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26 May 2000

Dear Cllr Goodman

Taste and Decency

Thank you for your letter of 20 May.

The High Court decision on the 'R18' issue is clearly a significant one and it will be interesting to follow developments. You argue that 'encrypted television is the equivalent of 'R18' video recordings' but this has not been the interpretation to date and the ITC Programme Code has always barred the showing of 'R18' material even on encrypted channels. In allowing the waiving of watershed restrictions for pay-per-view systems protected by PIN mechanisms, the Commission made clear that 'adult' material was excluded from the arrangement.

Of course, policies can change and we will be considering the implications of recent developments and how they might impinge on television standards. The issue of proscription orders is not exempted from such consideration but there is nothing I can add at this early stage.

The ITC does apply national standards but this must involve taking into account the sensibilities of the nation as a whole, including the regions, rather than accepting a wholly metropolitan point of view.

Yours sincerely

Guy Phelps
Head of Drama, Entertainment and Religion