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1. INTRODUCTION

The Department for Transport's Door to Door Strategy (March 2013) and the recent ATOC RSSB Guidance on Station Travel Plans (July 2013) encouraged a more integrated approach towards the customer journey; ensuring train travel is simply a part of a seamless door-to-door journey experience.

Taxi services, however, have seen relatively small progress in this approach. ATOC, working with the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, has supported a study looking at the taxi story so far, considering lessons learnt and making recommendations on future provision. This is a supplementary document to the Station Travel Plan guidance and will provide a reference point for operators looking to develop this area as well as for franchise bidders.

2. HOW TAXI SHARE FITS INTO WIDER STATION TRAVEL PLAN INITIATIVES

What the station travel plan pilots told us:

An evaluation report of the 24 pilot schemes, "Evaluation of the pilot programme of Station Travel Plans," (RSSB, 2012) reported significant increases in the proportion of sustainable travel modes used. The results from the taxi sharing perspective were as follows:

- Milton Keynes and Leighton Buzzard had developed a taxi sharing service to the station.
- St. Albans and Hatfield stations reported that there were plans for a taxi sharing scheme at some point in the future.
- Leamington Spa pilot scheme had investigated the option, but decided not to proceed.
- Ashford International had the tools in place to operate a sharing service via its online journey planning forum, but the scheme was inactive, possibly due to inadequate levels of promotion.

2.1 Why taxi sharing hasn't been a key priority so far

Assessing the level of taxi sharing in greater detail, the report included quotes from consultation with various bodies involved in delivering the STPs. These demonstrated that implementation of a sharing scheme proved to be challenging: "Taxis, car sharing, ... received less attention and had, in some cases, been more contentious issues," "Car sharing and taxi sharing has proven very difficult to get started. These have been looked at, but...the taxi firms are resistant to sharing."

Taxi sharing as a tool in promoting smarter travel was not fully embraced by the Station Travel Plan pilot schemes. There may have been some appetite for trial schemes, but the STP steering groups faced various barriers and challenges to successful implementation. Feedback suggests this may be due to a lack

of knowledge or a negative perception of such schemes rather than a lack of faith in the tool itself. But it doesn't mean that repackaged – and rethought – the taxi offering cannot be a powerful part of the STP toolkit for appropriate stations.

3. DOES TAXI-SHARE MAKE SENSE IN SOME LOCATIONS?

Choosing the right taxi solution

Taxi sharing can be used to tackle sites that have been subject to a reduction in funding for public transport services, most notably bus service provision in rural areas. Industry studies up to now, however, have rarely explored the case for taxi sharing as a mainstream initiative and plausible mode of travel. Where reports have been produced, these have largely reviewed taxi sharing solely in rural areas and only considered it as a supporting option to Demand Responsive Transport rather than an independent mode.

The rail industry itself is responsive to markets and operators are continually looking to learn from wider, international best practice. The Greater Anglia Cab and Go scheme, launched in 2013, is an example of how the taxi stage of a journey can become more readily accessible, and as part of this process facilitate taxi share.

4. TAXI SHARING IN THE CONTEXT OF RECENT DFT DOOR TO DOOR GUIDANCE

Attempting to meet customer needs in the way the customer wants. Recent policy published by the DfT, the "Door to Door Strategy" (DfT, 2013), highlights how transport services have to become more flexible in meeting passengers' needs if we are to increase the use of more sustainable travel modes.

More generally, the strategy identifies that as transport networks become stretched - particularly in cities - we are compelled to consider a different kind of consumption; collaborative consumption. Put simply, this is a move away from owning a resource; instead, the resource is shared or hired. Therefore, it seems timely to consider the merits of taxi sharing as an initiative to support our growing rail demand and onward travel in cities, whilst meeting consumer demand for flexibility.

5. SO WHAT IS TAXI SHARING?

Some simple definitions

Taxi sharing can take various forms. The concept refers to multiple people who share a vehicle licensed as a taxi. The passengers may or may not have previously met and the sharing can be immediate or prearranged. Additionally, the passengers may be travelling from and to the same general location

from/to a station (e.g. a business park, a residential neighbourhood) or may be coming from/going to different origins and destinations along a defined corridor where taxi sharing is worthwhile and does not add significant journey time or detours. Passengers may also choose to taxi share if they are already in an established group of regular commuters and use private hire or more structured integrated services such as Cab and Go to complete their journey.

Taxi sharing is a very flexible concept, is responsive to demand and can take many forms. It can be used partially to help cater for high demand areas or it can help to connect out-of-town business parks and new housing development destinations. Solutions can be developed using private booked hire, Hackney Carriage services or registered taxibus routes. These are explained in the next section.



6. INFORMAL AND FORMAL TAXI SHARING METHODS/ GENERAL PUBLIC TAXI SHARING

Understanding the legislation and regulation

There are three key pieces of legislation which allow Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles to provide multi occupancy and flexible transport services to the travelling public. The DfT sets out these policies within "Taxi and Private Hire Car Licensing: Best Practice for Licensing Authorities" (DfT, 2007b). The Department is clear in encouraging local authorities to promote the flexibility the various legislations can offer: "so as to increase the availability of transport to the travelling public" (DfT, 2007b, para 73). The legislation is designed so that schemes can be tailored to a local area's specific needs, market and demand.

Taxi or PHV sharing by advanced booking (Section 11, Transport Act 1985)

This legislation allows operators to set up an initiative for up to eight passengers to share a vehicle. Passengers will be matched together based on their origins and destinations and booked in advance with agreed separate fares - each price lower than a single hiring. This legislation allows for one-off shared trips e.g. passengers travelling from/to a common origin/destination such as an airport transfer, or for more regular journeys e.g. daily commutes to a train station for onward travel.

The operator benefits by acquiring advanced bookings and passengers benefit from lower fares than exclusive hiring. The passenger can travel in the

knowledge of a guaranteed onward journey and the idea of a 'chauffeured' trip opposed to public transport is often the primary incentive to the passenger.

6.1 Taxi sharing from designated places – immediate hiring (Section 10, Transport Act 1985)

This section of the Transport Act allows the local licensing authority to set up a scheme with Hackney Carriages for up to eight passengers. Vehicles can be hired as required from ranks or designated areas for passengers going to the same or similar locations, as is often practised at busy mainline stations. There is no pre-booking required, passengers pay part of the metered fare and are presented with the option at the rank of whether they wish to share or travel exclusively.

This type of arrangement works well in rural areas at 'travel hubs,' (key points of demand) where passengers may be travelling to a similar location with no other means of local transportation. The legislation states that where at least 10% of taxi licences request a scheme for immediate hiring from designated spaces, the council must implement one. The council is able to set up special signs at designated areas for sharing and set maximum fares which will be lower than the exclusive single fare.

The benefits of this system include passengers experiencing lower fares and taxi drivers generally receiving a greater payment for a trip due to the higher occupancy of the vehicle. Local authorities benefit from the reduced number of vehicles on the network, thereby decreasing congestion and pollution. Passengers do not need to pre-book as part of this operation; however, to be successful the concept requires a critical mass of passengers for the sharing to work on demand and be profitable.

Owners of licensed taxis can apply to the Traffic Commissioner for a 'restricted public service vehicle (PSV) operator licence'.

Taxibuses (Section 12, Transport Act 1985)

Under this legislation, the taxi owner may use the vehicle to run a bus service for up to eight passengers. The route must be registered with the Traffic Commissioner and have at least one stopping place in the area of the local authority that licensed the taxi, although the service may also run beyond this area. The bus service is eligible for the Bus Service Operators Grant (subject to certain conditions) and taxibuses can be used for local authority subsidised bus services.

There are benefits with this use of legislation in areas where a level of public transport is required but a regular bus service may not be commercially viable. Taxibus services are often used to supplement public transport as feeder services

7. SITE-SPECIFIC TAXI SHARING

Looking at what has been tested before

The study looked at a number of locations where taxi sharing has taken place from a specific location. These are not all rail stations, but show what can be done and the principles behind a successful scheme.



7.1 Transport for London Schemes

Description:

These TfL-initiated schemes represent immediate taxi sharing from designated pick-up ranks within Paddington and Euston stations. The scheme operates at times of significant demand or disruption. The scheme provides a marshalled service, which clusters together passengers travelling to similar destinations who then either indicate their destination zone and collect a coloured token or use the marshal's knowledge to select the correct zone. When two or more passengers are grouped together to travel to the same zone, the taxi departs.

Benefits:

Passengers benefit by often boarding a taxi more quickly than they might through queuing and pay a fixed fare for the designated zone they are travelling to. This can often result in a lower fare than that of other public transport. Drivers benefit through earning more revenue for each trip and, as there are fewer taxi trips overall, this results in wider benefits for the environment and community.

Discussing the concept with taxi drivers, they added that they welcomed the scheme and many would prefer to use their vehicle for shared trips, as they gain more revenue and enjoy the 'challenge' of working out a route for all the passengers.

Key Issues:

Euston Station has clear signing for shared taxis from the main station area but passengers do still need reminding about the service. The role of customer service staff to marshal people from the standard taxi rank and support them in their onward travel planning is critical to the effective running of the service. This type of taxi share is mainly appropriate to busy stations with congested peaks and high passenger throughput, as it requires a critical mass of taxi usage to be effective.

7.2 Taxi One, Liverpool

Description:

This is an example of a Taxibus arrangement which has been operating since 2011 from Central Liverpool to Anfield for all Liverpool Football Club home matches. The scheme competes with a dedicated bus service provided by Stagecoach. The Taxibus operation offers a reduced fare to the bus service per head and provides a more 'personal' and fully accessible service. The scheme only operates for outward journeys to the ground.

Benefits:

Where the public buses are over capacity, passengers can use the taxi service as an overspill facility, but essentially where bus operations can be filled to capacity, this is more sustainable both commercially and environmentally.

The combination of conventional taxibus services ensures that passengers are moved more efficiently at times of known peak congestion. As this scheme focuses on the central Liverpool-to-Anfield route, management and control are kept tight.

Key Issues:

The scheme illustrates the importance of clear branding differentiation between standard Hackney Carriages and Taxibuses, as this could cause some confusion to passengers. A temporary map is displayed at Liverpool bus station on match days and a Merseytravel attendant normally advises fans of the scheme. The scheme does have a supporting website and a route map is provided through Merseytravel.

The scheme largely relies on word of mouth and repeat usage. It also focuses on specific types of passenger; i.e. those who have parked in the town centre or travelled into Liverpool by public transport. The limitation of this approach compared to a standard taxi operation is that vehicles do not depart until they have at least a four or five passenger occupancy level. So where this type of scheme is provided, there is a need to make sure people know about it, its 'terms' and also ensure that passenger wait time is not extended.

7.3 Highlands, Transport to Employment Service (T2E)

Description:

This was a scheme which matched together users in advance to help them access employment opportunities. The scheme was an initiative in rural areas of the Highlands, where transport ownership amongst the unemployed was low and travel identified as a key barrier to accessing employment opportunities. The scheme was developed as a social enterprise and received European funding.

Benefits:

Fares were negotiated at a 40% reduction to the standard tariff with passengers booking weekly in advance and paying monthly in arrears. The service was hailed a success with an evaluation carried out in 2008 which revealed that: “the combined benefit to individual users and the council is about £9,000 per year (while the user is still in employment) and the measurable social benefits outweigh the investment by more than 3:1 for current usage patterns” (Wright, S, Nelson, J D, and Cooper, J M, 2008, p190).

Key Issues:

The scheme needed the Highlands Council to provide subsidy of approximately £20,000 to maintain it in operation until March 2009, highlighting the issue of on-going funding requirements. This particular scheme lost its public sector funding in 2009.

7.4 Texxi (Liverpool)



Description:

This is a text-operated taxi service active in Liverpool since 2006. The scheme operates within the night time economy to disperse people more effectively from central locations to their destinations. Passengers text their destination postcodes to the service when they wish to leave and the service then matches together individuals travelling to similar destinations.

Benefits:

Individuals pay a fixed fee for their journey and drivers typically benefit from earning more per head. This is a demand responsive brokerage service which aims to make the best use of resources and offer a cheaper and safer travel alternative. Credits are automatically collected via reverse billing, which helps to maintain the customer base and reduces the risk of customers choosing to move away from using the service.

Key Issues:

As the service is aimed to improve the evening economy, there is a possibility of being paired up with intoxicated passengers. Consequently, the quality of the journey experience could be negatively affected.

7.5 Cab & Go



Description:
Cab & Go is an innovative new service from Greater Anglia, allowing customers to book a cab journey online or through a smartphone booking app (Android or iPhone).

The service is currently available at six stations: Norwich, Ely, Bury St Edmunds, Ingatestone, Chelmsford and Colchester. The operator aims to cover the entire Greater Anglia network and beyond during 2014.

The customer first registers and creates an account. At the end of the booking process they will be asked for their payment card details, which will be stored securely, making all future payments simple. The account will enable tracking of all previous and existing bookings. Cab & Go is a pre-paid, pre-booked service.

Benefits:
The scheme facilitates taxi trips from stations where there is no formal taxi rank or ‘waiting taxis’ and customers may arrive at a ‘quieter’ or more remote station needing onward travel when it is unstaffed. Although the scheme is not a pure taxi share, the system facilitates taxi share movements and enables pre-booking from stations where ‘turn up and go’ taxi provision is not readily available. The initiative is also underpinned by the Equality Act, as it caters for a wider range of social groups that need extra support and choice when making onward journeys from a station.

Key Issues:
Passengers need to have access to the Internet to use the service. All prices are per vehicle and customers are required to include the number of passengers and luggage when booking, which may be considered time consuming.

8. SETTING UP TAXI BASED SOLUTIONS

Weighing up the Pros and Cons

Taxi share Summary	
Pros	Cons
A strong potential market in rural areas where public transport is limited.	The two tier system of private hire and Hackney carriage operators can be confusing to the public.
There is high demand for such a service at night when dispersal of high volumes of passengers is a priority.	Taxi licensing departments are often separate from Transport Planning, leading to a lack of integration.
A range of taxi share apps are now available, providing informal and formal sharing. Social media could play a significant role in promoting information and awareness.	Taxis are arguably not fully incorporated into integrated transport policy.
Major employers, e.g. councils, represent a pool of opportunity yet to be explored.	The taxi trade has tended to follow more traditional ways of doing things - so this can lead to a lack of entrepreneurialism.
The flexibility of the legislation (three different forms) allows for schemes to be developed specific to an area’s needs and characteristics.	The range of legislation can arguably be difficult to understand.
Younger people represent a target market which can be built upon. The car is often no longer an aspirational asset.	The procedure for setting up a taxi share scheme can be perceived as complex.
Tourism could be supported by taxi sharing and is a market yet to be fully explored.	Local authorities may not offer much support towards schemes due to a lack of knowledge, unknown costs or a perceived risk.
Taxi sharing could become a core part of the ‘door-to-door’ journey offering, reducing overall journey time.	Greater knowledge is needed of market segments and specific customer needs at different times of day – which could be collected as part of the Station Travel Planning process.

9. EFFECTIVE TARGETING



9.1 Morning Peak Hour Trips

During the morning peak hour period in larger conurbations, passenger travel demand is high with increased volumes of people making journeys from or to similar destinations. In these circumstances, a sharing scheme is more likely to be viable, with immediate hire saving time in queues and helping passengers reach their end destination quicker. This type of system is currently utilised at Euston and Paddington stations. It is felt such schemes have the potential to be successful if they are promoted and marketed adequately. Other benefits include effective operational management of the taxi ranks and customer knowledge that only licensed Hackney Carriage vehicles are used, providing reassurance on personal safety.

This type of operation is less effective during the afternoon peak when demand is typically more staggered, as it does not easily cater for the switch in tidal flow. There may be further opportunities to explore the use of post afternoon peak taxi share services to hotels, leisure venues and other social destinations. There are a number of Network Rail and other high footfall TOC-operated stations that could benefit from pilots to support local customer profiles and to provide further reductions in door-to-door journey time.

9.2 Evening Economy

The evening economy presents a high level of demand in a relatively small area and a need from a security perspective to transfer individuals efficiently and effectively. Schemes such as Texxi give individuals the guarantee of a ride

home prior to departing their location. Whilst this is pre-booking, (often seen as a drawback), this is not seen as a significant mitigating factor. Drivers and vehicles are used as and when necessary and are able to retrieve booking costs. Where there is often relatively little availability of public transport, this option provides a beneficial solution, not only to individuals, but to all those involved in passenger dispersal.

As with the peak hour service suggestion, it is advised that such schemes are trialled on a broader scale. Existing services are all branded differently; covering their unique area and this fragmented approach needs to be overcome if an operation of this kind is to be embraced by large volumes of passengers. A jointly run scheme between a local authority or TOC and the private industry would appear to offer an ideal forum.

9.3 Rural Areas

It became very clear through the production of this research that the greatest level of opportunity is perceived to lie within rural areas. Demands are relatively low, but focussed, often with groups of passengers travelling to/from key services, facilities or travel 'hubs'. Taxi sharing schemes can provide additional support to demand responsive services, however, these tend to be expensive and it is recommended they work in partnership with other sectors such as health, non-emergency transport and home-to-school transport, for example. These types of facility often require similarly accessible vehicles and, as such, partnership opportunities exist.

The Taxibus legislation has been the most widespread and it is felt that this is the area within which further schemes can be implemented. Vehicles operating on fixed routes, perhaps in addition running outside of standard public transport operating hours, offer a solution to inefficient bus services; helping to connect people to employment opportunities and education. Schemes support high-level objectives of addressing social exclusion in rural communities, cutting carbon and boosting economic growth by removing the barrier presented by a lack of transport.

Schemes should be piloted to assess areas of further improvement, for example an operating model like the Fellow Travellers scheme, where routes are suggested by the community.

10. MATRIX OF MEASURES – THE KEY ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER

Description	Benefits	Marketing	Management	Examples
Urban Areas – Morning Peak Hours				
Sharing through immediate hiring from designated places (stations) during peak periods.	Passengers pay a fixed fare and can board a vehicle on demand. No pre-booking.	Clear signing within stations, wider promotion through advertising, social media and season ticketing.	TOC / Network Rail.	TfL, Euston and Paddington.
Urban Areas – Evening Economy				
Sharing through advanced booking during the evening economy.	Passengers can book a vehicle before leaving their venue. An audit trail is captured. Crowds are dispersed more quickly.	Targeted at all age groups, online and via social media.	Private company, TOC, local authority.	Texxi, Glasgow, SPT.
Rural Areas – Taxibus				
Taxibus operation, connecting communities to key destinations.	Efficient use of vehicles, demand-driven, contributes towards high level and local core issues.	Work to be done to assess marketing techniques to capture a wider audience. Some negative perceptions of “community buses” to be overcome.	Brokerage schemes, partnership with local authority desirable.	Fellow Travellers, Connexxion, TreinTaxi, AST Linz.

10.1 Tips for effective piloting

Recommendations predominantly indicate a joint or partnership role in scheme investment, management and delivery. Whilst this may be seen as a ‘utopian’ situation, schemes where partnerships have been formed have proved more sustainable and successful. Ultimately, buy-in from a variety of partners needs to be achieved to promote any new initiative such as marketing taxi sharing. Sites should also have the critical mass in place to make schemes viable.

Schemes have been limited in the UK, and where they have been trialled they have rarely been successful. This research attributes the limited success to the following:

- A lack of understanding and awareness of schemes
- Inadequate scheme information and funding
- Poor marketing and identification of target groups
- A general lack of communication with the taxi industry

11. CONTACTS, SIGNPOSTING AND ADVICE

So what next?

The industry continues to look at innovative ways to make onwards travel easier, and to be more creative about the use of taxi services.

With specific taxi management (e.g. selected London terminals), the Abellio Cab & Go approach and more localised schemes, there is a need for further pilot testing and market research to determine if taxi share solutions are justified across the markets proposed.

This would provide business cases and demonstration of schemes. Detailed work also needs to be undertaken on scheme costs, investment and ongoing subsidy; this should consider established European examples.

Schemes should be monitored to provide an evidence base to inform strategic decisions about taxi share implementations in the UK. The key findings from the 2012/13 research programme concluded that:

- Taxi licensing departments are often separate from Transport Planning, leading to a lack of integration
- The taxi trade is built upon a traditional model and this can restrict entrepreneurialism
- The range of legislation and liabilities can arguably be difficult to understand
- The procedure for setting up a taxi-share scheme can be seen as complex
- Local authorities may not be in a position to offer much support towards schemes due to a lack of knowledge, unknown costs or a perceived risk
- Issues still remain in relation to managing safety, particularly during the evening economy

But the above factors are not show-stoppers. They are as much about attitude change, clarity of responsibilities and an enabling approach where there is a proven need for pilot or new schemes. To view the full taxi-share evaluation report, please go to the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport website at www.cilt.org.uk

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