

CHAPTER 7

CAPACITY FOR CRIME REDUCTION IN THE NMMM AREA

The existing capacity for crime reduction was examined by assessing the capacity, operational strategies, and levels of public confidence in the police and the metro, as well as the role that SAPS and metro departments could play as partners in a crime prevention strategy.

The police

The capacity, perceived effectiveness and public confidence in the police was analysed on the basis of interviews with SAPS officials and the victim survey data. The results are summarised below.

Capacity

There are 17 SAPS stations in the metro. Thirteen of these fall under the jurisdiction of the Port Elizabeth SAPS area, and four fall under the Uitenhage SAPS area. Since the boundaries used by the SAPS and the municipality are not the same, police stations such as Uitenhage, Swartkops and Kinkelbos cover some areas that fall outside the metro boundaries. Despite this, the police maintain that their plans ensure adequate policing for the whole metro.

According to SAPS area officials, the police are under-resourced in terms of staff, infrastructure and equipment. A number of police stations have, however, been upgraded in both the PE and Uitenhage areas. For instance, new buildings have been erected at KwaNobuhle and Kamesh police stations in Uitenhage, and KwaZakhele in Port Elizabeth. There are also plans to build a new police station in Motherwell. In addition, the SAPS head office is gradually increasing the number of police officers nationally, which could result in more police being deployed in NMMM.

Although measures have been implemented to deal with resource shortages, equally challenging is the management of these limited resources. SAPS managers in the NMMM area face similar problems as those in many other

parts of the country such as ill-discipline, absenteeism, and low morale. In an attempt to deal with these problems, new station commissioners have been appointed to some stations in the metro area, and members have been transferred and replaced.

The lack of police resources is often mentioned with reference to the need to provide a visible presence. Although the extent to which visible policing reduces crime is debatable, it is clear that a police presence makes people feel safer. An overwhelming majority (87%) of respondents in the victim survey said they would feel safer if they saw a police officer on duty in their area more often.

Despite the resource shortages described by the SAPS, the survey results suggest that police visibility is comparatively good in the NMMM area. Over a third (38%) said they see a police officer in uniform and on duty at least once a day. By comparison, only 29% of all South Africans said the same.³⁸ In the NMMM, over a quarter (26%) saw a police officer once a week, with 11% saying once a month, and 7% less than once a month. Although it is concerning that 18% of respondents said they never see a police officer on duty, this percentage is at least slightly lower than the national total of 21%. It is significant that there were no major differences in the likelihood of seeing the police on duty between the race groups in the NMMM area.

Operational strategies

Police in the NMMM area are responsible for policing a diverse community in terms of settlement type, class and culture. Housing types range from informal settlements, to low-cost housing, affluent suburbs, rural settlements and smallholdings. Together with a heterogeneous population, the result is that crime problems and their policing needs differ substantially. Policing strategies must therefore be tailored to suit a diverse range of needs.

SAPS members across the metro area said their strategies are based on crime information and intelligence that is collected and analysed on a continuous basis. The information is used to identify priority crimes and hot-spot areas, and for offender profiling. In some police stations, CPF members are invited to the police planning sessions or are informed about police strategies. However, this is not uniform practice throughout the metro. According to the police, some CPFs are not effective and in several stations, the CPF and station management do not work well together.

The most common policing strategies in the NMMM area included visible policing, street patrols and stops-and-searches. Some stations had run 'Crackdown' type operations, which consist of high-density search and seizure operations, and roadblocks.

The current strategic priority of the SAPS is sector policing. This strategy consists of dividing a police station area into manageable geographic units known as sectors. The police official appointed as the 'sector manager' is required to identify all role players and involve them in meeting the safety and security needs of a sector. Police officials raised the following issues regarding the implementation of sector policing in the NMMM stations:

- Sector policing was being implemented at most stations. Nearly all had identified their sectors and were in the process of appointing sector managers. The municipal ward demarcation system and the building block system were used to mark off sectors.
- Some stations struggled to map out sectors because the boundaries of the municipality and the SAPS are different.
- In most stations, concerns were raised about the shortage of police officials who can be appointed as sector managers.

Public perceptions of policing

Public perceptions of the police are usually based on a range of factors, not all of which relate to policing directly, or to personal experience with police officials. In many cases, people express their opinions of government in general when asked about police performance in large quantitative surveys. Nevertheless, these opinions indicate broad public sentiment about policing, as well as the extent to which the public may be willing to work with the police (or other related government departments).

Public opinions of the police as recorded in the victim survey in NMMM were fairly similar to those recorded in a more recent national victim survey:³⁹

- 40% thought that police performance in the metro had not changed since 2000. Almost as many (37%) said police performance was better, and 23% said it was worse.
- Nearly half (47%) of the respondents said they have confidence in the police in their area. Under a third (31%) had confidence 'sometimes', and less than a quarter (21%) had no confidence in the police. The reasons for having confidence in the police included that the police try hard to make the area safe (35%), the police arrest criminals (26%) and

people trust the police (16%). A lack of confidence was attributed to police corruption (16%), laziness and being drunk on duty (15%) and lack of resources (10%).

- Despite some criticism of the police, most respondents (61%) said they would be willing to assist the police to fight crime in their area. However, it is worrying that over a quarter said they would not be prepared to assist the police, with black and coloured respondents more likely to say so than whites and Indians.

The results of the focus group discussions with the youth in NMMM supported many of the above survey findings. Generally young people were critical of the police because they were perceived as “corrupt, ineffective and drunkards”. The youth used statements such as, “police misconduct and corruption inspires a lack of community confidence”; “some police members are often seen drinking in shebeens. They often beat up people in the street whilst drunk”, and “police are ineffective because they do not have adequate resources to deal with crime”.

Despite these mixed perceptions of the police, the reporting rates recorded by the victim survey suggest that victims do still have confidence in the justice system. High reporting rates were recorded for car theft (86%), burglary (70%) and theft out of vehicles (67%). The need to make an insurance claim no doubt played a role with respect to these crimes, although this is rarely the only reason why victims report. A majority of assault victims also reported (60%, compared to the national reporting rate of 55%). This crime is seldom reported to the police because victims either do not think it is serious enough, or that the police and justice system cannot assist them. Even though reporting rates for robbery were low by comparison (48%), the rate in NMMM was still much higher than in South Africa as a whole (29%).

SAPS views on the NMMM

Although the police were willing to work with metro officials, their views on the municipality were generally not positive.

SAPS members complained about a lack of municipal services that could help create a safer environment, and make policing easier and more effective. The poor road conditions, lack of street names and house numbers in informal settlements in particular, and unserviced streetlights, make day-to-day policing difficult. These problems also mean that residents will struggle to take basic precautions against crime. In addition, the limited and inconsistent traffic

policing adds to broader safety problems, and draws scarce SAPS resources. In Uitenhage, for example, the SAPS said they were issuing more traffic tickets than the municipal traffic officers.

The other key area of concern for the SAPS was the metro's Community Based Volunteer programme. The main problems were the lack of communication between the metro and the SAPS on the programme, and the fact that the 'volunteers' were being paid by the metro:

- Police across the NMMM area knew about the metro's volunteer programme, but were unsure how it affected their policing areas. Some thought the volunteers were used mainly to patrol tourist attraction sites such as the beach areas. Some police and CPF members felt the municipality should have used SAPS and CPF structures to establish the programme. The police were apparently only requested to screen and fingerprint the selected volunteers to establish whether they had previous convictions or pending criminal cases against them. Some stations had been approached by municipal officials to collaborate on the volunteer patrol programme. However, the municipal officials did not provide the stations with a volunteer duty roster and never followed up on the issue.
- In terms of the payment problem, most police and CPF members resented the municipal volunteer programme because the 'volunteers' are paid (R400 per month) whereas SAPS volunteers are not. As a result, police and CPFs were losing most of their experienced volunteers to the municipality. They were also rightly concerned about the use of the term 'volunteers' to describe people who were receiving payment.

Despite these problems, the police from all stations interviewed were willing to assist the municipality by identifying municipal service delivery problems in their policing areas and alerting the relevant municipal officials. They currently rarely do this, however, because municipal departments do not respond to their queries and they seldom get any feedback. Nevertheless, several key areas identified for collaboration with the NMMM are:

- Conducting joint crime prevention awareness campaigns; involving municipal officials and councillors in sector policing;
- co-operating with the municipal volunteer programme in the area of training, for example;
- establishing better working relationships between police and traffic officers;

- drawing on metro councillors to assist in facilitating community dispute resolution;
- working with the relevant NMMM departments on crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) projects; and
- improving communication with the metro with regard to upcoming housing and infrastructure development projects.

Implications for strategy development

- Resource shortages are a concern for the SAPS, although measures are being taken to relieve the situation. Projects that require law enforcement or visible policing must take this into account, and be highly focused on specific crime problems and parts of the metro. If SAPS resources are insufficient for a particular project, alternatives may need to be found, such as enlisting the help of private security firms.
- A more visible police presence is likely to make people feel safer.
- Sector policing is currently the SAPS' strategic priority. A strategy should provide for the NMMM to play an active role in sector policing.
- Communication and teamwork between the SAPS and NMMM officials is weak. Regular channels of communication should be established between political leaders, as well as managers of both organisations.
- Co-operation between the SAPS and NMMM will require that the problems relating to the metro's Community Based Volunteer programme be resolved.
- SAPS members have clear and constructive suggestions about areas for collaboration with the metro. These ought to be discussed and acted upon.

The municipality

Various documents were reviewed and interviews conducted with senior officials and councillors in order to assess the capacity of the metro for participating in crime prevention activities. In addition, data from the victim survey were analysed to assess public opinion about the effectiveness of the metro, as well as satisfaction with the delivery of a range of services.

Integrated Development Plan

The Integrated Development Plan is the principal five-year strategic plan that guides and informs all planning, budgeting, management and decision-making processes in the municipality.⁴⁰ The IDP outlines the NMMM's strategic direction for the year 2002 to 2006. The six key developmental areas, in order of priority, are:⁴¹

- service delivery;
- investment and economic growth;
- tourism and tourism infrastructure development;
- crime prevention;
- cleansing and environment; and
- institution building.

Overview of the NMMM business units

Safety and security

The safety and security business unit consists of fire and emergency services, disaster management and traffic and licensing. In the long term, the unit hopes to house policing services as well. In the mean time, the unit is gradually increasing its number of traffic officers and diversifying their training to include public law enforcement and crime prevention. The unit also manages the community based safety and security volunteer programme. The functions of the unit include:

- traffic policing;
- bylaw enforcement;
- fire and emergency;
- registration and licenses;
- management of safety and security volunteers;
- crime prevention;
- co-ordinating the safety and security forum.

Housing and land

Delivery of houses is the main priority for the NMMM. It is also a key service required for long-term crime prevention. Land allocation and housing development projects impact on crime prevention in many ways. The municipality should ensure that town planning and design comply with safety and security measures and that the houses are built in areas with reasonable access to services such as transport, health, policing, recreation and social development. Land and stands should be clearly demarcated and the owners identified. Providing acceptable family housing contributes to poverty alleviation and family stability, which in turn will help to prevent crime.

The NMMM's housing and land business unit has committed itself to building sustainable communities and developing new residential areas to an acceptable standard. It also emphasises that land-use strategies should directly

contribute to poverty alleviation, job creation and stimulate economic growth for disadvantaged communities. The main functions of the unit include:

- co-ordinating the planning and implementation of all relevant activities of the municipality to ensure the building of sustainable communities;
- formulating a five year integrated housing and land delivery programme;
- developing a programme to assist in the improvement of the quality of existing low-income housing;
- community capacity building for the participation of beneficiaries in the delivery of housing;
- consolidating and reviewing land-use and land-use management practises.

Profiling for the delivery and provision of housing is important for urban space management. The unit will be required to conduct housing needs and land-use audits. Through this process land and property owners should be identified and steps should be taken against those who occupy land illegally. There are also a number of land-use bylaws that could be used for crime reduction purposes. In other cities, municipal officials together with the SAPS, have used land-use bylaws successfully to invade scrap yards and chop shops.

Infrastructure, engineering, electricity and energy

The strategic direction and values of the IEEE business unit are to deliver infrastructure in a manner that enables the development of communities. The unit emphasises quality service delivery and poor communities are their key targets. However, the unit will also continue to upgrade and maintain infrastructure requirements in established areas. The main functions of the unit are to:

- prepare an overall plan for tarring of gravel roads and maintenance and upgrading of tarred roads;
- develop an integrated delivery plan and programme for the metropolitan area;
- investigate and develop mechanisms to monitor the supply and use of services;
- assist in development and upgrading of tourism infrastructure;
- improve public transport infrastructure planning.

Projects and activities of the infrastructure, engineering, electricity and energy (IEEE) business unit directly impact on crime prevention through

environmental design (CPTED). The safety and security business unit and the SAPS should work with IEEE unit to identify the crime prevention through environmental design needs of the metro. Such an audit could, among other things, focus on the design of public transport routes and interchanges, lighting in parks, and closing passages that could facilitate street crimes. When the needs have been identified, these stakeholders could develop a CPTED programme of action for the metro.

Environment and health

A well cared for and maintained environment creates a positive image about the area. The opposite also applies. A lack of maintenance of buildings and open spaces, and conditions of squalor send a message that no one cares about the area - a welcome message for criminals and one that increases fear of crime among the public. This image of neglect also rubs off on those who live and work in the area, with negative consequences for individuals' self-esteem and community cohesion. All these factors contribute to creating an environment conducive to criminality. Creating a stimulating, healthy and liveable environment can therefore contribute to crime reduction.

A functional health system is also important for dealing with crime, and in particular violent crime. These crimes place an enormous strain on health care services. The problem is especially serious for the poor, who tend to experience high levels of violent crime as well as shortages in public health care services. Many studies show an association between drug and alcohol abuse and crime. Therefore crime reduction activities targeting control and management of drug and alcohol abuse impacts directly on the services of this unit.

Some key functions of the unit include:

- promote and expand the bio-diversity of the metro;
- develop an environmental health policy and programme;
- develop a long term programme of parks and aesthetics maintenance;
- establish community/neighbourhood and street beautification competitions;
- develop a policy on sustainable quality refuse collection system;
- establish a comprehensive health system;
- reduce HIV/AIDS infection rates;
- encourage the development of HIV/AIDS policy by other role players within the metropolitan area;
- foster a culture of caring for the aged;

- monitor the availability of *abakwetha* and other traditional rites of all communities;
- investigate more efficient land-use strategies for burial services.

To fulfil these objectives, the environment and health unit has a number of environment and health bylaws at its disposal. The safety and security business unit should assist with the enforcement of these bylaws. Other areas of collaboration between this unit and safety and security unit are in the prevention of rape and domestic violence. The environment and health unit is conducting a project on rape with Rape Crisis Centre in Port Elizabeth.

Recreational services

Sport and cultural activities are crucial for the social and emotional development of communities. These activities are not just for entertainment but play a pivotal role in building relationships between individuals and groups and improving quality of life. Sport and art activities can also provide young people with alternative career prospects. These factors play a role in helping to prevent people turning to crime.

The recreational services unit's programme indicates that sports and cultural services should be directed at the youth, the disabled and the aged. Some key functions of the unit include:

- sport development to encourage sports as an alternative career;
- develop a comprehensive five year programme for all priority sports code of the NMMM;
- improve the network of sport facilities;
- develop a strategy to improve the accessibility and availability of library services;
- establish a Metro-artists Forum;
- compile a database of artists, crafts etc. within the metropolitan area;
- identify arts and culture development needs;
- identify all heritage sites and determine potential tourism opportunities;
- develop and implement programmes to assist with the improvements of public schools especially in the formally disadvantaged communities.

Support for recreational services is not only about the development and maintenance of facilities. It is also about developing sports, arts and cultural programmes that people can participate in. Therefore the recreational service unit should identify and support key individuals in schools and communities to drive sports, arts and cultural programmes and projects.

Economic development

Most of the economic development challenges facing NMMM relate to structural unemployment, low levels of investment, and the increasing poverty gap. The economic development unit's programmes are structured to address these problems. The unit's strategic goals and objectives are to:⁴²

- achieve and maintain an economic growth rate of between 5% and 8% per annum;
- obtain an annual job growth of 3,5% in order to halve unemployment;
- reduce the number of households living below the poverty line by 60%;
- improve literacy rates by 50% by 2014;
- reduce the proportion of people suffering from hunger by 2014 by 80%;
- eliminate gender disparity in education and employment.

Local economic development is crucial for job creation and the general upgrading of people's standard of living. Although there is no direct link between crime and poverty, some factors associated with poverty such as overcrowding, child neglect, and poor socialisation of children, have been linked to crime and violence. Therefore general skills and economic development programmes directed at the poor are likely to contribute to crime prevention.

Human resources and corporate administration

Human resource and corporate administration is important for ensuring that all departments are adequately staffed and functional. The human resource and corporate administration unit is also responsible for assisting other directors with developing performance indicators for their staff.

Other than the most obvious human resource issues, the unit supports all departments with issues of corporate governance and administration. As with most departments in the municipality, the safety and security unit is required to co-ordinate and manage crime prevention partnership projects. Partners include other national and provincial government departments, private sector, non-governmental organisations and community based organisations. For most projects, the partnership between the municipality and other role players will have to be formalised. This unit should assist the safety and security unit with the development of formal and where necessary, legally binding co-operation agreements and procedures between the departments within the municipality and with partners outside the municipality. Since the metro's legal team is part of this unit, it should also co-ordinate the process of consolidating and rationalising municipal bylaws.

Municipal bylaws

The municipality is armed with a number of bylaws and regulations that can be effectively used for crime prevention. The bylaws cover the following areas:

- buildings;
- food handling;
- fire and emergency;
- standard public amenities;
- traffic;
- animal control;
- libraries;
- café's, restaurants and eating houses;
- noise pollution;
- hawking and street trading;
- child care centres and nursery schools;
- cleansing;
- parks.

According to council officials, the most common bylaw violations are:

- squatting or land invasion;
- construction of illegal buildings;
- hawking and street trading;
- theft of electricity by making illegal connections.

One of the major problems associated with all types of bylaw violations is the unwillingness of councillors, municipal officials and the SAPS to embark on an aggressive bylaw enforcement programme. No one wants to be seen as the 'enforcer' who makes tough decisions in difficult circumstances. One of the consequences of this is that many violations go unpunished. Another consequence is the poor image of the council, councillors and municipal officials, who are seen as 'weak' and uncommitted to the rule of law.

Public perceptions about the NMMM

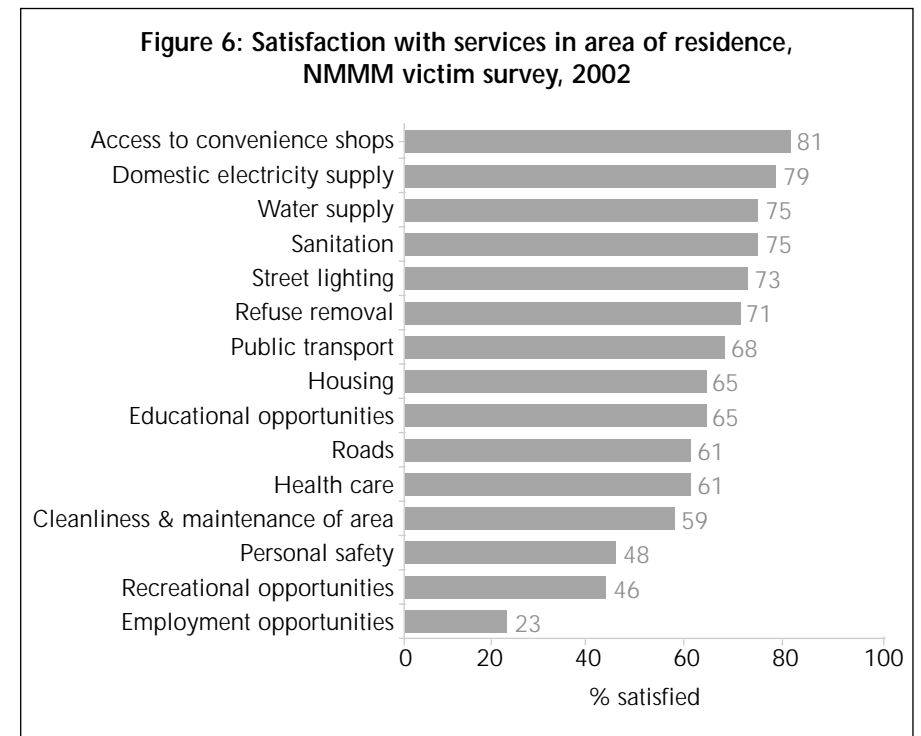
Several questions were included in the victim survey to help assess public opinion about the performance of the metro, knowledge of local government representatives and their activities, as well as satisfaction with the delivery of a range of services. The results showed that public knowledge of, and participation in, the activities of the metro government were low:

- 36% of residents in the NMMM said they know the councillor who represents them in the metro;

- 36% knew of a ward committee in their area;
- only 24% had participated in local government related meetings.

Although public levels of engagement with the metro government were low, a majority of people (65%) in the area thought that the NMMM was doing a good job. Black respondents were, however, much less positive than others: 57% of blacks said the metro was doing a good job, compared to 69% of coloureds, 71% of whites and 78% of Indians. These differences probably relate to the lack of employment opportunities and the general underdevelopment of township areas in the NMMM.

This becomes clearer when considering respondents' levels of satisfaction with a range of basic services in their neighbourhood. The results show that satisfaction with basic services (such as electricity and water) was highest, while people were least happy with job opportunities, followed by recreational opportunities and then personal safety (Figure 6).



Implications for strategy development

- The functions of the safety and security business unit make it a logical choice for lead department on a crime prevention strategy for the metro.
- In co-operation with the SAPS, the metro's traffic and bylaw enforcement activities, and the registration and licensing functions, can be targeted towards preventing crime.
- Housing delivery, which is the NMMM's main priority, should be carried out with safety and crime prevention considerations in mind. These relate to issues of housing design and town planning, but also to land-use bylaws that can be applied to stop the use of land for illegal purposes (such as chop-shops).
- The safety and security business unit and the SAPS should work with the IEEE business unit to identify the 'crime prevention through environmental design' needs of the metro, and develop a CPTED plan of action to be implemented by all these role players.
- There is potential for collaboration between the safety and security, and environment and health units, on projects to prevent rape and domestic violence, as well as bylaw enforcement.
- The recreational services unit should identify and support key individuals in schools and communities to drive sports, arts and cultural programmes and projects.
- Bylaw enforcement needs to be stepped up, particularly with regard to those bylaws that can contribute to preventing crime.