

TACKLING CRIME AT PROVINCIAL LEVEL

The Gauteng Safety Strategy: 2006–2014

Office of the Gauteng MEC for Community Safety

As in the case of Operation Iron Fist, reviewed in the previous article in this issue, the Gauteng Department of Community Safety has been at the forefront of innovative ways to improve safety in the province. This article briefly summarises the Gauteng provincial government's Safety Strategy, adopted by the Provincial Executive in August 2006, and which will be publicly launched on 30 March 2007. The strategy is both comprehensive and ambitious, and as the first to provide a strategic framework for tackling violent and serious crime at the provincial level, will no doubt provide important lessons for other provinces to learn from.

With a population of around 9.5 million people and contributing 40% of South Africa's GDP, Gauteng is a diverse and dynamic province with many opportunities and challenges. One of the opportunities is to develop Gauteng as a competitive global city-region to drive economic growth and promote integrated governance. This vision supports government's core objectives of halving levels of poverty and unemployment by 2014.

One of the main challenges to this vision is violent crime, which makes up one third of all recorded crime in the province. Violence destroys lives, places communities under siege and breeds fear and anxiety in a manner that stifles economic and social development. The Gauteng Safety Strategy provides a framework for reducing and preventing violent and serious crime.

The strategy recognises that it is not possible for the police to tackle crime alone. In addition to short term policing measures, a long term strategy is needed that improves provincial government's ability to align and coordinate all available resources in Gauteng towards reducing crime.

Because the crime problem is complex and has strong social and economic roots, the strategy seeks to provide a framework for action that involves all public and private agencies in the province.

The Gauteng Safety Strategy draws from the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) and the White Paper on Safety and Security. These documents recognise that crime in South Africa, as in any country, is a consequence of historical, social, economic and spatial characteristics of our society. Inequality, social exclusion, a culture of violence, dysfunctional families, high drop-out rates from school, and alcohol and drug abuse are among the factors that contribute to crime over which the police have little control.

Reducing crime therefore requires a strategy with two fundamental approaches:

- reforming and strengthening the criminal justice system in order to deter potential offenders;
- tackling the social and environmental factors associated with crime, which is the domain of departments outside the criminal justice system as well as organised civil society.

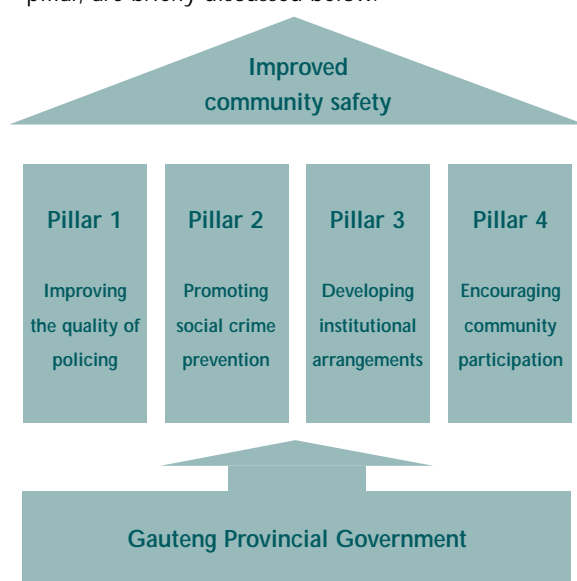
Provincial mandate and implementation

As the democratically elected representatives of the people of Gauteng, the provincial executive, through the Department of Community Safety, has a key role to play in promoting safety. Section 206 of the Constitution clearly stipulates that national policing policy be developed in line with the principle of cooperative governance through consultation with the provincial executive.

The Department of Community Safety will take responsibility for developing a funded implementation plan that will result in practical initiatives for each of the strategy's strategic objectives and focus areas. This will provide a basis for monitoring and evaluating the Gauteng Safety Strategy. The ultimate measure of the strategy's success will be the reduction in violent and serious crime in the province as per national government's annual target of between 7% and 10%. The strategy promotes the disaggregation of crime so that specific crime categories that cause the most harm and fear (such as murder, rape and aggravated robbery) are identified, prioritised and targeted for specific interventions.

The four pillar approach

The Gauteng Safety Strategy has adopted a four pillar approach through which the provincial government can improve community safety. The pillars, together with the relevant objectives in each pillar, are briefly discussed below.



Pillar 1: Improving the quality of policing

The provincial executive will play a greater and more innovative role in improving the quality of policing in the province.

Constitutional mandate for police oversight

Section 206 of the Constitution provides provincial executives with the authority to determine policing needs and priorities. This policy development role is supported by the constitutional powers granted to this sphere of government to hold the police accountable through monitoring service delivery, police conduct, visible policing and community police relations.

The Constitution clearly expects the principle of cooperative governance to frame the development of policing policy when it states that the national Minister of Safety and Security must determine national policing policy "after consulting with the provincial governments and taking into account the policing needs and priorities of the provinces as determined by provincial executives."

There will be substantial improvements in the public's experience of police service delivery and a decrease in perceptions of police corruption by 2010. The provincial government will use its constitutional powers to determine provincial policing needs and priorities through enhancing the Department of Community Safety's ability to assess police performance and conduct.

Objective 1.1: Strengthening the monitoring of police performance

By 2008 the Department of Community Safety will have established a performance monitoring system that accurately and timeously tracks crime and police performance in Gauteng. This will allow the department, in partnership with the SAPS, to set and achieve specific targets relating to specific crime problems.

In order to effectively assess service delivery and performance, the Department of Community Safety must establish an integrated information management system that can access and synthesise data on crime and police performance in Gauteng.

Objective 1.2: Strengthening the monitoring of police conduct

By 2009 the SAPS will have implemented an ongoing Police Integrity Strategy that will be monitored with the Department of Community Safety. This will assist in ensuring that the police in Gauteng have a reputation for professional conduct and that reports of police corruption or misconduct will be few.

The SAPS in Gauteng must take urgent measures to deal with corruption. The Prevention of Corruption and Fraud Strategy developed by the SAPS national office provides a framework for provinces to use. An accessible and well publicised police feedback system must also be established so that all complaints and praises about police behaviour are gathered and dealt with.

The Department of Community Safety will assist in developing and monitoring a Provincial Police Integrity Strategy. In addition to tracking allegations of police misconduct and criminality, the strategy will include proactive measures such as covert operations and integrity tests to identify and root out police officers who are abusing their powers.

Objective 1.3: Improving the functioning of Community Policing Forums (CPFs)

By 2009 each police station in Gauteng will have an effective community policing forum that implements community safety plans developed in partnership with the SAPS. The department has completed a set of provincial directives for CPFs in Gauteng to guide the establishment, roles, responsibilities and functions of the forums and to ensure adherence to a set of minimum standards.

The department will establish a monitoring system that assesses the extent to which all CPFs have achieved the minimum standards. The monitoring system will assist in identifying good practices that could be disseminated to improve the functioning of CPFs throughout the province.

Objective 1.4: Improving collaboration between the SAPS and other agencies

By 2009, the SAPS will have clear protocols for working with public, private and civil society agencies on crime reduction projects.

In the public sector, the SAPS should improve cooperation with local government and in particular with the municipal police departments. The Department of Community Safety will assist by monitoring the Provincial Police Coordinating Committee's role in promoting cooperation between the police departments. Protocols or agreements will also be developed between SAPS and other state agencies such as the Asset Forfeiture Unit and the Directorate for Special Operations in the NPA, the Department of Home Affairs and the South African Revenue Service.

Protocols or agreements will also be drawn up with non-state agencies. In particular, attention will be given to the regulation of the private security industry and ways in which the police and private security agencies can cooperate. Attention will also be paid to enhancing the role played by academic, research and other civil society bodies.

Pillar 2: Promoting social crime prevention

Social crime prevention is needed if a sustainable reduction of crime is to be realised. The Gauteng Safety Strategy seeks to introduce a number of innovations to the social crime prevention approach applied in the province.

Addressing the life cycle of crime

The social environment plays a significant role in determining whether or not people choose to become involved in crime. Children exposed to neglect or violence are at greater risk of becoming involved in anti-social and criminal behaviour as they grow up. Schools play a crucial socialising role for children as they progress to adolescence and should function not only as institutions of learning but as safe spaces that promote social responsibility and constitutional values.

Once young people leave school, they should have opportunities to further build self-esteem through participating in constructive activities and programmes. These programmes must be seen by young people as a viable alternative to becoming involved in crime.

Evaluated interventions

Effective programmes are those that target specific factors associated with crime among specific groups in particular communities. In this way it is possible to design interventions that can be monitored and evaluated to assess their impact on crime in a defined area. The Gauteng Safety Strategy will establish a Crime Prevention Resource Centre to provide examples of proven crime prevention interventions. The establishment of an integrated information management system will allow for the monitoring and evaluation of community-level interventions.

For sustained crime reduction over the period of the Gauteng Safety Strategy and beyond, it is necessary for the provincial government to focus on groups who are most vulnerable or at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violent crimes.

Objective 2.1: Violence prevention for children

Programmes must ensure that the numbers of crimes committed against children have decreased substantially by 2014. By 2010 interventions must be showing results in communities where children are most at risk. An early success indicator would be an increase in the reporting of violence against children as this indicates that fewer children suffer in silence and more perpetrators are identified and subject to appropriate interventions.

Objective 2.2: School safety strategies

This focus area seeks to achieve a substantial reduction in the number of violent crimes committed at schools. The provincial government should ensure that by 2009 each school in the province has a comprehensive School Safety Strategy which is monitored and reviewed annually. Schools that are identified as being the least safe should be prioritised.

Objective 2.3: Violence prevention for out-of-school youth

By 2009 the number of young people arrested and convicted for violent crime must have decreased significantly. Youth development and crime prevention programmes must be evaluated to ensure that they are averting young people from engaging in violent behaviour and criminality.

The implementation of the pillars of the 2005 Gauteng Integrated Youth Development Strategy will go a long way to addressing factors contributing to youth crime. In particular, the youth in the key risk categories need to be targeted, namely:

- youth who have dropped out of school;
- youth in trouble with the law;
- youth involved in alcohol or drug abuse; and
- young people who have been victims of crime.

The Department of Community Safety will identify and monitor the programmes undertaken by the provincial government and the Provincial Youth Commission that are specifically aimed at addressing issues of violence and crime.

Objective 2.4: Prevention of violence against women

By 2009 the province must have contributed to the creation of an environment that does not tolerate violence against women. The pillars in the Provincial Strategy for the Prevention of Violence against Women and Children (VAWAC) must be implemented. These include:

- implementing national legislation and policy;
- establishing infrastructure in areas where none exists;
- building the capacity of all public service practitioners;
- improving the criminal justice system's ability to respond to crimes against women and children;
- strengthening advocacy and awareness campaigns;
- strengthening prevention and support programmes;
- early childhood intervention; and
- improving data collection.

The Department of Community Safety will identify and monitor programmes undertaken as part of the VAWAC strategy so as to promote coordination between different departments and with roleplayers outside of government.

Pillar 3: Institutional arrangements to support crime prevention

The vision of Gauteng as a global city-region demands that the different departments and spheres of government operate in a more integrated and coordinated manner. This means aligning the planning processes, capacity and activities of government and non-government agencies to realise specific objectives.

Objective 3.1 Improving the coordination of the criminal justice system

By 2009 the departments of the criminal justice system and victim empowerment service providers will cooperate in a structured manner to ensure greater impact on perpetrators of violent crimes and better service provision to victims. At a national level the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Cluster has been established to improve coordination among government departments. A similar provincial body could be established with close links to the national cluster.

Focus area: Provincial criminal justice coordinating committee

A provincial criminal justice coordinating committee will be established to ensure that high level support and a strategic framework is provided for improved cooperation. Senior officials from each criminal justice department should participate in the structure. The Department of Community Safety will initiate and coordinate the establishment of a provincial criminal justice coordinating committee and participate in its proceedings.

Focus area: Local level criminal justice coordinating committees

Local level criminal justice coordinating committees will ensure that there is an increase in conviction rates for violent crimes through improved

collaboration between police officials, the courts, prisons and victim empowerment service providers at the local level.

While the provincial level structure will provide strategic direction, support and coordination, it is at the local level that a structure of this nature will have direct impact. Local committees could also ensure coordination between specific courts, police stations and government social service departments and NGOs providing services to victims and witnesses.

The Department of Community Safety will monitor the extent to which each police station and court is participating in local level criminal justice coordinating committees.

Objective 3.2: Strengthening intergovernmental relations for crime prevention

By 2009 there will be greater alignment of national, provincial and local government planning with regard to the provision of security and crime prevention infrastructure and initiatives.

Focus area: Improving provincial government integration

Departments outside the criminal justice system have an important role to play in the prevention of violent crime. For example, the Department of Health can collect information on violence-related injuries, notify the police, provide victims with information about services, and ensure that medical evidence is properly processed and available to the police and courts.

With joint planning and systems for sharing information, government can have a better impact on crime. However, there are no simple answers for ensuring cross-departmental integration. The national Governance and Administration Cluster 'Framework for Managing Joint Programmes' has provided a set of principles that can enhance integration among government departments. Using these, the Department of Community Safety will seek to improve horizontal government alignment through engaging in joint planning with other provincial departments to ensure inter-

departmental participation in crime prevention initiatives.

Focus area: Improving cooperation between provincial and local government

The Department of Community Safety will seek to improve vertical alignment between the provincial and local governments with regard to reducing violent crime. The department will work with local governments to set up and coordinate crime prevention initiatives by participating in the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) processes and establishing a Gauteng Intergovernmental Safety Coordinating Committee (GISCC).

The MEC for Community Safety will chair the Forum and his Head of Department will provide a supporting secretariat. The department will align its planning process with the IDPs to ensure better integration between the community safety programmes undertaken by provincial and local government.

Objective 3.3: Expanding the role of local government in crime prevention

By 2009 local governments will each have a safety strategy that links local service delivery to crime prevention. These strategies will be aligned to national and provincial crime prevention policies and will be budgeted for in the IDPs. The local safety strategies should be coordinated and monitored by local government structures established for this purpose.

Focus area: Promoting social crime prevention in the IDPs

As a key roleplayer in ensuring community level safety, all local governments must be well versed in the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). This will allow local departments concerned with urban planning, design and management to develop communities in a manner that promotes healthy urban culture and space.

Furthermore, local governments can support a range of crime prevention priorities such as ensuring clean

and safe areas around schools and maintaining recreation areas for youth. Local planning processes for new or expanding communities must also include the identification of spaces where new police stations can be built.

The Department of Community Safety will undertake to align its planning process with that of local government to ensure that provincial guidelines are considered when incorporating social crime prevention objectives into the IDPs.

Objective 3.4 Strengthening crime and safety information management

By 2008 the provincial government will have accurate and updated information on crime statistics and police performance for each policing precinct in Gauteng, to allow for the timely identification of crime trends and to assess the Strategy's progress. Information on best practices will also be collected and made available from a central location.

Focus area: A crime and safety integrated information management system

Detailed information about each of the Strategy's violent crime categories is necessary for the provincial government to identify locations for crime prevention interventions, design the most effective programmes, and assess impact. Fortunately, much of the required capacity and information exists within the Gauteng province. The Department of Community Safety will establish and develop an integrated crime and safety information management system to identify challenges and track impact throughout the province.

Focus area: Establishing a crime prevention resource centre

In order to mobilise roleplayers to participate in crime prevention, information about what works is needed. In the past decade substantial South African work on crime prevention has been developed that could assist local agencies in better understanding and addressing specific crime challenges. The Department of Community Safety will establish a resource centre that will collect, evaluate and disseminate information on best practices.

Pillar 4: Encouraging community participation

One of the challenges confronting the province is the large number of people who tolerate or are complicit in criminal activity. A campaign is needed to lower the tolerance and complicity of ordinary people for criminality. In particular it is necessary to promote the concept of adhering to the rule of law.

Objective 4.1 Encouraging a social movement against crime

In 2007 a social movement against crime will be launched to raise awareness and mobilise individuals to participate in practical initiatives to reduce violent crime in their areas.

Focus area: Increasing awareness and changing behaviour around crime

The Department of Community Safety will establish a social movement to intensify community mobilisation against violence and crime. The seeds of a social movement will be planted through a sustained communications and awareness campaign. Awareness will be raised by developing a communications strategy that is used by all provincial government departments in campaigns, events, and meetings.

Although it is important to increase awareness, the next challenge is to translate this knowledge into changes in attitudes and behaviour. This requires organising structures to support new forms of behaviour and action that result in crime reduction.

Focus area: Building organisational capacity to support community activity to reduce crime

The social movement concept seeks to increase the number of people who recognise that they have a role to play in reducing crime. The Department of Community Safety will establish a social movement office that will coordinate and support initiatives to improve safety.

The social movement will be underpinned by an expanded volunteer management programme driven and coordinated by the department to ensure that

volunteers have the necessary training and capacity to engage in community based activities. Existing structures such as community policing forums and youth desks will be strengthened to drive community based crime prevention initiatives.