



Subject:	Request for the exhibition of unclassified films
Date:	14 October 2026
Reporting Officer:	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning & Building Control, Ext. 2300
Contact Officer:	Stephen Hipkins, Building Control Manager, Ext. 2435

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

☐

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

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☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider a request from CCEA (Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment Northern Ireland) to permit unclassified films to be screened at Cineworld, as part of a screening event showing films produced by A-Level and GCSE students.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is recommended, having heard from representatives of CCEA, to permit the screening of the unclassified films in accordance with an age classification of 12A which has been specified by CCEA.
2.2	The Committee could instead decide to permit the screening of the unclassified films in accordance with a different age classification; or refuse the screening of unclassified films in the venue.
2.3	Whilst there is a general provision for appeals in relation to the conditions placed on Cinema Licences, there is no right of appeal in respect of this decision.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	The Council licences cinemas and other venues under the Cinemas (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 for the exhibition of films. The main functions of the legislation relate to technical matters such as structural stability and fire safety and, as such, the powers to issue licences are delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control.
3.2	Unlike other types of Licences there is no public notification and representation process for Cinema Licence applications hence there is normally no involvement of the Committee with Cinema Licensing.
3.3	However, the Order requires the Council to impose conditions or restrictions prohibiting the admission of children to film exhibitions involving the showing of films designated as works unsuitable for children.
3.4	When issuing Licences, the Council establishes Conditions regarding the general running and administration of the premises. One such Condition is that only films which have been classified with a certificate issued by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) may be shown. These conditions are attached at Appendix 1.
3.5	The BBFC is an independent body which classifies all films on behalf of local authorities, and they have strict guidelines and criteria in awarding films a classification. The BBFC categories and criteria guidelines are attached at Appendix 2.
3.6	This system is used by all authorities within the United Kingdom and all commercial films will have been classified through this process. Independent films, shorts and features that have not been classified through the BBFC tend to be shown in private clubs and societies rather than in commercial cinemas licensed by the Council. However, in recent years the Council have received an increased number of requests to consider screening of unclassified films.
3.7	There is a proviso in the Licence Conditions which allows the showing of an unclassified film if the Council is satisfied with the proposal. The Council can also append any Conditions it deems appropriate in relation to that film exhibition, including an age restriction. Such a

	decision does not attempt to 'classify' the film but merely permits its exhibition in the individual situation applied for.
3.8	The Service has previously received requests to screen unclassified films for which the Licensing Committee has provided its approval.
3.9	The Service reserves the right to take action for a breach of licence if any of the unclassified films are found not to be as described.
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.10	The Service has received a request for unclassified films produced by A-Level and GCSE students to be shown in Cineworld by CCEA. See Appendix 3.
3.11	The films selected by CCEA for broadcast have achieved awards within predefined categories by the examination body.
3.12	The applicant has confirmed that schools, examination bodies and a judging panel have viewed the exhibitions to be broadcast. Further to this, the applicant has identified they do not foresee any issues with appropriateness of content and would regard all films selected as representative of a 12A BBFC rating.
3.13	None of the films will have received classification from BBFC or equivalent body.
3.14	The expertise for film classification is considered to rest with BBFC and other statutory bodies established for this function. The Service has not viewed the films to validate the '12A' rating.
3.15	The audience viewing the exhibitions will comprise students, teachers, Principals and representatives from the film industry.
3.16	The applicant has identified that pupils to be admitted to the screening will be Year 12 and upwards. CCEA have confirmed pupils within these Year groups will be 15 years of age and older.
3.17	A representative from CCEA will be available at Committee to answer any questions Members may have in relation to the films.
4.0	Financial and Resource Implications None. Officers will carry out inspections before and during the events which will be catered for within existing Service budgets.
5.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment There are no issues associated with this report.
6.0	Appendices – Documents Attached • Appendix 1 – Conditions of licence • Appendix 2 – BBFC Classification Guidelines • Appendix 3 – Applicant request