

GMB UNION MOVE TO OPPOSE ASDA/ SAINSBURY'S MERGER AFTER 'STAGGERING' CMA FINDINGS

GMB warns that lives, livelihoods and communities are on the line, not just share prices.

GMB Union, the trade union for ASDA workers, has come out in opposition to the proposed ASDA/Sainsbury's merger as the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) released it's 'staggering' provisional findings.

A provisional report released this morning expressed extensive concerns about the impact of the merger on choice and quality for shoppers and higher prices at the checkout.

The CMA warns that the merger plans could result in substantial lessening of competition between:

- supermarkets in 629 local areas
- convenience stores in 65 local areas
- delivery supply points in 290 local areas

The report offers two options - complete prohibition of the merger or the potential 'divestment' of hundreds of stores and depots. Everything from stores and distribution to Asda Head office, home shopping to petrol stations could be impacted.

The CMA warns that store divestment would carry "a significant risk of being an effective remedy" to the competition concerns, casting doubt on the entire merger's prospects.

Tim Roache, GMB General Secretary said:

"The CMA provisional findings are staggering. GMB Union will absolutely oppose any merger that would see hundreds of stores and scores of depots put at risk.

"People are waking up today worried about what this means for them. If this merger were allowed to go ahead, we could see thousands of jobs at risk in everything from stores and distribution, to head office and home shopping.

"What's often lost in talk of share prices and 'divestment packages' is that this is also people's lives, livelihoods and communities we're talking about. The price shoppers and workers face paying for this merger is simply too high.

"Our members - many of whom have worked at Asda for years, if not decades - will continue to support Asda in being the highly successful, standalone business it has been for generations, but it's increasingly clear from the CMA announcement that isn't compatible with the Sainsbury's merger plan, which must now be blocked."

"GMB will be behind every one of our members in making sure their voices are heard in opposing this merger as we move forward."

Yours sincerely

GARY CARTER
GMB NATIONAL OFFICER