

Unlawful occupation 'expensive'

VINCENT CRUYWAGEN

THE continued unlawful occupation of the Helen Bowden site earmarked for social housing has already resulted in an expenditure of more than R35m in this financial year.

MEC for transport and public works Donald Grant said the site would see the erection of 302 housing units (as part of a larger development), once the city gives the green light. However, the issue becomes a bone of contention when the unlawful occupation by the organisation, reclaim the city, began a year ago.

At the time of the occupation, reclaim the city said this was part of their radical response to the sale of the Tafelberg School property by the Western Cape

government. This after the government announced the sale of the Tafelberg property in Sea Point to the Phyllis Jowell Jewish Day School for R135m.

“On Wednesday, the department of transport and public works began the process of notifying each of the occupants of the Helen Bowden Nurses Home site, part of the Somerset Precinct and close to the V&A Waterfront, that we wish to engage with them to bring an end to their unlawful occupation of the site.

“Since the unlawful occupation, violent outbreaks have erupted there from time to time which has also resulted in vandalism and the destruction of property. In our attempts to secure the site to date, the WCG has been forced

to contract additional security for the site at a cost of about R3m a month. In this financial year alone, the WCG has spent more than R35m on securing this property against continued invasions, vandalism and theft.

“It is my sincere hope that all the unlawful occupants will work with us to ensure the vacation of the property occurs timeously. Reclaim the city has long purported to be advocates for social housing. We hope that they will therefore do all they can to assist us in ensuring that we are able to proceed with the redevelopment of the Helen Bowden site that will see the erection of 302 social housing units thereon as soon as possible,” Grant said.

vincentc@thenewage.co.za