

Covid-19

Local authority travel and transport data

Weekly digest



Week Commencing

01st June 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 now 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. We provide a neutral meeting place for senior policymakers and investors (government, industry and network operators) who are investing in technology for roads management and operation.

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 – 26 data providers, geographically covering approximately 35 local authority areas.
- Cycling – 13 data providers, geographically covering approximately 25 local authority areas and 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 for the week commencing 1st June:

Traffic Flow

- Three local authority datasets have been removed from the overall data this week for having extremely high levels of lockdown traffic. While this data may be correct, it was impacting the overall baseline comparison value and did not reflect the wider trend. As a result, the values compared to the report for w/c 25th May will be slightly reduced.
- Overall traffic has reduced by an average of 48.2% for the period since the first of April, when compared to the baseline (first week of February 2020).
- Based on a seven-day rolling average from the 25th May – 31st May, traffic flows are now only a 34% reduction on baseline levels. This is a 2% change compared to the previous week (18th May – 24th May) which saw a 36% reduction.
- Lockdown relaxation announcements on the 10th and 13th May accounted for an approximate 10% increase in traffic during the week directly after the announcement.
- The week commencing the 25th May observed the highest levels of traffic since lockdown began, as traffic continues to rise towards baseline levels.
- The baseline for traffic analysis has been adjusted to the first week of February.
- A number of Local Authorities in urban centres and coastal areas have returned to baseline levels of traffic flows.

Cycling

- An additional two Local Authority cycling datasets were added this week which accounts for any differences seen between the values reported this week and last week.
- Overall cycling volumes continue to show an increase of over 200% on baseline volumes, however this is down compared to the end of April and early May where the percentage increase exceeded 300%.
- Figure 5 shows that while cycling volumes at weekends remain high when compared to baseline volumes, in recent weeks this increase has plateaued; in particular over the past two weeks which shows a slight reduction. In comparison, weekday cycling numbers continue to increase week on week reducing the variance between weekend and weekday cycling volumes.
- Cycling volumes on canal and river paths continues to significantly increase each week when compared to early March.
- The MET Office has reported that this Spring and May have been the hottest on record which may also be a factor when analysing increased cycling volumes.

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Figure 1 – Key Traffic Flow Dashboard Measures

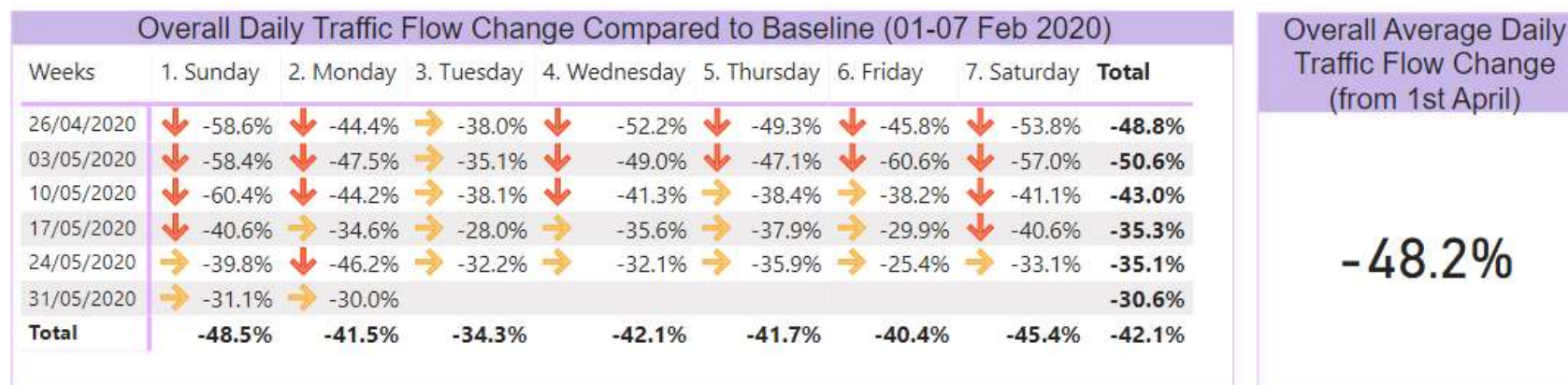


Figure 1: Key dashboard figures showing change in average daily traffic volumes compared to the baseline (first week of February 2020)

Figure 2 – Key Cycling Dashboard Measures

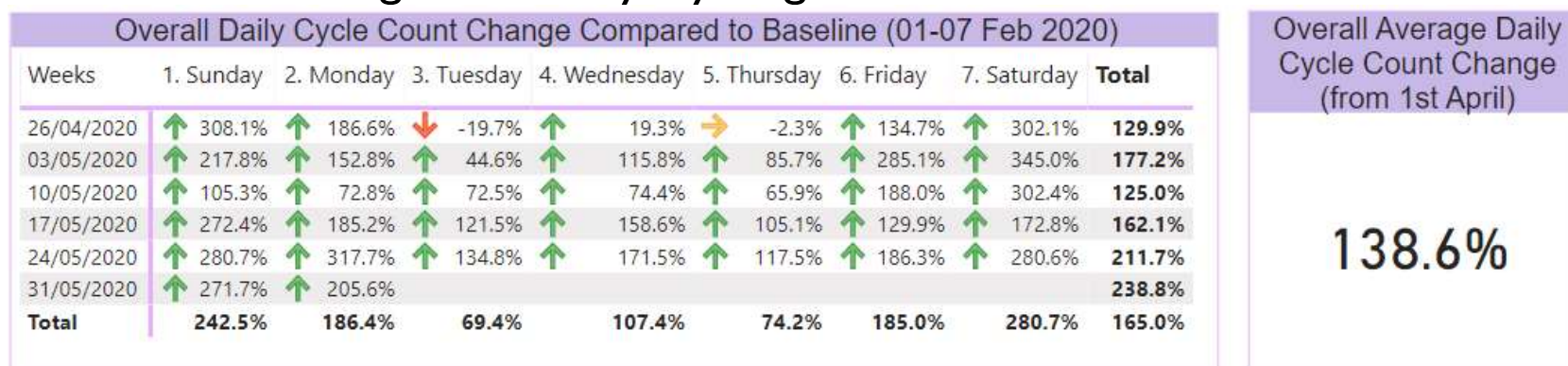


Figure 2: Key dashboard figures showing change in average daily cycle volumes compared to the baseline (first week of February 2020)

Figure 3 – Daily average traffic flow change from baseline

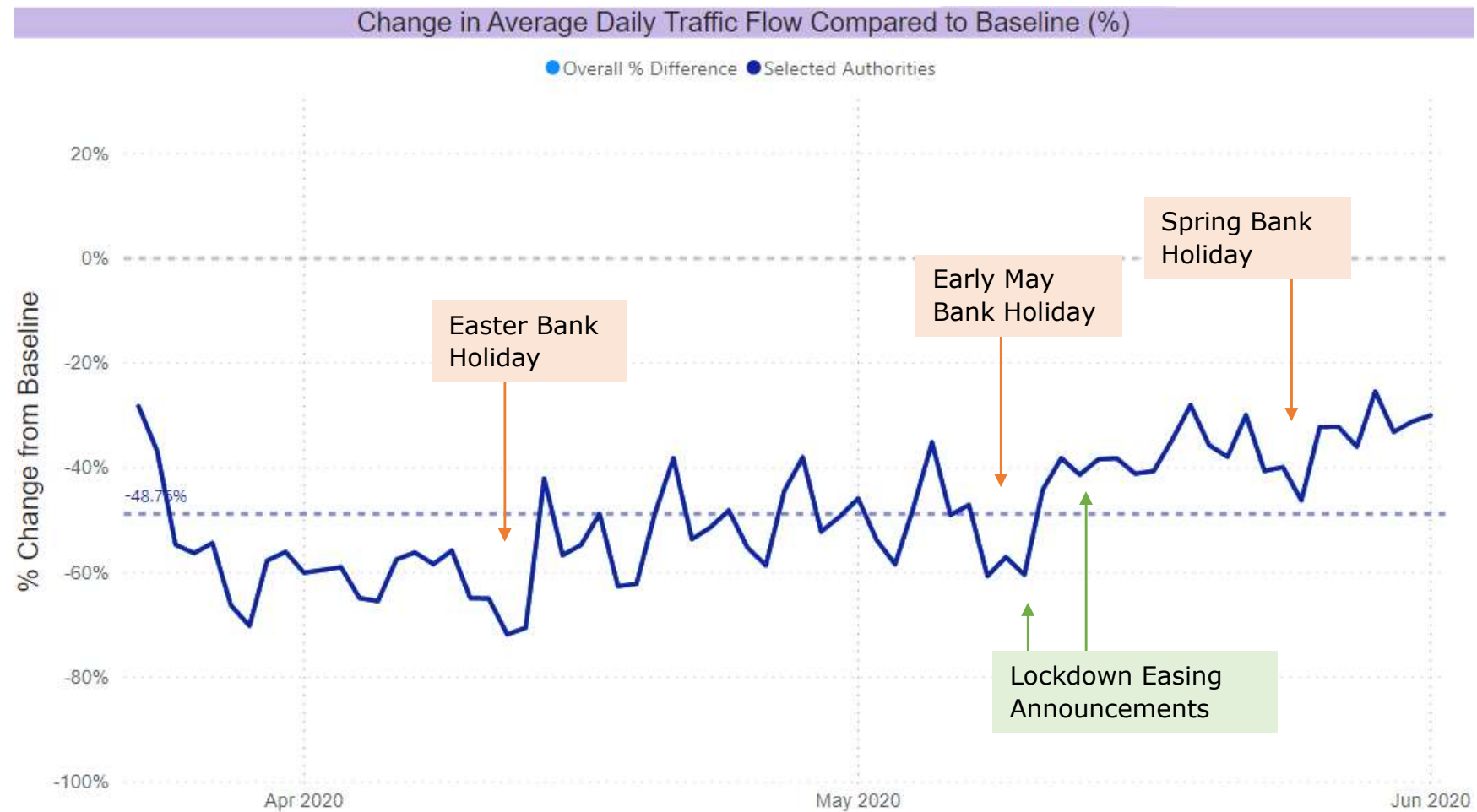


Figure 3: Change in average daily traffic volumes since 23rd March (lockdown) across all sources compared to the baseline (first week of February 2020)

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Figure 4 – Hourly traffic flow comparison per week

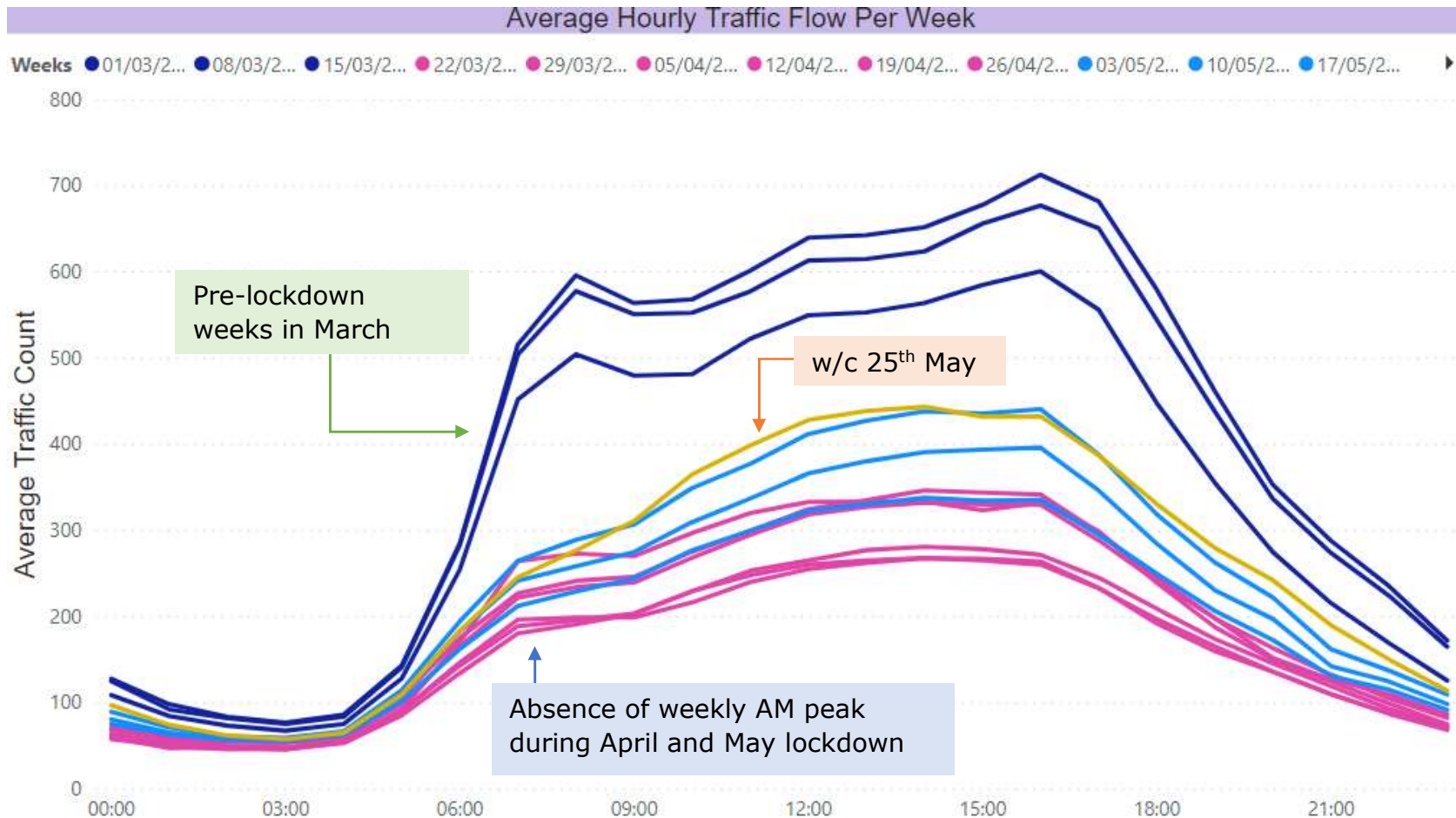


Figure 4: Change in average hourly traffic volumes per week since 1st March across all sources with w/c 17th May highlighted. All data series with greater volumes of traffic than the w/c 17th May are pre-lockdown weeks in March.

Figure 5 – Daily average cycling change from baseline

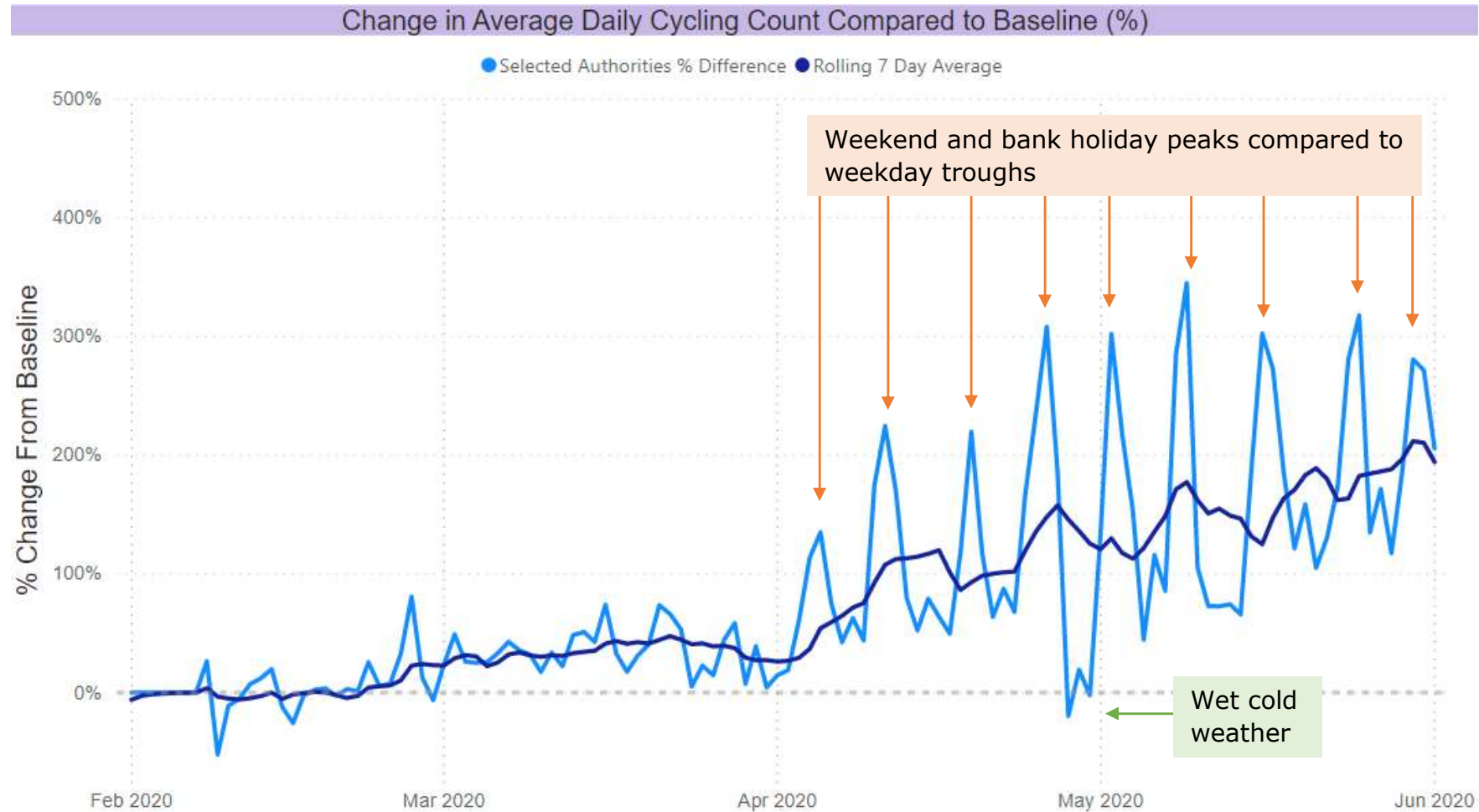


Figure 5: Change in average daily cycling volumes since 23rd March (lockdown) across all sources compared to the baseline (first week of February 2020)

Figure 6 – Hourly weekday cycling comparison per month

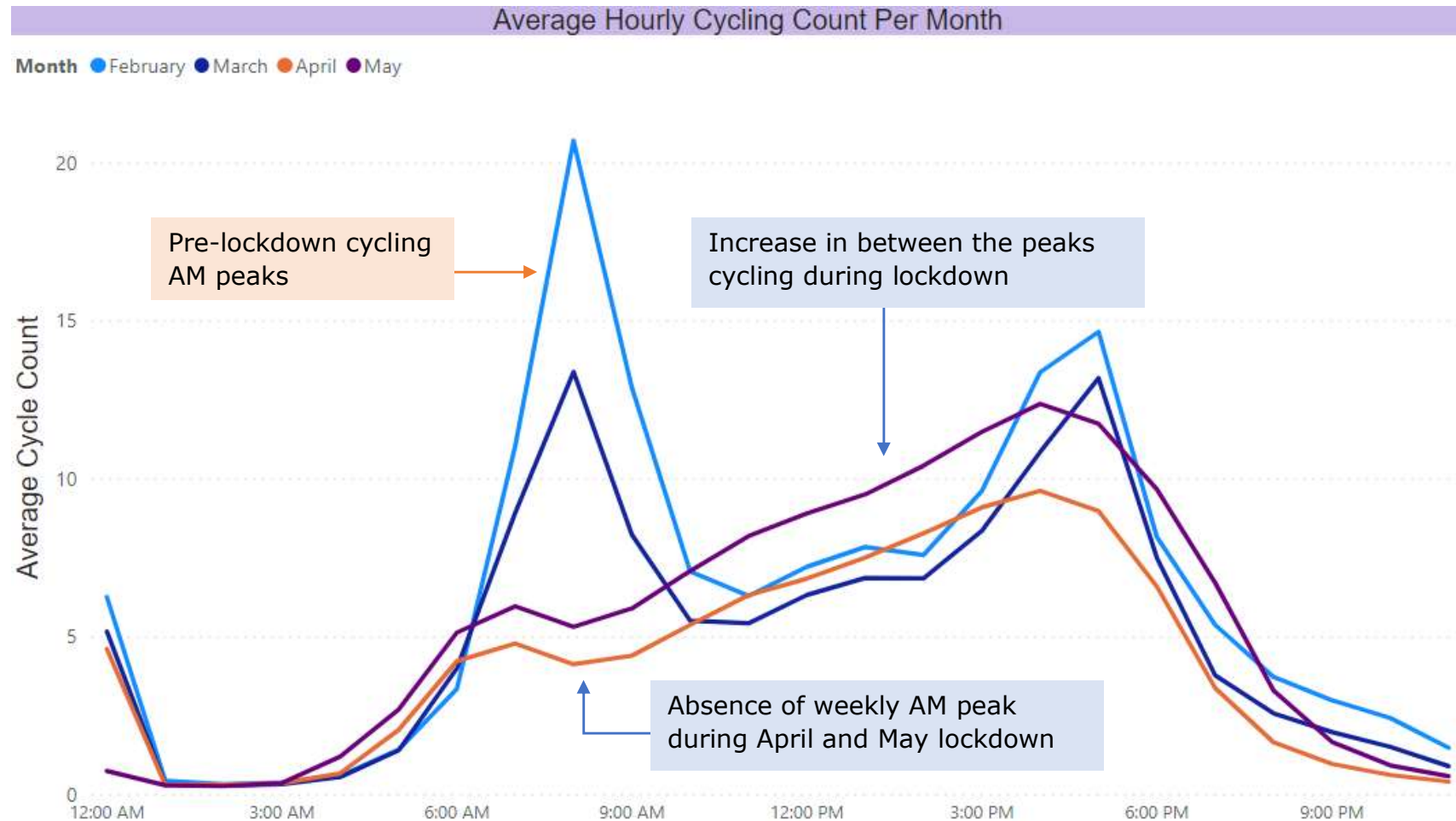


Figure 6: Change in average hourly weekday cycling volumes per month since 1st February across all sources

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 (01/02 – 07/02) 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.
- Average daily traffic volumes have been used to minimise the impact of individual sensors changing between active and inactive states.

Please note that as we add new datasets, 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. We hope very soon 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.

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News from local authorities

Introduction

This section of the weekly digest aims to share best practice amongst local authorities. Each week ideas and implementations promoted by authorities will be included, giving readers inspiration about policy they could use in their respective areas. The authors encourage all authorities to share a brief summary of what they are doing in their respective areas. 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.

CROYDON COUNCIL

Croydon Streetspace project creates more space for walking and cycling in seven new areas



The Croydon Streetspace project is expanding to seven new locations next week, creating more space for people to walk and cycle during Covid-19.

The latest step in the borough-wide initiative, will see the pavements widened at six busy pinch-points in Crystal Palace, South Norwood and

Thornton Heath, to make it easier for pedestrians to socially distance when passing each other.

Parking bays will be suspended with barriers set up to expand the pavement on Church Road and Westow Hill, both in Crystal Palace and Clifford Road in South Norwood on Wednesday 27 May and at on High Street, South Norwood and two stretches of Brigstock Road, Thornton Heath, on Friday 29 May.

<http://news.croydon.gov.uk/croydon-streetspace-project-creates-more-space-for-walking-and-cycling-in-seven-new-areas/>

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Bold plans for transport as Oxfordshire prepares for the “new normal”

Bold transport proposals are in the pipeline for Oxfordshire as the county joins the nation in gradually emerging from lockdown and preparing for the “new normal.”

Innovative ideas have been identified by county councillors all over Oxfordshire in response to the Government's national £250 million cash fund to implement changes to roads and transport networks.

There's set to be a focus on encouraging residents to walk and cycle, with the county council linking up with district councils, Oxford City Council and other partners on the work. In terms of longer-term recovery, the use of public transport will be encouraged as part of the county-wide strategy.

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/bold-plans-for-transport-as-oxfordshire-prepares-for-the-new-normal/>



SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

Southampton City Council announces its Green Transport Recovery Plan

Southampton City Council is to deliver a package of transformative transport measures to help people travel healthily and safely in an era of social distancing. The £4.1m Green Transport Recovery Plan, to be delivered by the council's Highways Partners Balfour Beatty Living Places, has been established in line with the Government's recommendations for encouraging safe and active travel as we come out of lockdown.

It sets out a series of interventions to address two key challenges identified by the council. Firstly, it will enable people to continue adhering to social distancing guidelines as people start to travel more and, crucially, it will support people to keep walking and cycling following a staggering rise in active travel across the city.



As well as new measures to facilitate continued active travel and minimise potential congestion as people return to work, the council's Green Transport Recovery Plan also includes some already planned infrastructure projects that will now be accelerated to meet immediate demand. Measures will be implemented in three stages to ensure that the city's transport system responds effectively to the evolving challenges of the pandemic in the short, medium and long term. The plan prioritises the ability of key workers to travel to work safely and the safety of pupils getting to and from school as they start to reopen. It also sets out the council's plans to work closely with bus operators and retail businesses as they put in place social distancing measures as demand increases.

The plan outlines schemes that will support social distancing and maximise the opportunities for increased active travel.

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/news/article.aspx?id=tcm:63-427354>

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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 travelers 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	Lockdown Relaxation #1 (PM Address). Those who cannot work from home, such as construction workers and those in manufacturing, 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	Lockdown Relaxation #2 - 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. Play physically distanced sports (e.g. Golf). 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. Security guards trained in crowd control are placed on duty at some major railway stations
01/06/2020	School relaxation 1 - Schools will re-open for early years pupils, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6
01/06/2020	Groups of up to six people from different households allowed to meet outside

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.