



News Release

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CC FORMALLY CLEARS WATERSTONE'S/OTTAKAR'S MERGER

The Competition Commission (CC) has formally cleared the anticipated acquisition of Ottakar's plc by HMV Group plc through Waterstone's Booksellers Ltd, after concluding in its final report that the merger would not lead to a substantial lessening of competition in the market for the retail sale of new books to consumers in any part of the UK.

This confirms the provisional findings published at the end of March. See release dated 30 March at www.competition-commission.org.uk/press_rel/2006/mar/index.htm

The final report can be found on the CC's website at:

www.competition-commission.org.uk/inquiries/ref2005/hmv/index.htm

The merger was referred by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) on 6 December 2005 and the CC was required to publish its final report by 22 May 2006. HMV's offer for Ottakar's lapsed upon referral to the CC.

Notes to 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 HMV/Ottakar's inquiry group consisted of five members: Diana Guy (Group Chairman), Jayne Almond, Diane Coyle, Nicholas Garthwaite and Charles Henderson.
3. 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. Media enquiries should be directed to Rory Taylor on 020 7271 0242 (email: rory.taylor@cc.gsi.gov.uk).