proposal would not be in full accord with [the] emerging Policy A35… as it would fail to provide the required cycling improvements…" Limited weight was given to that, as it was to the concerns of the local education authority that the site was not suitable for an all-through school for the wider community. Although some of the harmful impacts on the appearance of the area could be partially mitigated by extensive landscaping, "this would not disguise the basic fact that a new settlement in a rural area would, inevitably, cause substantial harm to both its character and its appearance." This would be irreversible, contrary to development plan policy, and carried significant adverse weight. Other factors were considered as well. The Secretary of State agreed that many of the purported benefits were little more than mitigation, while the benefits for the wider community, outside the appeal site, were rather more limited. The loss of some 44ha of best and most versatile agricultural land was accorded considerable weight. The harm to heritage assets was less than substantial.

146. On 13 June 2018, the Secretary of State rejected a request from Wisley Property Investments Ltd to delay issuing his decision on the appeal, concluding that:

> "in view of the range of factors remaining to be resolved, the most satisfactory approach is to decide this appeal in the context of the current development plan. This reduces the uncertainty for all parties and leaves the way open for further applications to be considered (by the Council in the first instance) once there is an up-to-date planning framework for the Borough."

147. Mr Maurici QC for Wisley Property Investments Ltd submitted that this showed that the Secretary of State did not regard the appeal decision is ruling out the allocation or a further application. That is true, but its significance can be overstated. He also drew my attention to the decision of the Inspector, accepted by the Secretary of State, to refuse an application for costs against the developer after the appeal. The application was made on the grounds that the pursuit of the appeal was unreasonable in view of the absence of any solution to the highways issues, and the unmet housing need was "unlikely" to outweigh harm to the Green Belt and provide very special circumstances. The emerging local plan could not add sufficient weight to amount to very special circumstances. The appeal Inspector found that the appellant had always intended to pursue a plan-led scheme, and had done so in the reasonable expectation that the emerging Local Plan would have been adopted in July 2016 in time for the decision on the application lodged in December 2014. But it had been delayed; the allocation boundaries had varied. The highways issue turned on the slip roads; it was not an objection in principle but went to whether they could in fact be provided. On Green Belt, the appeal Inspector said that the lack of suitable housing sites remained acute and some land would probably need to be released from the Green Belt to meet any identified need. He continued:

> "I do not consider that it is inevitable that this appeal would fail on Green Belt grounds or that its location within the Green Belt, in advance of any determination on whether it should be taken out of the Green Belt, made the appeal hopeless. The Appellant put forward a credible case for the development in the Green Belt including a raft of matters that were, when taken together, considered to comprise the necessary VSC."

148. It is worth noting, in the context of the arguments which I have heard, that neither the appeal Inspector nor the Secretary of State regarded the scope of "very special circumstances" as limited to individual circumstances which were, taken by themselves, not very special, in the sort of language which Mr Kimblin deployed in relation to the concept of "exceptional circumstances." The need for general housing was capable of contributing to those circumstances.

149. I note these further points from the appeal Inspector's Report, AIR. Guildford BC's Green Belt and Countryside Study, part of its Local Plan preparatory work, recognised that any large non-urban site in a Borough where 89% of the land lay within the Green Belt, would conflict with the Green Belt purpose of assisting in the regeneration of urban land; and it was only being contemplated because there was insufficient suitable urban land within the Borough. At 20.71, AIR, the appeal Inspector considered transport sustainability. Without changes, the appeal site was not in a sustainable location, with little public transport in the immediate vicinity, and narrow winding lanes, without footways or lighting, which were not conducive to walking or cycling. The proximity of the A3 and the strategic road network would encourage travelling by car. Various significant interventions were proposed to deal with this. The maintenance of the level and cost of the bus services would be "quite challenging", but would go "some way to improving the public transport options." The off-site cycle network required, by the emerging Local Plan, to key destinations including railway stations at Ripley and Byfleet was not provided; the roads were of insufficient width and rather demonstrated that they were not conducive to cycling other than by experienced and confident cyclists. The long linear shape of the site did not assist sustainability as buses would be needed by some residents to reach the village centre, notably from the housing which could be up to 1500m, as the crow flies, from the centre. The scheme failed to meet even the minimum requirements for cycling in the emerging Local Plan. However, AIR20.81, the proposals went a long way towards making the location more sustainable but fell short of the full cycling improvements required by the emerging Local Plan. Weight would be given to that shortfall because that was the plan which Guildford BC intended to submit for examination.

150. The appeal Inspector accepted, AIR20.87, that some landscape and visual harm was inevitable with development in the countryside: the character and appearance of the site would change significantly; the character of the wider area would also be affected. Guildford BC accepted some harm was inevitable, wherever new housing was provided in the Borough, given the severe constraints it faced. But there would still be a very substantial change to the character of the area; the form of the proposed settlement would be wholly at odds with the loose, informal nature of the settlements that had grown up organically in the area over the years. The site was on a long east-west ridge, rising to the east, so "any development on the site would inevitably stand out in the surrounding landscape making it prominent and potentially dominating." The inclusion of the additional land in the allocation to the south of the appeal site, with the same amount of development, "would allow a less dense and linear development, as envisaged in the eLP." As it was, AIR 20.94, all the development was squeezed from the north, by the SPA, and the south:

> "forcing the development upwards and resulting in a highly urban character this is partly a consequence of the site being considerably smaller than the site that GBC intends to allocate

> in eLP Policy A35. While any development of this scale on this site would appear out of keeping with its surroundings, the additional constraint imposed by a smaller site seems to exacerbate the harm to the character of the area."

151. The overall impact "would result in substantial harm to the character of the immediate area", eroding the historic pattern of the settlements to the detriment of their character. He agreed with residents that this impact "would be catastrophic on their rural way of life."

152. The impact on the appearance of the area would be rather less severe than on its character, as much of the site was quite well screened from off-site public viewpoints. The existing runway was a stark concrete feature that failed to make a positive contribution to the appearance of the area; but there would be a harmful impact on public rights of way. There would be a change from travel through an open largely agricultural landscape to an urban walk, with urban sights and activity. Off-site views would be fairly long distance as the site was quite well screened by existing trees and, from nearby, but the ridge would be visible from as far afield as the AONB. It would appear as a linear, urban feature, although careful use of materials would soften its visual impact. Its impact would be exacerbated by its village location, with 3- to 5-story buildings along the central spine road making the full 2.4km of the development visible from highly sensitive locations on public rights of way in the AONB. In time, some of the impacts on the appearance of the area could be mitigated by extensive landscaping.

153. The appeal Inspector also considered nitrogen and nitrous oxide levels in the SPA. He rejected the extreme position put forward by Wisley Action Group and Ockham Parish Council, for whom Mr Harwood appeared at the appeal Inquiry, that because the critical level for NOx and the critical load for nitrogen were already being exceeded, not one single vehicle movement could be generated without infringement of EU law, so planning permission would have to be refused. He summarised the detailed assessment carried out by the Appellant, AIR 20.140:

> "This shows that the part of the SPA where the 1% increase is exceeded is limited to strips of land adjacent to the A3 and M25….Surveys show that beyond 200m there is no discernible effect; the impacts are thought to be greatest within the first 50-100m but the area where the appeal scheme makes a greater than 1% contribution is much more limited. …20.141 [M]ost of the SPA that falls within even 200m of the A3 and M25 comprises woodland; there are only small areas of heath. It also shows that by 2031 none of the heathland would fall within an area exceeding critical levels for NOx with the appeal scheme and other future development….This woodland provides a shelter belt and possibly nesting opportunities for the Woodlark but does not offer ground nesting sites. This type of buffer is advocated in DBRM as best practice. The evidence, which was not challenged, shows that some Nightjar territories have been within the 200m distance but none within the 140m distance from these roads."

154. Natural England had raised no objections on air quality grounds. There was no evidence demonstrating that changes in air quality, individually or in combination with other developments, were likely to have significant effects or undermine the conservation objectives for the SPA; an Appropriate Assessment was not required.

155. The appeal Inspector accepted that the runway and hard standings, amounting to almost 30ha, was the largest area of previously developed land in the Green Belt in the Borough, and its beneficial reuse contributed to very special circumstances, and to Guildford BC's justification for seeking to release it from the Green Belt. This had to be tempered by the fact that a larger area of agricultural land including well over 40ha of the best and most versatile would be lost.

156. In his overall conclusions, the appeal Inspector said that the proposals were "largely, but not completely, in accordance with the eLP but, for the reasons set out above, it carries only limited weight as there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies. The unresolved objections are significant in content and quantity and this limits the weight that can be accorded to the eLP." He understood the frustration of the Appellant who could reasonably have expected the eLP to be more advanced and therefore weightier than it was.

157. The proposals did not fully accord with the eLP, seeking to accommodate roughly the same amount of development as sought by the eLP, on a smaller site. Other requirements in Policy A35, such as the provision of an off-site cycle network to key destinations and sensitive design at site boundaries would only be partly met by the appeal scheme. The failure to provide adequate infrastructure, in the form of north facing slip roads at Burnt Common, was a major and fatal failing of the scheme. The proposals would not protect or enhance the natural, built or historic environment and could result in a high level of car-dependency. The inevitable harm from such development in a rural setting would be particularly noticeable in the midst of a cluster of hamlets. Its linear form, in part a consequence of the smaller site, and its location on a ridge meant that there would be longer views of the proposals; from the AONB, the new settlement would be seen to impose itself on the landscape without regard to the established settlement pattern or form.

158. Mr Kimblin's contention was that the LP Inspector had not grappled with the thrust of the reasons which led the Secretary of State to accept the appeal Inspector's recommendations for the dismissal of the appeal. They reached different decisions on the same issues, and it was not possible to understand why he differed from the appeal decision. Mr Kimblin highlighted the contrasting language about the harm to the Green Belt, the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, the degree of prominence and visual self-containment, the sustainability of the location, including the provision of bus services and the difficulty of accommodating facilities for the average cyclist.

159. Mr Kimblin made some complaint, without alleging any separate error of law, that the Inspector had sought a note from Guildford BC on the appeal Decision but had refused to accept written representations from other participants, on whatever side of the Wisley airfield allocation debate. The Note pointed out that an appeal decision and the decision on a Local Plan allocation were decisions of a different nature, with different statutory tests. The approach to development in the Green Belt necessarily differed. It has always been the intention of Guildford BC that the site should come forward via the plan-making process. There would be no substantial harm to the Green Belt if the site were

removed from it. The important highways objection had largely been resolved and Highways England expected to be able to withdraw its objection. The harm alleged to the character and appearance of the landscape had been considered, in that process, in the context of longer -term housing need, and where else the need could be met with less harm. The allocation in the emerging Local Plan had been given limited weight. The residue of the allocation outside the appeal site, could have come forward for further housing, had the appeal succeeded. The appeal Inspector accepted that the difference between the allocation and the appeal site had exacerbated the harm caused by the development.

160. First, in my judgment, this issue is different from some cases where an appeal decision has been prayed in aid of an objection to an allocation, but has not been dealt with by the LP Inspector. This appeal decision concerned the larger part of an allocated site, rather than a calculation of some more generally applicable nature, or some unallocated site. It was contemporaneous. Here, the LP Inspector did treat the appeal Decision as relevant in considering the soundness of the allocation, as it obviously was; and he set out to deal expressly with its significance for his Report. If he had not done so, there could have been a lively debate as to whether he ought to have done so, but that is not the case here.

161. Second, the decision on the appeal was not a decision on the soundness of the allocation, nor vice versa. It would not have been for the appeal Inspector to trespass on the functions of the LP Inspector and the former, and the Secretary of State, would have been well aware of the need not to do so. The framework for the respective decisions was markedly different, as IR 181, the subsequent discussion, and the earlier discussion of strategic Green Belt exceptional circumstances in IR86, showed.

162. The appeal was concerned with whether the proposal was consistent with the existing development plan; the PE was concerned with whether the emerging Local Plan was sound, in making changes to the Green Belt boundary, and in making housing provision for the period to 2034. “Very special circumstances” had to be shown for this inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as opposed to “exceptional circumstances”, a lesser test, for varying Green Belt boundaries.

163. Third, the Local Plan was emerging but the appeal Inspector was aware of the objections to the Wisley allocation and did not afford it much weight on that account; the LP Inspector had the task of judging its soundness, and not its weight as an emerging Plan. The LP Inspector also had not just the immediate housing land supply shortfall, but also the future allocations to meet the OAN with a buffer to deal with. He had to deal with a long-term plan, covering the whole of Guildford BC’s area, so that a coherent strategy for that period was provided, within which development control and infrastructure decisions could be made. He necessarily had to consider whether there were any non-Green Belt sites which could be released instead, and, if Green Belt sites were to be released, which were the best locations overall, including not just their effects on the Green Belt, but also their ability to form a coherent spatial distribution strategy, meeting other needs, and being made sustainable, as a whole. This was a comparative exercise, and not a decision about a single site. This was all part of the LP Inspector’s consideration of “soundness”. The consideration of “soundness” was no part of how the appeal Inspector had to approach his Report, and the Secretary of State, his decision.

164. Fourthly, there were also more development/allocation specific considerations: one of the most important was the sustained highways objection to the absence of practical solution to the necessary north-facing A3 slips, which was sufficiently resolved by the time of the LP IR for that major objection not to be a factor against the allocation's soundness. The second was the difference between the appeal site and the allocation, with the implications which that had, whether for further development on the residue of the allocation, or on the way in which the height of the buildings, particularly with the ridge running west-east, would make development prominent. Necessarily, the detail of the boundary treatment would be different. These are all part of IR186, and the way in which the allocation is analysed by the LP Inspector.

165. I do not consider that it was necessary for the LP Inspector to take the AIR and analyse all its views against his views on the various topics. There is perhaps a difference in emphasis in the LP IR comments on the Green Belt releases in general "relatively limited impacts on openness" and their not causing "severe or widespread harm", and the AIR comment that there would be "very considerable harm" to the Green Belt from the Wisley allocation. However, as IR 182 makes clear, on a comparative basis, the Wisley site was of medium sensitivity. Its development would avoid putting pressure on other Green Belt areas of greater sensitivity. This comparative exercise, underpinned by the Green Belt and Countryside Study, was not a task which the appeal Inspector could undertake or attempted to undertake; but was essential for the LP Inspector. The same applies to the assessment of the degree of visual prominence: the LP IR comments on the allocation as "fairly self-contained visually," being on a plateau and not prominent, whereas the AIR thought it visible along its length to highly sensitive receptors, though quite well screened in certain respects. But the sites they consider differed in an important respect and with an adverse effect for the appeal scheme. It is obvious from the AIR that the narrowness of the appeal site exacerbated the prominence of the appeal development. The LP Inspector also considered that specific design objectives, should be in the Plan, via a Main Modification, Policy A35.The effect on the character of the area is referred to in IR 181, but is a factor outweighed by the compelling strategic-level exceptional circumstances. The LP Inspector obviously considered the appeal decision, but found the circumstances he had to deal with, compelling.

166. At the strategic level, the allocation can support sustainable modes of travel. It was not necessary for the LP Inspector to point out how the comments of the appeal Inspector in relation to the cycle network in the appeal scheme could be varied so as to provide what the allocation envisaged. The Secretary of State had already agreed that the appeal proposals went a long way towards making the location sustainable. The appeal Decision could not and did not conclude that the cycle network could not be provided or provided with a larger site, or that the bus services could not be provided. The shortcoming was only given limited weight. The LP Inspector was not required to deal with best and most versatile agricultural land explicitly in order for adequate reasons to have been given for his conclusion on the soundness of the allocation of this site; limited weight was given to that aspect by the Secretary of State.

167. Accordingly, I reject the contention that it is not possible to see why the LP Inspector reached the conclusion he did, having considered, as he obviously did, what the AIR and Secretary of State had to say. In the circumstances known to all participants about the differing tasks, the reasons are sufficient. There was no need to identify, issue by

issue, where the LP Inspector did or did not, to some degree, agree or disagree with the appeal Inspector. Such differences as there may be are explained by the different focus of their tasks and the different cases they were considering. I have referred earlier to the authorities on reasons which are most to the point. The instant case calls for no further elaboration of the law. I add *Dylon 2 Ltd v Bromley LBC* [2019] EWHC 2366 (Admin) to the authorities on reasons, already referred to because it deals with reasons and their relationship to earlier appeal decisions, though in a different set of circumstances.

**Issue 5A: the "white land" at the former Wisley airfield**

168. This relates to the allocation at the former Wisley airfield. There are three areas where land around the allocation was taken out of the Green Belt but left unallocated, termed "white land". That expression is convenient in this context even though other policies applied to restrict development on the areas in question, and it is not reserved or safeguarded for future development, as would normally be the purpose of "white land". The major area of white land lies between the Wisley allocation and the new Green Belt boundary to the north along the SPA; it is part of the buffer zone for the SPA. The second is to the south with allocated land on three sides. The third is at the south-east corner of the allocated site, and was removed from the Green Belt in the 2017 changes to the Plan.

169. Mr Kimblin submitted that, once it had been accepted by the Inspector that there was no need for land to be safeguarded for development or treated as reserve land, there was no need for land to have been removed from the Green Belt, and left as white land. His complaint was that the Inspector, though no longer it appeared Guildford BC, had provided no justification for those areas to have been removed from the Green Belt.

170. The reasons for exclusion from the Green Belt of the area north of the allocation were the establishment of new defensible Green Belt boundaries, and because some development, such as small car parks, board walks and the like, which would or could be inappropriate in the Green Belt, was proposed in connection with the new SANG, as essential mitigation for the development on the allocation, as agreed with Natural England. It was not included in the area allocated because it was not suitable for development in general. The need for that land to be excluded from the Green Belt so as to create a suitable Green Belt boundary was raised in the Green Belt and Countryside Study, part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. IR115 referred to the buffer between residential development and the SPA boundary. Policy P5 resisted a net increase in residential units within 400m of the SPA boundary and sought avoidance and mitigation in respect of residential development between 400m and 5km from the boundary.

171. The test of "exceptional circumstances" cannot simply be applied to the whole of the area of change to the Green Belt boundary without acknowledging that the new boundary has to follow defensible lines. The rather wavy line bounding the north of the Wisley allocation was plainly not as defensible a boundary as that adopted. It is not necessary for separate exceptional circumstances to be shown. The necessary exceptional circumstances justify the Wisley allocation; defensible boundaries to the Green Belt may not always align with the allocation boundary, but defensible boundaries have to be provided as a necessary consequence; see NPPF 85, above.

172. The second area was near the Bridge End Farm. This was not available for development so it was not allocated. But the need for defensible boundaries to the Green Belt make its exclusion from the Green Belt clear. This was also explained in the Green Belt and Countryside Study.

173. The third area, at the south east corner of the site, was not included in the allocation because it is not available; the owner is opposed to the allocation. Yet the boundary of the Green Belt, if it followed the allocation boundary hereabouts would not follow defensible features. The previously redrawn boundary followed the airfield boundary and a field boundary. It was now to follow the two roads, Ockham Lane and Old Lane, which bounded the south-east corner site on the south and east sides. This was explained in the "Summary of key changes to the Proposed Submission Local Plan: strategy and sites (2017)". The airfield is no more; defensible boundaries are permanent hard features, of which roads are a paradigm. Field boundaries are not so permanent. This is a simple matter of planning judgment.

174. The explanations by Guildford BC are sufficient. This is a matter of planning judgment for Guildford BC. It was not necessary for the Inspector to address each area where the proposed new Green Belt boundary was contentious between Guildford BC and others making representations. He had the local authority evidence base. He had to consider the allocations for soundness, but not their precise boundaries, unless in some way a boundary issue itself went to the major issues on soundness, legal compliance and policy consistency. That is not alleged here. As I have said, there was no further test of "exceptional circumstances", at least not normally, to be applied to such areas of land as might lie between an allocation and a defensible new Green Belt boundary, where they are not reserved or safeguarded sites and simply result from a sensible boundary drawing exercise. The exceptional circumstances come from the very allocation of the site.

**Issue 5B and the consultation on the 2017 version of the submitted Plan**

175. This point is of no real moment according to Mr Harwood who fashioned it: it was a technical but readily correctable error, on his analysis. The 2017 changes to the allocation area and Green Belt deletions could not be made without the Inspector determining that the 2016 plan was unsound if they were not made, which he did not do. So, there was no power to make them on the part of either Guildford BC or the Inspector.

176. This is how his argument proceeds. The 2016 proposed submission version of the Plan was published for representations to be made under Regulation 19 of the 2012 Regulations. Representations were received in large number. That version was not however submitted to the Secretary of State. The 2016 version proposed the removal of the Wisley allocation from the Green Belt, along with the land to the north of the allocation which was a buffer to the SPA, and the southern part of the unallocated land.

177. The Plan was altered in 2017. So far as the Wisley area was concerned, three fields towards the south-east of the centre of the allocation were included for the first time, and the area to the south-east corner was removed from the Green Belt but not placed in the allocation.

178. A further round of representations was sought, but this was confined to the changes from the 2016 version, and it was only representations on the 2017 Plan about the changes which would be passed on to the Inspector. He would however also receive all the representations on the 2016 version. General comments about the changes could be made, and Guildford BC was also seeking specific comments on legal compliance, the duty to cooperate and soundness. Guildford BC described this as a "targeted Regulation 19 consultation".

179. The 2017 version was submitted to the Secretary of State and was the subject of the PE, and proposed modifications. None of the changes to the 2017 version from the 2016 version were themselves the subject of any modification proposed by Guildford BC to the Inspector or by him directly.

180. Mr Harwood submitted that regulation 19 required the consultation in 2017 to have been on the whole plan and not just on the changes. Regulation 19 states:

> "Before submitting a local plan to the Secretary of State under section 20 of the Act, the local planning authority must-(a) make a copy of each of the proposed submission documents and a statement of the representations procedure available in accordance with regulation 35….

181. By regulation 20(1): "Any person may make representations to a local planning authority about a local plan which the local planning authority propose to submit to the Secretary of State." It is those representations which have to be submitted to the Secretary of State. "Proposed submission documents" are defined in regulation 17: they include "(a) the local plan which the local planning authority propose to submit to the Secretary of State." By s20(2) of the 2004 Act, no development plan document can be submitted by a local authority to the Secretary of State, unless the requirements of various regulations have been complied with, and the submitting authority thinks that the document is ready for independent examination for, amongst other matters, its soundness. The examining Inspector must recommend that a plan that is not sound or which does not satisfy statutory requirements should not be adopted, unless he considers that there are modifications that would make it sound and satisfy the statutory requirements, provided that the duty to cooperate has been met, and the submitting authority asks the examining Inspector to make the necessary modifications.

182. The powers of the Court under s113 of the 2004 Act extend beyond a quashing of the document, and by s113(7A) and (7B), permit it to remit the document to the planning authority with directions as to the action to be taken. Directions may require specific steps in the process to be treated as having been taken or not taken, and require action of unspecified scope to be taken by the plan-making body. Those powers can be exercised in relation to the whole plan or part of it.

183. Mr Harwood submitted, as had the Wisley Action Group in its response to the 2017 submission draft, that the plan intended to be submitted was the 2016 version; the changes in the 2017 version could not lawfully be made until the Inspector had found that the Local Plan was unsound without them, and modifications had been sought by the Council or recommended by the Inspector to make the plan sound. The 2017 changes were no different in law from any other changes intended to remedy unsoundness; this was all because there had not been consultation on the 2017 plan as

a whole. He submitted however that the consequence was that it was only the inclusion of the changes made in the 2017 draft which were unlawfully included in the Plan.

184. I did not find this persuasive at all. I note that Planning Practice Guidance, PPG, contemplates that there can be such a targeted consultation, though that cannot be determinative of the law. The PPG states that the Inspector should consider whether the changes resulted in changes to the plan's strategy, whether there had been public consultation and a SA where necessary. If those points were satisfied, the addendum could be considered as part of the submitted plan. If not, he would usually treat those proposed changes as any other proposed main modifications, which would need to satisfy the statutory terms of s20(7B) and (7C). I regard that as practical advice, which does not assist Mr Harwood's rather technical legal submission. But I do not necessarily accept that the PPG is a complete statement of the circumstances in which, before submission, modifications can be made, with a targeted consultation, to a plan which had already been consulted on. It may not be necessary for the plan to be regarded as unsound before the changes can be made, in view of the obligation to submit what the local authority considers to be a sound plan.

185. It starts with Regulation 19. I see nothing in that Regulation on its own or with Regulation 20 which prevents a Local Plan being amended before submission so that in the judgment of the local planning authority it is sound when submitted. The contrary is not contended. There has to be consultation on the submitted Plan, and all the representations have to be submitted to the Secretary of State. All aspects of the Plan submitted in 2017 were the subject of consultation and all the representations were submitted. That is all that the language requires. The authority must submit a plan which it believes is sound. If it considers that changes are necessary after consultation but before submission, Mr Harwood would require that the whole Plan is subject to further consultation. I cannot suppose that all those who had previously made representations would realise that they had to repeat them, even if they merited no change, for them to be forwarded to the Secretary of State, or would have the stamina to do so. Were they not to repeat themselves, it is hard to see on what basis their consultation responses to an earlier plan should be forwarded to the Secretary of State.

186. I cannot see what language or purpose of the Regulations means that amendments cannot be the subject of a targeted or restricted consultation at all. The opportunity to provide further comments would be pointless. I can see that if a further round of consultation was limited in its scope with the result that an aspect of the Plan, or some interaction between the various parts or some discontinuity arising from the fact that the alterations came later in time, was not consulted upon, that would be a breach of the Regulations, but that is not contended here. Mr Harwood was unable to point to an aspect of the 2016 Plan which was affected by the alterations in 2017 from which further representations were excluded. His point had no substantive contention behind it. If it did, he would have been able to argue that the Regulations had been breached, not because of form but because of the substance of the consultation.

187. If Mr Harwood is right about a breach of a procedural requirement, falling short of the submission of the wrong plan, it is difficult to see what useful remedy there should be. The alleged breach of a procedural requirement prejudiced no one and had no effect on the Plan at all. I could require the consultation step to be treated as having been taken in relation to the whole plan, but that is not the purpose of his argument. I was unable

headroom, but hurdles and delays in the way of approving infrastructure would have been well within his contemplation of the sort of problems which larger sites face.

**Overall conclusion**

218. I reject all the grounds of challenge. The three claims are dismissed.