

News story: Written Ministerial Statement: Media Matters

Having taken over as the Secretary of State with responsibility for media public interest cases I have reviewed the process regarding the proposed merger between 21st Century Fox (21CF) and Sky Plc (Sky). I am content that DCMS and the relevant parties have ensured a scrupulously clear, fair and transparent process and I can now therefore inform the House of the final decisions made by my predecessor as Secretary of State. These decisions were made in a quasi-judicial capacity.

On 5 June the previous Secretary of State made a statement to the House in which he set out his decision in relation to the proposed merger.

He announced that having considered the Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) report, he agreed with their findings on the public interest grounds and their finding that undertakings to divest Sky News to The Walt Disney Company (Disney) or to an alternative suitable buyer could potentially remedy the public interest concerns identified.

Following the completion of discussions with the parties, on 19 June he published a consultation on the undertakings offered by 21CF along with new undertakings offered by Disney for the divestment of Sky News to Disney and several associated documents.

We received five responses to the consultation, which closed on 4 July. These responses will be published today on the DCMS website, along with the government's response to the consultation.

Having considered the responses to the consultation, the previous Secretary of State agreed with the parties a clarificatory change to Disney's undertakings and changes to the associated brand licensing agreement. In response to specific concerns raised by respondents, he also agreed that where appropriate the Secretary of State will consult with the CMA in relation to these undertakings and will publish the formal written advice given by the CMA. I am content to confirm this position.

The final version of the undertakings have been published along with the other relevant documents on the DCMS website.

The publication of the undertakings marks the final stage of the public interest consideration of this case. It is right that Ofcom, the CMA and my Department have taken such care in ensuring the bid is properly and effectively scrutinised. It is now a matter for the Sky shareholders to decide whether to accept 21CF's bid.