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Reference:	26/3/5/2	PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER
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All Provincial Heads
All District Commissioners
All Station Commanders
All Unit Commanders
WESTERN CAPE

OVERSIGHT ROLES OF COMMUNITY POLICE FORUMS

1. Community Police Forums (CPFs) and Boards at the various levels request oversight over the South African Police Service. The request for oversight include conducting station visits, attending management meetings, being informed of members misusing sick leave, to name but a few. These requests and sometimes demands result in strained relations between the South African Police Service and CPFs.
2. Section 18 of the South African Police Service Act, No. 68 of 1995 (the Act) prescribes the objectives of CPFs and Boards, and stipulates as follows:

“18. Objects of community police forums and boards

- (1) *The Service shall, in order to achieve the objects contemplated in section 215 of the Constitution, liaise with the community through community police forums and area (now districts) and provincial community police boards, in accordance with sections 19, 20 and 21, with a view to –*
 - (a) *establishing and maintaining a partnership between the community and the Service;*
 - (b) *promoting communication between the Service and the community;*

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- (c) *promoting co-operation between the Service and the community in fulfilling the needs of the community regarding policing;*
 - (d) *improving the rendering of police services to the community at national, provincial, area and local levels;*
 - (e) ***improving transparency in the Service and accountability of the Service to the community; and***
 - (f) *promoting joint problem identification and problem-solving by the Service and the community.*
- (2) *This Chapter shall not preclude liaison by the Service with the community by means other than through community police forums and boards.” (Own emphasis)*
- 3. It deems mentioning that oversight and accountability are two distinctly different concepts. Nowhere is there reference made to the CPF having an oversight role over the South African Police Service. The primary focus of CPFs should be promoting a partnership between the community and the South African Police Service, improving, promoting, communication, joint co-operation, joint problem identification and problem-solving by the South African Police Service and the community.
- 4. For purposes of promoting and achieving the objects of Section 18 referred to hereinabove, the following minimum standards are set for the engagement with CPFs at all levels:
 - 4.1 CPFs are not allowed to conduct station visits in the form of an inspection, however nothing prevents a CPF from visiting any station to observe the levels of service delivery and the general functioning of a police station.
 - 4.2 **The Western Cape Community Safety Act, 2013 paragraph 5(1) Directives for establishment of community police forums and boards**, provides that in order to promote good relations between the South African Police Service and the community, the Provincial Minister may issue directives regarding the establishment of community police forums and boards in terms of sections 19(1), 20(1) and 21(1) of the South African Police Service Act, 1995, including the directives relating to:
 - (a) the requirements to identifying relevant community organisations, institutions and interest groups to form part of a community police forum or board.
 - (b) the procedures for the establishment of a community police forum or board.
 - (c) the term of office of members of a community police forum or board.
 - (d) the adoption of a constitution for a community police forum or board and the minimum content thereof.

4.3 Resources:

Station Commanders to provide the CPFs with a global picture of the availability of resources.

Vehicles – The total number of serviceable vehicles available at the station. (CPF's are in any event not in a position to address and assist with the vehicles at garages).

Personnel – The total number of members available on any given day, within the three main categories, namely Visible Policing, Detectives and Support, without disclosing absenteeism statistics and the various categories of absenteeism.

Immovable property – Provide feedback relating to the general condition of the stations. The day-to-day budget projects that are receiving attention and challenges that are not covered within the day-to-day repairs. Challenges with regard to maintenance where the CPFs may be able to assist with the project, subject to compliance with Departmental prescriptions.

Provide feedback regarding the condition of the cells and detainees which may include the number of detainees as per the Prisoners Population Prediction Model (PPPM).

Service-delivery Complaints - Station Commanders should provide feedback with regard to complaints received during the previous month. The details of complaints need not be discussed, the types of complaints and the different environments where they emanate from are to be discussed. In the event of recurring complaints and/or specific members identified, the Station Commander should inform the CPFs of corrective actions implemented to prevent or reduce similar complaints.

4.4 Crime:

Provide the CPFs with the trends and hotspots based on the previous four weeks Crime Pattern Analysis. Quarterly Crime Statistics can be discussed after the release thereof by the Minister of Police.

Inform the CPFs of high profile crime incidents, such as shooting incidents, business/house robberies, gang activities which may include murder and armed robberies.

Inform the CPFs regarding unrest related matters, such as service delivery protests, taxi violence, strikes, etcetera.

Engage CPFs regarding crime prevention programmes/initiatives, such as Festive Season Programme, Easter Weekend Safety Programmes, etcetera, with the view of securing the cooperation of the CPFs and participation in these initiatives.

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CPF's are to provide feedback regarding programmes to address root causes of crime, awareness campaigns, safety tips and crime prevention programmes.

The CPF's' role with regard to Neighbourhood Watches (NHWs) within the policing precinct and the role of the CPFs is to enhance the functioning of NHWs, resolve disputes and conflicts within the various NHWs.

Provide feedback regarding general response times as per the Efficiency Index (EI). In the event of poor response times, corrective steps should be discussed.

4.5 Meetings:

CPF's are not allowed to attend management and or crime planning meetings such as the SCCF. CPF's must however attend crime planning meetings where crime prevention initiatives/projects such as the Festive Season/ Easter Weekend are discussed, where the CPF will form an integral part of the initiative or project.

District Commissioners and Station Commanders and the CPF Chairperson, should meet at least on a monthly basis to discuss the role of the CPFs in addressing crime and to provide feedback on the issues listed hereinabove. This meeting is not the general CPF meeting. This meeting must be attended by the District Commissioner, the District Commander: Visible Policing: Compliance and Operations and the District Commander: Detective Services: Compliance and Operations. At station level, the Station Commander, Visible Policing Commander, Detective Commander and to some extent Support Head, should attend this meeting. The CPF Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson or in the absence of the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson, the meeting should be attended by at least two members of the CPF Executive Committee. District Commissioners and Station Commanders may consider more frequent meetings referred to hereinabove, depending on the circumstances.

The Western Cape Uniform Constitution for Community Police Forums and Boards 03/2024 provides for the responsibility of the Station Commander and Sector Commander in 8.5.5 which states that the Station Commander must provide reasonable access to resources of the station to members of the forum or sub-forum to execute their functions in terms of this constitution and any related official Memorandums of Understanding or Agreements.

4.6 Social Media:

Social media does and can play an important part to improve policing/crime prevention within a station precinct, however the respective stations should discuss and agree on a social media policy applicable to the CPFs. The reason for this is the fact that history has learned that reporting crime-related matters as well as resource-related matters out of context lead to conflict between the parties and a loss of trust in the South African Police Service by the general public.

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Social Media can also play an important role to enhance the partnership between the CPFs and the South African Police Service, as this is a forum where compliments can also be shared relating to excellent work/service-delivery.

5. **According to the National Instruction 5 of 2017 Media Communication in SAPS paragraph 3(1)**, members must view medial communication as a potentially constructive means to promote the Service and lobby community support for the activities of the Service. The marketing of the Service in the media as a credible, committed, but not necessarily faultless organization, has a crucial part to play in the achieving of the objective of the Service. Care must be taken to ensure that the promotion of the Service does not lead to merely any information being furnished to the Media or to the suppression of information in the public interest or the truth.

- 5.1 Each CPF should formulate a social media policy in consultation with Provincial Communication and Liaison Office, as misuse/abuse of social media can be very damaging in any relationship.

**LIEUTENANT GENERAL
PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER: WESTERN CAPE
TE PATEKILE [ADV.]**

Date: 2024-06-07