

REPORT

To: GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE		Subject: CINEMA LICENSING - REVIEW OF FILM CLASSIFICATIONS
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 19 September 2002	Ref: WBK/KH	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of a change to film classifications for children under 12 and to propose that a decision be reached in respect of same.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) classifies films for exhibition in cinemas. It has historically done so on behalf of local authorities although the BBFC has, in fact, no legal status. Accordingly significant policy decisions taken by the BBFC which have a direct impact on cinema licensing require to be passed by local authorities.
- 2.2. The BBFC classifies films for cinema exhibition according, in general terms, to the age of persons to be admitted to the film. The principal categories are as follows:-
- 2.2.1. "U" - Universal. Audiences of any age may watch but the film should be suitable, in general terms, for audiences aged 4 years and over.
- 2.2.2. "PG" - Parental Guidance. Unaccompanied children of any age may watch however parents are invited to exercise a discretion and the film should, in general terms, not disturb a child aged 8 or over.
- 2.2.3. "12". No one younger than 12 may be admitted to a 12 certificated film.
- 2.2.4. "15". No one younger than 15 may be admitted to a 15 certificated film.
- 2.2.5. "18". No one younger than 18 may be admitted to a 18 certificated film.
- 2.3. The BBFC recently announced a change to the mandatory "12" cinema classification from 30 August 2002. The 12 cinema classification has now been converted, for the purposes of cinema exhibition, to an advisory "12A" classification. Children under 12 will be admitted to a "12A" certificated film if accompanied by a person aged 18 years or over. The advisory rating puts the public on notice to assess the suitability of a film prior to taking a child under 12 to view it.
- 2.4. The BBFC has indicated that this classification change follows a year long process of consultation and research. It asserts that there has been strong public support (and particularly parental support) for the change.

- 2.5. Cinemas in North Lanarkshire are issued with licences on certain conditions. Those conditions govern, among other matters, film classifications and the conditions for entry. The standard licence conditions will require to be amended to incorporate the new "12A" classification.

3. CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1. The matters contained in this report are in accordance with the Council's overall policies and positions.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1. The Committee is asked to homologate the British Board of Film Classification's decision to convert the mandatory "12" cinema classification to an advisory "12A" classification with effect from 30 August 2002.
- 4.2. The Committee is asked to agree a variation of the Council's cinema licence conditions to incorporate a condition that "No person apparently under the age of 12 years shall be admitted to any exhibition at which there is to be shown any film which has received a "12A" certificate from the British Board of Film Classification, unless accompanied throughout that exhibition by a responsible adult aged 18 years or over".

Walter B. Kelyow

p. Director of Administration

Members seeking further information on the contents of this Report are asked to contact Kenny Hannaway, Senior Solicitor (Licensing) at Extension 2214.