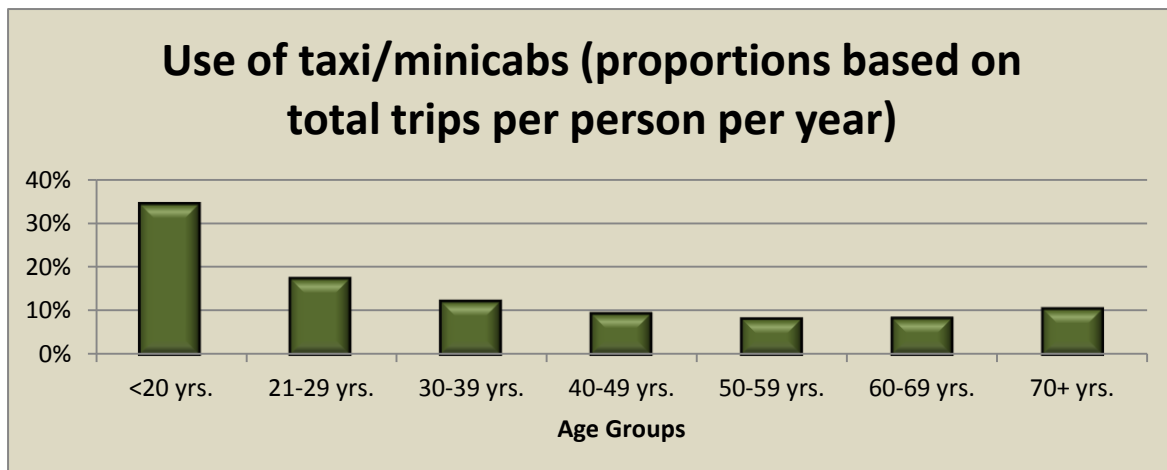


The use of Taxis in rural communities – a discussion point.

It was suggested to me by a Business Manager of a rural authority that 'if taxi regulations were relaxed then they could operate more like buses providing a service where buses don't operate or are very infrequent'.

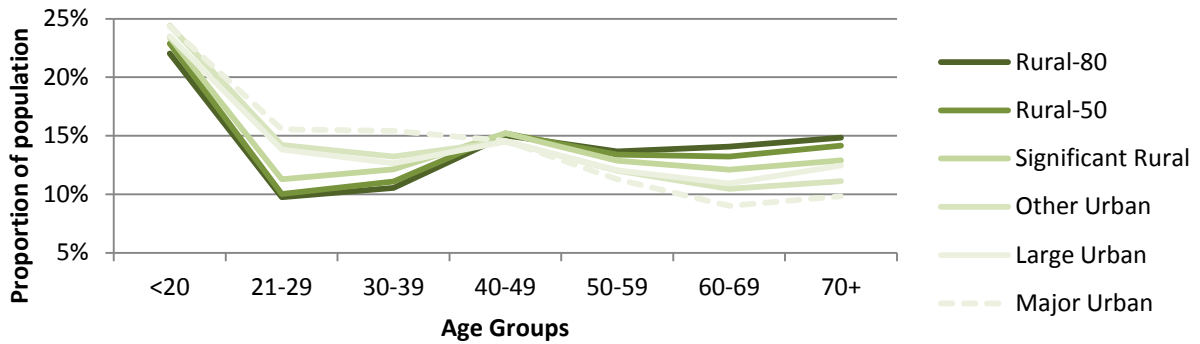
I decided therefore to enquire a little deeper into the data reflecting current taxi use to discover a little more.

The following bar chart demonstrates how various age groups currently use the taxis available. The higher proportion of use shown by the under-20 year old group was certainly to be anticipated due to the limited access to private vehicles for this age range. The dip in use between the two extremes of age range was also unsurprising. What was intriguing however was that the taxi/minicab use in the over-70s age group was not greater.

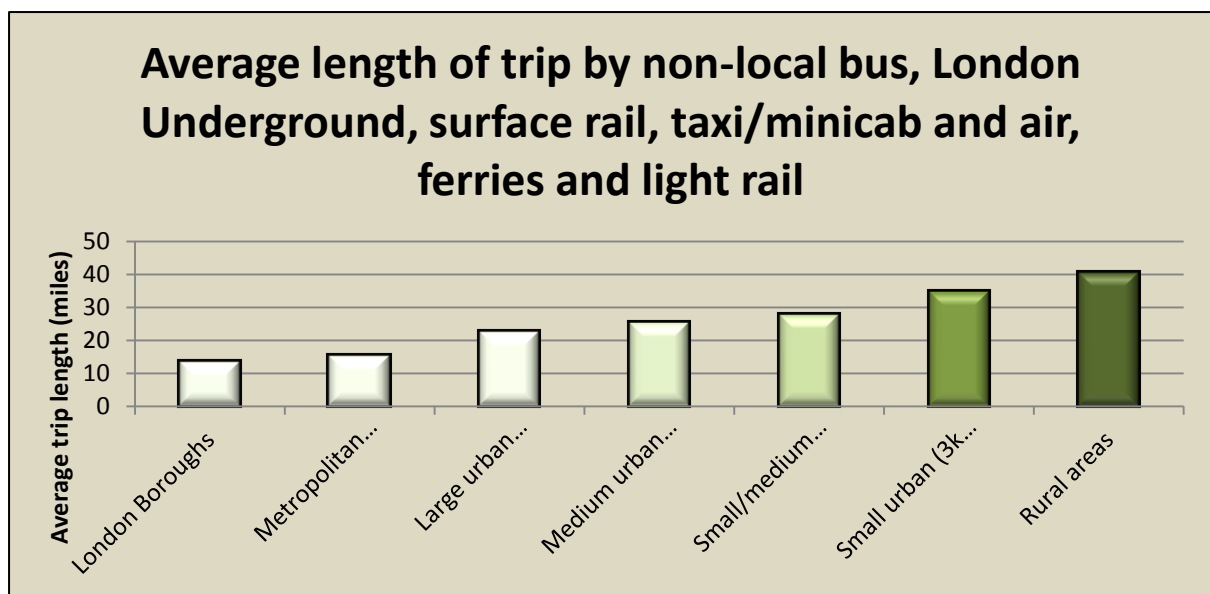


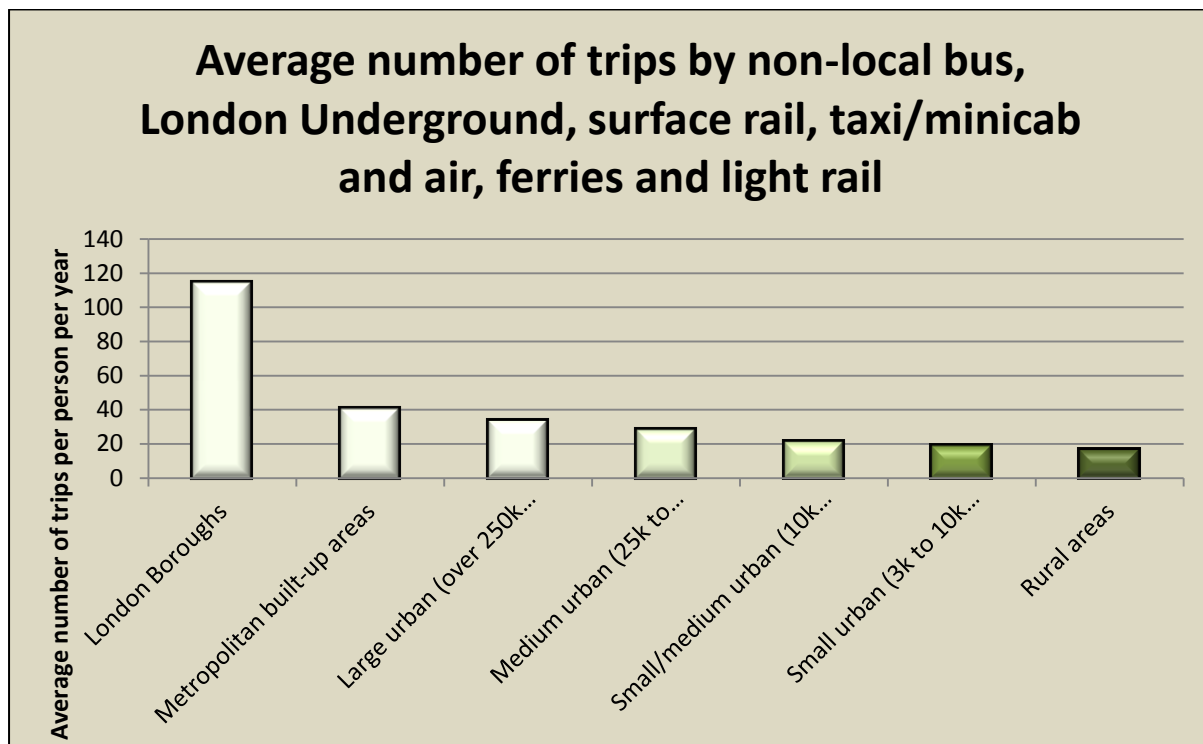
Plotting the population figures for these same age groups, split between the rural/urban classifications of the authorities to which the populations relate, demonstrates the varying age demographics for the six classifications. As you would expect, urban areas have a younger population than their rural neighbours, with the crossover being the age group 40-49 years. Yet the proportion of under 20s in each rural/urban classification is fairly consistent for all.

Mid Year Population Estimates, 2011

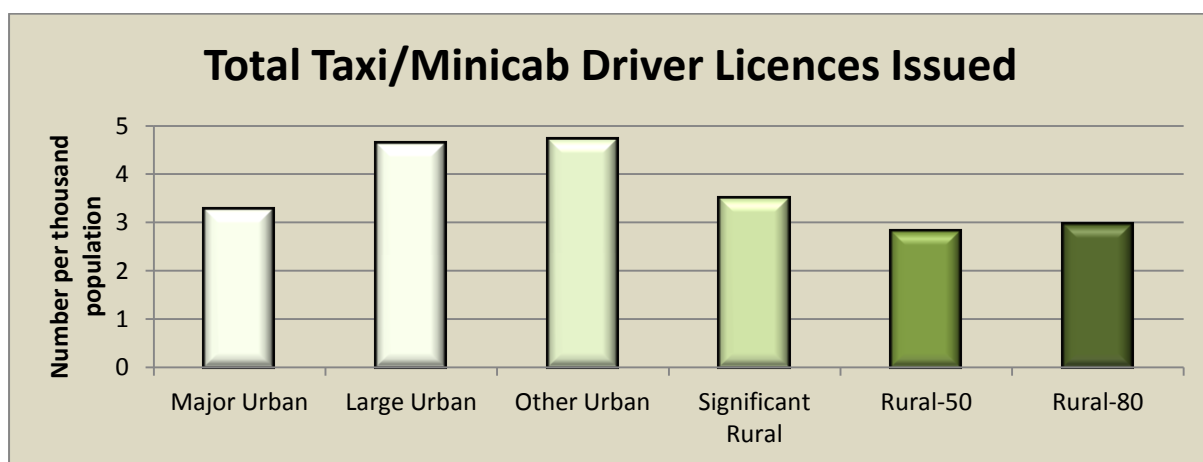


Looking at the use of a variety of 'other' public transport options (not Local Bus), which includes taxis and minicabs, it is interesting to see that although the trip distances are relatively long, the frequency of use is relatively low in rural areas. Of course, how much of this data relates specifically to the use of taxis and minicabs it is impossible to know, but does lean to the natural thought that taxi journeys in rural areas would be longer.





The provision or relative need of taxis/minicabs in rural areas can be gauged through the number of taxi/minicab driver licences issued per head of population. Again, the bar chart demonstrates a clear disparity between rural and urban positions.



There are obviously several factors at play when considering what issues are contributing to the usage figures for taxis/minicabs; but it is interesting to consider how the demographics of rural areas, the length of required journeys, the frequency at which such journeys are taken, and the availability of taxis and minicabs in rural communities all impact on their use and future potential use.