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ENVIRONMENT

Baboon strategy nears the end

A draft Memorandum of Agreement and a Strategic Management Plan of Chacma Baboons in the Cape Peninsula is expected to be finalised by the end of October with public engagement planned for the following month.

South African National Parks (SANParks) – one of the three representatives on the Cape Peninsula Baboon Management Joint Task Team – last week released a statement, saying that, following a number of meetings, they were in the process of preparing for public engagement on the draft Strategic Baboon Management Plan (SBMP). The statement said public engagement would take place as soon as a draft plan was available, currently planned for November.

Dr Luthando Dziba, Managing Executive of Conservation Services for SANParks, said the parties had agreed to Joint Task Team Terms of Reference (ToR).

“The aim is to finalise the Memorandum

of Agreement between the three parties for approval by the end of October. The parties will also ensure the engagement of other parties such as the South African Navy, National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, DFFE, Cape of Good Hope SPCA, as well as other major property owners, for example, the Western Cape government,” said Dziba.

The formation of the joint task team was announced at a roundtable discussion hosted by Barbara Creecy, the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, in June.

Organised by SANParks, together with Cape Nature and the City of Cape Town, the purpose of the discussion was to bring parties together “for an open but constructive conversation about sustainable solutions to baboon management in Table Mountain National Park and the City of Cape Town” (“We are going to work together to take responsibility”, *People's Post*, 21 June).

The engagement followed reports in April

that the City was set to abandon its urban baboon programme by mid next year.

In July, the City announced that it would be holding online meetings with residents and businesses from baboon-affected areas to discuss a suite of more sustainable proposals. The City said that the outcome of the upcoming meetings would be presented to the joint task team, together with other key role players (“Focus on baboon management”, *People's Post*, 2 August). At the time, the City said that the task team was responsible for the transition to a more sustainable baboon programme with the intention to have this in place, or in progress, by 30 June next year. This is when the City's three-year contract with NCC Environmental Services, who is currently managing the Urban Baboon Programme on the City's behalf, comes to an end.

There were eight online meetings in total with the last one held on Thursday 22 September, each targeting a specific suburb affected.

These areas included Kommetjie, Scarborough and Misty Cliffs, Constantia south of Constantia Nek, Tokai, Zwaanswyk, Da Gamma, Welcome Glen, Glencairn, Simons' Town South and Murdock Valley, Sunnydale, Capri, Imhoff's Gift, Heron Park, Ocean View, Simon's Town main and north of Constantia Nek.

According to Eddie Andrews, the City's Deputy Mayor and Mayco member for spatial planning and environment, the meetings were well attended and the engagements positive and constructive.

He said residents, interested parties and ratepayers' associations across the board contributed with comments and proposals and also raised some concerns (“Time to get off the fence”, *People's Post*, 30 August).

“We have been collating the feedback from the meetings and this will be presented to the Joint Task Team for consideration in the development of the draft the SBMP,” he said.