

25/04

28 May 2004

NATIONAL EXPRESS GROUP'S ACQUISITION OF GREATER ANGLIA FRANCHISE

Competition Commission invites evidence

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) has referred the acquisition of the Greater Anglia Franchise by National Express Group to the Competition Commission (CC).

The CC has been asked to consider whether the acquisition has resulted, or may be expected to result, in a substantial lessening of competition in the supply of passenger transport services on certain routes in the Greater Anglia area.

National Express Group, which took control of the new expanded Greater Anglia rail franchise at the start of April, also provides a number of major coach routes in the Greater Anglia area and rail services between London Fenchurch Street and Southend.

The acquisition of a rail franchise is treated as a merger in this context. The CC recently published its provisional findings on the proposed acquisition by FirstGroup plc of the Scottish rail franchise.

The CC is required to publish its report by 10 November 2004.

The CC would like to hear from all interested parties, in writing, by 17 June 2004. To submit evidence, please write to:

The Inquiry Secretary (National Express/Greater Anglia)
Competition Commission
Victoria House
Southampton Row
LONDON WC1B 4AD

or email: Douglas.McCreadie@competition-commission.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 (see OFT Press Release PN 06/04).

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. Enquiries should be directed to Francis Royle on 020 7271 0242 or Rory Taylor on 020 7271 0398 (rory.taylor@competition-commission.gsi.gov.uk).