

Cape Town Stadium Given the Green Light

Plans to build a new stadium in Cape Town to stage matches in the 2010 World Cup were given the green light when the provincial government dismissed a series of appeals against its construction.

Tasneem Essop, planning and economic development minister in the Western Cape provincial government, said that a rezoning application for the land where the 68,000-seater stadium should be built had also been approved.

"Far from having a substantial detrimental effect on the environment, overall the new stadium and urban park on the Green Point Common will have a beneficial impact on the local environment and will benefit the broader Cape Town community," she told reporters.

The appeal against the construction of the stadium at Green Point had been launched by the local residents association which had cited environmental concerns.

Local organisers of the tournament had threatened that Cape Town would be stripped of its status as one of the nine host cities if a lengthy dispute about the planning process delayed construction.

The Green Point Common Association was not immediately available for comment today but it has previously threatened court action if its appeal were to be dismissed by the provincial government.

The proposed stadium is one of few which would be large enough to stage one of the two semi-finals – yet to be allocated to host cities.

The Cape Town city council noted Essop's decision and expressed its commitment in a statement to public consultations in the final stages of the authorisation process. The council is to meet on January 17 to consider granting consent use authorisation for the newly rezoned Green Point Common, one of the final prerequisites for stadium construction to start. Essop expressed confidence today that enough time remained to complete the stadium by the end of 2009, as required by football world governing body FIFA.