

Questions over 'lazy' EPWP workers

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MEMBERS of the public have questioned the "lazy" Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers, "who are always sleeping on the job", despite the fact that it is costing the city more than R1.4 million a month.

An irate member of the public said yesterday that "it looks like they are being paid to lie on the pavements like homeless people".

"They even have cardboard boxes flattened into beds to make sure they are comfortable."

The member of the public said that a group of around 20 workers were supposed to be cleaning in the CBD last week. "At one stage, I watched how they slept for two hours solidly on their backs. Only at around 10am did they lazily get up to pick up a rake. Even then it seems like some are being paid to watch because when a few are working, the rest are just leaning on their rakes watching them.

"It is an absolute disgrace, especially in light of the fact that so much money is paid every month for the so-called cleaning of the city and yet Kimberley is still so dirty."

Another city resident pointed out that if even half of this money was given to privately-driven cleaning campaigns, "the city would look spotless in no time".

According to Sol Plaatje municipal spokesperson, Sello Matsie, the municipality receives around



LAZY: Members of the public have questioned why the "lazy" EPWP (Extended Public Works Programme) workers, "who are always sleeping on the job" are costing the city more than R1.4 million a month.

R3 million a year from national government for the EPWP programme.

"This is a national programme, launched at the time by President Thabo Mbeki as a job-creation project."

The former Sol Plaatje executive mayor, Mangaliso Matika, last

Picture: **Soraya Crowie**

year launched a clean-up campaign in the city, which saw the municipality employing additional workers and paying the costs from its own coffers.

According to Matsie, there are currently around 378 EPWP workers employed in various sections of the municipality.

"They are employed on various projects, including cleaning, as well as in the security section and at Gogga Pump Station and at the Homevale Waste Water Treatment Works."

The working hours of those employed to clean the streets are, according to Matsie, from 6am and 2pm. "This was agreed with the workers because of the intense heat in the middle of the day."

The employment of EPWP workers in the city also came under scrutiny in the recent Section 109 report, where it was pointed out that the employment of people on the project was open to "nepotism and favouritism".

The report called for an investigation into the verification of all EPWP workers to eliminate possible ghost employees, while it recommended that no remuneration be paid out to those not verified yet.

One councillor, who did not want to be named, pointed out that this was a mayoral project, launched by Matika. "The problem is that no one can tell us how many people are employed on the project, where they work or how much is actually being spent because it is coming from various budgets."