



News Release

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ANTICIPATED ACQUISITION OF OTTAKAR'S PLC BY HMV GROUP PLC THROUGH WATERSTONE'S PLC

Competition Commission invites evidence

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) has referred the anticipated acquisition of Ottakar's plc by HMV Group plc through Waterstone's plc to the Competition Commission (CC).

The CC has been asked to decide whether the acquisition may be expected to result in a substantial lessening of competition in the market for the retail sale of books to consumers.

The CC is expected to report by 22 May 2006.

The CC would like to hear from all interested parties, in writing, by 6 January 2006. To submit evidence, please write to:

Alan Shearman
Inquiry Secretary (HMV/Ottakar's merger inquiry)
Competition Commission
Victoria House
Southampton Row
LONDON
WC1B 4AD

or email: alan.shearman@cc.gsi.gov.uk.

Notes for editors

1. The Enterprise Act 2002 empowers the OFT to refer to the CC completed or proposed mergers for investigation and report which create or enhance a 25 per cent share of supply in the UK (or a substantial part thereof) or where the UK turnover associated with the enterprise being acquired is over £70 million.

2. The CC has a 24-week period in which it is required to publish its report, which may be extended by no more than eight weeks if it considers that there are special reasons why the report cannot be published within that period.
3. Further information on the CC and its procedures, including its policy on the provision of information and the disclosure of evidence, can be obtained from its website at: www.competition-commission.org.uk.
4. Enquiries should be directed to Rory Taylor on 020 7271 0242 (email rory.taylor@cc.gsi.gov.uk)
5. The full text of this referral decision will be placed on the OFT's website at www.of.gov.uk.