In accordance with the South African Constitution (2011) and the Community Safety Act of 2013, the Department of Community Safety is required to hold the police and traffic service to account. Although the Department does not have any operational control over the South African Police Service, it has a mandate to not only exercise oversight, but to determine, in partnership with the National Government, the Policing Needs and Priorities (PNPs) of specific communities within the Western Cape Province.

Due to this mandate, Communities are called upon to support the Department by reporting positive and negative aspects of police and traffic services, so that we ultimately ensure that we create safer communities; Better Together.

To establish the Policing Needs and Priorities of specific communities the Department embarked on a series of 25 public accountability meetings in various communities, which were grouped together according to their Police Clusters. The Delft engagement was the last in the series of 25 planned for the Western Cape Province. The Delft Police Cluster includes the Belhar, Bellville South, Delft and Ravensmead areas.

These engagements are designed to give the community an opportunity to raise their crime and safety concerns. The SAPS Community, Policing Forums, Neighborhood Watch structures, Faith Based Organisations, members of the broader community, and representatives from all spheres of government attend these meetings.

During all engagements the MEC, Dan Plato, and the HOD, Dr Gilbert Lawrence, will always stress the need for a whole-of-society approach towards increasing safety in our communities. A wide range of safety and security issues are discussed at the meetings and the emphasis is always on finding safety resolutions, with a focus on Women, Children and the Elderly. Below are a few of the crucial policing needs identified during the engagement, specific to the Delft Cluster:

- The Delft Community raised unemployment, poverty, substance abuse and youth boredom as causes of crime.
- Scrapyards, illegal tuck shops, shebeens and drug houses were identified as motivators of crime in the police cluster.
- The community called for a restriction of the operating hours of scrapyards in the cluster.
- The SAPS raised the lack of resources, particularly human resources, and equipment as a serious issue. This invariably affects their ability to deliver service, and manage the demand of the geographical area covered by the police precinct. The language barrier was also identified as a serious cause for concern.
- The community raised concerns about the state of policing in certain precincts, and raised allegations of police corruption.

There is a need for increased visibility with regard to the Neighbourhood Watch and within the cluster.

The Departmental representatives assured the community that their concerns had been heard, and below are some of the interventions the Department will be pursuing:

- Noting that safety is everyone’s responsibility, the department is committed to continuous engagement with communities in a multifaceted manner, inclusive of the CPFs, SAPS and various role players. The community is also called upon to keep a watchful eye, and to engage each other with regards to the safety concerns.
- The Department will provide ongoing support to the CPFs and Neighbourhood Watch forums in the cluster.
- Allegations of corruption against the police will be dealt with by the Department’s Monitoring and Evaluation directorate.
- The community supported that the success of increasing safety is largely dependent on the partnership and collaboration between the police community, Western Cape Government and Non-Governmental institutions.

It must be noted that there are issues raised at these meetings, which are not within the Department’s scope of influence. In such cases we will escalate those matters to the respective Government Department or institution so that it may be resolved.

For more information, please visit www.westerncape.gov.za or SMS PnP to 35 395.