

Homerton Low Traffic Neighbourhood (interim traffic counts)

This briefing gives interim traffic counts from the Homerton Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) taken in November 2020 in comparison to changes in background levels of traffic caused by the COVID-19 lockdown.

It shows that whichever measure of the lockdown effect on traffic is used, traffic has on average fallen further inside the Homerton LTNs. On LTN boundary roads where traffic displacement might be assumed to be a risk, the picture is more mixed. While traffic on Kenworthy Road and Wick Road fell broadly in line with background levels of traffic, traffic on Homerton High Street was 6.5% above baseline even during this lockdown period.

Background

The ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic and its associated public health lockdown response has had big effects on travel in London including large drops in public transport use (following government guidance to avoid using it wherever possible) and initially large reduction in road transport. But as London emerged from its third lockdown in the first half of 2021 there is the continuing potential for vast increases in the number of motor vehicles on our roads if even a small proportion of people who used to travel by public transport switch to using private cars.

The public health and road safety implications will be profound for those groups already disproportionately impacted upon by the secondary effects of motor vehicle use, including those on low incomes, people of minority ethnic backgrounds, older people, and children. This could potentially exacerbate air pollution in a borough that already has the sixth highest mortality rate out of 418 UK local authorities and by one analysis, the largest number of road injuries amongst pedestrians and cyclists per 1000 journeys of any borough in London. This would be particularly socially unjust in a borough where 70% of households do not own cars.

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

The rollout of LTNs has been an important part of London and Hackney's response to the pandemic and a key to preventing a car-led recovery. The LTNs are designed to physically prevent motor vehicles from cutting through residential areas while maintaining motor vehicle access to residents and creating space, cleaner air and better conditions for walking and cycling. But what does the evidence from interim traffic counts actually show?

In Homerton there are two Low Traffic Neighbourhoods separated by Homerton High Street - a road which runs between them. To the south, a road filter on Barnabas Road has created an LTN bounded by Homerton High Street in the north and Kenworthy Road in the east with Wick

Road forming the southern boundary. It was introduced in May 2020 using experimental traffic orders. Homerton North LTN was created in June 2020 by the introduction of permeable road filters on two roads (Meeson Street at the junction with Kingsmead way and Ashenden Road at the junction with Glyn Road). It was designed to address rat-running between Homerton High Street and Chatsworth Road, roads which form the southern and eastern boundaries of the LTN. There are no real eastern and northern boundary roads

In late November 2020/early December (16th-3rd December) Hackney commissioned a series of traffic counts throughout the LTN area including boundary roads. These counts were compared to baseline counts taken before the introduction of the LTN.

Whichever measure of the background lockdown effect on traffic is used, traffic has on average fallen further inside the Homerton LTNs by an average of 40%. On LTN boundary roads where traffic displacement might be assumed to be a risk, the picture is more mixed. While traffic on Kenworthy Road and Wick Road fell broadly in line with background levels of traffic, traffic on Homerton High Street was 6.5% above baseline even during this lockdown period.¹

Benchmarking the effects of lockdown

We are aware that road traffic in November 2020 was depressed by the second of the capital's lockdown periods which have an effect independent of the LTNs measures. We considered a number of ways to benchmark this. One way would be to look at national traffic levels which according to the DfT were **24% down** in this period but perhaps a more relevant benchmark is to look at national urban traffic which was **16.6% down** on pre-COVID levels.

More local benchmarks would include the traffic flows on the A12 in Hackney which is an urban motorway with high flow levels and would be largely unaffected by any potential traffic displacement from LTNs. Traffic on this road was **14.8% down**.

An alternative local benchmark would be to look at the overall average of flows on roads in Hackney in November 2020 and compare this to the equivalent period in 2019 (**14% down on the equivalent period in 2019**) and traffic on the Hackney section of the A12 - a major strategic local road strongly influencing traffic trends in eastern Hackney - (**14.8% down**). Details of these local benchmarks are given in **Table 1 below**

¹ Not surprisingly nearly every count within the LTN shows very substantial drops in traffic. One example is Ashenden Road where traffic in November 2020 was about 73% down on pre-covid levels. But this and other similar drops on other residential roads in the Homerton LTN area reflect the effect of **both** lockdown reductions in traffic and the removal of through traffic. Later in 2021 we hope to assess the LTNs overall impact on traffic levels including the net absolute levels of traffic on boundary roads and internal roads and a fuller picture of the benefits realised can be viewed as a whole. For now we are focussing on boundary roads looking at early indications of what might eventually happen and looking for early warning flags of where we might need to make adjustments to traffic management.

Table 1: Traffic on Main Roads in Hackney (16.11.20 - 01.12.20)	
Location	% change on equivalent period in 2019²
Homerton High Street (TfL 3)	+6.5% ³
Albion Road	-6.2%
A10 Tottenham High Road	-8.8%
Seven Sisters Road	-10.4%
A12 Hackney Wick	-14.8%
Southgate Road	-17.8%
Green Lanes Borough Boundary	-16.6%
A10 jw Walford Road 289	-15.4%
A10 Kingsland Road jw Richmond Road	-12.9%
Old Street	-20.9%
A10 Hoxton	-23.8%
Mare Street jw Brenthouse Road	-27.5%
Average of Roads	-14.0%

Traffic on Homerton LTN Boundary Roads

It is useful to view the changes in traffic levels on boundary roads of the Homerton LTN with these background benchmarks in mind.⁴ Traffic trends from the Homerton LTN boundary roads with the baseline period used are given in **Table 2: Traffic Trends on Homerton LTN Boundary Roads**.

Table 2: Homerton LTN boundary roads (November 2020 traffic % change from 'Baseline')		
Road	November 2020 ATC counts % change from 'baseline'	Baseline source
Homerton High Street (west of jw Barnabas Road)	+6.5%	TfL Data (equivalent period in

² The 2019 baseline uses data from 18 November 2019 to 1 December 2019 while the equivalent dates in 2020 are the period 16 November 2020 to 29 November 2020 (to achieve consistency of days of the week).

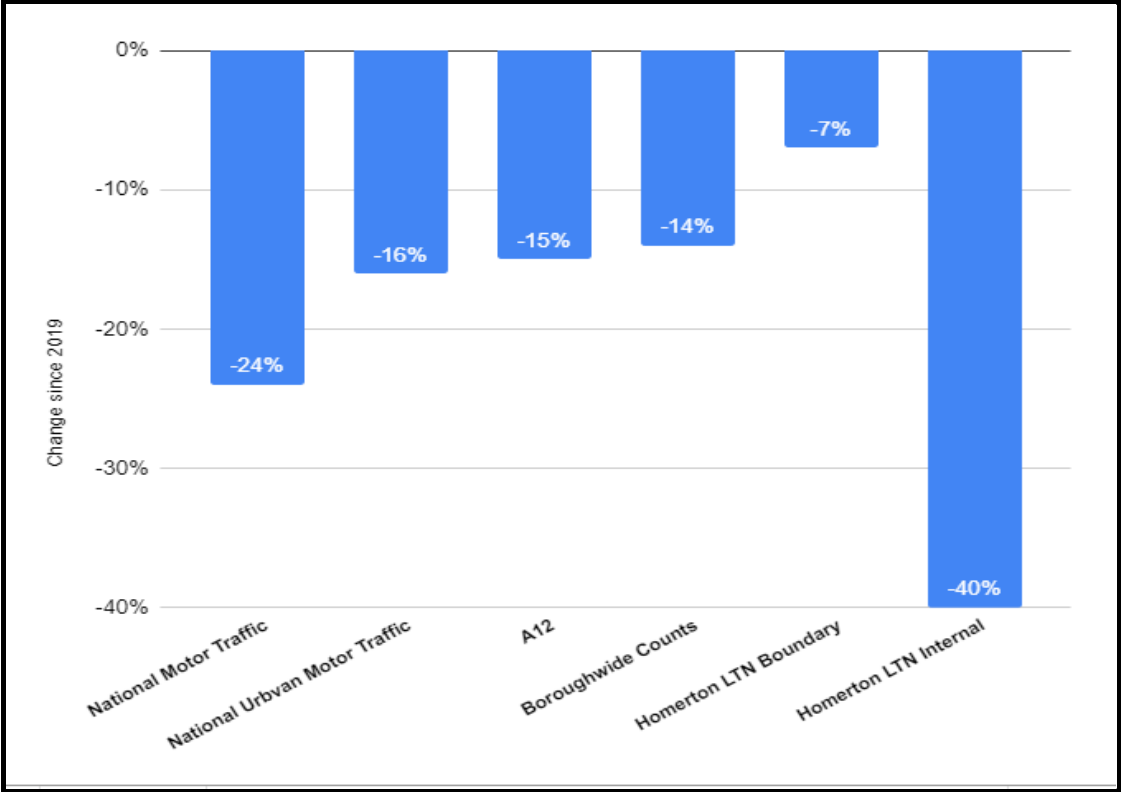
³ We issued 12,000 key worker parking permits during the pandemic, many of which were used in the area around Homerton Hospital, which is thought to be a partial cause for this increase in traffic compared to pre-lockdown levels. It is also worth noting that traffic levels on Homerton High Street were close to than pre-pandemic levels before the introduction of the London Fields low traffic neighbourhood, and remained at this level for much of remainder of the year

⁴ An important caveat to bear in mind is that whereas with the TfL traffic counts could be compared with a baseline for the equivalent period in 2019, this type of data was not available for the many of the newly commissioned counts on LTN boundary roads. Instead baseline figures from the most recently available pre Covid traffic counts were used instead.

		2019 ⁵
Kenworthy Road (south of jw Ballance Road)	-14.0%	November 2019
Wick Road (east of jw Barnabas Road)	-13.5%	December 2019
Average of Homerton LTN Boundary Roads	-7.0%	Various

A comparison with the average flow from this table with national and local traffic benchmarks is shown in **Figure 1** below. Flow trends on LTN internal roads (discussed in the next section) are also included for the sake of comparison.

Figure 1: Homerton LTN and National and Local Traffic Trends November 2020



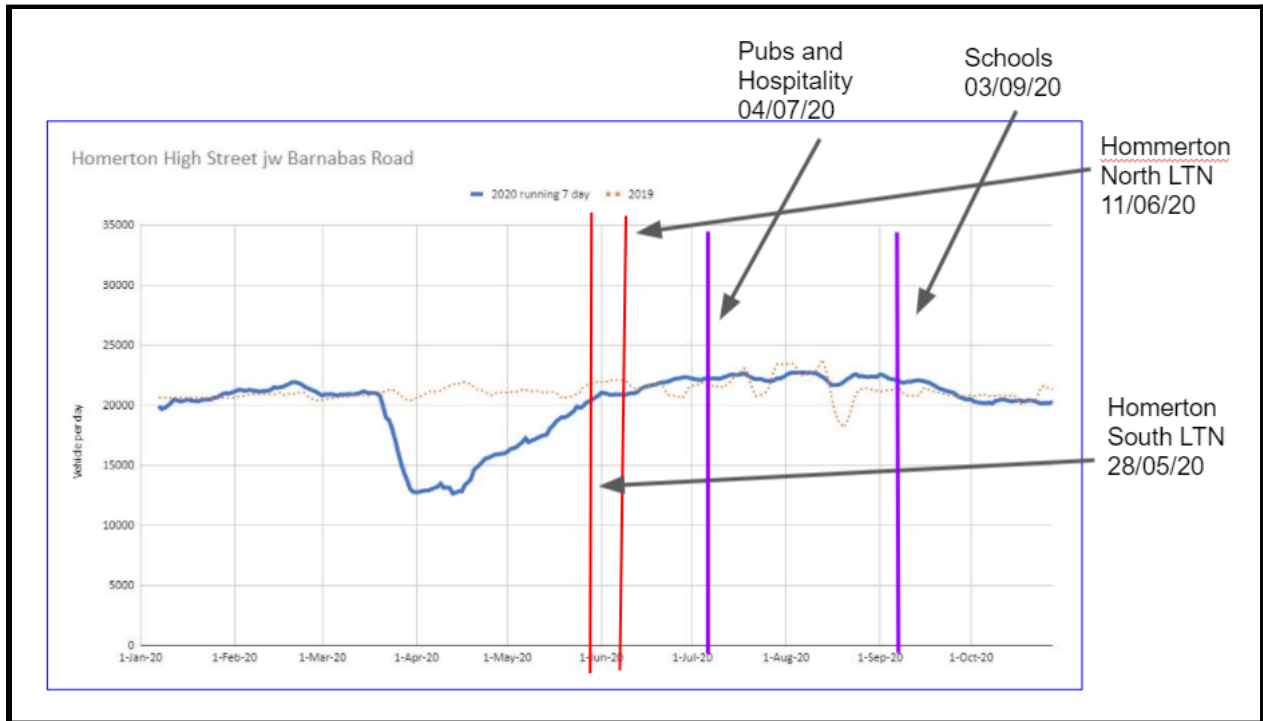
The average of the flows of the LTN boundary roads was **7%** below the baseline which when compared to the benchmarking exercise represents less of a decrease than the roughly **14%** decrease seen across the borough’s main roads or on the Hackney section of the A12.

⁵ The 2019 baseline uses data from 18 November 2019 to 1 December 2019 while the equivalent dates in 2020 are the period 16 November 2020 to 29 November 2020 (to achieve consistency of days of the week).

Looking at **Table 2** the outlier in the dataset is traffic on Homerton High Street. The other two boundary roads are showing decreases which are very much in line with background traffic in the borough or on the nearby Hackney section of the A12.

While the traffic situation on Homerton High Street clearly needs to be monitored closely there are reasons to believe that other than displacement from Homerton LTN may be at play. For instance Hackney issued 12,000 key worker parking permits during the pandemic, many of which were used in the area around Homerton Hospital, which is thought to be a partial cause for this increase in traffic compared to pre-lockdown levels. It is also worth noting that transport levels on Homerton High Street were close to pre-pandemic levels before the introduction of the London Fields LTN, and remained at roughly this level for much of the remainder of the year

Figure 2 Traffic Levels on Homerton High Street in 2020 compared to 2019 levels



Traffic on Homerton LTN Internal Roads

The figures in **Table 3** below show the changes in monitored levels of traffic on roads inside the low traffic neighbourhood. While there is a wide variation in traffic levels all roads with the exception of Glyn Road show a decrease in traffic averaging a 40% drop in traffic since the most recent count from the period before the pandemic.

Road	November ATC Count % change from 'baseline'	Baseline source
Glyn Road	+16%	7-day ATC Mar 2019
Daubeney Road	-35%	7-day ATC Dec 2018
Meeson Street	-83%	7-day ATC Mar 2019
Kingsmead Way	-8%	7-day ATC Feb 2019
Ashenden Road	-73%	7-day ATC Mar 2019
Roding Road	-10%	7-day ATC Mar 2019
Coopersdale Road	-57%	7-day ATC Mar 2019
Ballance Road	-62%	7-day ATC Dec 2019
Hassett Road	-24%	7-day ATC Dec 2019
Barnabas Road	-34%	7-day ATC Dec 2019
Berger Road	-65%	7-day ATC Dec 2019
Average	-40%	Various