



News Release

43/04

10 August 2004

ANTICIPATED ACQUISITION BY ARRIVA PLC OF THE SOVEREIGN BUS AND COACH COMPANY

Competition Commission invites evidence

The OFT (Office of Fair Trading) has referred the anticipated acquisition by Arriva plc of the Hertfordshire bus operations of Sovereign Bus and Coach Company to the Competition Commission (CC).

The CC has been asked to consider whether the proposed acquisition will result in a relevant merger situation and, if so, whether its creation may be expected to result in a substantial lessening of competition within the market for bus services in Hertfordshire. According to the OFT, Arriva and Sovereign are the two largest bus operators in Hertfordshire.

The CC is required to publish its final report by 17 January 2005.

The CC would like to hear from all interested parties, in writing, by 10 September 2004. To submit evidence, please write to:

Inquiry Secretary (Arriva/Sovereign)
Competition Commission
Victoria House
Southampton Row
LONDON
WC1B 4AD

Or email: A-S.Public@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.

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 web site at: www.competition-commission.org.uk.
4. Enquiries should be directed to Francis Royle on 020 7271 0242 (email francis.royle@competition-commission.gsi.gov.uk) or Rory Taylor on 020 7271 0398 (email rory.taylor@competition-commission.gsi.gov.uk).