Hackney

Traffic in Hackney technical note December 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 This report presents a view on general traffic trends in Hackney over the past 12 months. Additional context is given on longer term and National traffic trends.

2. Key findings

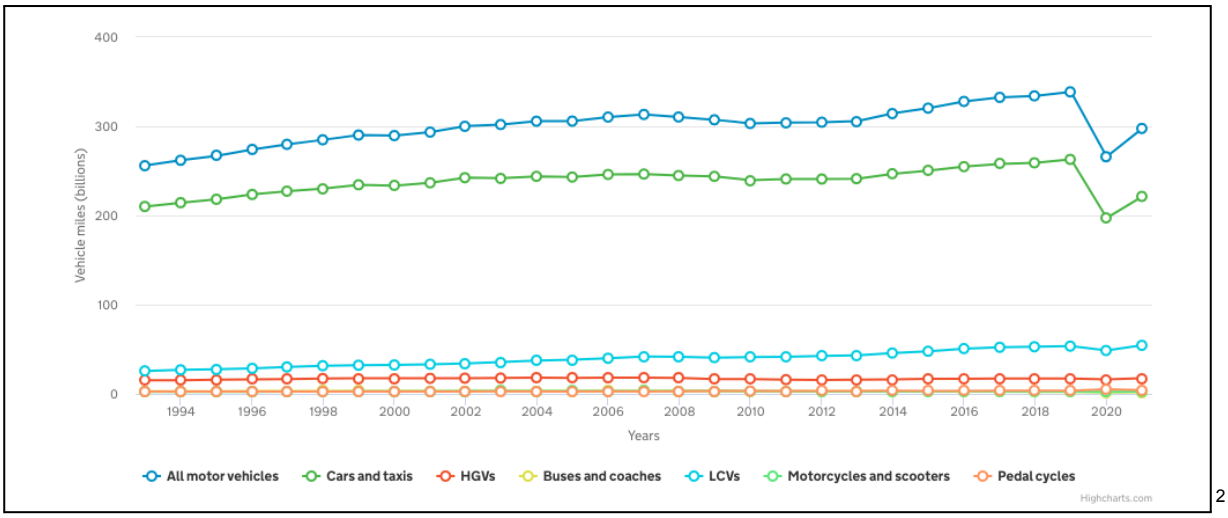
- Motor vehicle traffic has returned to pre pandemic levels across Great Britain
- Motor vehicles traffic is at 96% of pre pandemic levels in London
- Motor vehicle traffic is at 94% in Hackney, outperforming Great Britain, and broadly in line with London (depending on the exact date)
- National rail usage is still below pre pandemic levels across great Britain
- Public transport use is at 80% of pre pandemic levels in London
- Levels of cycling across London remain 40 per cent higher than levels seen before the pandemic.

3. Traffic review

3.1 The UK has seen a long term upward trend in motor vehicle use as seen in **Figure 1** below. It is clear that the Covid 19 pandemic had a significant impact on overall traffic volumes, but as the DfT report summarises:

"Whilst historically significant, the long term trends can be misleading in most cases due to the extraordinary circumstances observed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Vehicle miles travelled in Great Britain have had year-on-year growth in each year between 2011 and 2019. Following a sharp decline in 2020, traffic levels for 2021 have increased on the previous year but still remain lower than the 2011 levels. Therefore, to say traffic has fallen over the last decade would misconstrue, as the overall decrease is entirely due to the decline in traffic levels observed in the 2020-2021 estimates." [1]

Figure 1: Annual motor traffic in Great Britain from 1993 to 2021, by vehicle type, in vehicle miles (billions)

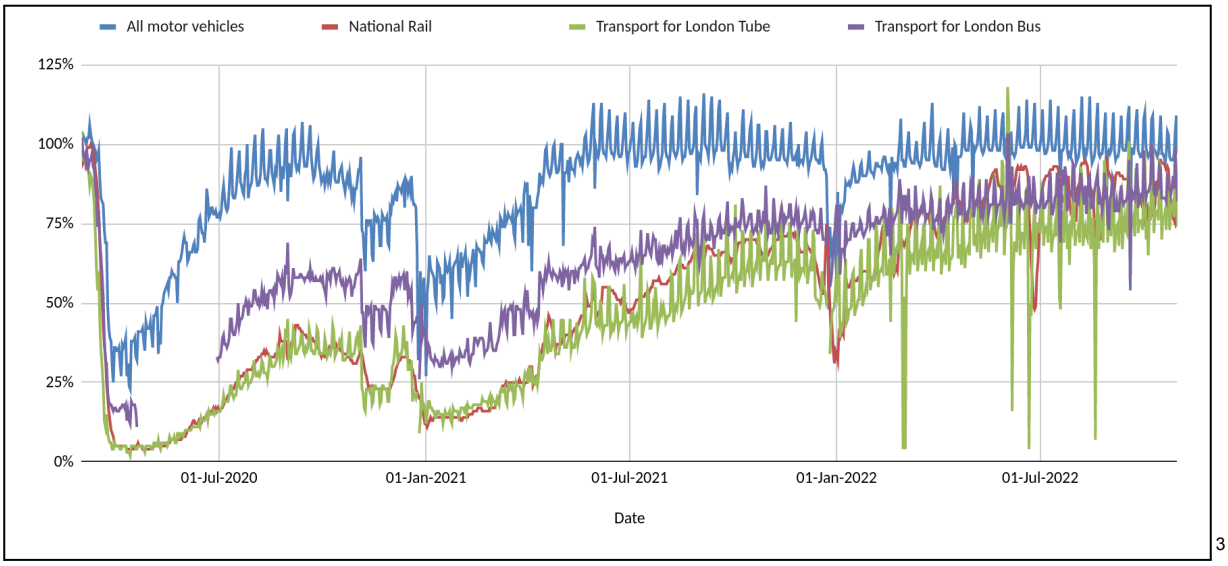


[2]

3.2 More recent data on the National traffic trends from the DfT **Figure 2** since March 2020 show that general motor traffic has broadly returned to pre pandemic levels. However, public transport has only returned to around 80% of pre pandemic levels.

[1] https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/summary
[2] https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/summary [accessed 01/12/2022]

Figure 2: Daily usage of transport by mode: Great Britain, 1 March 2020 to present as a percentage of the baseline equivalent day or week

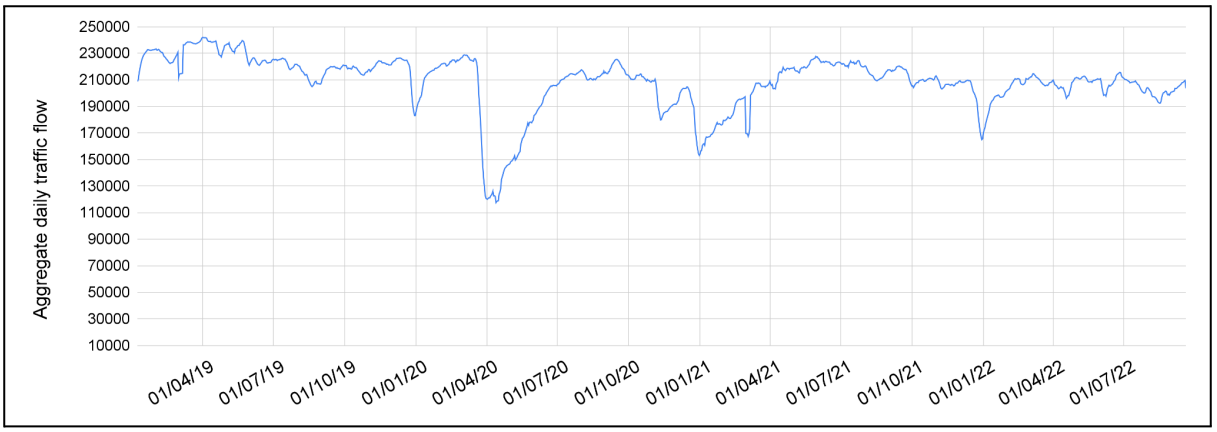


[3]

3.3 People have changed the way they move around for work and leisure following the pandemic, and the impacts of these changes are still being evaluated. We are also facing an economy that is rapidly electrifying and seeing the beginnings of societal impacts of climate change.

3.4 **Figure 3a** shows the traffic volumes aggregated across all TfL continuous traffic counts in Hackney from January 2019 to September 2022. The total volumes shown here reflect the same trend seen in the analysis based on traffic versus equivalent day in **Figure 3b** and **Figure 4**. While traffic levels bounced back from the Covid 19-related declines in 2021 to near pre-pandemic levels, 2022 has seen a renewed decline in traffic.

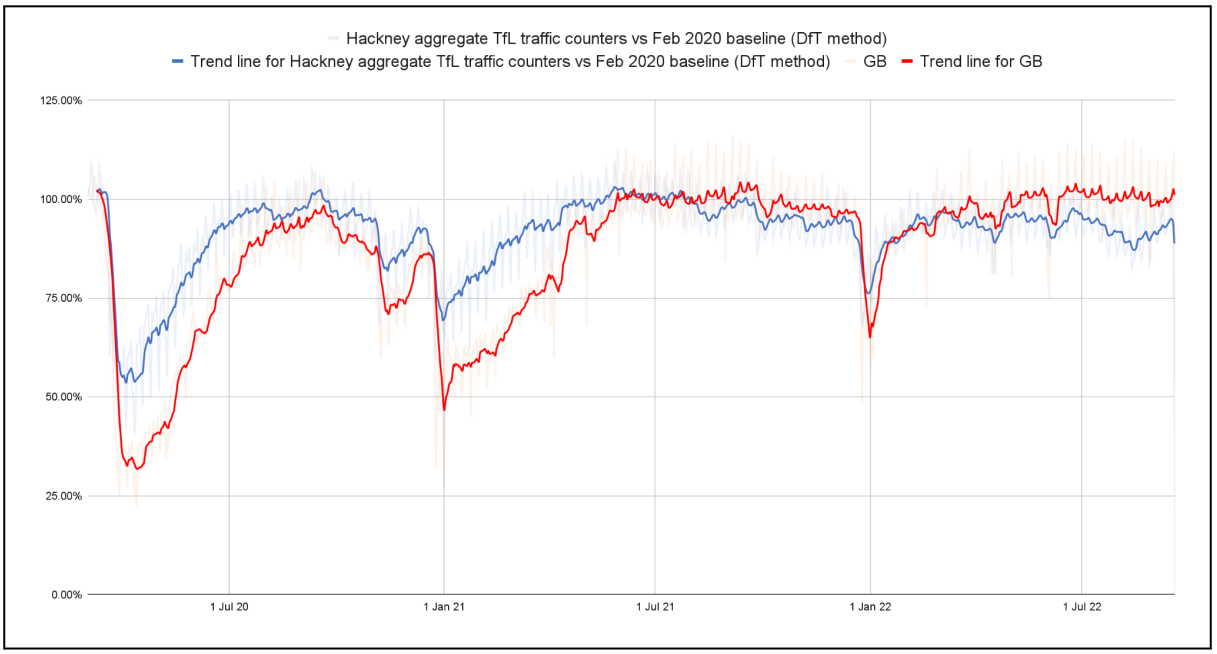
Figure 3a: Aggregate of TfL continuous traffic counts in Hackney (excluding A12), 2019 to 2022



[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic

3.5 **Figure 3b** below shows traffic volumes across both Great Britain and locally in Hackney since the beginning of the first lock down period in March 2020. National traffic trends suggest that road traffic has broadly returned to pre pandemic levels by 2022. Data for Hackney main roads suggests that in 2021 Hackney traffic levels had returned to pre pandemic levels, and then proceeded to drop to about 6% below pre pandemic levels in 2022. Other notable observations are that Hackney did not see as significant a reduction in traffic as a result of the first and second down lockdowns (March 2020 & December 2020) as compared to the rest of Great Britain.

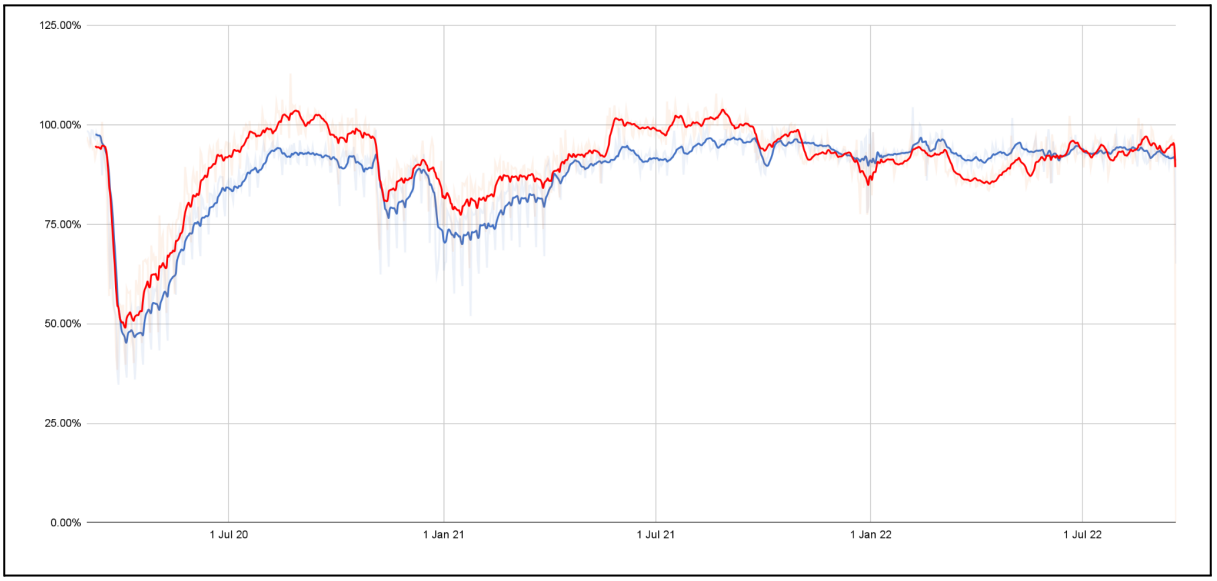
Figure 3b: Daily motor traffic in Great Britain and Hackney (aggregate of TfL counters in Hackney), from March 2020 to September 2022, as a percentage of February 2020 baseline



3.6 **Figure 4** below shows Hackney traffic levels broadly in line with London trends - a little above it in early 2021 and a little below it in 2022. This is to be expected because at least 40% of the traffic in Hackney is through traffic.

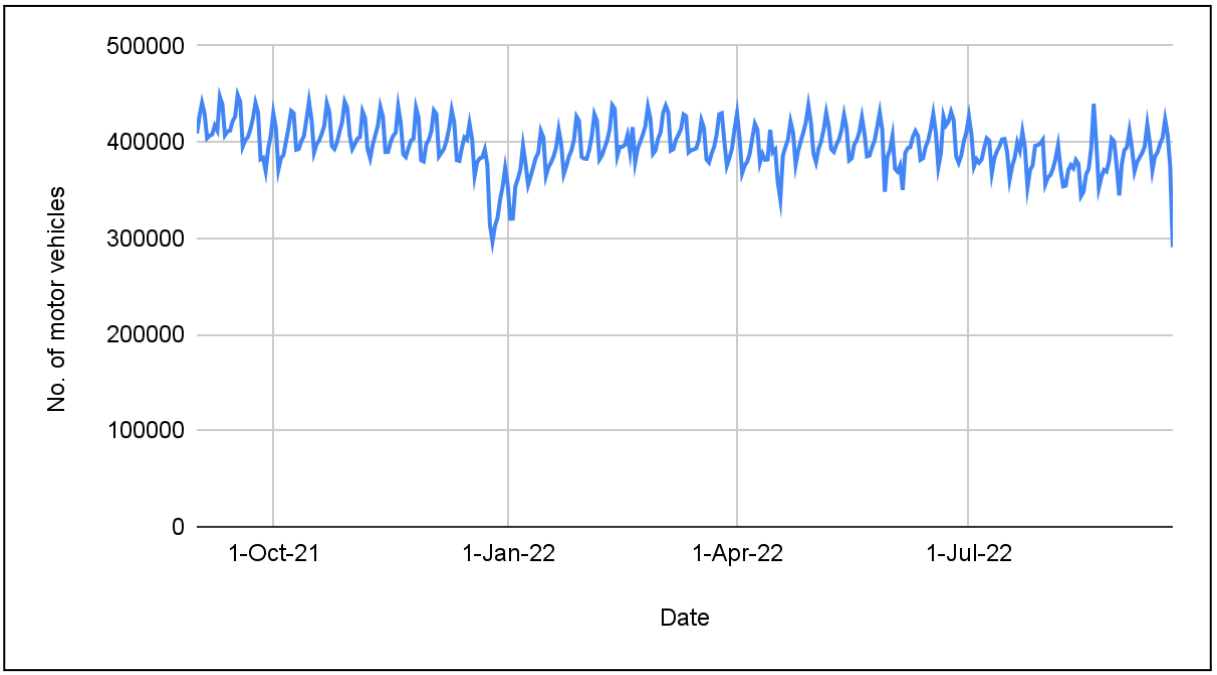
3.7 While there has been a 6% decrease in traffic relative to pre pandemic levels, the number of vehicle miles in Hackney remains high and is estimated to exceed 270 million in 2022 (declining from over 286 million miles in 2019). All trends indicate that there has been an increase in mode share for private cars and vans and as general traffic increases in London Hackney will also see increases in traffic, with issues relating to traffic, such as road safety, reduced bus times and poor air quality all deteriorating.

Figure 4: Daily motor traffic in London (using TfL counters) and Hackney (aggregate of TfL counters in Hackney), from March 2020 to September 2022, as a percentage of equivalent day in 2019/20



3.8 **Figure 5** shows the aggregated traffic volumes for all motor vehicles on selected Hackney roads using the 'All Motor Traffic 20 Index'. The 'All Motor Traffic 20 Index' combines the continuous motor traffic counts from 20 selected locations to produce Hackney's own record of motor traffic trends across the borough.

Figure 5: Hackney index of motor traffic, 1 September 2021 - 19 September 2022

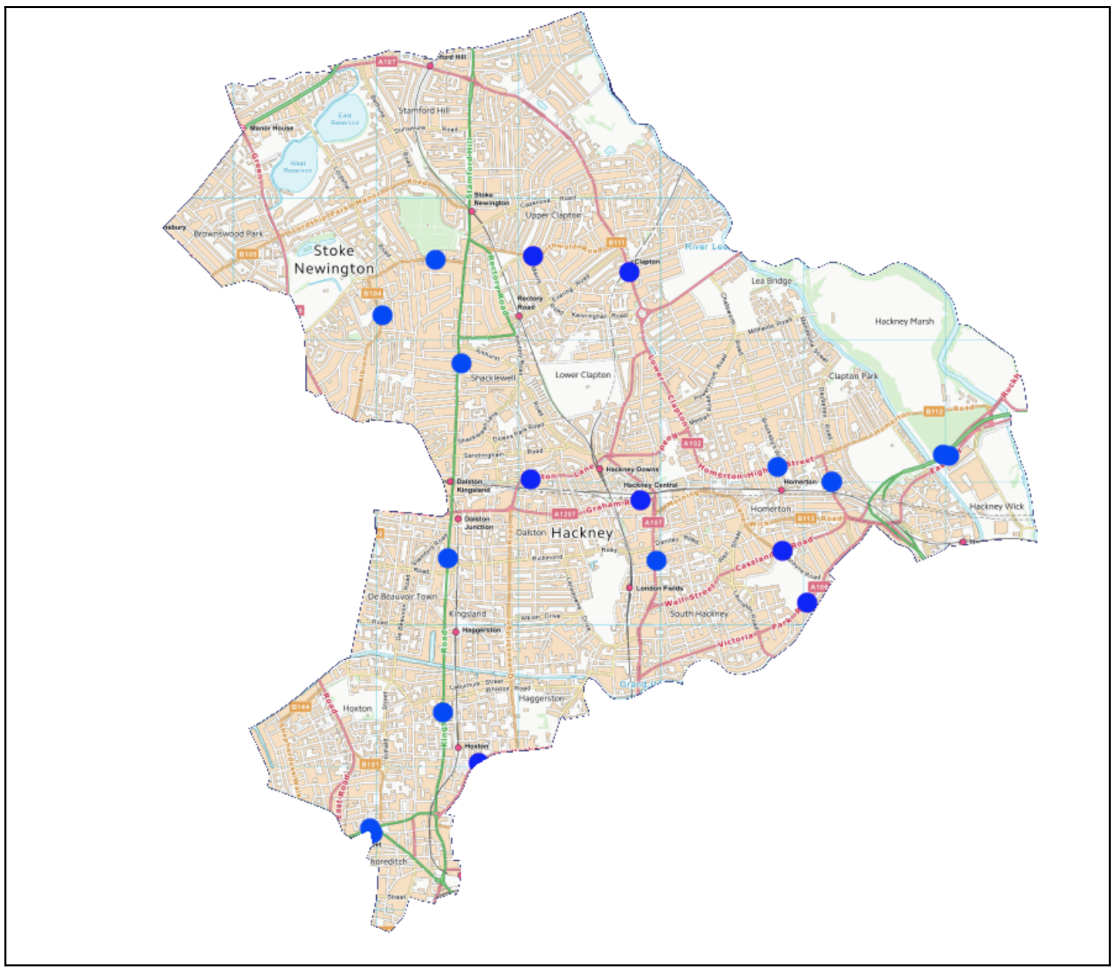


3.9 The Index (locations shown in **Figure 6** below) includes all of the TfL-owned counters in the borough (with 3 just outside the borough boundaries not shown) supplemented by some Hackney counts. The Hackney counts were selected to sample key orbital routes (such as Graham Road, Dalston Lane and Hackney Road) helping to correct the over-emphasis on radial routes in the TfL Counts.

3.10 The Index covers the period from September 2021 when Hackney-owned counters came online.These include:

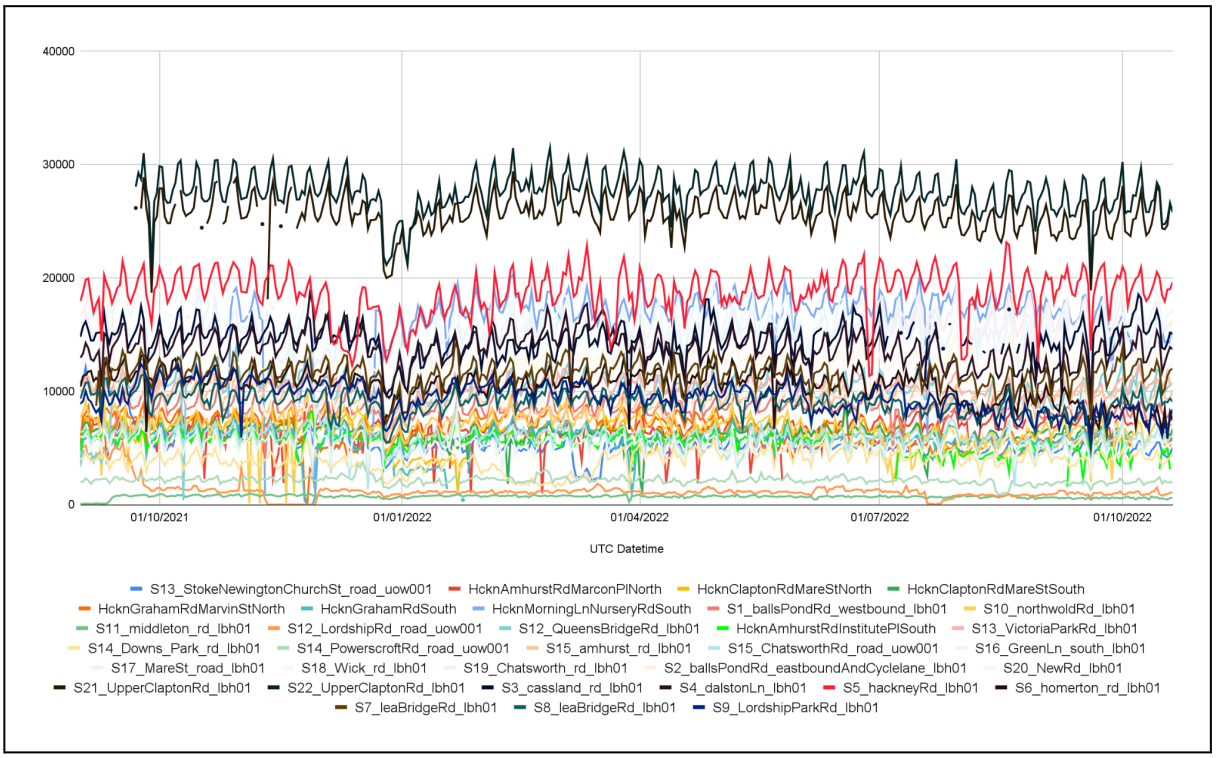
- Graham Road
- Dalston Lane
- Upper Clapton Road
- Hackney Road
- Victoria Park Road
- Cassland Road
- Northwold Road
- Stoke Newington Church Street

Figure 6: Count locations aggregated to produce the Hackney index of motor traffic



3.11 **Figure 7** shows the readings from all continuous counters broken down by count point over the same period.

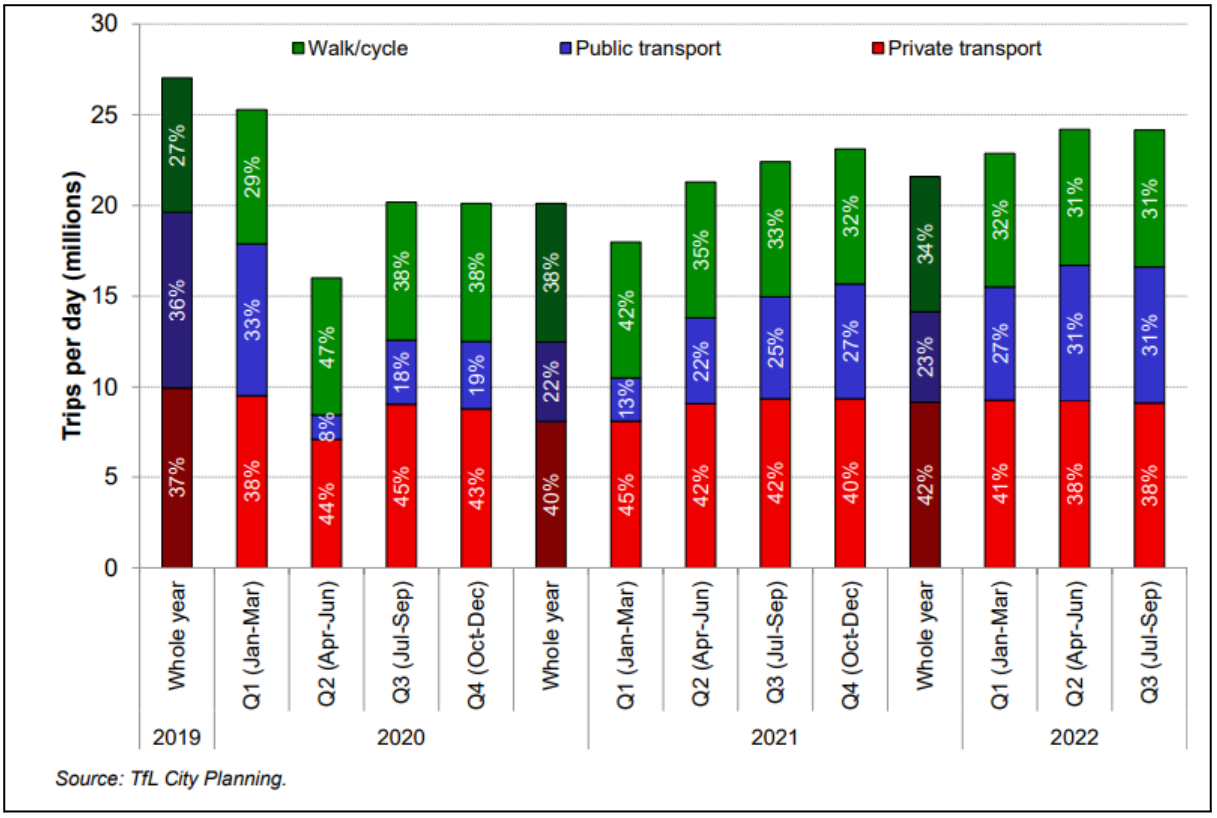
Figure 7: Daily motor traffic at Hackey continuous counter locations, 1 September 2021 to 31 October 2022



4. Walking and Cycling

4.1 The latest data from TfL shown in **Figure 9** shows that while public transport use was curtailed drastically during the Covid 19 pandemic and is only slowly recovering to pre-pandemic levels, walking and cycling levels remained relatively high as Londoners stayed local to do essential shopping or their permitted daily exercise. They accounted for 47% of all trips at the peak of lockdown. By the third quarter of 2022 they were still well above pre-pandemic levels accounting for 31% of all trips. Although under the unwanted duress of pandemic restrictions, the scale of the shift to active modes during the pandemic highlights a potential opportunity to embed positive aspects of this into London's recovery.

Figure 9: Estimated quarterly trips and mode share by mode in London, 2019-2022



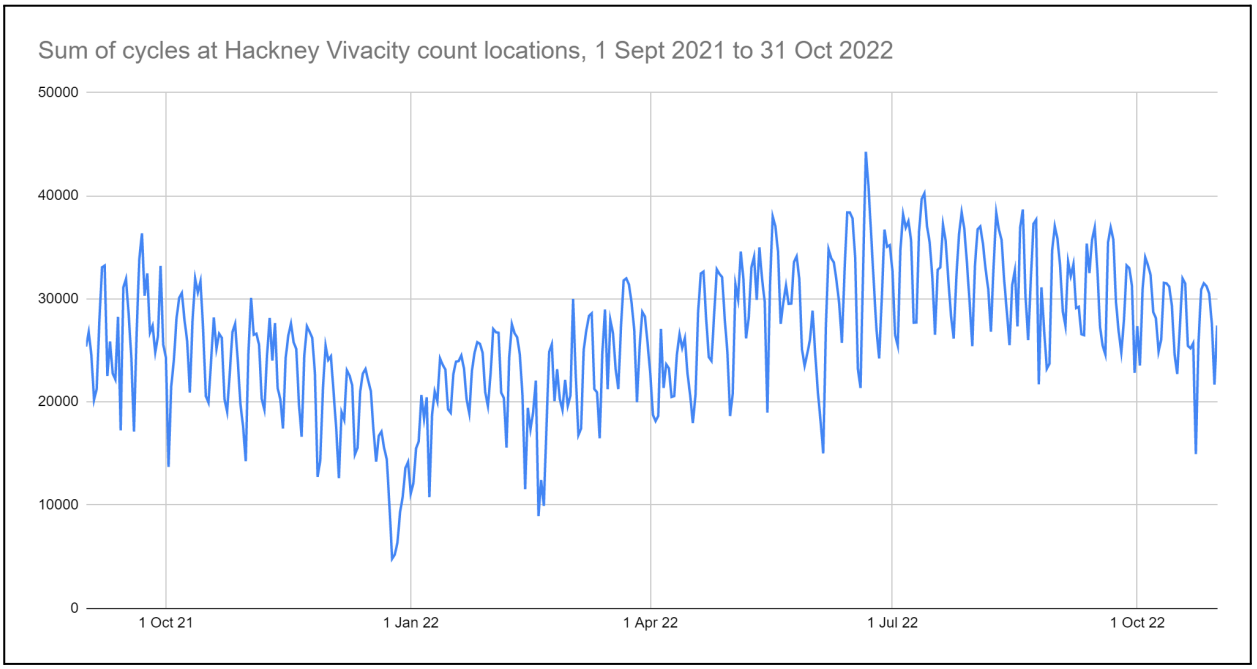
4.2 Hackney's continuous counters are also now monitoring pedestrian and cycle routes on more than 20 routes across the borough; the counters (in place since late 2021) show a strong seasonality of cycling rates.

4.3 Further analysis is required to draw conclusions about walking levels in Hackney. However, there is evidence of a 6% increase in walking on Stoke Newington Church Street, where specific pedestrian focussed analysis has been done[4].

[4] https://news.hackney.gov.uk/walking-and-cycling-up-after-stoke-newington-ltn/

4.4 **Figure 8a** shows cycle flows aggregated across all Hackney roads with Vivacity continuous traffic counters from 01 Sep 2021 to 31 Oct 2022.

Figure 8a: Cycle flows at all Hackney Vivacity continuous traffic counts 01 September 2021 - 31 October 2022



4.4 **Figure 8b** shows all cycle flows aggregated across selected continuous counts. The two comparable months from 2021 and 2022 show an increase in cycling which is consistent with the latest Travel in London reports from TfL which shows during the latter months of 2022 weekday cycling levels in Central and Inner London being some 20-25 per cent higher than before the pandemic, with weekend demand typically around 90 per cent higher.[5]

4.5 September and October 2022 saw 24% and 18% increases in cycling versus the same month in 2021. Comparison is limited to two months so any trends identified here will need to be monitored to see if there is a measurable effect in Hackney.

[5] Travel in London 15, https://board.tfl.gov.uk/documents/s19181/Travel%20in%20London%2015%20Overview.pdf

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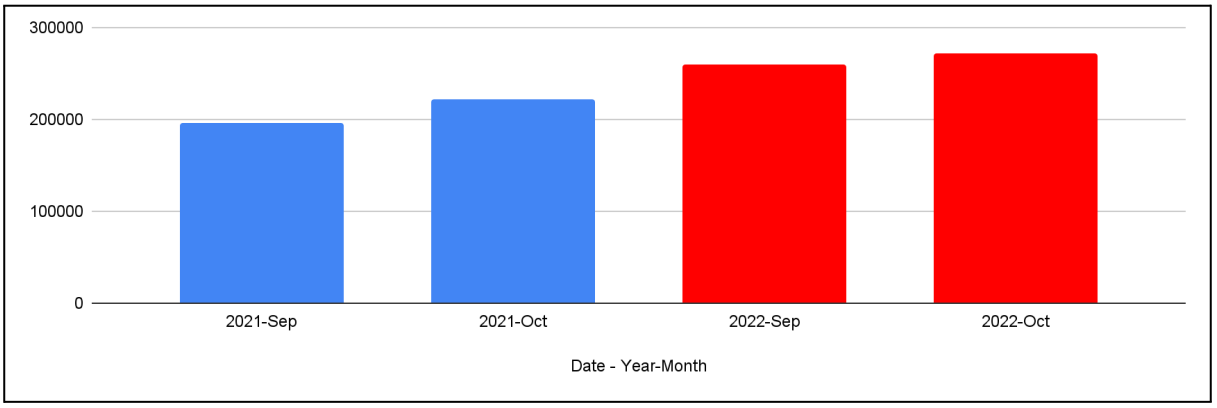
Figure 8b: Cyclist flows September and October 2021 compared to September and October 2022 on selected roads[6]



[6] Dalston Lane, Upper Clapton Road, Hackney Road, Victoria Park Road, Cassland Road, Northwold Road & Stoke Newington Church Street

5. Public transport

5.1 Bus patronage has been recovering predominantly off-peak and at weekends due mainly to an increase in leisure trips. Weekday AM peak journeys have shown the slowest increase as some workers have opted to continue working from home. In addition many key workers and those in low paid jobs are travelling before 0700 and on Night Buses so this would explain why the AM peak figure is depressed.

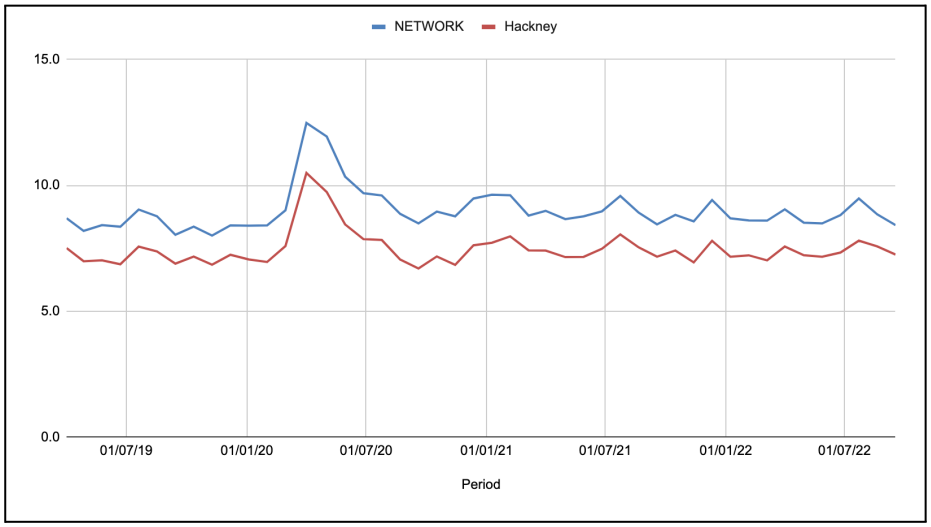
5.2 **Table 1** below shows bus demand recovery rates for Hackney in September 2022. (last week of September 2022 compared to November 2019)

Table 1: Bus demand recovery rates in Hackney 2022 vs 2019

Time period	Recovery rate % (September 2022 vs November 2019)
Weekday AM peak	72%
Weekday Interpeak	85%
Weekday PM peak	84%
Weekday Evening	85%
Weekday All Day	82%
Saturday All Day	91%
Sunday All Day	90%
7 Day Total	84%

5.3 **Figure 9** shows that bus speeds during the am peak in Hackney are maintaining the pre pandemic speeds. Speeds did increase dramatically during the 2020 lock down indicating that lower general traffic can help increase bus speeds.

Figure 9: Hackney bus speeds vs average TfL bus network (am peak) speeds (mph), 01 July 2019 - 14 Oct 2022

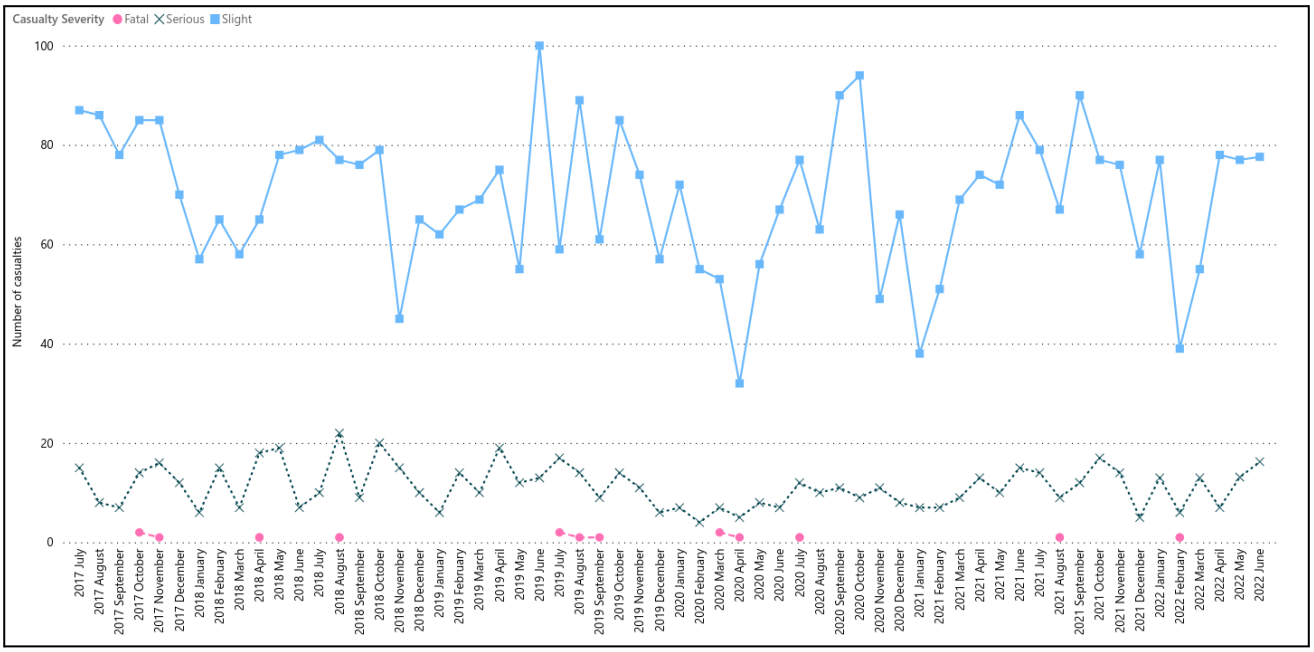


6. Traffic collisions

6.1 **Figure 10** below shows casualties by year and month in the borough from July 2017 to June 2022. The graph represents the trends in the slight, serious and fatal casualties across all modes of travel, gender and ages in the borough.

6.2 Overall trends are difficult to establish throughout this period, but the effects of the Covid-19 restrictions in April 2020 are shown as a sharp drop in the number of casualties during this month.

Figure 10: Road traffic collision casualties in Hackney 2017-2022



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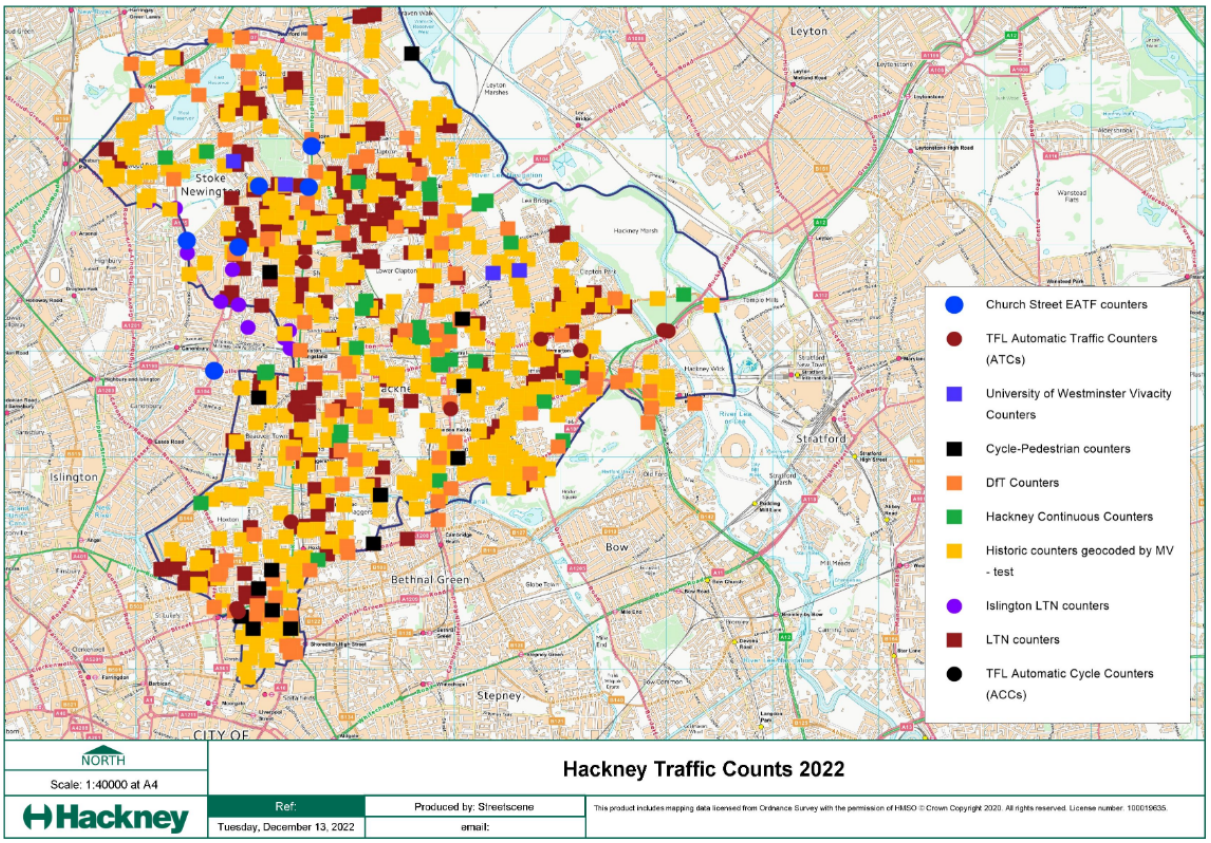
[7] https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/road-safety [accessed on 13th December 2022]

7. Current live and future monitoring

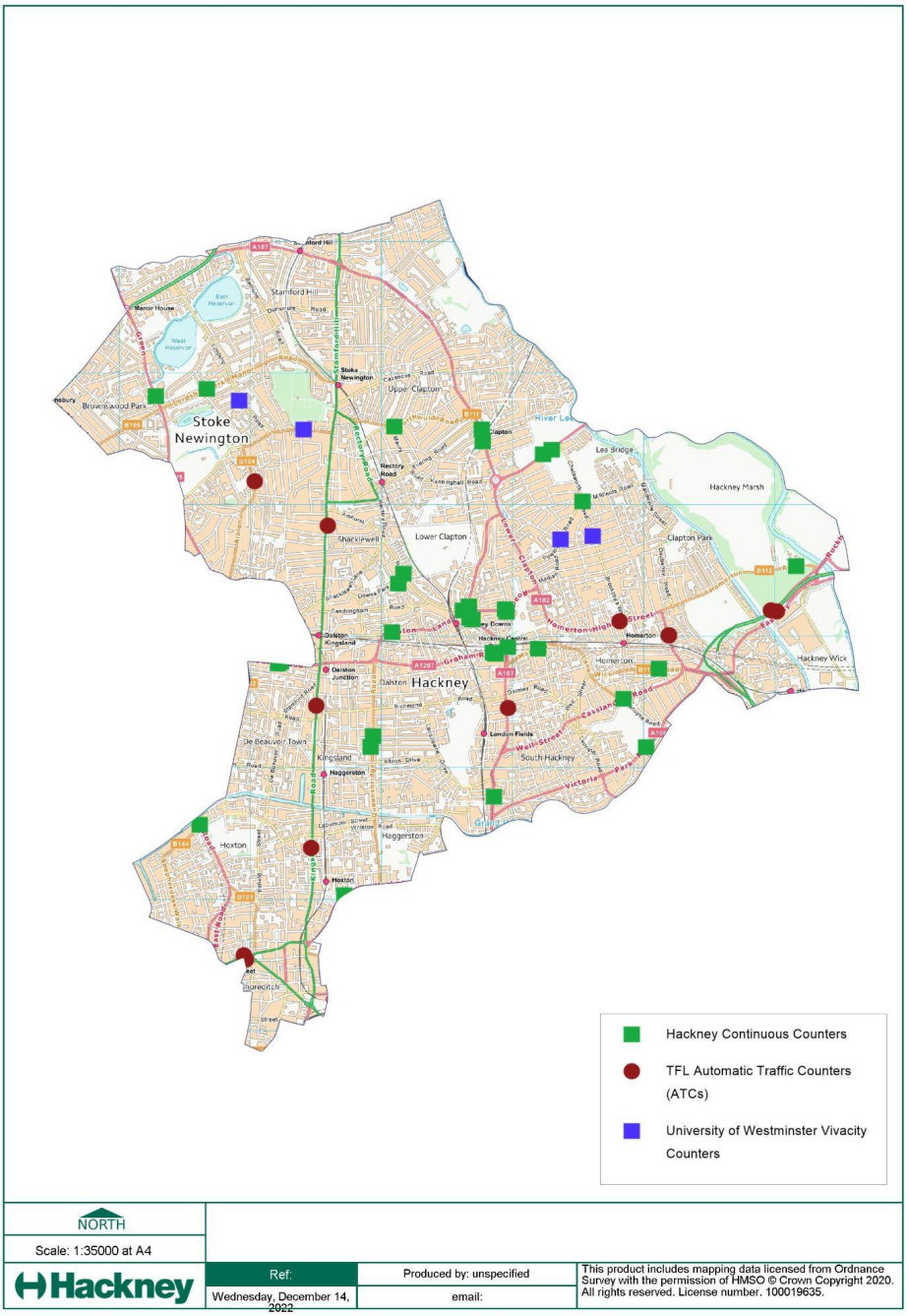
7.1 To supplement the existing TfL traffic counters, Hackney installed 30 continuous counters on key links. Together with existing ad hoc counts of various types these have contributed to one of the densest networks of traffic counts in the country shown in **Figure 11** below.

Figure 11: Location of traffic counts in Hackney



7.2 The Hackney continuous counters were installed in August 2021, with most returning data from 1 September (although electrical supply issues delayed two or three of the sites).

Figure 12: Location of continuous traffic counts in Hackney 2022



7.3 **Figure 12** shows the distribution of all continuous traffic counts in Hackney currently. With this information, Hackney will be able to continuously monitor traffic levels (including pedestrians and cyclists) in greater depth and precision than before. In the future, Hackney will be able to bring together data from our own continuous monitors alongside data from TfL sites for an accurate and detailed picture of traffic in the borough.