

Covid-19

Local authority travel and transport data

Weekly digest



Week Commencing

24th August 2020

Introduction

Since the imposition of travel restrictions designed to help dramatically reduce the spread of Covid-19, the Transport Technology Forum has led the collation of transport data from local authorities into information used to understand changes in travel behaviour.

Authorities from cities, towns and counties across England are sharing urban traffic control and automated traffic counter data from the roadside, as well as information on cycling and car parks. Industry has also supplied video analytics and floating vehicle data patterns. This sits alongside data the Department receives about rail and air, public transport, freight and maritime to summarise how, where and when people and goods are moving around the country.

The Transport Technology Forum is able to publish outcomes from this data set for interested parties, not least those bodies who went above and beyond the call to share their data with us.

About the Forum

This document has been prepared by the Transport Technology Forum as part of its remit to drive more effective and efficient management of existing and new road networks, as a key national opportunity before, during and after the current Covid-19 emergency.

Road transport will remain a key pillar of how people and goods move across the nation, not just on strategic roads. Improving road travel through technology is a core aim of the Forum.

The Forum promotes a collaborative culture to open up the opportunity and address the caution which has historically impeded efficiency and innovation.

About this Report

The report provides an ongoing snapshot of travel, summarising weekly, daily and hourly changes based on information shared by:

- Traffic – 29 data providers, geographically covering approximately 107 local authority districts.
- Cycling – 16 data providers, geographically covering approximately 84 local authority districts including nationwide canal and river paths.

This provides an overview of how public behaviour is changing as a result of restrictions being eased, whether travel habits are returning to normal or what new patterns are being experienced. Local Authorities can benefit by being able to compare what is happening in their areas with the national picture, allowing local and national comparisons to be drawn.

Highlights summary

The following provides a high-level summary of the key findings within the data:

Traffic Flow

- Traffic for the week commencing 17th August saw a slight increase in flows (2 percentage points) compared to the previous week, bringing the overall traffic count average for the week to a reduction of 10.8% compared to the baseline (first week in February 2020).
- Thursday 20th August and Sunday 23rd August saw 5% and 8% increases respectively compared to the previous week, while the rest of the week showed only slight increases (approximately 1%), except for Wednesday 19th, which saw a 3% decrease.
- Hourly traffic volumes show a slight increase in interpeak levels when compared to the previous week, bringing them almost on par with pre-lockdown levels. AM traffic levels have shown a minor decrease since the previous week while PM levels are still showing steady recovery compared to levels in June and July.
- Analysis of vehicle classification data (Figure 5) shows that motorcycle use dropped significantly midweek due to the wet weather, while bus/coach traffic is back at baseline levels and HGV/LGV traffic is still exceeding the baseline.

Cycling

- Cycling flows for the week commencing 17th August show a 33% increase on baseline levels, a significant decrease of 21% compared to the previous week, most likely due to rain and thunderstorms that occurred midweek.
- The most significant change was seen Wednesday, which saw an 83% decrease in cycling levels compared to the previous week, with levels decreasing to 41% below baseline levels. Contrarily, the weekend saw significant increases in cycling compared to the previous week, with 15% and 43% more cycling seen on Saturday and Sunday respectively, most likely due to an improvement in weather towards the weekend.
- For the week commencing 17th August, AM cycling levels are slightly below levels achieved in June and July and are still well below pre-lockdown levels. Cycling during the interpeak is significantly reduced when compared to levels in June and July, but is still marginally above the pre-lockdown trough between AM and PM. PM levels are slightly reduced compared to previous weeks in August.

Local authority travel and transport data weekly digest

Figure 1 – Key Traffic Flow Dashboard Measures

Overall Daily Traffic Flow Change Compared to Baseline (01-07 Feb 2020)								
Week	1. Monday	2. Tuesday	3. Wednesday	4. Thursday	5. Friday	6. Saturday	7. Sunday	Total
17/08/2020	📉 -10.70%	📉 -10.33%	📉 -14.60%	📉 -9.21%	📉 -13.20%	📉 -11.13%	📉 -5.88%	-10.80%
10/08/2020	📉 -11.37%	📉 -11.39%	📉 -11.42%	📉 -14.52%	📉 -14.46%	📉 -13.09%	📉 -13.54%	-12.54%
03/08/2020	📉 -10.81%	📉 -11.33%	📉 -8.89%	📉 -14.44%	📉 -14.43%	📉 -12.56%	📉 -10.50%	-11.83%
27/07/2020	📉 -17.40%	📉 -13.53%	📉 -8.31%	📉 -11.50%	📉 -15.92%	📉 -14.39%	📉 -12.62%	-13.04%
20/07/2020	📉 -14.51%	📉 -13.01%	📉 -15.34%	📉 -16.92%	📉 -13.29%	📉 -12.93%	📉 -8.29%	-13.56%
13/07/2020	📉 -13.50%	📉 -15.63%	📉 -18.42%	📉 -16.52%	📉 -15.04%	📉 -15.75%	📉 -16.56%	-15.69%
06/07/2020	📉 -20.47%	📉 -16.38%	📉 -18.22%	📉 -19.96%	📉 -18.65%	📉 -17.16%	📉 -16.67%	-17.98%
Total	-24.72%	-23.07%	-23.23%	-24.15%	-24.21%	-24.53%	-24.30%	-24.02%

Figure 1: Key dashboard figures showing change in average daily traffic volumes compared to the baseline (first week of February 2020)

Figure 2 – Key Cycling Dashboard Measures

Overall Daily Cycling Change Compared to Baseline (01-07 Feb 2020)								
Week	1. Monday	2. Tuesday	3. Wednesday	4. Thursday	5. Friday	6. Saturday	7. Sunday	Total
17/08/2020	📈 49.37%	📈 35.48%	📉 -41.46%	📈 55.09%	📉 -20.00%	📈 73.41%	📈 118.39%	33.33%
10/08/2020	📈 57.14%	📈 65.38%	📈 42.41%	📈 29.41%	📉 28.68%	📈 58.03%	📈 75.97%	54.36%
03/08/2020	📈 70.79%	📈 48.75%	📈 44.30%	📈 54.85%	📈 57.14%	📈 146.45%	📈 166.37%	77.19%
27/07/2020	📉 -2.32%	📈 73.53%	📈 63.89%	📈 77.14%	📈 55.95%	📈 119.57%	📈 154.90%	74.57%
20/07/2020	📈 70.79%	📈 81.88%	📈 64.44%	📈 53.66%	📈 53.50%	📈 10.34%	📈 171.43%	68.94%
13/07/2020	📈 52.44%	📈 42.65%	📈 34.74%	📈 50.88%	📈 83.33%	📈 139.61%	📈 110.31%	83.72%
06/07/2020	📈 70.73%	📈 52.95%	📉 -7.86%	📈 8.57%	📈 50.59%	📈 122.10%	📈 165.88%	60.00%
Total	19.51%	20.16%	4.35%	12.94%	16.67%	62.96%	90.00%	28.26%

Figure 2: Key dashboard figures showing change in average daily cycle volumes compared to the baseline (first week of February 2020)

Local authority travel and transport data weekly digest

Figure 3 – Daily average traffic flow change from baseline

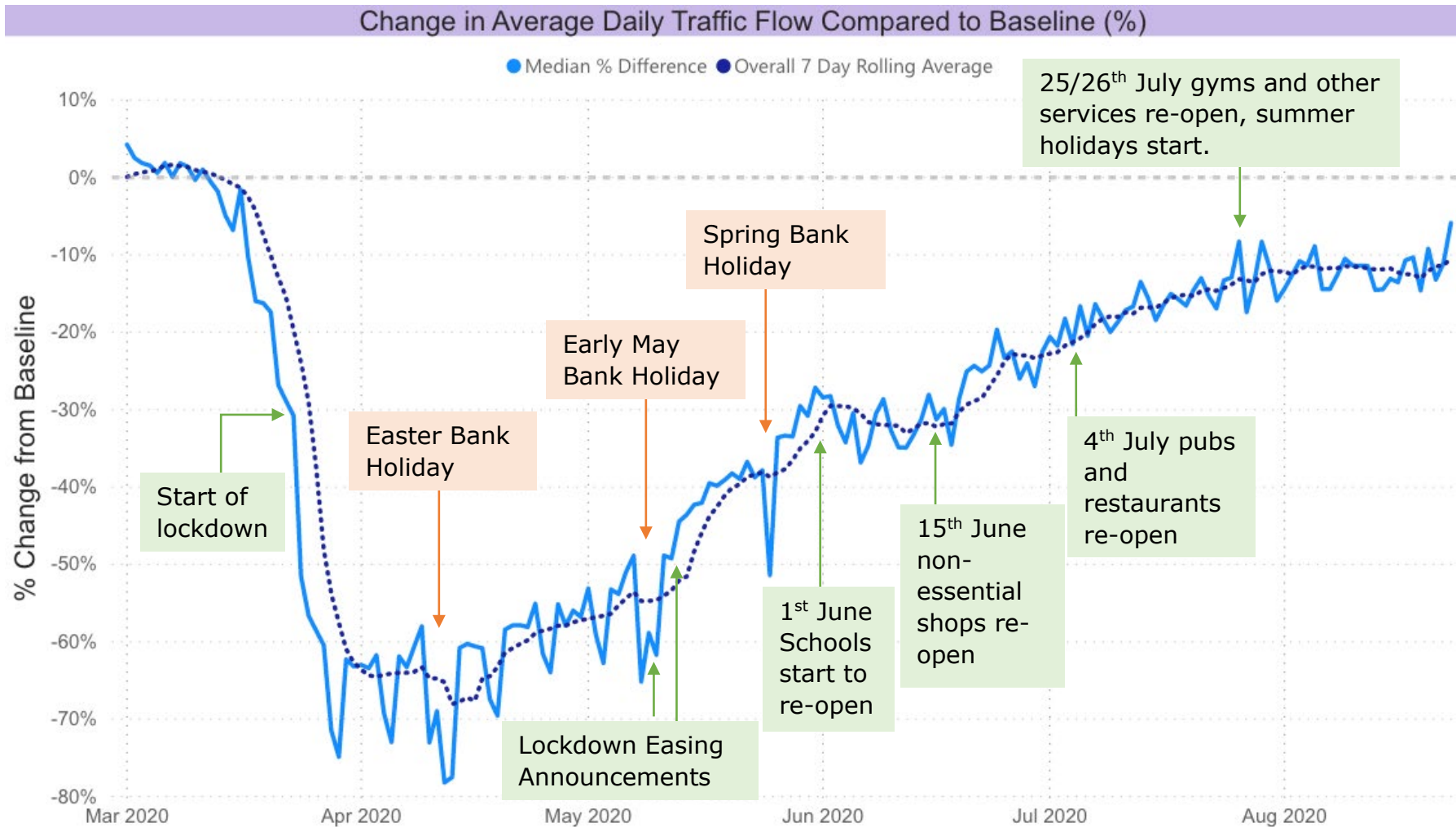


Figure 3: Change in average daily traffic volumes since 01st March across all sources compared to the baseline (first week of February 2020)

Figure 4 – Hourly traffic flow comparison per week

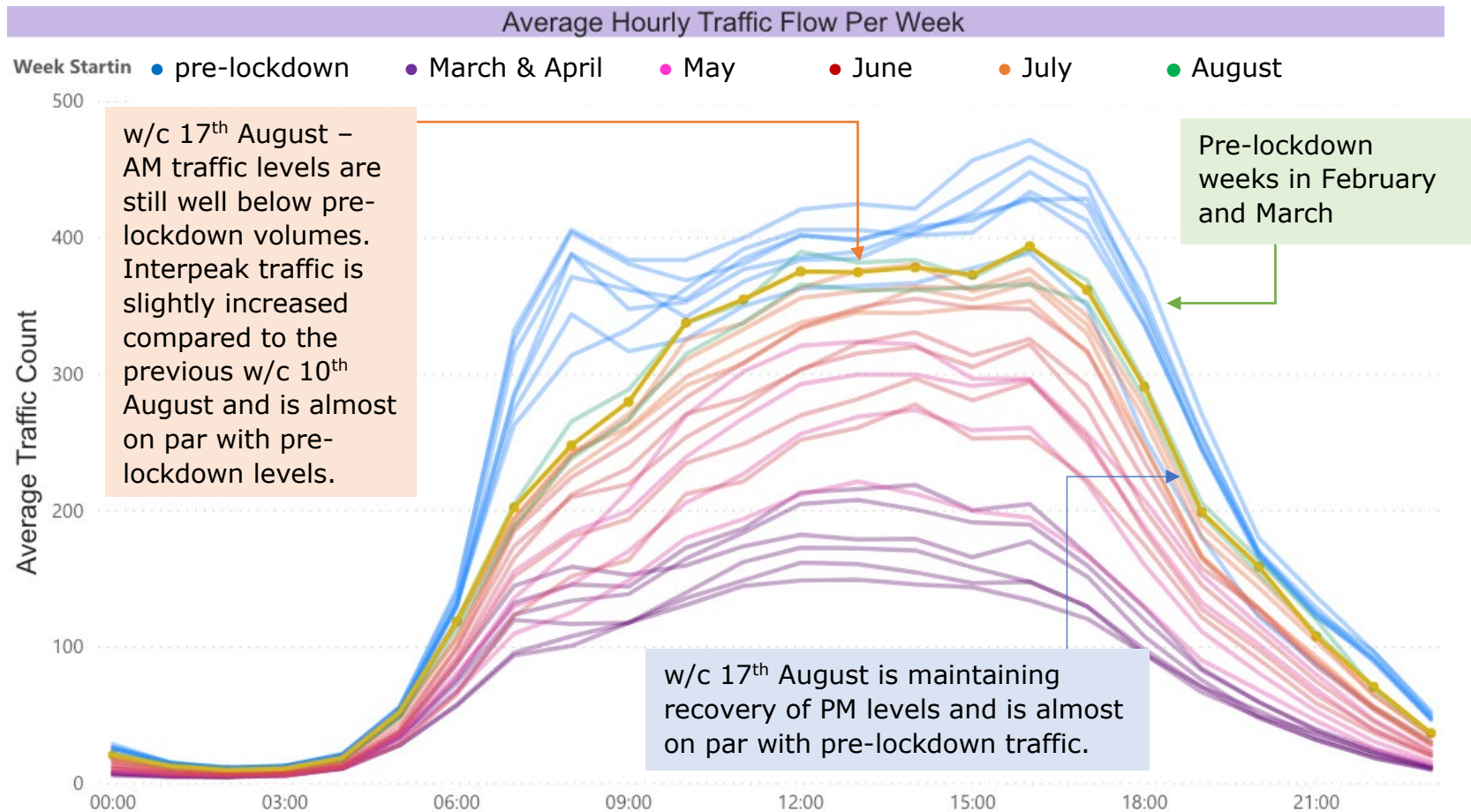


Figure 4: Change in average hourly traffic volumes per week since 1st full week in February across all sources with latest week highlighted.

Figure 5 – Change in journeys by vehicle class

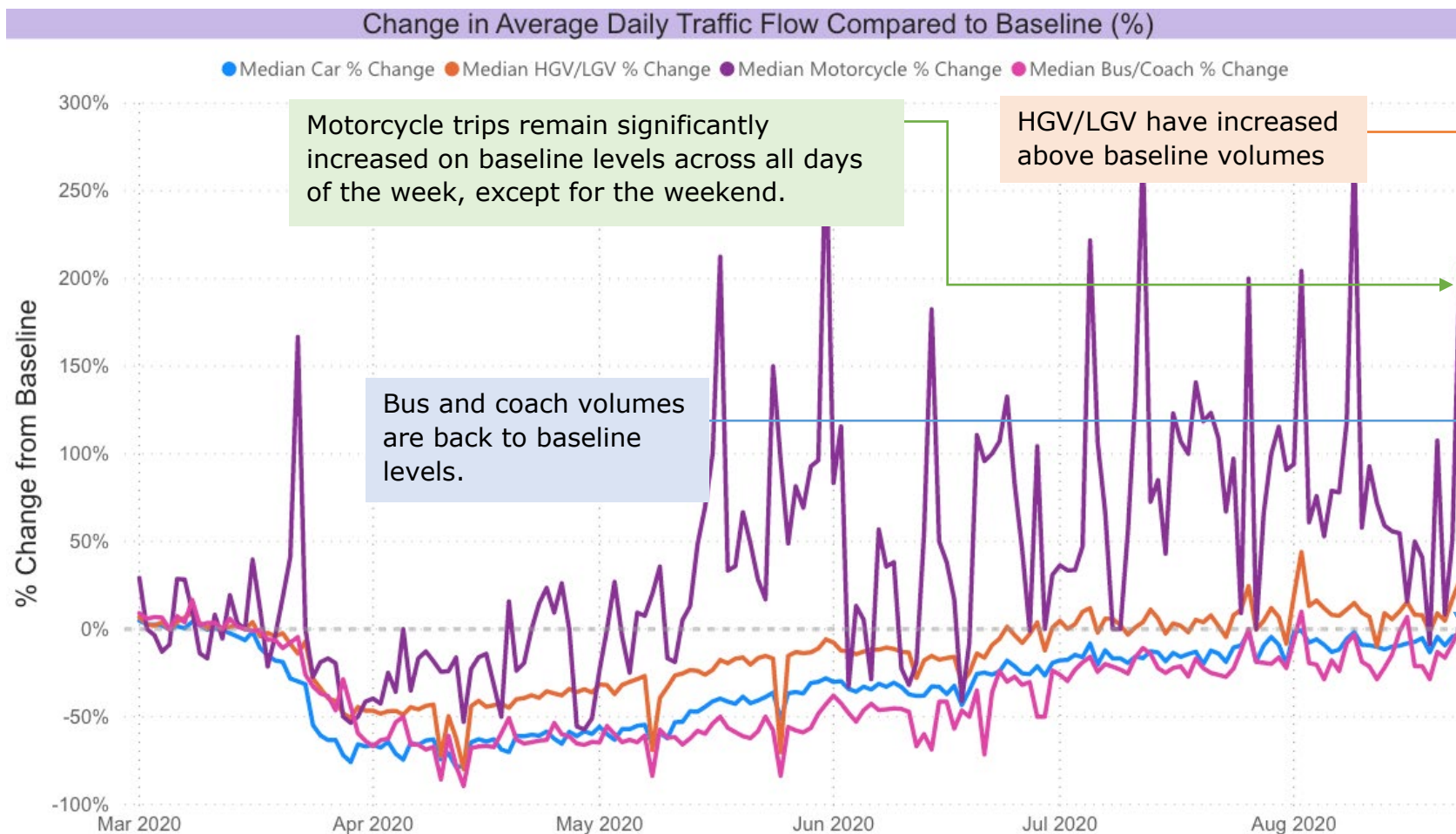


Figure 5: Change in average vehicle trips by vehicles class where available in the source dataset (note this data is measured at sensor level so sources with large numbers of sensors will have a greater contribution to the average count)

Figure 6 – Daily average cycling change from baseline

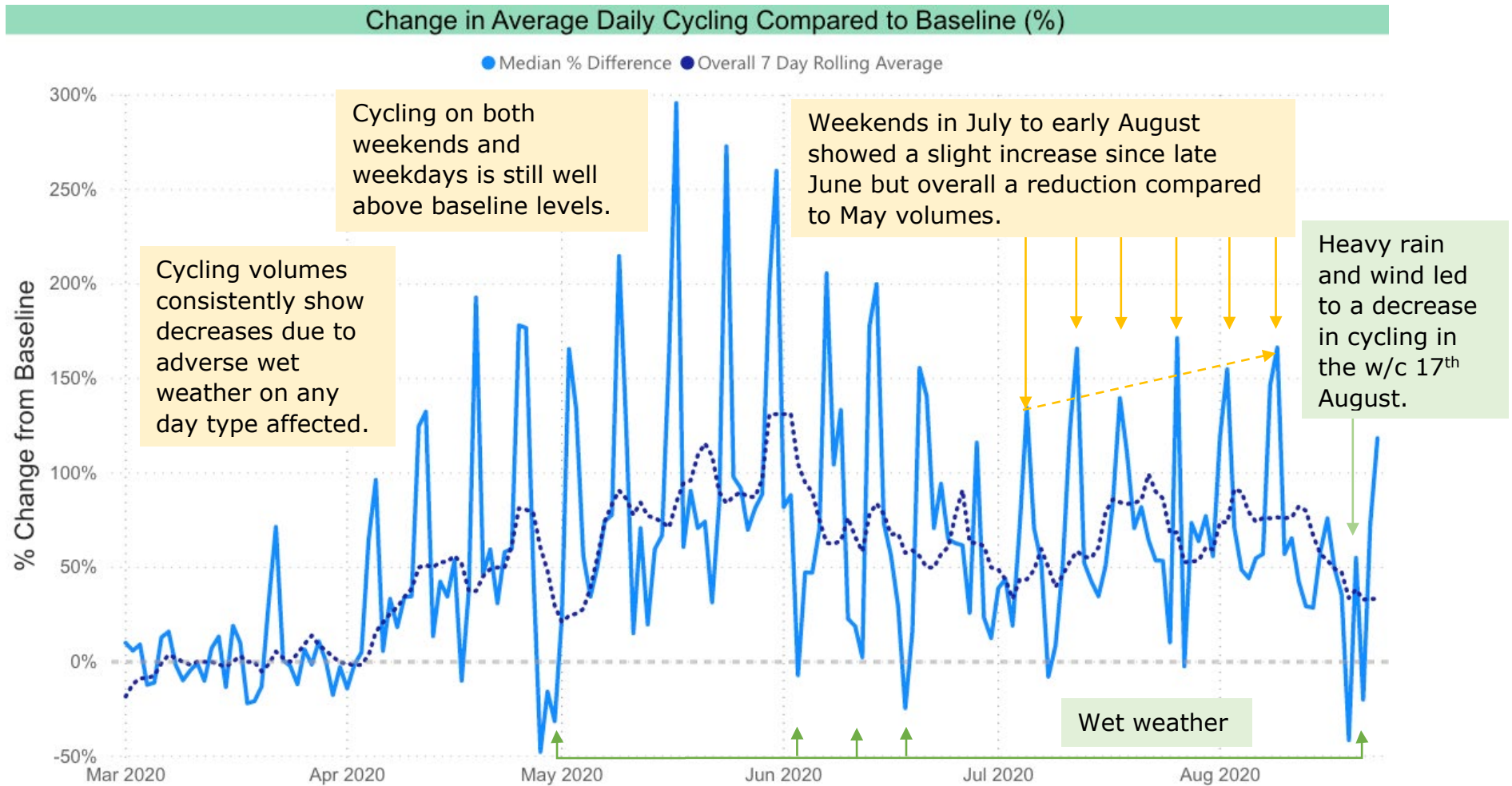


Figure 6: Change in average daily cycling volumes since 01st March (start of lockdown) across all sources compared to the baseline (first week of February 2020)

Figure 7 – Hourly cycling comparison per week

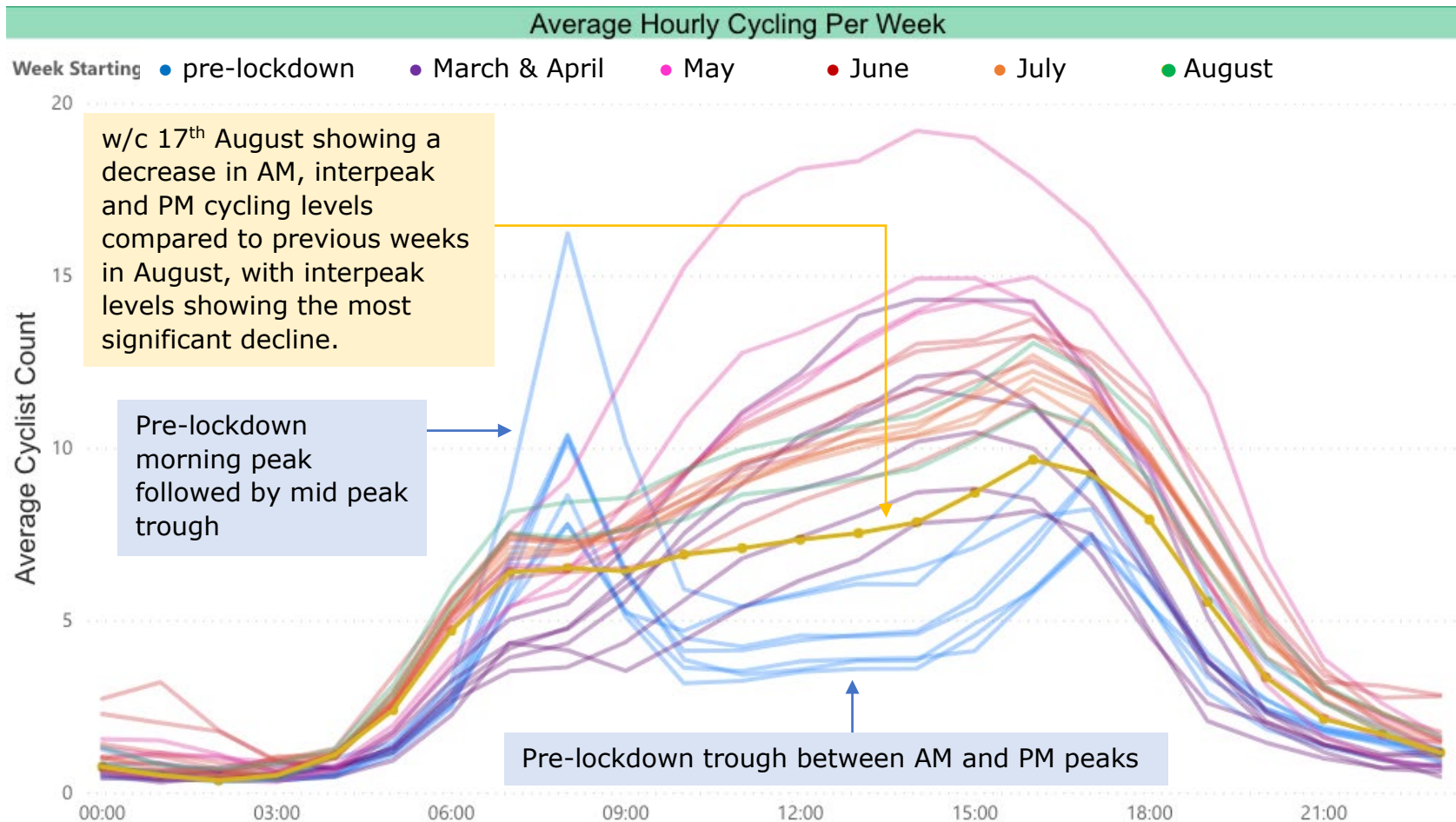


Figure 7: Change in average (mean) hourly cycling volumes per week since 1st full week of February across all sources

Data Method

The following provides some detail behind how the data has been analysed:

- The baseline has been defined as the first week of February 2020 (1st February – 7th February) for the following reasons:
 - This is consistent with national reporting.
 - Not all data sources can provide baseline data from previous years.
 - The first week of February is considered a normal working week unaffected by poor weather and half term dates later in February.
- Each day of the week has its own baseline.
- Only those datasets for which data was available for the first week of February have been included in the baseline comparison outputs.
- Baseline comparisons at aggregated Local Authority District level have only been calculated using traffic/cycling sensors that contributed to the baseline to reduce the impact of new sensors being added to data sources
- Average daily traffic volumes have been used to minimise the impact of individual sensors changing between active and inactive states.
- Averages have been calculated using the median (50th percentile) to reduce the impact of outliers (with the exception of Figure 7 which is a mean average)

Please note that each week not all datasets that contribute to our analysis are available when this report is produced. Therefore, as we add new datasets when they become available, enhance validation of those we've received and refine the underlying methodology, the overall values may change, however we expect the trends to remain the same.

Coming Soon

The Transport Technology Forum is now looking at how these datasets can be collated in the long term as a national data asset to be used following the pandemic. The start of the school term in England during early September represents a period when we expect to see significant traffic changes and we will continue to report on these.

We hope to open up the data sets so authorities can compare their own data with others and the national picture online. Please let us know if you have any thoughts about this, or if you do not want your data being made available in this way.

If you have traffic flow data that you can provide on a daily basis at an hourly aggregation and would like to contribute, please see the contact section for details of how to get in touch.

News from local authorities

Introduction

Each week in this digest we will share details of innovations by local authorities, to give readers ideas for policy they could use in their respective areas. This includes new initiatives and the publicity of existing plans and policies with specific relevance to today's challenges. The authors encourage all authorities to share a brief summary of what they are doing in their respective areas - please email info@ttf.uk.net. This could simply be a link to a tweet, press release or other online post – it need not be onerous on officials' already busy workload.

This week news has been fairly quiet, which is normal for August, but we have details of active travel with a new campaign in the West of England and more money earmarked for it in Scotland.

WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY

West of England Mayor launches new cycling and walking campaign

Residents in the West of England are invited to 'find joy in the journey' by swapping short car journeys for walking or cycling to help reduce congestion and improve air quality in the region.



The new campaign from the West of England Combined Authority, launched today (17 August) promotes the benefits of cycling and walking to boost health and wellbeing as well as helping to build a cleaner, greener future for the West of England.

It comes as the number of people cycling and walking reached record levels during lockdown and new cycling and walking measures have been

Local authority travel and transport data weekly digest

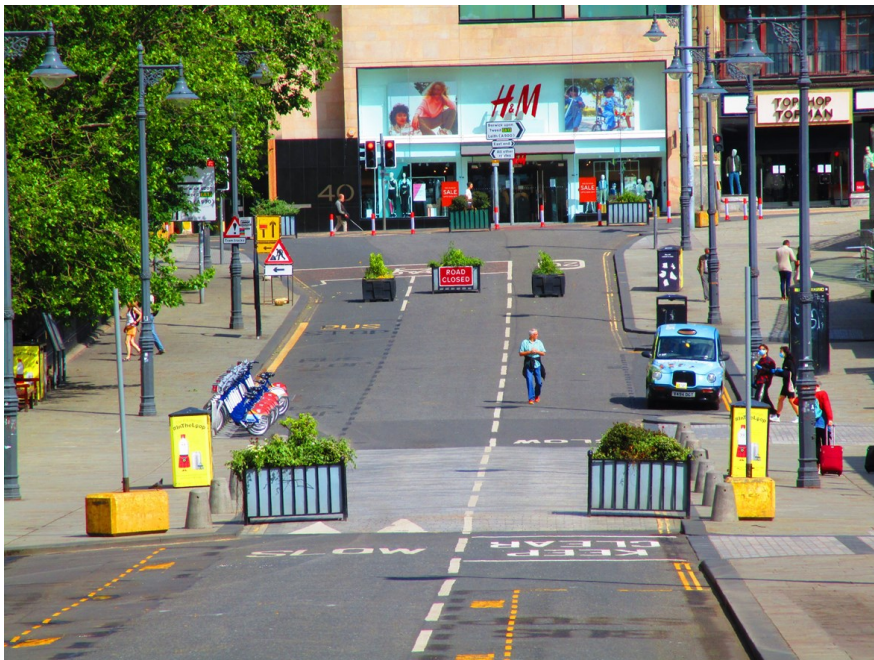
put in place to build confidence and enable residents to cycle and walk more easily.

<https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/west-of-england-mayor-launches-new-cycling-and-walking-campaign/>

SCOTLAND

Over £38 million allocated for pop-up active travel infrastructure

£38.97 million has now been allocated to local authorities for pop-up walking and cycling infrastructure through the Spaces for People initiative.



After the closure of the fund, all remaining applications have now been assessed to help enable physical distancing during the COVID-19 crisis, through measures such as widened pavements and temporary cycle lanes. The initiative is already helping people to keep safe by allowing for 2 metre physical distancing when walking and wheeling, whilst also supporting a rapid increase in cycling rates.

With this fund now closed and emergency measures in place or being developed, attention has now returned to permanent active travel infrastructure in Scotland, both in terms of new schemes and, where appropriate, building on this temporary infrastructure. These permanent schemes are also funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by Sustrans through their Places for Everyone programme. To further support local authorities to build permanent active travel infrastructure – the Scottish Government is reducing the match funding rate for the Places for Everyone programme from 50% to 30%.

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/over-38-million-allocated-for-pop-up-active-travel-infrastructure/>

Local authority travel and transport data weekly digest

Covid-19 Timeline

FEBRUARY 2020	
04/02/2020	China Advice - All UK citizens advised to leave China
MARCH 2020	
10/03/2020	Italy Air Travel - Majority of flights to and from Italy suspended
12/03/2020	7-day Isolation - 7-day self-isolation for individuals presenting symptoms
16/03/2020	Social Distancing - Households to self-isolate for 14-days if symptoms present. Work from home where possible. Avoid pubs, clubs, theatres etc. 12-week isolation for elderly and vulnerable (commencing end of week)
17/03/2020	UK Foreign Travel 1 - Foreign Secretary advises against all non-essential travel overseas
21/03/2020	Schools Closed - Schools to remain closed until further notice (exception for key workers)
23/03/2020	UK Lockdown - Guidance provided for essential travel only. All non-essential businesses required to close. Public events banned
23/03/2020	UK Foreign Travel 2 - Foreign Secretary advises all British travellers to return to the UK
28/03/2020	PM's Letter - Prime Minister issues guidance letter to all UK households
APRIL 2020	
16/04/2020	NPCC Guidance - NPCC issues guidance clarifying reasonable excuses for leaving home
MAY 2020	
10/05/2020	Those who cannot work from home are encouraged to return to work. Avoid public transport where possible and instead walk or cycle.
11/05/2020	Relaxation Document - The UK government publishes a 50-page document setting out further details of the phases for lifting the lockdown restrictions.
13/05/2020	Individuals can undertake unlimited exercise (and can travel to do so). Individuals can meet someone from another household providing it is on a one-to-one basis. All garden centres are allowed to open. House moves and viewings are now permitted.
18/05/2020	Rail Operators - Rail operators begin running more train services.
JUNE 2020	
01/06/2020	Schools re-open for some pupils. Groups of up to six people from different households allowed to meet outside
15/06/2020	All non-essential retailers and zoos in England reopened
19/06/2020	UK's COVID-19 Alert Level is lowered from Level 4 (severe risk, high transmission) to Level 3 (substantial risk, general circulation)
JULY 2020	
04/07/2020	Further relaxation of social distancing and reopening of pubs, restaurants, hotels and hairdressers on 4 th July
25/07/2020	Gyms and other indoor services reopen in England

Contact us

All authorities are encouraged to share best practice for inclusion in this report. Authorities not yet contributing but who still have, in particular, cycling data to share are encouraged to do so.

Please contact info@ttf.uk.net

Thank you to...

All local authorities and their consultancies and contractors who have shared data with the Transport Technology Forum to enable this report to be collated, and those in the wider industry who also provided data directly. The TTF, which is sponsored by the Department for Transport and Innovate UK is grateful to ITS (UK) and its members for their swift support in recruiting Local Authorities to participate.

This report provides regularly updated intelligence and findings from the Transport Technology Forum Covid-19 Local Authority Travel Data Project. This project is collecting and analysing traffic and travel data from local highway authorities across England to present a national picture of travel patterns and behaviour, and local authority responses to the Covid-19 crisis.