

Response from Retailer A to the CMA's invitation to comment on remedies

[Retailer A] shares the CMA's view that this transaction may result in a substantial lessening of competition in the supply of bread and other bakery products (pancakes, potato farls and soda farls) in Northern Ireland (NI). [Retailer A] supports the proposed divestment of the AB Northern Ireland business (the **Divestment Business**) in its entirety. Customers in NI have specific expectations and rely on access to unique local products, particularly potato and soda farls, which are an essential part of [Retailer A's] range in NI. While ideally, a purchaser would have relevant expertise in the production and distribution of these products, [Retailer A] believes such experience is not strictly necessary (provided the CMA is satisfied that the purchaser has the necessary capability and commitment to compete effectively in NI), given that the Divestment Business will encompass all the essential components—production sites, facilities, inventory, supply agreements, and the entire workforce—to ensure continuity of supply. Additionally, the Kingsmill and Sunblest brands hold significant value in NI so it is essential that these brands form an integral part of the Divestment Business.

To adequately address [Retailer A's] concerns in NI, it considers that the purchaser should commit to (i) continue supplying pancakes, potato farls, and soda farls, and (ii) maintain the Kingsmill and Sunblest brands, for a minimum period of five years.

This would enable retailers to continue to provide NI consumers with access to the same quality and range of bread and bakery products they currently enjoy. This approach would also ensure that should the purchaser decide to change or discontinue any AB lines after five years, retailers will have sufficient time to make alternative arrangements to maintain an adequate range of high quality, unique local products in NI.

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