

LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Licensing Sub-committee held on Wednesday 30 June 2021 at 11.30am in the Council Chamber.

Present

Councillors Scott Payter-Harris
Stuart Brown
Charlotte Gerada

11. Election of Chair

Councillor Scott Payter-Harris was elected Chair.

12. Apologies for Absence.

Councillor Kimberly Barrett had sent her apologies. Councillor Stuart Brown, the reserve member took her place.

13. Declarations of Members' Interests.

No interests were declared.

14. Licensing Act 2003 - Section 20 - Mandatory Condition - Exhibition of Films "Drop City" - Guildhall Square Film Screening.

Councillor Payter-Harris explained that the committee had watched the film that morning and deliberated over its classification.

Decision

In the matter of the Licensing Act 2003.

In the matter of an application for the sub-committee to impose age classifications using the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) categories in respect of a film exhibition to be shown on the Big Screen, Guildhall Walk, Portsmouth.

Section 20 of the 2003 Act provides that where a premises licence authorises the exhibition of a film, it must include a condition requiring the admission of children (those aged under 18) to the films to be restricted in accordance with recommendations given either by a body designated under section 4 of the Video Recordings Act 1984 specified in the licence (currently BBFC) or by the licensing authority itself for the area in which it is to be shown.

This Sub Committee was engaged by reason of an application being given to the Licensing Authority for an exhibition of a film on Sunday 04 July 2021. The premises user (the premises being Guildhall Square) Erika Smith, Festival Director for Ports Fest acting on behalf of No.6 Cinema, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, wishes to exhibit a feature film entitled "Drop City" and the applicants have advised that it has not been classified by the BBFC. The applicants, being the Port Fest organisers and the Boathouse No.6 are seeking the licensing authority's age classification for this film in order to exhibit it.

The Sub Committee viewed the film in its entirety, and heard the representation of the relevant Licensing Authority, being the Responsible Authority in this matter.

Whilst carrying out its functions, the Licensing Authority recognises the need to promote and have regard to the licensing objectives set out in the 2003 Act. The principle licensing objective engaged in this application is the protection of children from harm.

In addition to viewing the film in its entirety, the Sub Committee considered all the papers put before them along with the appendix attached which is the BBFC Classification Guidelines - these being non-statutory but persuasive and relevant.

Decision

The Sub Committee can confirm the following reasoning was adopted in reaching a classification for the film "Drop City":

- The film contained themes of violence, suicide and drug use albeit without dwelling in detail on these.
- The film also contained a swear word but it was explained by the Licensing Authority that the exhibitors had already agreed to mute this word in the film prior to it being shown.
- The film is intended to be shown after 7pm within an area which is open to the public without restriction.
- The Sub Committee noted the film included dialogue around the making and use of drugs; images of a vehicle depicted as a police car being destroyed without a reassuring counterbalance to disapprove of the behaviour; and references to violence.

The Sub Committee considered whether a Universal rating could be appropriate but given the above content and reasoning, the Sub Committee ascribes a PG classification to this film, having considered the Act and the Guidance in the BBFC guidance. This category should not unsettle a child aged around eight or older. Unaccompanied children of any age may watch, but parents are advised to consider whether the content may upset younger or more sensitive children.

The Sub Committee further decided that due to the film being shown in an open and public area, a message should be shown on the screen, prior to the start of the film, to advise of the PG classification.

The meeting concluded at 11:45am.

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Chair