

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS OPENS DIEPSLOOT POLICE STATION FOR USE

By Sphilele Nxumalo

Crime-weary residents of Diepsloot have reasons to feel safer and more secured - the Department of Public Works (DPW) has finally opened the Diepsloot Police Station for use.

The construction of the project, which took seven years, was completed this year and the Minister of Public Works, Mr TW Nxesi, conducted the final quality inspection and hosted a community imbizo on 4 December.

The project was bedevilled by many challenges, including legal battles with the first contractor whose contract was cancelled. Despite the challenges, the project provided skills development to the local Diepsloot community.

Many job opportunities were created; 145 community members were employed as general workers; 200 youths were trained in different construction fields through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and the National Youth Service.

The Minister conducted a short project inspection. Later he held a community imbizo during which he listened to residents' concerns, hopes and dreams for their newly completed police station. Majority of the speakers expressed joy at the opening of the law enforcement facility.

Others said they hoped the police would be able to discharge their responsibility of fighting crime in a much more efficient manner, now that they have their own building to work from.

The new police station is a beacon of hope for the crime-ravaged community of Diepsloot that has suffered some gut-wrenching incidents of crime.

It is a big structure with several wings and provides a full scope of community services. There is also staff accommodation on site which will go a long way in providing the community with the quickest assistance possible.

It will come as a big relief as well to the SAPS members that they will have their own offices and reception area to receive the community members as they were sharing the same offices in one building with the Johannesburg Metro Police.

The SAPS management at the station expressed their heartfelt joy at the spanking new station. "The station is beyond expectations. It is a five star facility. It went beyond our requirements," said acting station commander, Lt-Col W Serfontein.

Minister Nxesi urged the community to use public facilities with responsibility as they are there to serve them. “It is your right to strike when there is no service delivery in the community, but be responsible and take care of public amenities. Do not burn the facilities as you will need them in the future,” said Nxesi.

“I have seen university strikes where students destroy even the libraries, and in some strikes angry community members destroying healthcare facilities. This will lead us nowhere as a country.”

The construction commenced in 2008 and was completed this year. The building of the Diepsloot police station has moved a long way in supporting government socioeconomic objectives. These are poverty alleviation, job creation opportunities for the marginalised and empowerment to the local community.

Minister TW Nxesi will officially hand the police station over to the SAPS minister next year.