



Subject:	Response from the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) regarding a proposed 15A rating
Date:	17 January, 2024
Reporting Officer:	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer:	Stephen Hewitt, Building Control Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. 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 matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. 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	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To present the response received from the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) in relation to its consideration of introducing a new film rating of “15A”.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the response.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Committee, at its meeting on 18th October, 2023, agreed to write to the BBFC to request that it would give consideration to developing a new classification of “15A” for films, as part of its ongoing consultation with the industry.
3.2	A response was received from Mr. Lamberti, Policy Manager at BBFC, on 20th December, 2023, a copy of which is attached to this report.
3.3	He advises the Committee that, to introduce a new age rating for cinema films would require the support of licensing officers, film distributors, cinema exhibitors, the UK Government and the general public. He outlines that this was the case in 2002, when the BBFC replaced the “12” cinema rating with a new “12A” rating.
3.4	He states that there has been no wide expression of support for a new rating of “15A” and, indeed, the only requests for a “15A” rating have been from Belfast City Council.
3.5	After Belfast City Council agreed to allow cinema exhibitors within the Belfast area to show The Batman as a “15A” in 2020, BBFC carried out research to gauge the appetite for a new “15A” rating across different groups. He points out that the Advisory Panel on Children’s Viewing was unanimous of its view that a “15A” rating would represent a significant child protection risk.
3.6	Mr. Lamberti advises that BBFC carries out a large-scale public consultation on its Classification Guidelines every 4-5 years and that the most recent consultation was currently in its final stages, with the results being published early in 2024. He states that the consultation included questions regarding under-15s viewing 15 rated films in the cinema.
3.7	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> None.
3.8	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Response from BBFC