

## **JCRA Statement Concerning the Proposed Acquisition of Empire Stores by Littlewoods Shop Direct Group**

In April 2008, the JCRA received an application from Littlewoods Shop Direct Group Limited of the UK seeking the approval of the JCRA for the acquisition of the 'Empire Stores' brand name, its book debts, customer database and obsolete stock from Redcats (Brands) Limited in the UK.

The business of Empire Stores was mainly as an agency mail order (AMO) operator. AMO is a form of home shopping involving payment over a period of time – that is, it involves consumer credit. It contrasts with the most predominate forms of home shopping such as direct mail order and on-line Internet shopping, which involve an up-front payment. Redcats decided at the start of this year to progressively cease the operations of its Empire Stores business.

Under Article 22(4) of the Competition (Jersey) Law, the JCRA must determine if the proposed acquisition would substantially lessen competition in Jersey. The JCRA concluded that the proposed acquisition was not likely to have such an effect and, accordingly, it approved the proposed acquisition on 19 May 2008.