

Plants operate over maximum capacity

STAFF REPORTER

ALTHOUGH sewage is overflowing at the Homevale Sewage Works, the executive mayor of Kimberley, Patrick Everyday, has given the assurance that it is not necessary to panic.

"Consistent and continuous meetings are being held around the clock to deal with the treatment plant. We should not panic but absorb the situation and manage the challenges," Everyday said at yesterday's last Sol Plaatje city council meeting of the year.

His reassurances, however, come at the same time as confirmation that several other bulk infrastructures in the city are also currently over capacity. This includes the Beaconsfield Waste Water Treatment Plant, which is currently operating at double its capacity and as a result no development can take place in the nearby areas.

The Ritchie Oxidation ponds are also hydraulically overloaded and need upgrading.

The old water purification plant at Riverton is also currently out of operation and needs to be refurbished to increase the current purification capacity while the Ritchie Water Purification Works is also op-

erating way above its capacity and needs to be upgraded.

It was pointed out a total amount of R550 million was needed for all these projects, although there has been an indication by the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) that R500 million could be sourced from them.

Everyday said at yesterday's meeting that although the Homevale Sewage Plant was "overflowing at the moment, we have the best treatment plant in the world. We just had a problem with maintenance at the plant due to financial constraints but we are busy executing the necessary work at the moment and the money has been allocated."

The Sol Plaatje Municipality was issued with a notice of non-compliance by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry in August in which it was pointed out that the failure to operate and maintain, as well as refurbish and expand the Homevale Waste Water Treatment Plant, had resulted in the continued discharge of poor quality effluent into the environment.

The department placed a moratorium on all new developments in the city until certain requirements were met by the council regarding the Homevale works.

Among the developments affected

are the 4 200 units in Lerato Park, the 6 300 units at the North Gate Development, the 1 000 units in Lindani and the Promised Land and the 540 units in Donkerhoek.

The plant, which was constructed in 1970, has a capacity of 30ML/day. Due to the rapid development of the city, the plant is operating at 40 ML/day. This has resulted in poor water quality being produced and disposed into Kamfers Dam, posing a threat to the flamingos and the nearby railway line.

At yesterday's meeting, DA councillor Ronnie Bauser, pointed out that R14,4 million had been budgeted in this financial year for the upgrading of the Homevale Sewage Works, and a further R17 million in the next financial year.

"The problem, however, is that we are upgrading to meet our existing needs and we are not looking at the future. We need to decide whether we are going to build a new sewage works to cater for future expansion." Bauser confirmed that work had already started on the Homevale Sewage Works.

Several councillors, however, expressed concern about which projects would be affected by the moratorium and whether it would affect projects already approved by the council.