

COVID-19

Local authority travel and transport data

Weekly digest



*ITS UK Project of the Year
Award 2020 Winner*

Week Commencing

2nd November 2020

Introduction

Local authority travel and transport data weekly digest

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 and 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.

Local authority travel and transport data weekly digest

Highlights summary

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

Traffic Flow

- For the week commencing 26th October, the overall daily traffic flows are 11% below baseline, a marginal increase of 1.6% compared to the previous week (Figure 1). This change can also be seen in Figure 3, where traffic levels can be seen to decrease nationally since the implementation of the three-tier restriction system; but have risen very slightly in the last week.
- Heading into a second national lockdown, the highest traffic levels to have recovered since the start of lockdown is 8 percentage points below baseline.
- Interpeak traffic has increased in the last week and is now above baseline levels (Figure 4.1). At the weekend (Figure 4.2), traffic levels have increased marginally around midday.
- Figure 5.1 shows that weekday car volumes returned briefly to baseline levels on Wednesday 28th October before decreasing to 9% below baseline. HGV/LGV and bus/coach traffic remain marginally above baseline, while motorcycle usage continues to decline. Weekend car volumes returned to 1% below baseline levels, up 28% compared to the previous week (Figure 5.2).
- Figure 8 presents the change in hourly average weekday traffic flows for the Local Highway Authorities of Birmingham, Derbyshire, Hampshire, Suffolk, York and Leicestershire. The graphs highlight that hourly traffic profiles for the last 3 weeks compared to pre-lockdown vary significantly between LHAs. Derbyshire has shown the most significant change for the week commencing 26th October where traffic levels have decreased significantly throughout the day compared to previous weeks in October, most likely a reflection of Derbyshire moving to tier 2 'high' alert level on 31 October.

Cycling

- For the week commencing 26th October, cycling volumes have decreased to 26.8% below baseline levels, a significant 15.4% lower than the previous week (Figure 2). This is most likely due to wet weather and increased darkness in the AM and PM peak periods as the UK now enters winter.
- Thursday 29th October saw the most significant decrease in cycling compared to the previous week, with national cycling levels decreasing 41% below baseline levels, down 40% from the previous Thursday. This can be attributed to heavy rain across many parts of England on 29th October.
- On weekdays (Figure 10.1), AM and PM peak cycling levels have decreased significantly compared with the previous 2 weeks to below baseline levels. Interpeak cycling levels are also significantly decreased; but remain above baseline levels.
- On the weekend (Figure 10.2), cycling levels have decreased in both the AM and PM peak compared with the previous week.

Local authority travel and transport data weekly digest

Figure 1 – Overall daily traffic flow change compared to baseline
(1-7 Feb 2020)

Week	1. Monday	2. Tuesday	3. Wednesday	4. Thursday	5. Friday	6. Saturday	7. Sunday	Total
26/10/2020	📉 -10.82%	📉 -13.90%	📉 -9.25%	📉 -13.39%	📉 -9.35%	📉 -12.47%	📉 -10.91%	-11.33%
19/10/2020	📉 -11.72%	📉 -11.29%	📉 -11.96%	📉 -15.33%	📉 -14.72%	📉 -13.06%	📉 -14.26%	-12.94%
12/10/2020	📉 -8.21%	📉 -10.30%	📉 -6.64%	📉 -9.32%	📉 -8.01%	📉 -7.43%	📉 -10.28%	-8.58%
05/10/2020	📉 -9.05%	📉 -10.85%	📉 -10.53%	📉 -12.88%	📉 -10.26%	📉 -10.62%	📉 -12.48%	-10.62%
28/09/2020	📉 -9.78%	📉 -10.67%	📉 -9.61%	📉 -7.53%	📉 -9.87%	📉 -14.66%	📉 -15.56%	-10.34%
21/09/2020	📉 -8.59%	📉 -11.92%	📉 -4.69%	📉 -9.53%	📉 -8.44%	📉 -5.39%	📉 -6.38%	-7.99%
14/09/2020	📉 -10.79%	📉 -9.71%	📉 -10.17%	📉 -8.54%	📉 -10.23%	📉 -4.28%	📉 -6.82%	-8.87%
Total	-19.60%	-18.26%	-18.58%	-21.36%	-20.55%	-19.47%	-19.14%	-19.56%

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

Figure 2 – Overall daily cycling change compared to baseline (1-7 Feb 2020)

Week	1. Monday	2. Tuesday	3. Wednesday	4. Thursday	5. Friday	6. Saturday	7. Sunday	Total
26/10/2020	📉 -4.55%	📉 -33.90%	📉 -33.01%	📉 -41.18%	📉 -20.05%	📉 -11.96%	📉 -15.18%	-26.83%
19/10/2020	↔ 0.00%	↗ 2.48%	📉 -39.13%	📉 -1.52%	📉 -4.17%	📉 -26.60%	📉 -7.81%	-11.43%
12/10/2020	📉 -11.42%	📉 -7.63%	↗ 0.00%	↗ 10.84%	↗ 0.00%	↗ 33.97%	↗ 34.38%	7.32%
05/10/2020	↗ 4.35%	📉 -3.35%	↗ 14.13%	↗ 6.33%	↗ 7.11%	↗ 30.36%	↗ 92.54%	14.81%
28/09/2020	↗ 29.70%	↗ 25.68%	📉 -15.40%	↗ 20.42%	📉 -32.56%	📉 -36.39%	📉 -26.79%	-3.03%
21/09/2020	↗ 58.61%	↗ 50.45%	📉 -7.93%	↗ 8.21%	↗ 11.44%	↗ 60.00%	↗ 52.17%	27.43%
14/09/2020	↗ 61.75%	↗ 43.95%	↗ 53.91%	↗ 56.55%	↗ 49.34%	↗ 100.00%	↗ 108.70%	67.16%
Total	10.73%	12.50%	0.00%	9.85%	8.11%	45.37%	62.50%	17.24%

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 – Overall daily average traffic flow change from baseline

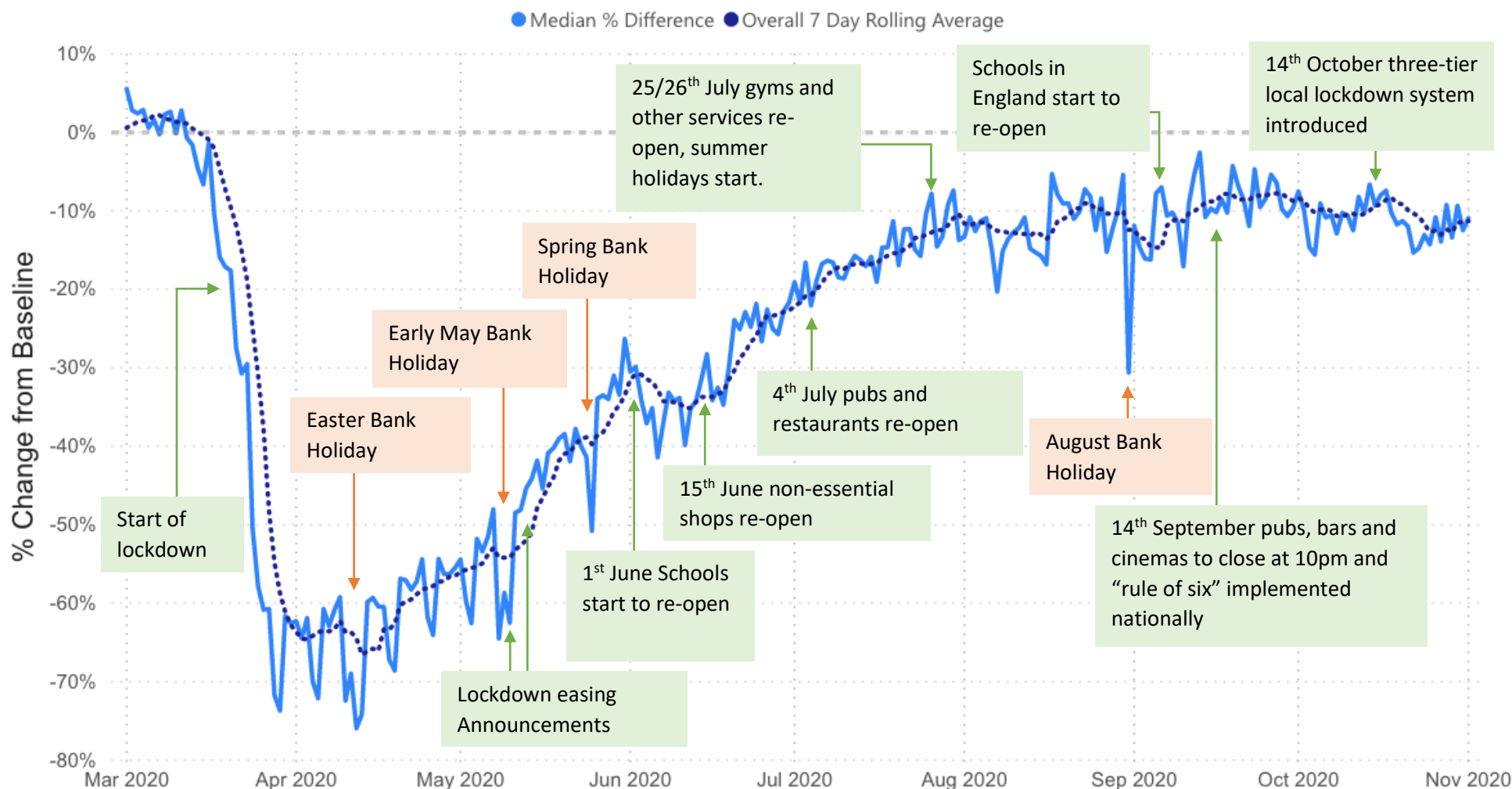


Figure 3: Change in national daily average traffic volumes since 01st March across all sources compared to the baseline (first week of February 2020)

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Figure 4.1 – Overall comparison of average hourly weekday traffic by week

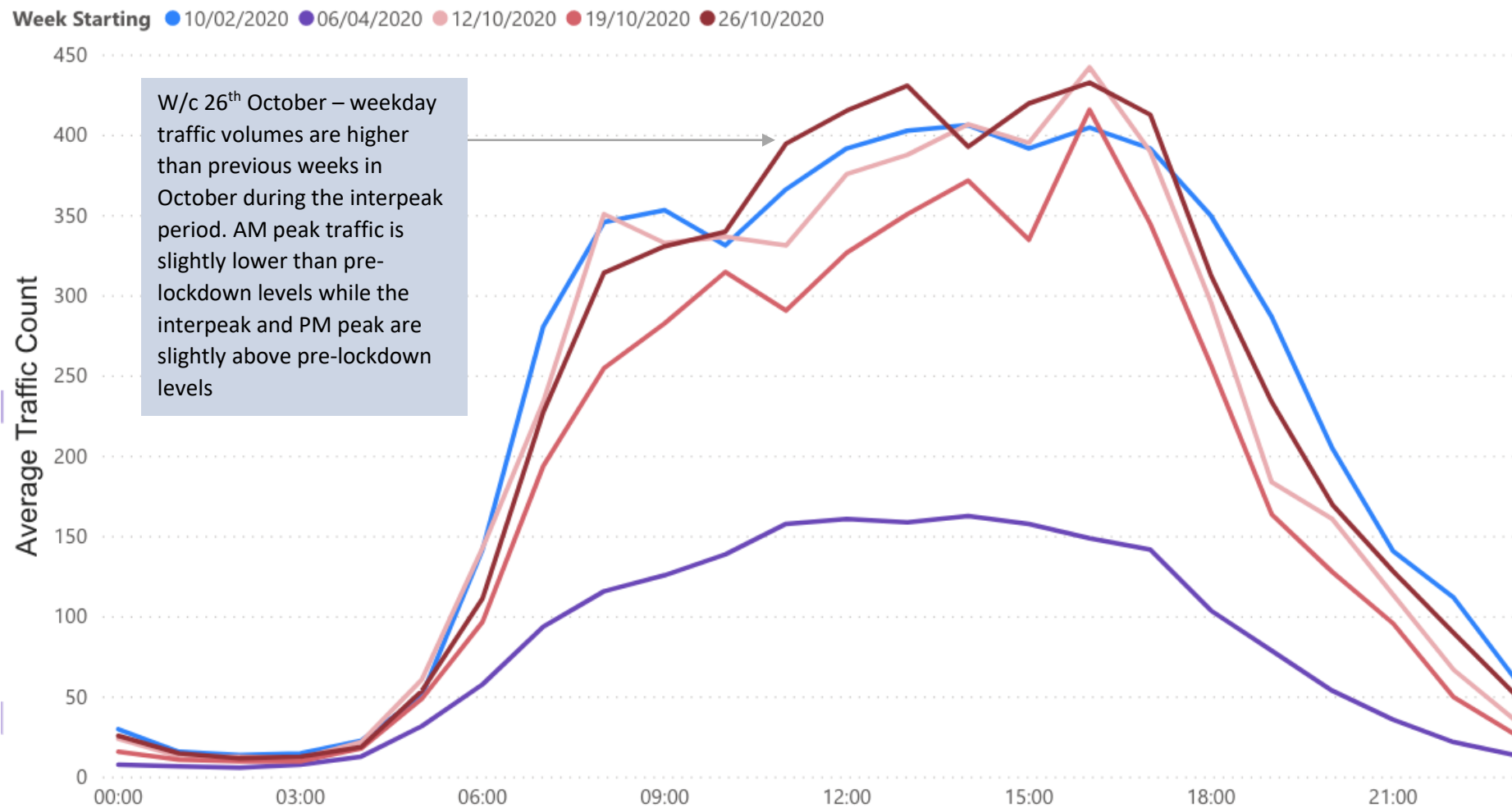


Figure 4.1: Weekday traffic volumes compared to pre-lockdown (10/02/20) and early lockdown (06/04/20) across all datasets

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Figure 4.2 – Overall comparison of average hourly weekend traffic by week

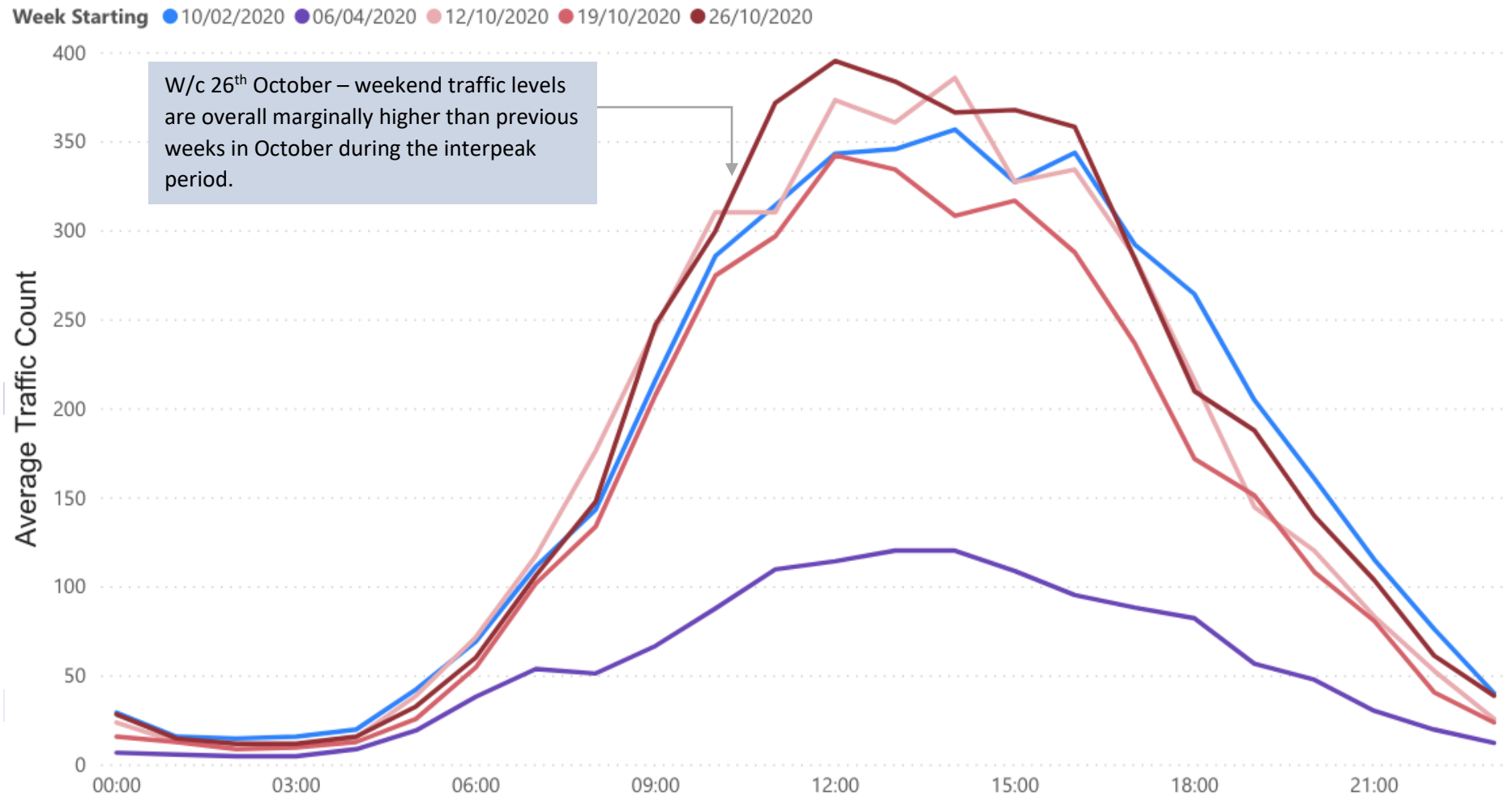


Figure 4.2: Weekend traffic volumes compared to pre-lockdown (10/02/20) and early lockdown (06/04/20) across all datasets

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Figure 5.1 – Overall weekday change in traffic flows by vehicle class

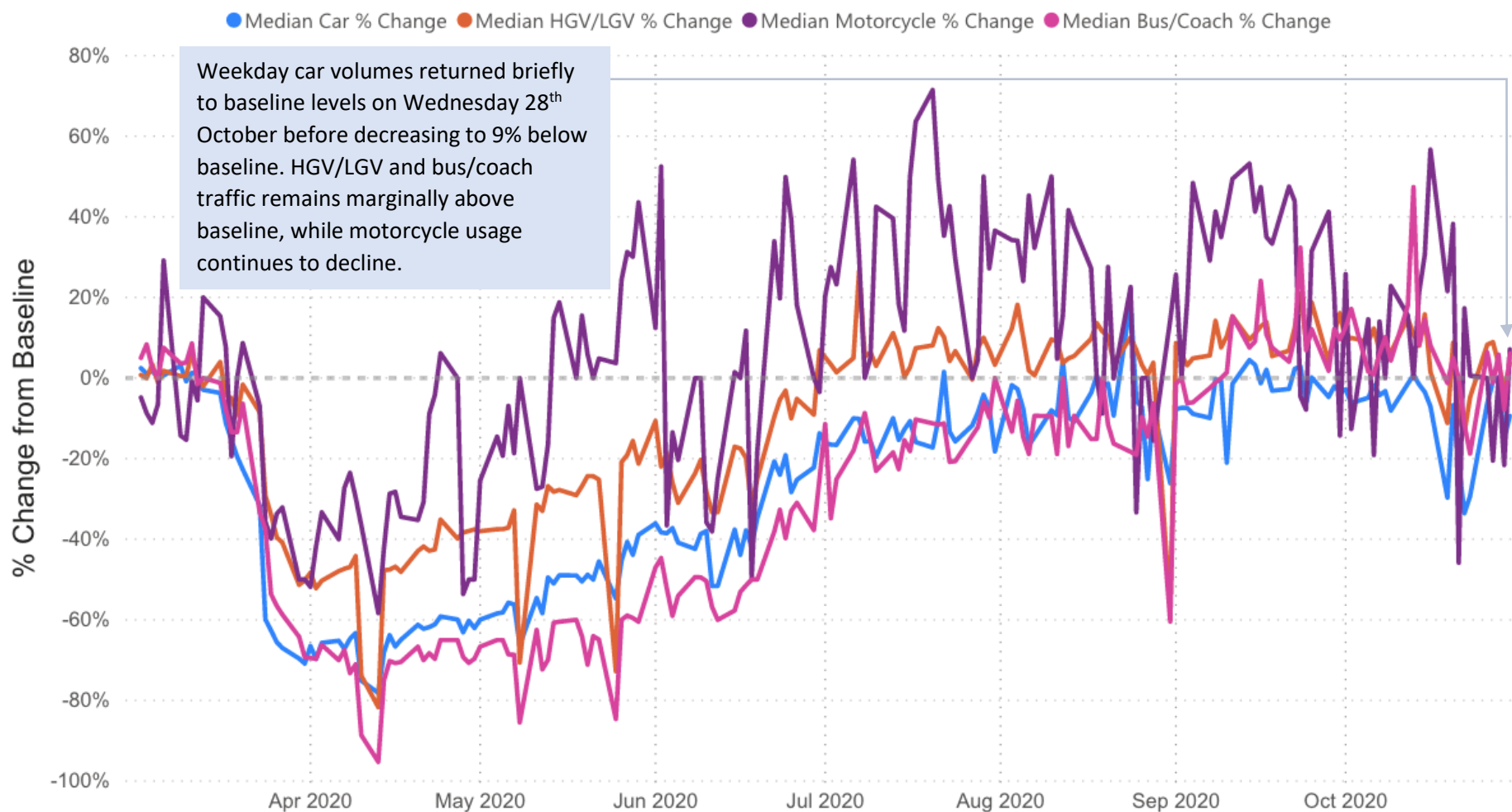


Figure 5.1: Change in average vehicle trips by vehicles class where available in the source dataset (note this data is measured at sensor level so sources with large numbers of sensors will have a greater contribution to the average)

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Figure 5.2 – Overall weekend change in traffic flows by vehicle class

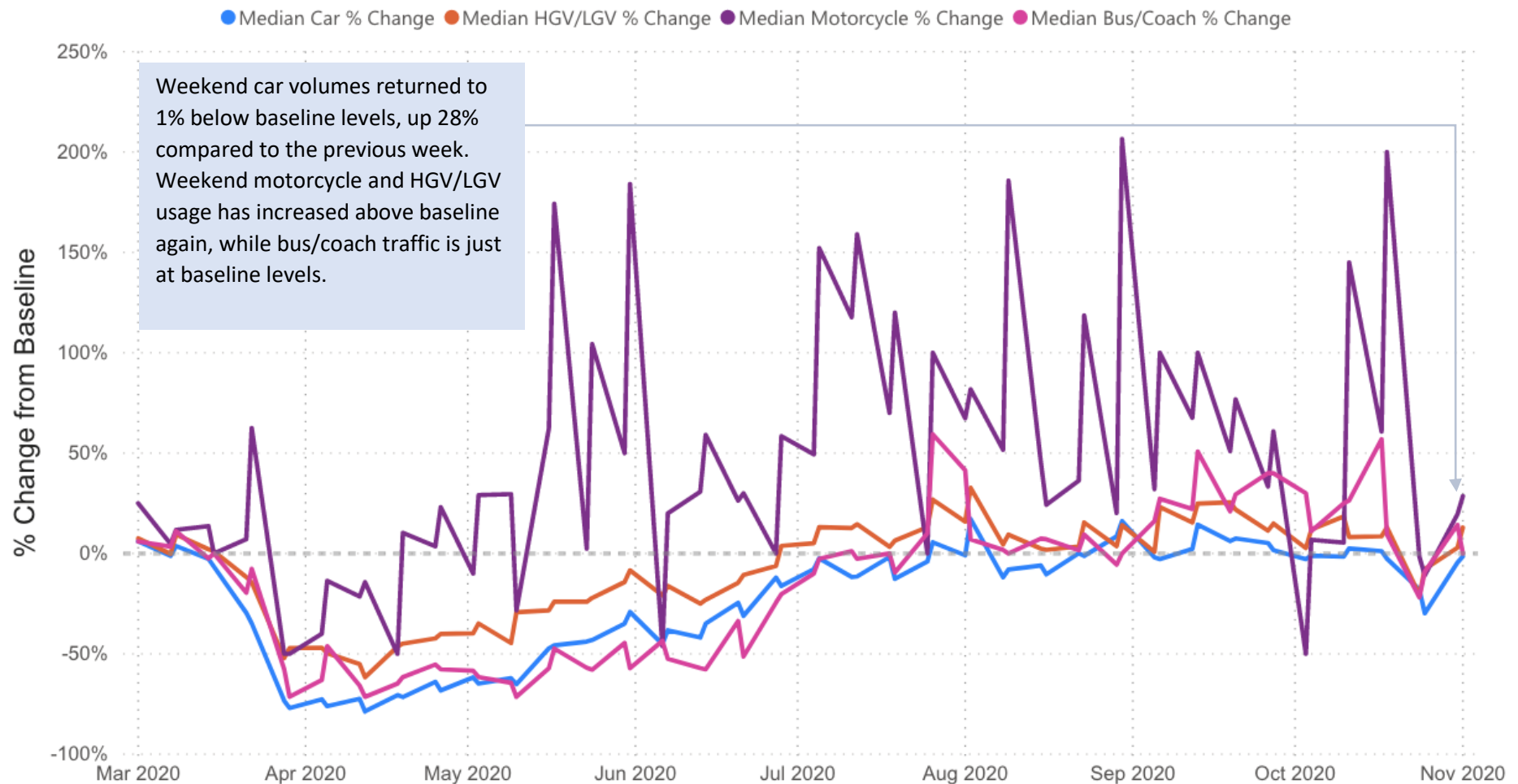


Figure 5.2: Change in average vehicle trips by vehicles class where available in the source dataset (note this data is measured at sensor level so sources with large numbers of sensors will have a greater contribution to the average)

Local authority travel and transport data weekly digest

Figure 6 – Map of tiered local COVID-19 restrictions in England (updated 03/11/20)

In this section of the report, we examine 5 local areas: Birmingham, Derbyshire, Hampshire, Leicestershire, Suffolk and York. They provide a good geographic spread of areas for comparison.

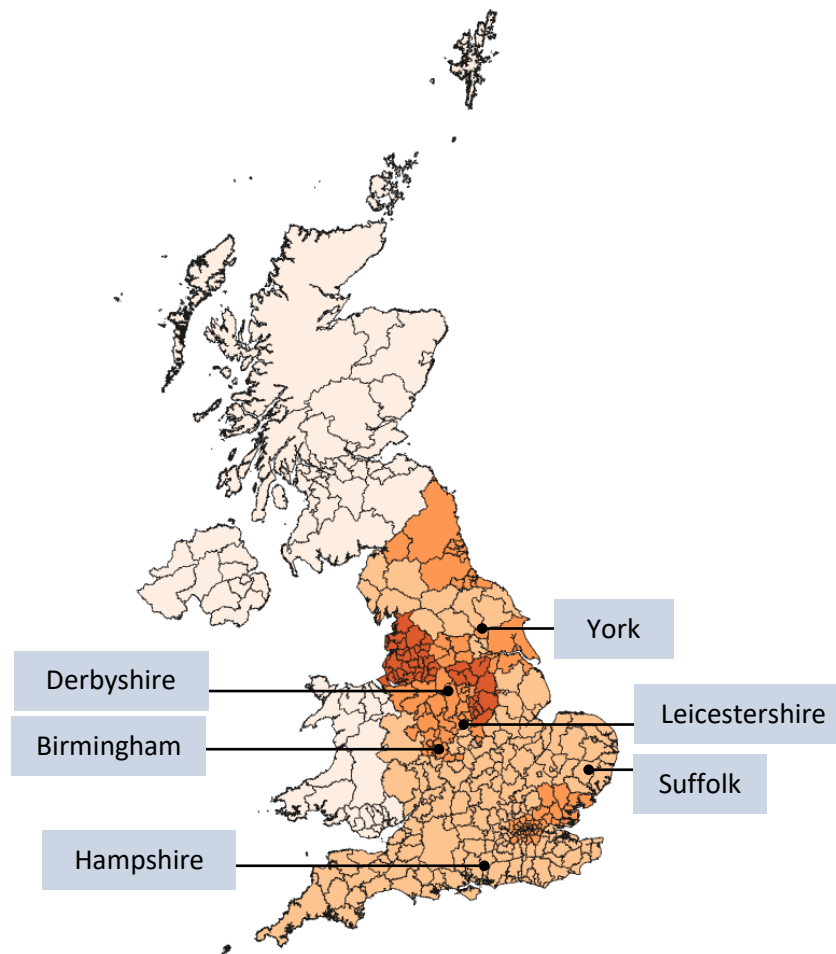


Figure 6: Tiered local COVID-19 restrictions in England.
Data has been provided by:

- Birmingham City Council (tier 1>2 14/20/20)
- City of York Council (tier 1>2 17/10/20)
- Suffolk County Council (tier 1)
- Hampshire County Council (tier 1)
- Derbyshire County Council (tier 1>2 31/10/20)
- Leicestershire County Council (tier 1 – excludes city of Leicester)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-levels-what-you-need-to-know/>

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Figure 7 – Change in daily average weekday traffic flow across a sample of Local Highway Authorities

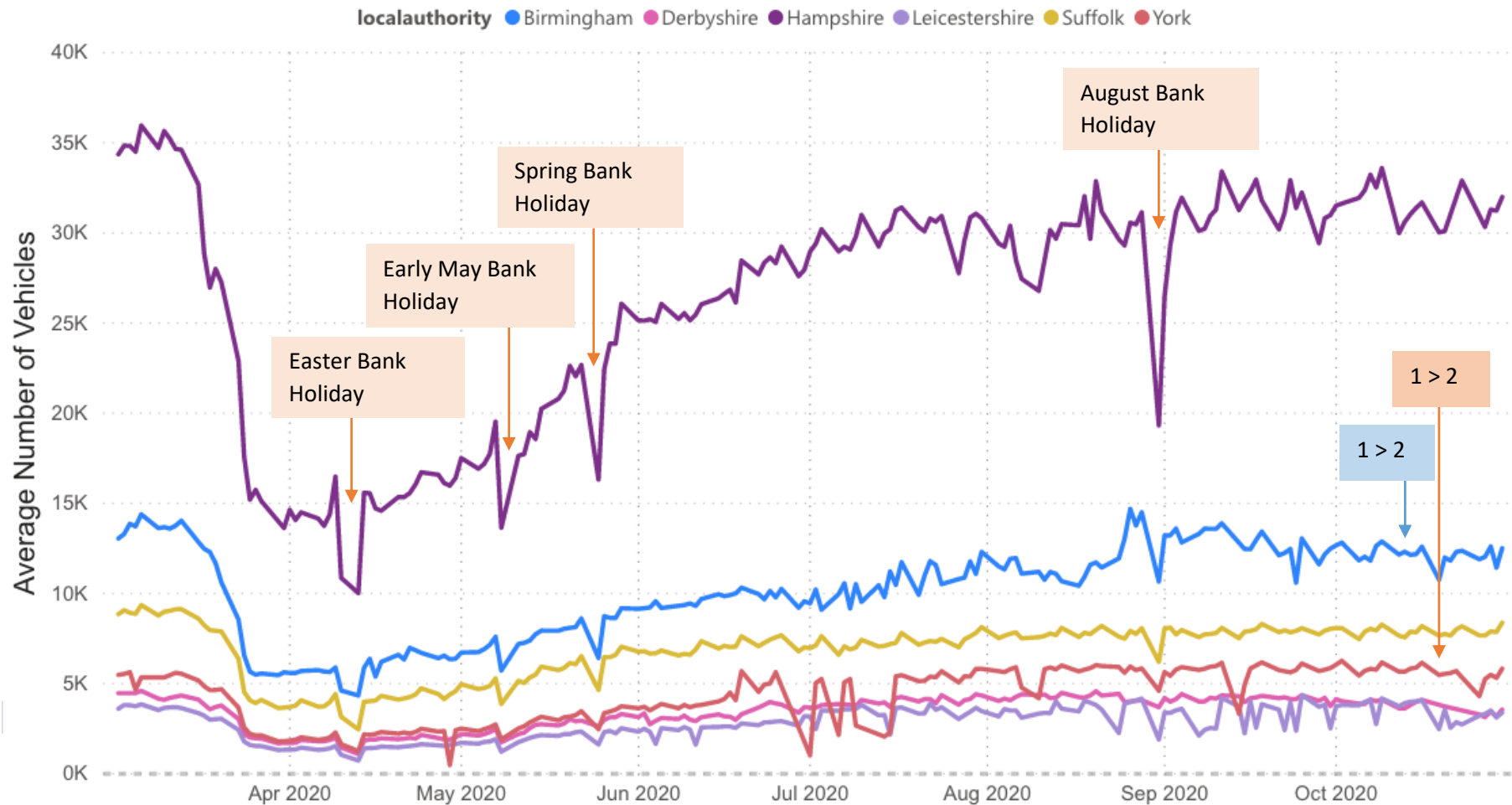


Figure 7: Change in daily average weekday traffic volumes for a selection of local authorities since 01st March compared to the baseline (first week of February 2020).

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Figure 8 – Weekday traffic volumes for a selection of local authorities

Comparing pre-lockdown (10/02/20), with early lockdown (06/04/20) and recent weeks

Week Starting ● 10/02/2020 ● 06/04/2020 ● 12/10/2020 ● 19/10/2020 ● 26/10/2020

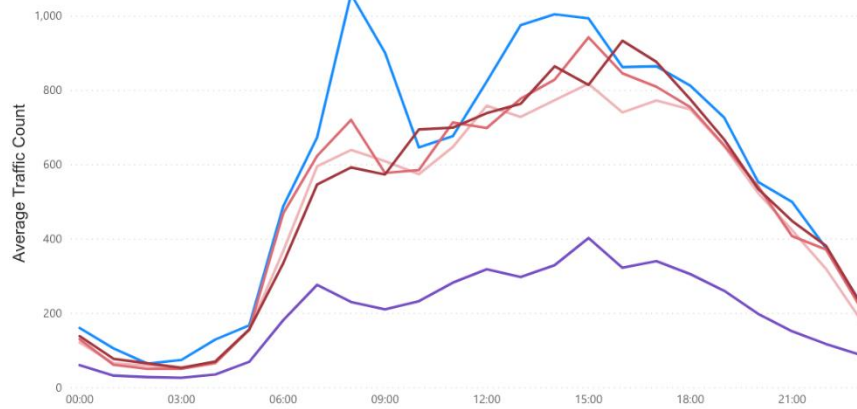


Figure 8a: Birmingham

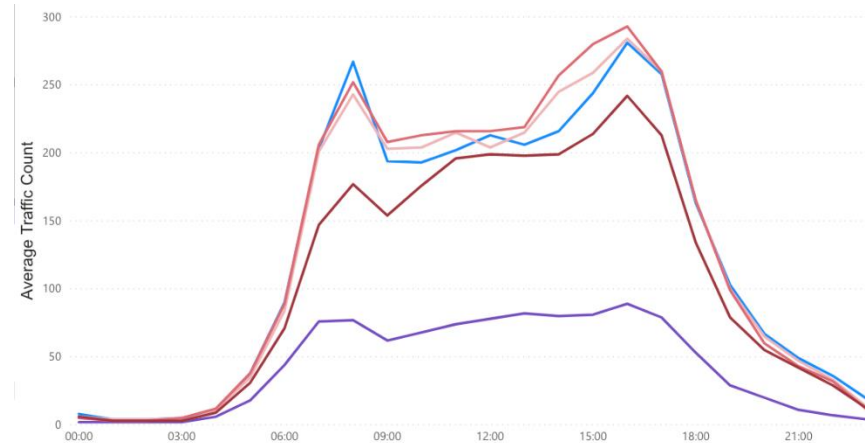


Figure 8b: Derbyshire

Local authority travel and transport data weekly digest

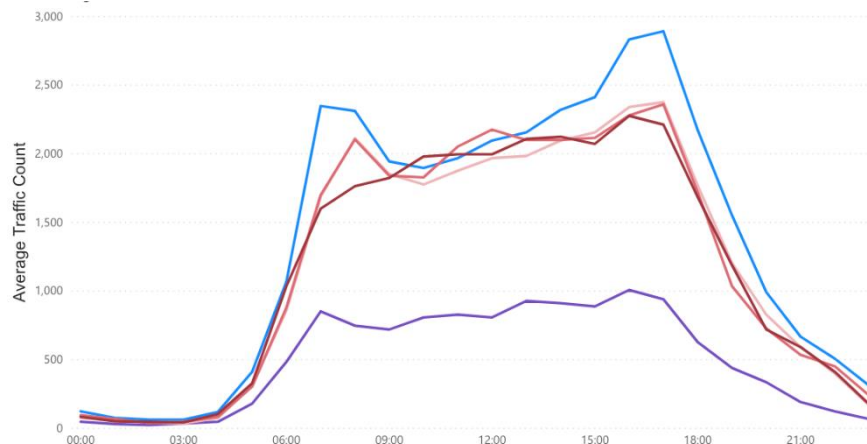


Figure 8c: Hampshire

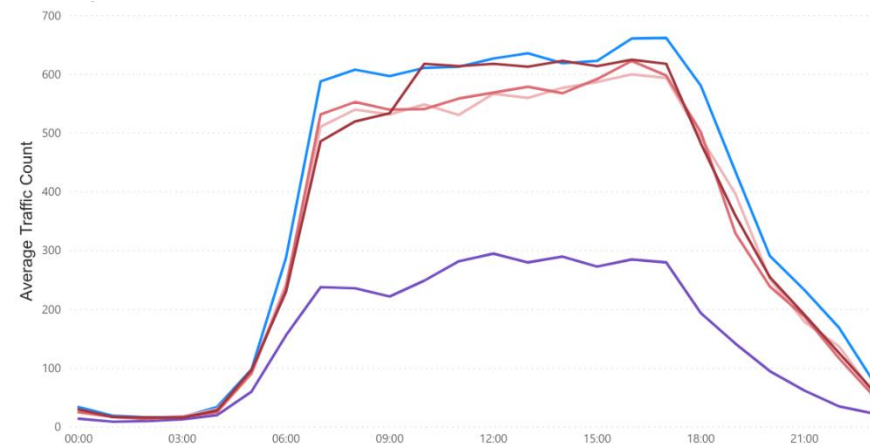


Figure 8d: Suffolk

Week Starting ● 10/02/2020 ● 06/04/2020 ● 12/10/2020 ● 19/10/2020 ● 26/10/2020

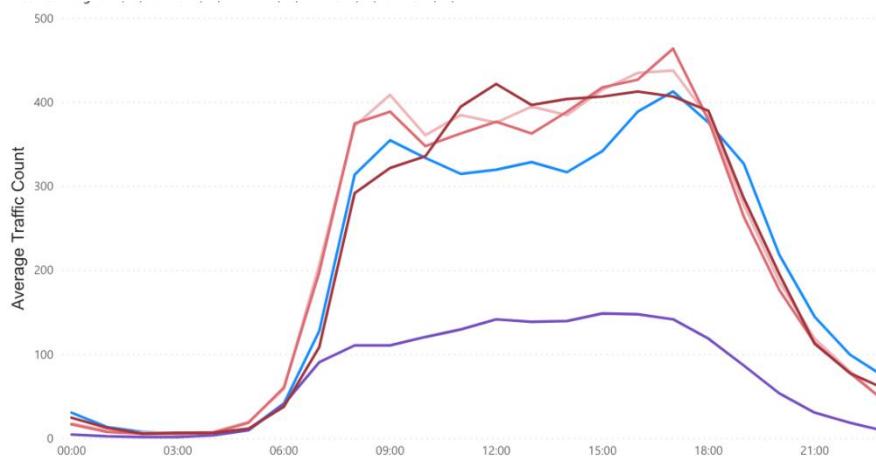


Figure 8e: City of York

Local Highway Authority analysis shows the differences between emerging traffic patterns across the country.

- In Birmingham (8a), weekday traffic levels are on par with previous weeks in October, except the AM peak which shows a decrease likely due to half term.
- In Derbyshire (8b), traffic levels have decreased significantly throughout the day compared to previous weeks in October, especially during the AM peak. This is most likely a reflection of Derbyshire moving from tier 1 'medium' alert level to tier 2 'high' alert level on 31 October.
- In Hampshire (8c), traffic has shown little change in the interpeak and PM peak compared to previous weeks but saw a slight decrease during the AM peak.

Local authority travel and transport data weekly digest

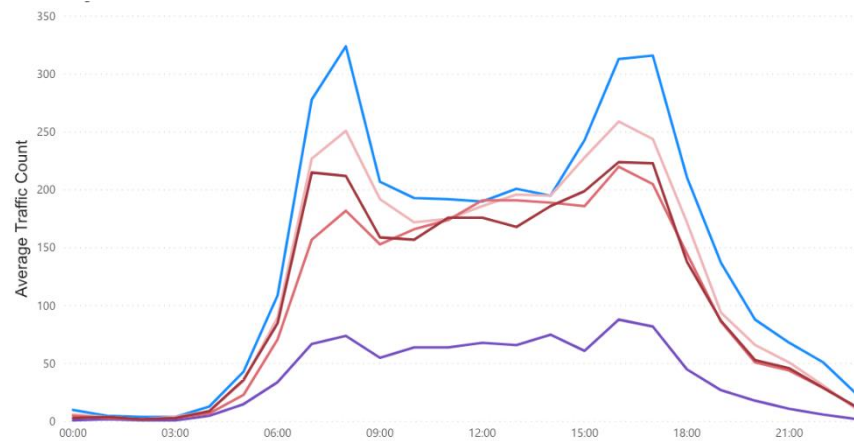


Figure 8f: Leicestershire (excluding Leicester)

- In Suffolk (8d), traffic levels during the interpeak period increased to baseline levels, but remains on par with previous weeks in October during the AM and PM peaks.
- In the City of York (8e), traffic flows have decreased to below baseline levels during the AM peak and PM, but remains above baseline levels during the interpeak period. This is most likely due to York being under tier 2 restrictions since 15 October.
- In Leicestershire (8f), weekday traffic flows for the week commencing 19th October increased slightly in the AM peak when compared to the previous week, but overall remains largely below baseline levels. Charnwood was added to the list of areas in Leicestershire under tier 2 restrictions from 31 October, joining Oadby and Wigston and Leicester.

Local authority travel and transport data weekly digest

Figure 9 – Overall average daily cycling change from baseline

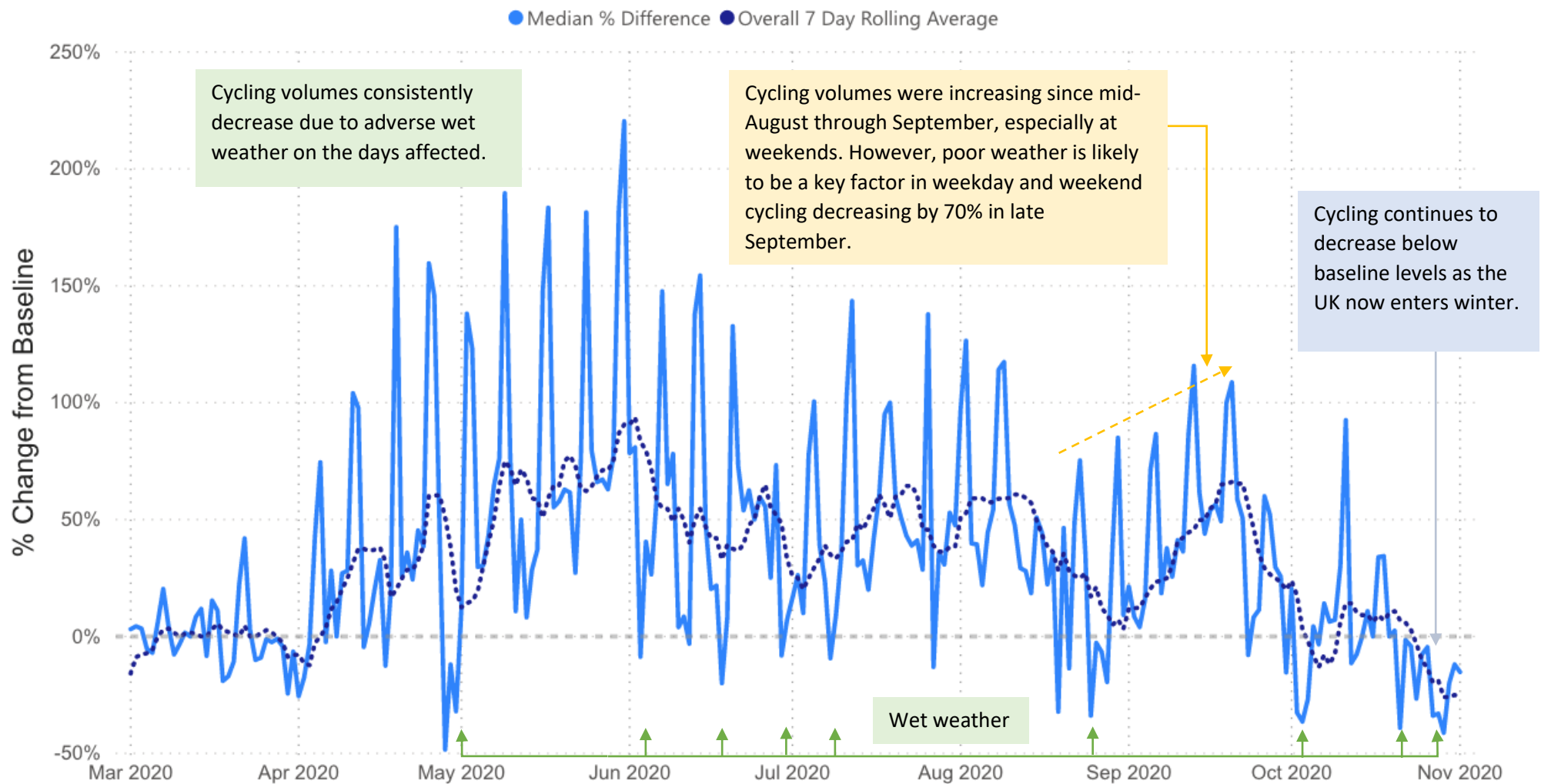


Figure 9: Change in average daily cycling volumes since 01st March (start of lockdown) across all sources compared to the baseline (first week of February 2020)

Local authority travel and transport data weekly digest

Figure 10.1 – Overall weekday hourly cycling comparison by week

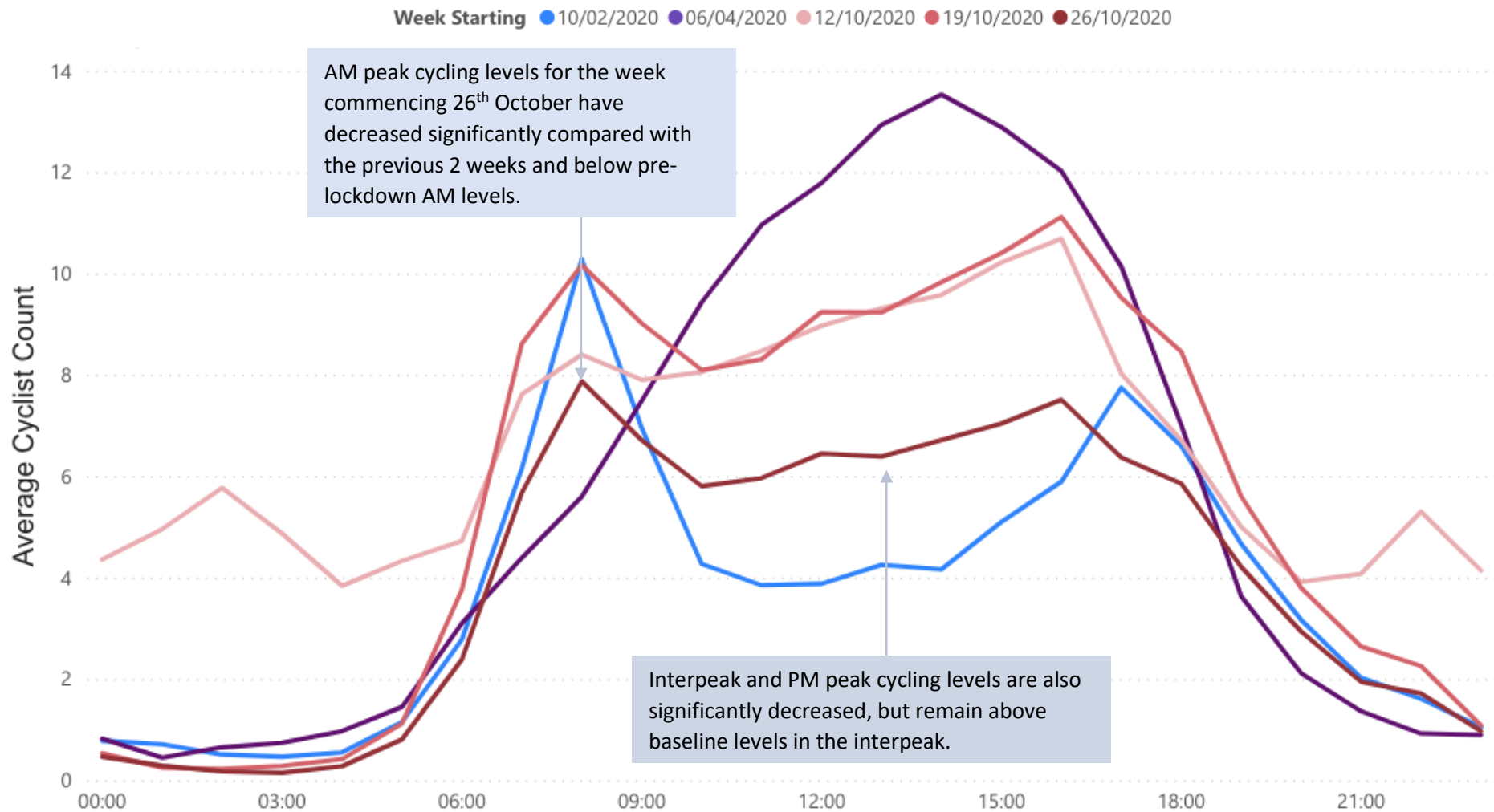


Figure 10.1: Change in average weekday (mean) hourly cycling volumes comparing pre-lockdown (10/02/20) with early lockdown (06/04/20) and the previous 3 weeks.

Local authority travel and transport data weekly digest

Figure 10.2 – Overall weekend hourly cycling comparison by week

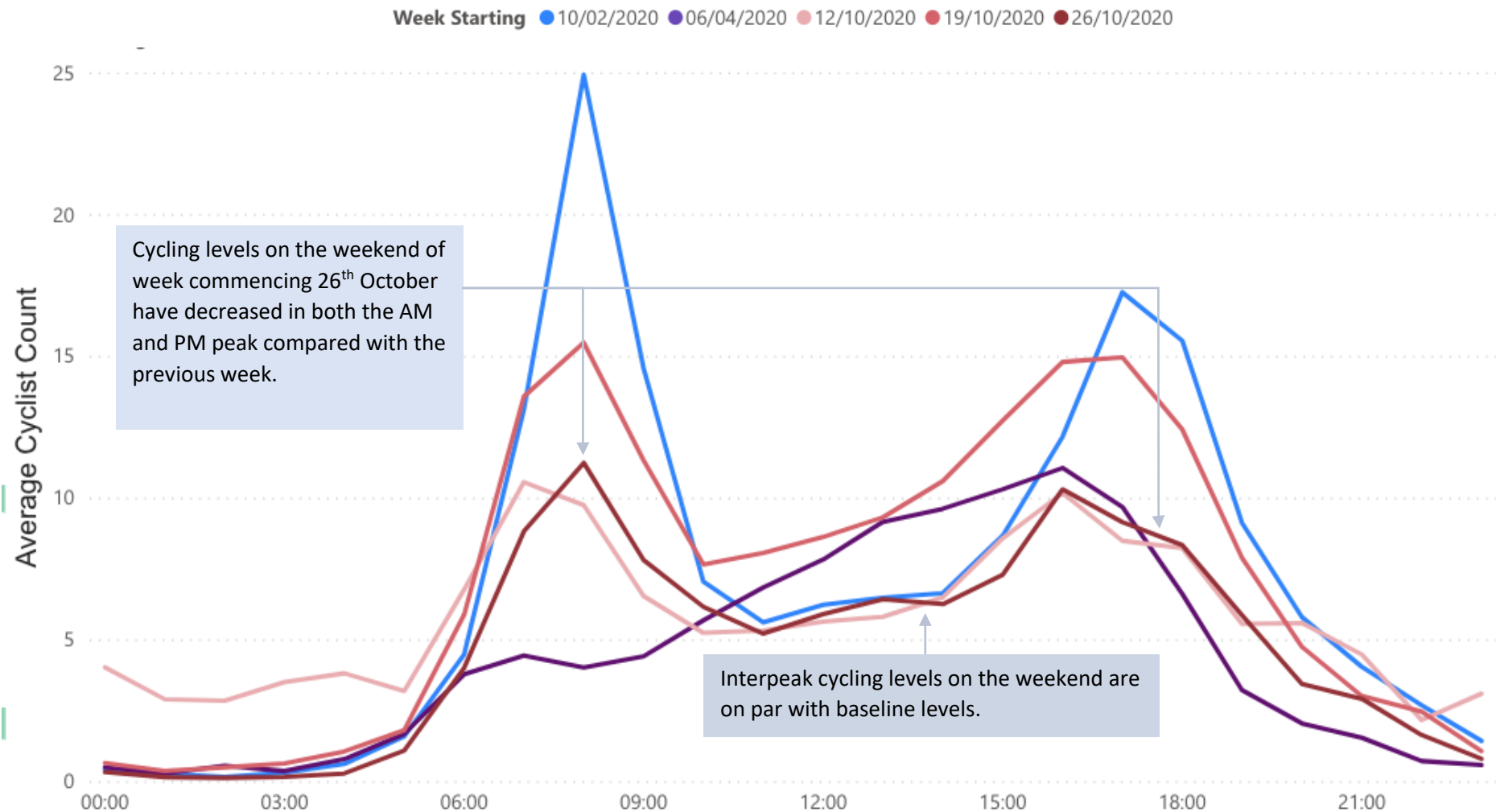


Figure 10.2: Change in average weekend (mean) hourly cycling volumes comparing pre-lockdown (10/02/20) with early lockdown (06/04/20), the latest week (12/10/20) and the previous weeks (05/10/20 & 28/09/20).

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 Highway Authority (LHA) 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 Figures 10.1 & 10.2 which are 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.

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

Local authority travel and transport data weekly digest

25/07/2020	Gyms and other indoor services reopen in England
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AUGUST 2020	
21/08/2020	Driving tests are approved to go ahead
SEPTEMBER 2020	
01/09/2020	Large number of schools across England re-open for the autumn term.
08/09/2020	All schools across England have re-opened
14/09/2020	Rule of six comes into effect to tackle coronavirus, where any social gatherings of more than six people will be against the law
OCTOBER 2020	
14/10/2020	Tiered level restrictions were implemented across different local areas in England. Liverpool placed on highest alert (Tier 3).

Contact us

All authorities are encouraged to share best practice for inclusion in this report. Authorities not yet contributing but who still have 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.

The 'Understanding Travel Patterns during COVID-19' project has been awarded the **ITS UK - Project of the Year Award 2020** which would not have been possible without all of your support. The judges were impressed that this project demonstrated how the industry can come together, and underlined how the TTF can coordinate a collaborative front with Local Authorities and commercial data suppliers to collect, process and visualise over 16 million travel movements during the lockdown period and beyond.

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.