

8.5 NSW Planning Portal Integration

REPORT BY THE ACTING DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT
TO 20 JULY 2022 ORDINARY MEETING
GOV400098, GRA800006

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Acting Director Development on the NSW Planning Portal Integration;**
2. **accept grant funding of \$80,000 from NSW Government Planning Portal API integration grant;**
3. **amend the 2022/23 Budget and Operational Plan as follows:**
 - **In 2022/23 set an expenditure budget of \$185,000 to be funded by grant funding of \$80,000 and unrestricted cash of \$105,000;**
 - **In 2023/24 and 2024/25 set an expenditure budget of \$60,000 p.a. for licensing expense for ongoing integration between Technology One and the NSW Planning Portal; and**
4. **authorise the General Manager to finalise and sign the funding agreement with the NSW Government.**

Executive summary

The NSW Planning Portal was introduced in July 2021 by NSW Government with the intention to digitise the planning process for a wide-range of users across the state. Whilst the intention was to streamline services for customers and government agencies, without digital integration with Council software and management programs the Planning Portal has increased manual workload significantly for Council. In turn this has reduced service levels to process planning related applications and created increased opportunities for errors and issues in the administration of the development process.

To improve efficiency, reduce errors and improve times to process Development Applications, it is recommended that Council accept grant funding from NSW Government Planning Portal API Integration Grant and amend the budget and operational plan per above recommendations to deliver integration between the Planning Portal and Council's TechOne software.

Disclosure of Interest

Nil

Detailed report

The Department of Planning and Environment is providing funds through the NSW Planning Portal API grant to support local councils to digitally integrate with the NSW Planning Portal via APIs. APIs, or application programming interfaces, are the digital tools necessary to complete

the integration of an online service. APIs enable one party to push out data from a particular data field into their IT system (in this case, the NSW Planning Portal) and for another party (for Council this is TechOne) to receive that data and map it to equivalent data fields from their side. This works in both directions, enabling any data entered into fields at either end to flow back and forth in real time. The NSW Planning Portal API Grant is contributing to assist councils to digitally integrate their IT systems with the NSW Planning Portal using ePlanning integration APIs.

The core advantages to Council of establishing an Application Programming Interface (API) between TechOne and the Planning Portal;

- Increased productivity and efficiency through the automation of data migration, saving time on important tasks such as; record keeping, data creation/collection, and various other tasks that require transferring data between each application.
- Increased productivity and efficiency, where the application process will be sped up, reducing assessment time for customers.
- An API will improve consistency in the collection of data.
- Improving data quality and allowing more reliable and accurate input of data – will remove human error
- Inefficiencies are experienced currently, where Council are using a dual system to register applications, one where DAs are integrated with TechOne automatically, and the other where applications are having to be manually inputted into TechOne.

The number of Development Applications received and processed by Council has continued to grow over the last few years. The increased volume of applications, along with a more manual and laborious process has led to delays in DA processing time. Income from Development Application fees have increased by 158% over the last 12 months. Therefore, it is timely to utilise the increased funds to invest in improved processes to manage increased workloads and provide improved services to the community.

It is recommended that Council accept grant funding of \$80,000 from NSW Government Planning Portal API integration grant and amend the 2022/23 Budget and Operational Plan as follows:

- In 2022/23 set an expenditure budget of \$185,000 to be funded by grant funding of \$80,000 and unrestricted cash of \$105,000
- In 2023/24 and 2024/245 set an expenditure budget of \$60,000 p.a. for licensing expense for ongoing integration between Technology One and the NSW Planning Portal

Community Plan implications

Theme	Good Governance
Goal	An effective and efficient organisation
Strategy	Pursue efficiencies and ongoing business improvement

Strategic implications

Council Strategies

This project supports Council's goal to be an effective and efficient organisation.

Council Policies

Not applicable

Legislation

The Planning Portal is a NSW Government mandated system to lodge planning applications online. This must be used by anyone in NSW to lodge a range of planning applications with Council.

Financial implications

This project will increase operational expenses in 2022/23 by \$185,000 and \$60,000 p.a. into the future to continue to receive software support and updates.

Budget Year	Operating Performance Ratio	Own Source Revenue	Building & Infrastructure Renewal
2022/23	✘	-	-
Future Years	✘	-	-

Associated Risks

Should Council not invest in supporting the integration between the NSW Planning Portal and TechOne software, it is likely that errors in planning activities due to the manual duplication of tasks will occur. Further, without integration, increases in planning applications and activities will require further administration resources to support and process these and the recruitment of staff is difficult due to a tight employment market. This leaves a risk of further increased times to process development applications, exposing Council to greater risk of Land and Environment Court matters due to slow decision making.

ALINA AZAR
ACTING DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT

17 June 2022

Attachments: Nil

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

SIMON JONES
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY