



The Role of Taxis in Improving Accessibility

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Presentation Structure

- Methodology
- Information Collected
- Summary of Research Findings
- Research Conclusions



The Research

- CfIT Study *'Public Subsidy for the Bus Industry'* identified higher subsidy costs for buses than taxis.
- Research recommended:
 - Examination of utility of taxi based services; and
 - Identification and consideration of barriers to further development of taxi based services
- Mott MacDonald appointed to *'establish whether flexible taxi schemes could offer similar or better transport services in rural areas and be at a lower cost to the taxpayer than standard bus services'*

Key Research Questions

- Can taxis help bring about a 'step change' in transport provision in rural areas?
- Would taxis offer a cost effective replacement for rural buses?
- Can taxis offer a way of reducing car dependence and environmental impact, *as well* as achieving greater social inclusion?
- Why have flexible taxi services not developed on a large scale in the UK, unlike in other European countries?

Approach to the Study

- Policy and Literature Review
- Examination of 'taxi based' schemes in operation
 - 70+ schemes identified across Europe
 - 10 in-depth analysis case study schemes – including Cumbria!
- Consultation with key stakeholders
- Analysis of demand in rural communities

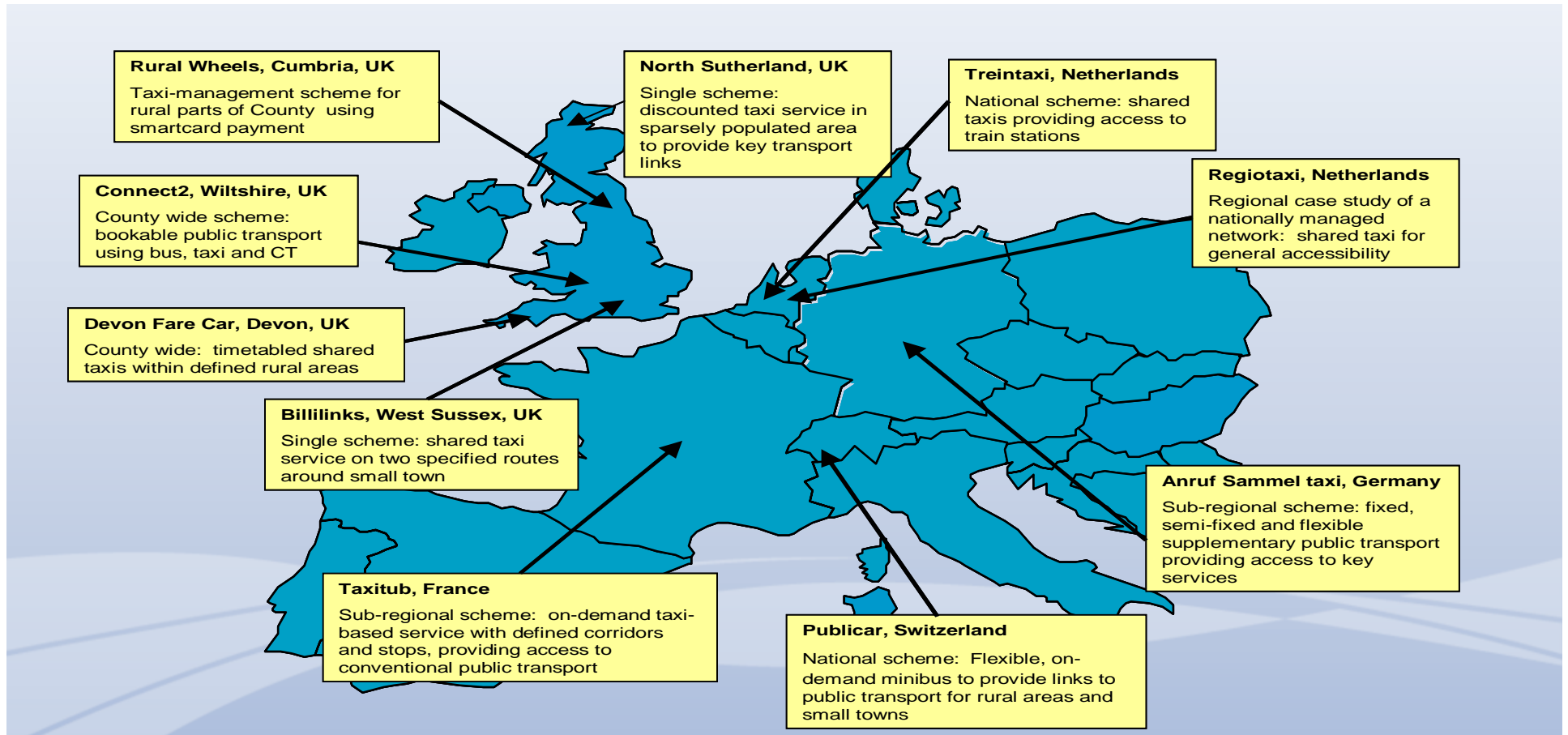


Case Study Analysis – Key Issues

- A wide range of issues were reviewed during the Case Study Analysis:
 - Scheme Management
 - Scheme Operation
 - Licensing and Legislation
 - The role of the taxi sector
 - Funding and Resources
 - Policy and ‘politics’



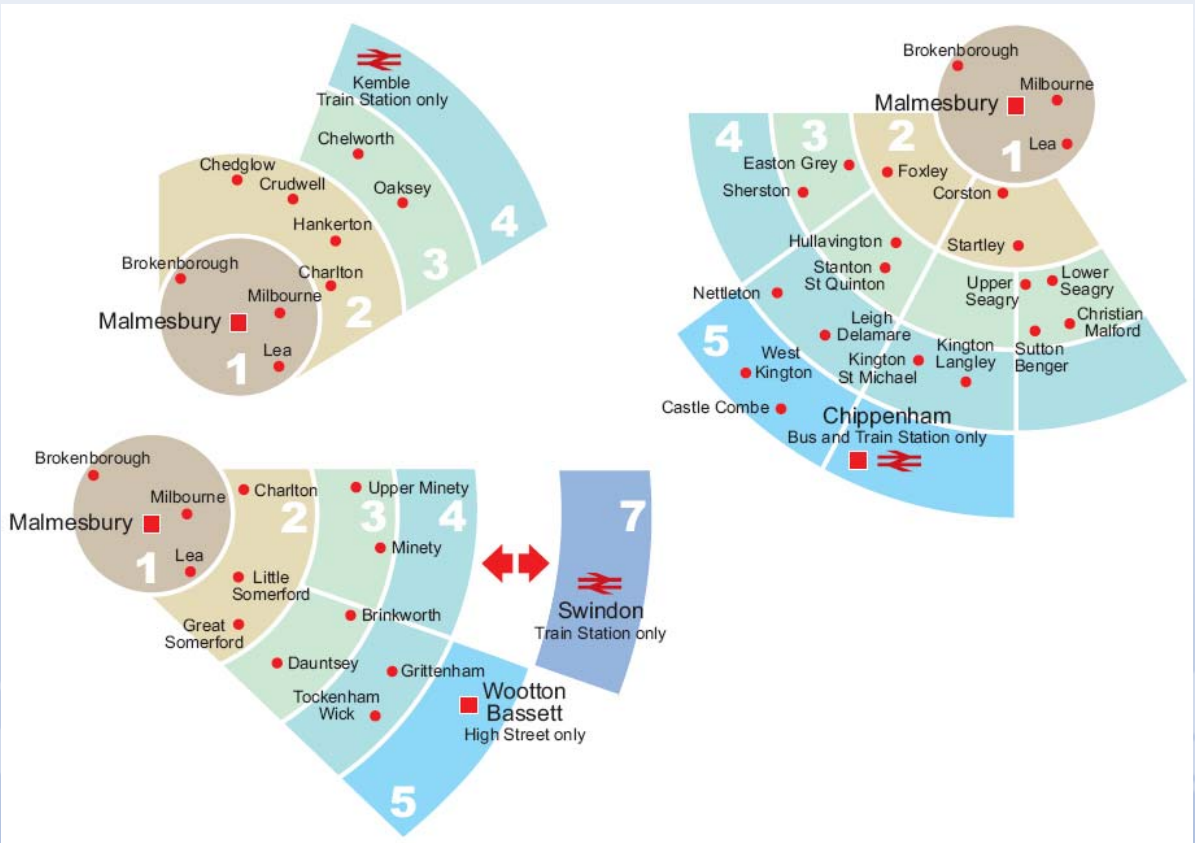
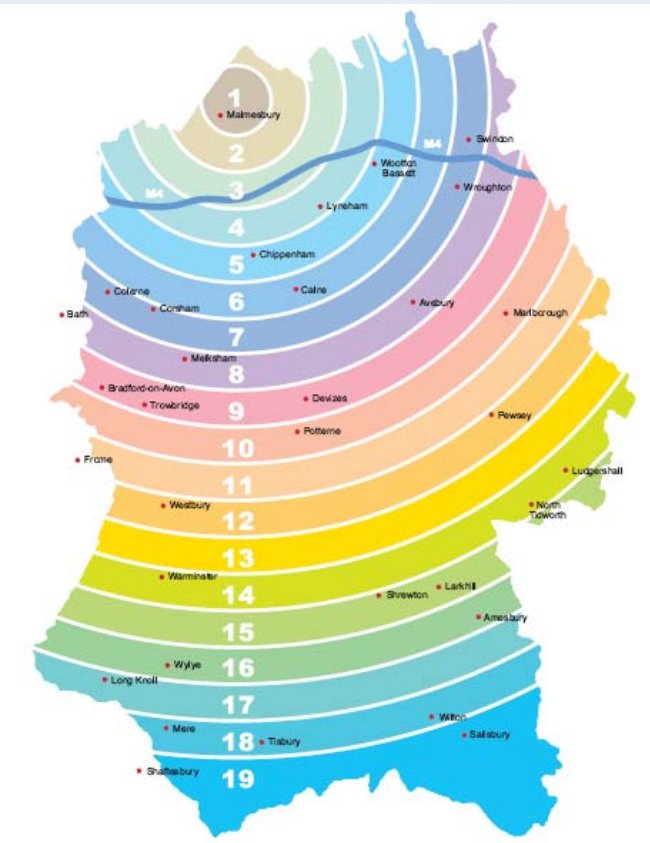
In-depth case study schemes



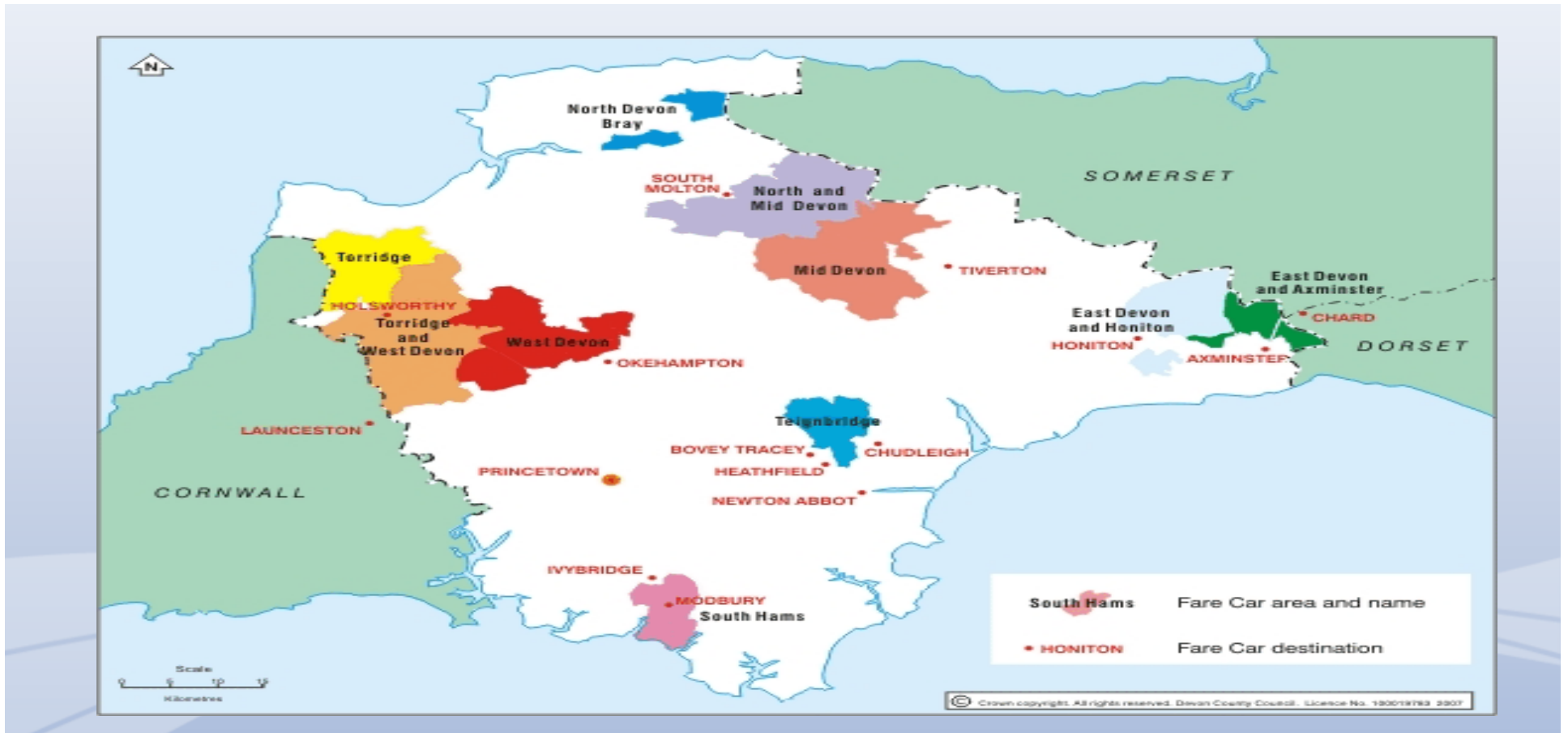
'What we found'

- Differences between schemes in mainland Europe and UK
- From a passenger viewpoint:
 - mainland Europe services may be booked as little as 1 hour before travel
 - and are available 7 days a week, from early in morning till late at night
 - with fares and services integrated with other public transport
- From a policy viewpoint:
 - some mainland Europe schemes now operate at a large scale (e.g. 100,000 passengers p.a.)
 - cost (and subsidy) per passenger journey is lower
 - costs kept down by efficiencies of scale e.g. booking via central call centre
 - important role of 'management' organisations

Wiltshire Connect2



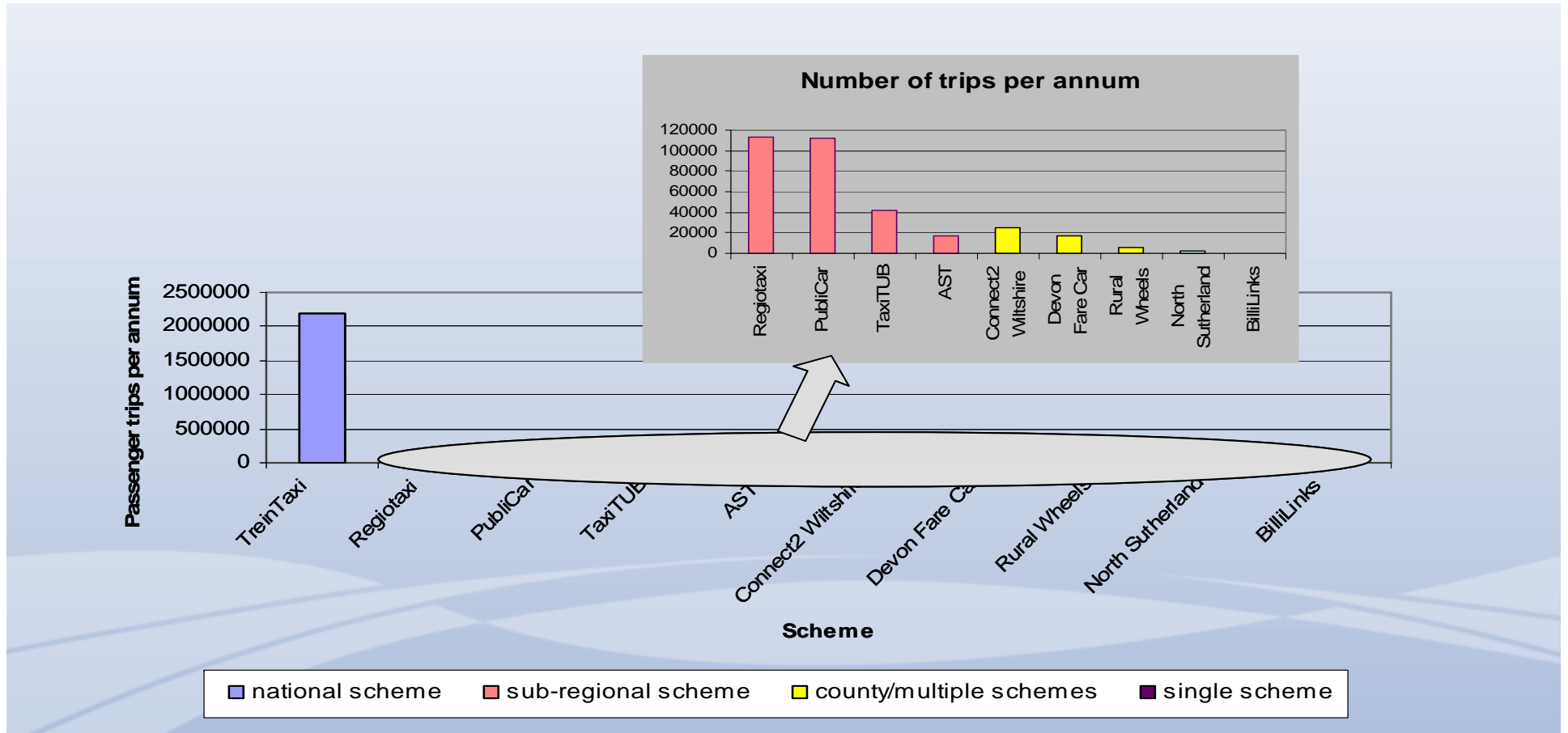
Devon FareCar



Booking and Payment

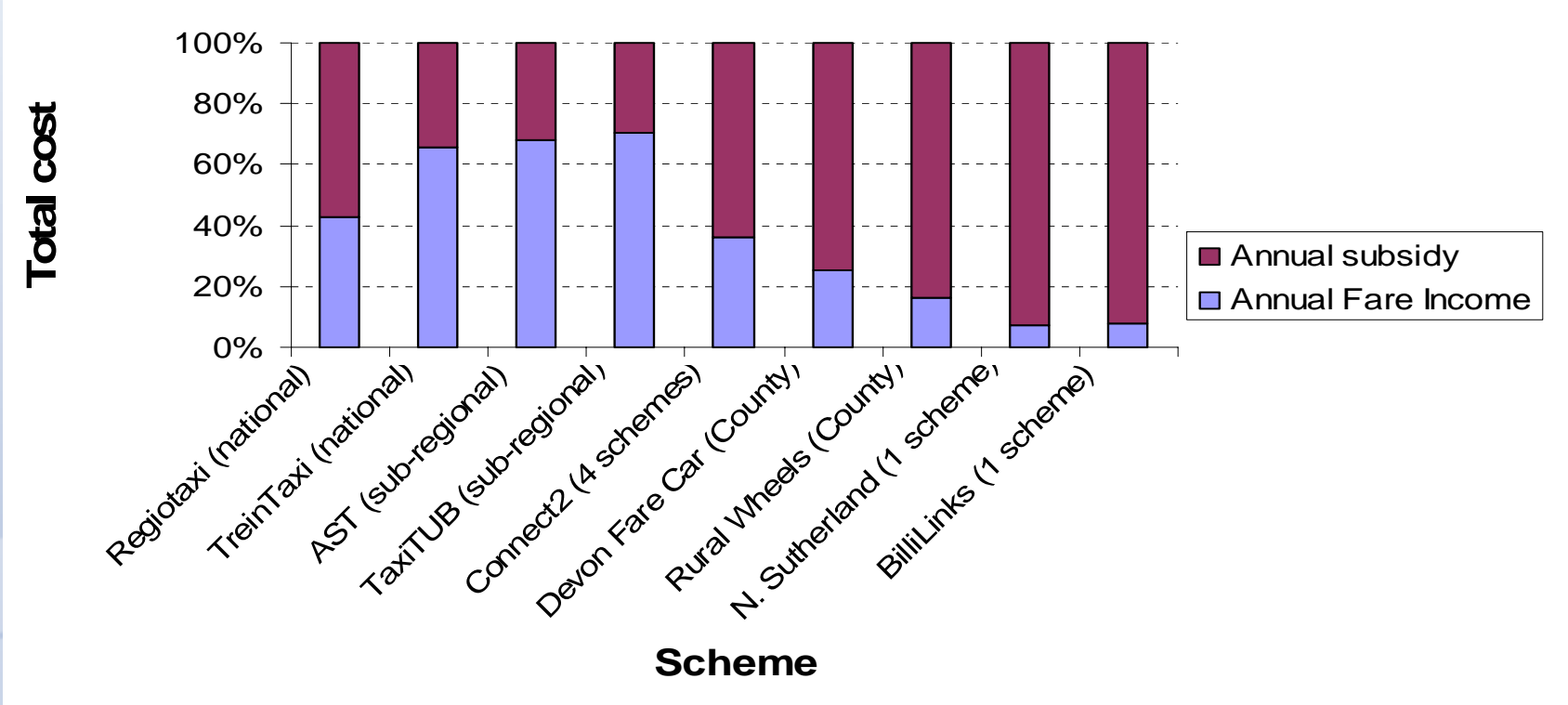


Scale of Operation



Number of passenger trips per annum, by geographical scale of operation

Funding and Subsidy



Proportion of total cost met by subsidy
(schemes ranked by gross cost)

Other Possible Benefits

- Valuable service for elderly, disabled and mobility impaired people
- Offer local authorities the ability to develop a range of schemes to reflect different local circumstances
- Support of local taxi businesses

Barriers

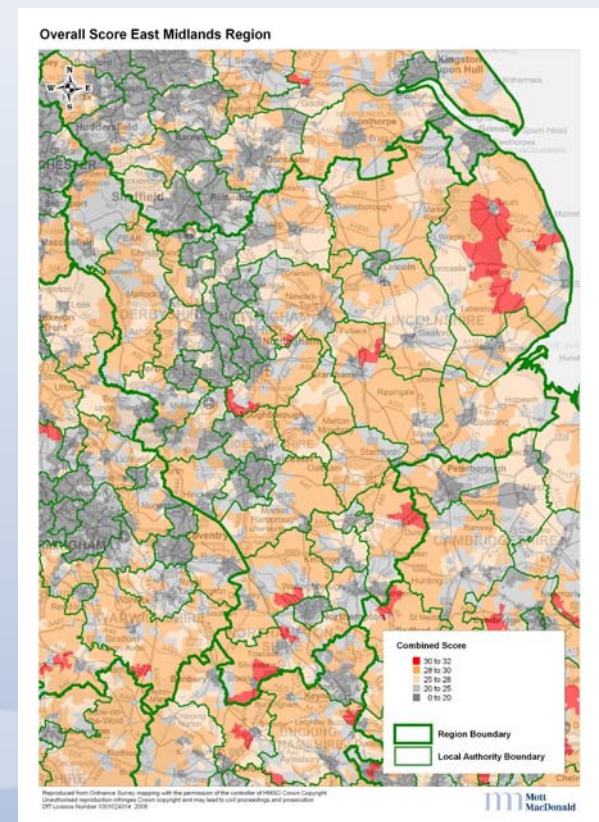
- **Taxi Industry**
 - Capacity
 - Willingness to 'become involved'
 - Lack of Awareness of opportunity
- **Local Authorities and Governance**
 - 'Two Tier' structures
 - 'Big Bus' culture
 - Procurement
 - Lack of Awareness of opportunity
- **Bus Industry**
 - Not yet engaged but developing awareness of European lessons

Barriers II

- **Customers**
 - Awareness of options/ perception of “Taxis”
 - Requirement to pre-book
- **Funding and Financial Support**
 - Capital and Revenue
 - Monitoring and Admin’ appropriate to scale
- **The role of Central Government**
 - Concessionary Fares
 - BSOG
 - Review Licensing arrangements
 - Review Guidance to Local Authorities to raise awareness of opportunities

The Cost of a 'Good Quality' Taxi-Based service

- Simple method based on:
 - Identification of most 'rural' areas
 - Understanding potential demand in those areas
 - Used 'cost' information from the case study schemes
 - Assumed levels of usage for different community groups
- National costs identified ranged between
 - £25m pa to provide recipients with one trip a week
 - £308m pa based on the replicating a 'best case' scheme;
 - £1.1bn pa based on a 'high cost' service



Conclusions I

- Can taxis help bring about a 'step change' in transport provision in rural areas?
 - Yes: the larger scale operations in mainland Europe clearly offer considerable amenity to local people
- Would taxis offer a cost effective replacement for rural buses?
 - Potentially: but this can only be achieved through economies of scale as found in the larger schemes in mainland Europe

Conclusions II

- Can taxis offer a way of reducing car dependence and environmental impact, *as well* as achieving greater social inclusion?
 - Yes: but the most successful schemes are intended to meet economic as well as environmental and social needs
- Why have flexible taxi services not developed on a large scale in the UK, unlike in other European countries?
 - The UK has a number of legal and institutional barriers which, whilst surmountable, have prevented growth of local schemes to the necessary scale of operation

Recommendations

- No 'best solution' for rural areas – recognise variation in communities
- Integration of operation with other forms of public transport is key
- 'Multi-Modal' ticketing is fundamental to developing co-ordinated public transport across 'regions'
- Need to 'Pilot' a network level taxi based scheme to test performance of larger schemes in the UK, like those in 'mainland' Europe but with longer timescale than typical EU demonstration
- Explore opportunities to overcome institutional barriers created by new legislation

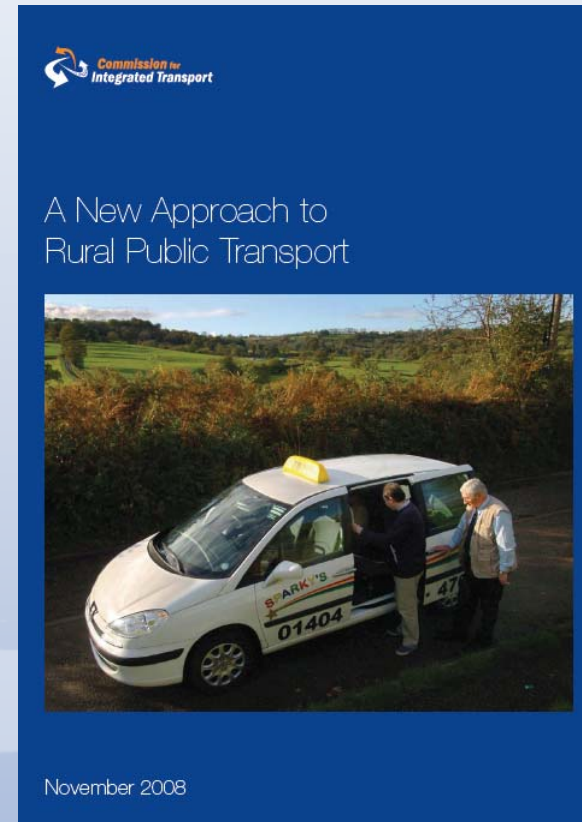
Sectoral Recommendations

- Taxi Industry – Regional contracting entities representing the industry – facilitate engagement
- LA's
 - Support to overcome procurement restrictions
 - Relax rules on livery and branding
 - 'Taxi Quality Partnerships'?
- Central Government
 - Allow taxi based services to qualify for similar subsidies to bus services
 - Transfer licensing to larger geographical level
 - Allow automatic registration in neighbouring authorities

Further reading

All research
documents
available for
download from:

cfit.independent.gov.uk/pubs/2008/rpt/index.htm





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