

Walmer residents demand that satellite police station reopens

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Residents of Walmer in Port Elizabeth want their satellite police station to be reopened, [reports GroundUp](#).

The Fountain Avenue police station was shut down a year ago after it was vandalised.

Residents say they have had to travel to 8th Avenue in Walmer town, about 4km away, to report cases at the Walmer police station.

An SA Police Service (SAPS) spokesperson says the police have added more vehicles and patrols to make up for the closed satellite station.

The Fountain Satellite police station in Walmer, Port Elizabeth, has been abandoned for a year. (Joseph Chirume, GroundUp)

Zola Mkutu, a street committee member, said people were afraid to go to the Walmer police station at night.

"The police take time to respond to crime scenes at night. The same happens with emergency medical services," said Mkutu.

Last year, the community protested, demanding that the satellite station be reopened.

According to Crime Stats SA, Walmer is among the 10 worst Eastern Cape precincts for overall crime (more than 8 000 cases reported, including 27 murders) and in the top three worst precincts for car theft as well as robbery and burglary at a residential premises.

Ward councillor Ayanda Tyokwana said he offered space at his offices in November last year to the police to use at night and over weekends. He said he also gave the police two mobile phones.

"The police only implemented this for two weeks. They then started bringing excuses. They would say that their members were not willing to work in the township. They also said there was not enough manpower to man the office."

Tyokwana said a meeting was held earlier this year between SAPS, metro police, provincial and municipal politicians, and the community policing forum. Tyokwana said it was agreed at the meeting that the police would pay R400 000 to the Department of Public Works to renovate the satellite police station. He said the police had not raised the funds.

Police spokesperson Colonel Priscilla Naidu said the police have increased their visibility.

"Office space was allocated by the councillor and police did utilise the space for a short time. However, due to reasons of their own, security at the premises refused police entry. The matter was discussed with all the stakeholders and the Walmer police have increased their vehicle fleet in the Walmer location to cater for the people requiring prompt response."