

Travel patterns

The Covid lock down and interruption to normal working lives has had a big impact on travel patterns. It has made people keener on personal transport and on road deliveries at the expense of buses, trains and tube.

The latest figures compared to the travel pattern just before covid struck in March 2020 is a complete recovery in vehicle traffic overall. Use of vans is up by 14% and of heavy goods vehicles by 5% reflecting greater on line ordering and road deliveries to individual addresses which trains cannot manage. Car use is 5% down, probably reflecting more home working and on line ordering.

Rail use is 14% down, tube use 33% down and buses outside London down 15%. Much of the decline in tube and other public transport use is probably brought about through less commuting to work and more office workers staying at home part of the week. The tube has suffered most, reflecting the reluctance of many office workers to resume five days a week commuting given the difficulties and cost of these public transport journeys.

The greens who want to discourage travel altogether will presumably be pleased that more people stay home to work as there is less overall travel. They will however be disappointed that the motor vehicle has once again proved more useful and popular and is increasing in use for deliveries. Green Councils will continue to make it more difficult for these important commercial vehicle journeys to run smoothly and to time. This paradoxically will add to congestion, emissions and fuel use as much needed supplies sit in long traffic jams brought on by traffic mismanagement policies.