

POLICE STATION OPENS

By laila.majiet

Photo : laila majiet

2013-05-14 08:00

LOCAL LABOUR: Rugshana Jacobs (left) is one of the last of 66 local labourers to have worked on the site. The 28-year-old from Lentegeur was trained on the job as a carpenter. She is pictured with Lentegeur station commander, Colonel Elizabeth Hermanus, Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi, Mitchell's Plain cluster commander Major General Jeremy Vearey and deputy public works minister Jeremy Cronin.

PHOTO: laila majiet

THE first feet have walked through the door of the new police station in Mitchell's Plain.

Expected to open on 1 March, the Lentegeur Police Station opened yesterday after it was hamstrung by delays.

Police officials say the new facility comprises of a community service centre where residents can report crime, a detective service centre and a hub from which response vehicles will operate.

Situated off Merrydale Avenue, the R85m police station is divided into two sections. The one section has holding cells and a community service centre, while the other will be used as offices and a criminal record centre.

Minister of Public Works, Thulas Nxesi, last week handed over the keys to the facility to the Mitchell's Plain police.

Nxesi says his department had insisted that the multi-storey, face-brick building in Lentegeur be built according to a new strategy which involved the input of the police as the client and the department throughout the project. "We think that this new approach will have a very positive impact on future projects," he says.

Deputy Public Works Minister Jeremy Cronin says the new police station is people-friendly, green-friendly, and doesn't appear so grim as police stations from the previous political dispensation.

"We want the community to feel that this is their building. It is user and people-friendly," he explains.

Victims of crime will be able to access the police station through a side door in an attempt to not expose them to second degree trauma. A 24-hour detective service will also be available. Detectives will have offices close to the area where statements are taken. As part of going green, there are no light switches, with light being turned on where movement is detected.

About 750 people worked on the site, with at least 44% percent of them coming from local communities, says Frederick Johnson, the regional manager for the Department of Public Works.

Rugshana Jacobs, one of the last of 66 local labourers to have worked on the site, was trained on the job as a carpenter.

The 28-year-old from Lentegeur is now employed by a local company based on her success during the course of the project.

“It was exciting to be a part of something so big, something that is beneficial to the community in which I live,” she says.

The building, which has 132 offices, will house a complement of detectives and members of the Visible Policing Unit. The Local Criminal Record Centre, the only such facility on the Cape Flats which will house laboratories for forensic evidence such as finger-printing and ballistics data, will be accommodated on the premises.

Mitchell’s Plain Police cluster commander, Major-General Jeremy Vearey, says there is enough space at the new facility.

“This is the first other police station in Mitchell’s Plain. It is expected to take pressure off the Mitchell’s Plain Police Station,” he says.

Mitchell’s Plain, which has the seventh highest murder rate in the province, is also one of the top 10 areas plagued by violent crimes in the province.

Mitchell’s Plain police spokesperson Captain Mugelaine van der Vendt says a new community policing forum (CPF) is to be elected for the Lentegeur precinct.

“Candidates must be active and registered with the respective subforums. This includes all street committees within the Lentegeur policing precinct,” she says.

Elections for the new CPF is expected to take place in June.

For further details contact the Lentegeur station commander, Colonel Elizabeth Hermanus, on (021)4660405 or the Mitchell’s Plain Cluster CPF chairperson, Michael Jacobs, on 0824218658.

To reach the Community Service Centre at the new police station, call (021)4660400. To reach the operations room, call (021)4660401/2. Phone the crime office on (021) 466 0403.