

Municipality blamed over park decline

Environmental Affairs Deputy Minister Barbara Thomson has expressed disappointment with the state of Alexandra Park, saying no effort has been made to make the park a family friendly facility.

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She was speaking to Capital Newspapers after it was brought to her attention that the park had been neglected with litter strewn all over, a lack of dust bins and overgrown vegetation. Thomson, who started the revamp of the park in 2017, said Msunduzi Municipality should have done more to make sure the park was kept in a good state. “I expected that they would get people under the Extended Public Works Programme to help in ensuring that the park is clean and user-friendly as we had planned,” said Thomson.

She added that had been disturbed to hear the place had become a home for vagrants and drug users.

“There should be regular patrols in the precinct considering that Alexandra Park is nearby, the municipal security should also do rounds here. The fact is, we can’t allow criminals to co-exist with people. This park is important to Pietermaritzburg residents.”

The infestation of the area by crime has seen a decline in the use of the park by its regular

patrons. On the recent, visit the toilets were locked and some park users urinated outside, and some of the seats were covered by overgrown vegetation while some makeshift structures were vandalised.

The revamp had an allocation of R11 million and more funds were expected to be pumped into the project.