

Confusion over cop station upgrade

SAPS, Public Works cannot confirm if it has been called off

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CONFUSION reigned yesterday on which department between the SAPS and Public Works would trump the other in the cancellation of the R100 million mega-upgrade to the Muizenberg police station.

It appeared neither department knew what decisions had been initiated by the other, and – despite assurances by Deputy Minister of Police Bongani Mkongi that the R100 million project had been called off – neither national department could confirm this to be true.

At a community meeting in Khayelitsha on Sunday, Mkongi announced “the palace police station is going to be halted” and that “it’s not going to happen”.

But Public Works spokesperson Thami Mchunu said yesterday “the department has not received any notice to cancel the planning of the project”.

National police spokesperson Sally de Beer said: “The SAPS will liaise with all key role-players, including the Department of Public Works, the custodians of the project in question. We would then be in a position to comment further.”

Khayelitsha Development Forum (KDF) chairperson Ndithini Tyhido, who was present at Sunday’s meeting, said he believed the deputy minister that an extension to the Muizenberg police station would not happen.

“We had a lengthy meeting with the deputy minister and he understands we want to maintain a cordial relationship with the police. We don’t want to be where we were a few years ago, when the relationship between the community and police was strained,” Tyhido said.

“He (Mkongi) clarified that the money to fund the police stations in Makhaza and other areas would be funded by the SAPS. He assured us they’ve got the budget.”



IN THE BALANCE: Artist's impression of what the upgraded Muizenberg police station will look like – if it goes ahead.

According to Tyhido, the deputy minister said the money intended to upgrade the Muizenberg police station would “be redirected to fund upgrades at other police stations around Cape Town”.

Tyhido said the KDF had been assured that the report on the three new police stations in Cape Town would be compiled by June.

“Mkongi said the SAPS has sacked the previous team who had been handling this

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and that a new team had been established to oversee the new projects. Once they’ve compiled the report by June, they will come back to us as a community.”

Head of the Safety and Justice Programme at the Social Justice Coalition,

Chumile Sali, said: “We welcome the deputy minister’s responsiveness to the opposition to the R100 million price tag. We hope the Ministry’s position is not merely reactive but has taken into consideration the real needs of communities, including the poor, working-class black African and coloured communities of Vrygrond, Capricorn, Overcome Heights and Sea Winds currently served by the Muizenberg police station.” - siyabonga.sesant@inl.co.za