



No help from city to curb rat infestation

An overgrown sub-station, rubbish and vegetation left lying on the verge are attracting rats to a Berea building.

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The sub-station below Rohallion is a breeding ground for rats, says Bev Pearce.

AN infestation of rats has become a major concern for the body corporate and owners of flats at Rohallion, on the Berea who have had to fork out extra funds in an effort to keep the rats under control.

Chantel Jones from Wakefields, which manages the building, said the agency had sent numerous emails to the municipality requesting that the area around the sub-station located in Ramsay Avenue, below the building, be cleared and cleaned. She said the overgrown grass was cut, however the refuse was not cleared and as a result the flats were being overrun by rats which the body corporate was trying to deal with. She said residents had complained that the rats were spotted during the day and concerns had been raised that the infestation could lead to health issues.

According to Bev Pearce who sits on the body corporate, eight rodent traps had been placed around the complex. These were replenished twice a week, but despite these measures she felt the source of the problem needed to be addressed with some urgency.

"We employed someone to cut the bush on the verge as it had become a breeding ground for the rats, but feel this shouldn't be at our expense. The rat traps were filled on Friday, and today (Monday) they are already empty, which I didn't expect. This shows the extent of the problem! It is also a costly affair having to refill these," she said.

She said the rats were 'massive' and the body corporate had been asking the municipality since January to do something about the problem.

"The rats have found a way into the garages. One resident had all the electrical wiring in his vehicle chewed up by the rats. They also eat the piping for the windscreen wipers. All this damage costs residents," she said.

She said emails had been sent to a number of municipal officials and many calls had been made to the Health Department and the City Rodent Management unit, but their pleas for help had fallen on deaf ears.

"On the verge outside the building and by the sub-station there is a lot of overgrown bush, rubbish and broken bottles, which all attract rats. We are also concerned about people hiding in there, which brings a criminal element to the area. It's a damn disgrace," she said.

The municipality failed to respond to Berea Mail's request for comment on this issue at time of going to print. However, in March this year the city announced it was taking a proactive approach to effectively manage the rodent problem in the City and claimed that various City units were already on the ground working to tackle the rat problem.

At the time, Dr Ayo Olowolagba, Head of the City's Communicable Disease Control Department said they wanted to work towards making the City rodent free.

"It is a reality that we have incidents of rats breeding in places they should not be. It is important for us to come together as relevant stakeholders to discuss a way forward. We have to deal with the problem at the source, otherwise we will keep treating only the symptoms and the problem will continue repeating itself," he said in March.

Olowolagba said breeding sites for rodents included sites of refuse accumulation, problem buildings, manholes that were not cleaned, electrical substations, refuse bin areas, unmaintained road verges, recycling sites, taxi and bus ranks and markets and informal traders where correct waste disposal was not being practiced.



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