

Property group: Strip council planning powers

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North Sydney Council will have to re-exhibit its local environment plan after the Land and Environment Court ruled it was invalid last week.

The decision prompted property industry group Urban Taskforce to call for the council to lose its planning powers to an independent panel.

Justice David Lloyd found the council had misled the public about the amount of residential floor space the plan could achieve, and had failed to consider a submission from Urban Taskforce.

As a result, he ruled the process was invalid. North Sydney Council will have to re-exhibit the plan before approving a new one, and pay court costs for the applicant, developer Castle Constructions.

North Sydney Mayor Genia McCaffery said the decision was based on technical errors in the council's local environment plan process.

"This is a developer who is trying to get a development more than double the current height controls and is not prepared to abide by the rules like the other developers," she said.

She said it would be ridiculous to take away the council's planning powers as the State Government had approved the plan.

Urban Taskforce chief executive Aaron Gadiel said the council had lied to the community. "It's disappointing that not only did the council propose a plan that could have reduced residential development - it misled the public about its intention," he said.