

THE CASEY REVIEW AND TAXI LICENSING

MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLORS BERNSTEIN, LANCASTER, McBRIAR AND VERNON

The Casey Review, published in June 2025, included a dedicated chapter (7) on taxi licensing and explicitly addressed concerns about taxis licensed in other areas, particularly in the context of child sexual exploitation.

Local authorities issue taxi licences in line with statutory guidance issued by the Government. Some go above and beyond this statutory guidance but are being hindered by a lack of stringency in other local authorities and legal loopholes, which mean drivers can apply for a licence anywhere in the country.

Proper safeguards in the licensing of taxis, is as much about protecting the drivers as the passengers.

The report did make it clear that most taxi drivers are law-abiding people providing an important service to the public. There are many occasions where taxi drivers have gone above and beyond to protect members of the public and to support the Police and other emergency services in their duties.

The report noted that several areas they visited which were imposing rigorous standards were left frustrated by seeing taxi drivers freely operating in their areas having been licensed by other authorities who were perceived to operate less rigorous processes.

Bury Council has long supported the closure of the out of town licensing loophole and has lobbied successive ministers of all political colours. Most recently, writing to the Minister for Transport in February 2025. The Mayor of Greater Manchester has also expressed concerns that a high proportion of taxis operating across Greater Manchester were licensed outside the area and were undermining public safety. This year the Mayor, GMCA and local authorities launched a campaign 'Backing our taxis: Local. Licensed. Trusted' with aims to put a stop to out of area licensing amid figures which GMCA said showed that more than 11% of England's private hire vehicles are licensed by a single local authority, up from 0.5% less than a decade ago. Bury Council fully backs this campaign.

The Casey report stated the Department for Transport should close this loophole immediately and introduce more rigorous standards, to address inconsistencies in local authority processes. Emphasising that out of area licensing undermines local oversight and accountability. The Transport Select Committee is currently taking evidence for an inquiry into the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles. This inquiry will examine whether the current licensing framework provides authorities with the tools they need to successfully regulate the sector. The Committee will consider the implications of uneven rules between areas, the growing role of digital ride-hailing platforms, and the challenges that can arise from cross-border working. Bury Council will be submitting a response to this inquiry.

This Council acknowledges the information and recommendations contained in the report and fully supports them

Write to the Secretary of State urging action be taken immediately to implement the findings of the Casey Review.