



# HOME OFFICE

Sentencing and Offences Unit

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*Our reference:* 7142

*Your reference:*

*Date:* 22 November 1999

Councillor E Goodman  
Campaign Against Censorship  
23 Budgen Drive  
Redhill  
Surrey RH1 2QB

Dear Councillor Goodman

## CENSORSHIP OF VIDEO RECORDINGS

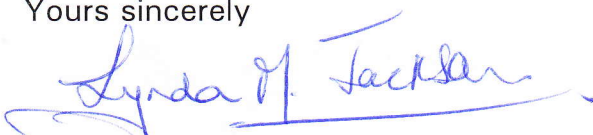
Thank you for your letter of 10 November about an article from *The Spectator* concerning comments made by Andreas Whittam Smith, the President of the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) about the licensing of sex establishments.

As you know, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 permits local authorities to control the number of sex shops in their area and, as you point out, this may be set at nil. The licensing scheme seeks to provide a means of control of premises whose activities are not unlawful but which may reasonably be felt to warrant regulation. It allows local authorities, whose councillors are, of course, elected by the local community, to ensure that undesirable elements are not concerned with the operation of sex shops and the character of their areas is not adversely affected by these activities.

Schedule 3 to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 also states, in paragraph 9 (15), that the local authority is obliged to have regard to any observation submitted to them by the chief officer of police and any other objections of which notice has been sent to them. However, the legislation does not empower an authority to refuse to grant or renew such licences on the grounds of morality.

There are no plans to amend the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 to prevent a local authority from having no licensed sex shops in its area if it so wishes.

Yours sincerely

  
LYNDA JACKSON