

ASDA – SAINSBURY'S MERGER

Competitions & Markets Authority (CMA) Announcement

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has announced that the proposed ASDA/Sainsbury's merger has been fast tracked to the next and final stage of its investigation. In its phase one decision, CMA stated that there could be a substantial lessening of competition in 463 stores.

This is very worrying both for retail colleagues and the knock on effect it could have in distribution. The GMB does not want stores sold off and we will fight to keep jobs and stores open.

ASDA has 584 supermarkets and 317 petrol filling stations. Sainsbury's has 606 supermarkets, 815 convenience stores and 311 petrol filling stations.

The CMA did not take in to account Aldi and Lidl stores in stage one, but there is no guarantee they will do so in stage two.

As the news broke, GMB was in contact with ASDA management and we will be seeking further meetings at the most senior level.

Background and what happens next

In May, ASDA and Sainsbury's announced they intend to merge and become the UK's largest food retailer with over 30% of the market and a combined operating profit of 1.4 billion.

The proposal has been referred to The Competition and Markets Authority, which is the regulator responsible for ensuring the market is competitive for businesses and consumers, and will make the ultimate decision about whether the merger can go ahead. The CMA will base their decision solely on whether or not the merger will result in a "substantial lessening of competition" and increased prices for consumers, not on what it means for jobs, or terms and conditions of staff in ASDA and Sainsbury's.

There has been lots of speculation about what will happen if the merger is given the go ahead by the CMA, and if so, what conditions they might put in place such as requiring stores or more unlikely, depots to be sold off.

The proposed merger has been fast tracked to phase two. There will be provisional findings by January 2019 and the statutory deadline and decision will be made by 5th March 2019, much faster than previously communicated by both companies.

If CMA requires stores or depots (more unlikely) to be sold, this could have to take place by 5th June 2019.

Yours sincerely

GARY CARTER
GMB NATIONAL OFFICER



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