Planning Inspectorate

Costs Decision

Site visit made on 11 December 2025

by S F Murphy BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI MISEP CEnv.

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 January 2026

**Costs application in relation to Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/W/25/3366969
Matchbox Stable, A286 Town Lane To The Grove, Singleton, West Sussex PO18 0EX**

- The application is made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, sections 78, 322 and Schedule 6, and the Local Government Act 1972, section 250(5).
- The application is made by St Wilfrids Hospice (South Coast Ltd) for a full award of costs against South Downs National Park Authority.
- The appeal was against the refusal of planning permission for a change of use of Matchbox Stables annex from holiday/ tourist accommodation to residential annex for use in association with Old Cottage.

Decision

1. The application for an award of costs is refused.

Reasons

2. Parties in planning appeals normally meet their own expenses. However, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that costs may be awarded against a party who has behaved unreasonably and thereby caused the party applying for costs to incur unnecessary or wasted expense in the appeal process.

3. The PPG explains unreasonable behaviour may be either procedural or substantive relating to the issues arising from the merits of the appeal. The PPG goes on to clarify what counts as unnecessary or wasted expense including time spent in preparing for an appeal or the use of consultants to provide technical advice. However, an award of costs cannot extend to compensation for indirect losses, such as those which may result from alleged delay in obtaining planning permission.

4. The applicant contends that the South Downs National Park Authority (the National Park Authority) should have allowed the planning application and submits the National Park Authority has acted unreasonably in substantive terms. The applicant considers the National Park Authority to have unreasonably refused the planning application, including preventing or delaying development which should have been permitted, having regard to its development plan, national policy and any other material considerations. The applicant states that evidence was provided to the National Park Authority prior to determination to demonstrate compliance with Policy SD23 sub paragraph 2 of the South Downs Local Plan adopted July 2019 (the Local Plan).

5. The evidence before me does not show that the National Park Authority acted unreasonably in determining the planning application and did so in accordance with its development plan. I recognise that the applicant considers sufficient evidence of

a marketing campaign alongside details of unviability of Matchbox Stables as a holiday/ tourist accommodation was provided to the National Park Authority.

6. However, the National Park Authority produced a report which considered the proposal against the particular requirements of Policy SD23 sub paragraph 2 of the Local Plan. This articulated the National Park Authority's concerns that insufficient evidence had been presented to demonstrate Matchbox Stables in its current use as holiday/ tourist accommodation is financially unviable and that there is no market demand for this existing use or an equivalent tourism use. The National Park Authority identified areas of conflict against specific parts of Policy SD23 and summarised these in the reason for refusal. I have also read correspondence provided as part of the evidence accompanying the appeal where the National Park Authority communicated their concerns.

7. It will be seen from my decision that I agree with the National Park Authority that insufficient evidence has been demonstrated showing the current use is financially unviable and that a robust marketing campaign for the holiday/ tourist accommodation use was carried out to establish no market demand for that use. Consequently, the proposal does not accord with the development plan. It follows that I am satisfied that the National Park Authority has shown that it was able to substantiate its reason for refusal, and I cannot agree that the National Park Authority has acted unreasonably in this case. As such, there can be no question that the applicant was put to unnecessary or wasted expense.

Conclusion

8. I therefore find that unreasonable behaviour resulting in unnecessary or wasted expense, as defined in the PPG, has not been demonstrated. Accordingly, the application for costs is refused.

S F Murphy

INSPECTOR