.”

MMC Mfikoe said the visit was an “eye opener”.

“These are not the living conditions that our people are supposed to live in,” she said.

She said the committee was, however, well-received.

“They were happy. It’s not about elections; it’s about us taking responsibility in providing services to our people,” MMC Mfikoe said.

Regional Director Abigail Ndlovu said service delivery was one of the core mandates of her region.

“We’re on the ground to get the views of people while we ensure that the services we provide are the services the communities need. We make it a point that service delivery takes place and human rights are not violated,” she said.

Ndlovu added that there were 48 informal settlements in Ivory Park.

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