

Press release: Statement: merger between Trinity Mirror Plc and Northern & Shell's publishing assets

On 1 May 2018, I informed the House that I had issued a Public Interest Intervention Notice (PIIN) in respect of the acquisition by Trinity Mirror plc (now known as Reach Plc) of certain publishing assets of Northern & Shell Media Group Limited.

The PIIN triggered the requirement for the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to report to me on jurisdictional and competition matters, and for Ofcom to report on the following two media public interest considerations:

- Firstly, the need for, to the extent that it is reasonable and practicable, a sufficient plurality of views in newspapers in each market for newspapers in the United Kingdom or a part of the United Kingdom; and
- Secondly, the need for free expression of opinion in newspapers.

I received the CMA and Ofcom reports on Thursday 31 May and have today published these on the gov.uk website.

I accept the CMA's findings that whilst it is, or may be, the case that a relevant merger situation has been created, the merger does not give rise to a realistic prospect of a substantial lessening of competition in any market.

I have also accepted Ofcom's conclusions that the merger does not raise concerns in relation to plurality of views, nor does it raise concerns in relation to free expression of opinion in newspapers.

In light of this, and having considered representations submitted by interested parties in response to the PIIN, I have written to the parties today confirming my decision not to refer the merger for a Phase 2 investigation.

I have also notified the CMA, in accordance with section 56(1) of the Enterprise Act 2002, to now deal with the matter from a competition perspective.

The role of the Secretary of State in this process is quasi-judicial and procedures are in place to ensure that I act independently and have followed a process which is fair and impartial.