

## Congestion on local authority managed 'A' roads: 2010/11

This Statistical Release presents information about congestion on local authority managed 'A' roads between September 2010 and July 2011.

The release finalises the statistics published in previous quarters and presents provisional information about congestion during September 2011. The provisional statistics for September 2011 will be finalised in November 2012.

Congestion on locally managed 'A' roads is measured by estimating the average speed achieved by vehicles during the weekday morning peak, 7am to 10am. The data are based on GPS location reports from a fleet of probe vehicles and, in the case of the statistics published in this release, are weighted to take account of the relative traffic flow on each road.

*We are always keen to receive feedback from users of transport statistics. If you have any comments about how the statistics in this release are presented or analysed, please contact us using the details provided on this page.*

Key findings	1
Congestion on local authority managed 'A' roads	2
Strengths and weaknesses of the data	4
Background Notes	5

### The key findings from this statistical release include:

- The average speed achieved during the weekday morning peak on locally managed 'A' roads in England between September 2010 and July 2011 was 25.1 mph. This is broadly similar to the speeds observed in the previous 2 years but is 1.8 per cent faster than those achieved during 2006/7.
- With the exception of May 2011, the average morning peak speeds observed over the last 8 months have been above the levels seen during the previous year. However, speeds observed during the 9 months prior to this were all slower than the year before.
- Provisionally, the average speed achieved over the morning peak during September 2011 was 25.4 mph, up 0.5 per cent on the previous September.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

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# 1. Congestion on local authority managed 'A' roads

This release contains monthly, quarterly and annual estimates of the speeds achieved during the weekday morning peak on locally managed 'A' roads.

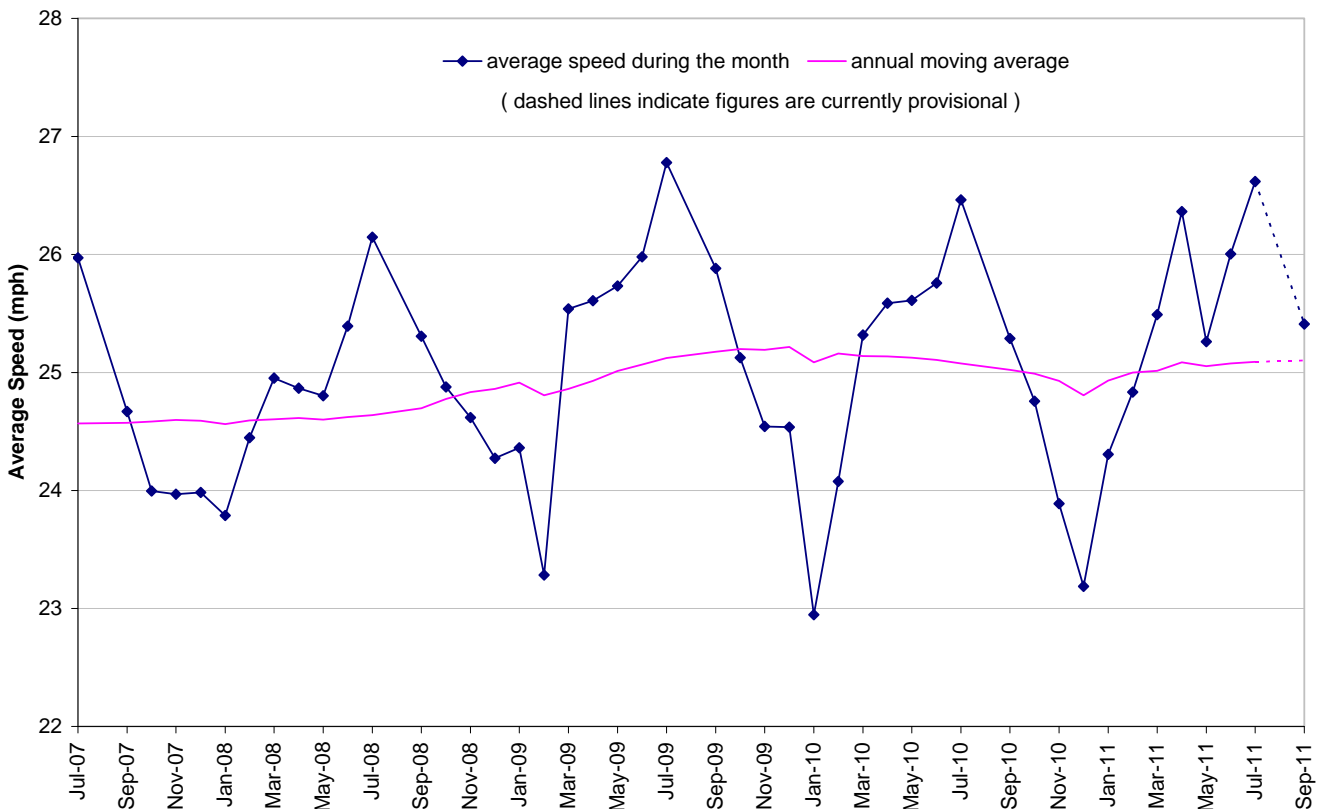
Data for the period September 2010 to July 2011 (also presented in this release as 2010/11) are now final while data for September 2011 are currently provisional and will be finalised in November 2012.

The key findings for the period September 2010 to July 2011 were as follows:

- The average speed achieved during the morning peak in 2010/11 was 25.1 mph.
- This is broadly similar to the average speeds observed during 2009/10 (25 mph) and 2008/9 (25.1 mph) but 1.8 per cent faster than those observed during 2006/7 (24.6 mph).
- During the first 4 months of 2010/11, from September 2010 to December 2010, average morning peak speeds were slower than those achieved the previous year. However, from January 2011, average monthly speeds have generally been faster than the year before.
- The exception to this came in May 2011, when speeds fell from the previous year, but this is likely to have been somewhat affected by people arranging their leave around the late Easter and Royal Wedding in April and then returning to their normal working patterns during May.

## Average vehicle speeds (flow-weighted) during the weekday morning peak<sup>1</sup> on locally managed 'A' roads: England, September 2006 to September 2011<sup>P</sup>

(Congestion web table [CGN0205](#))

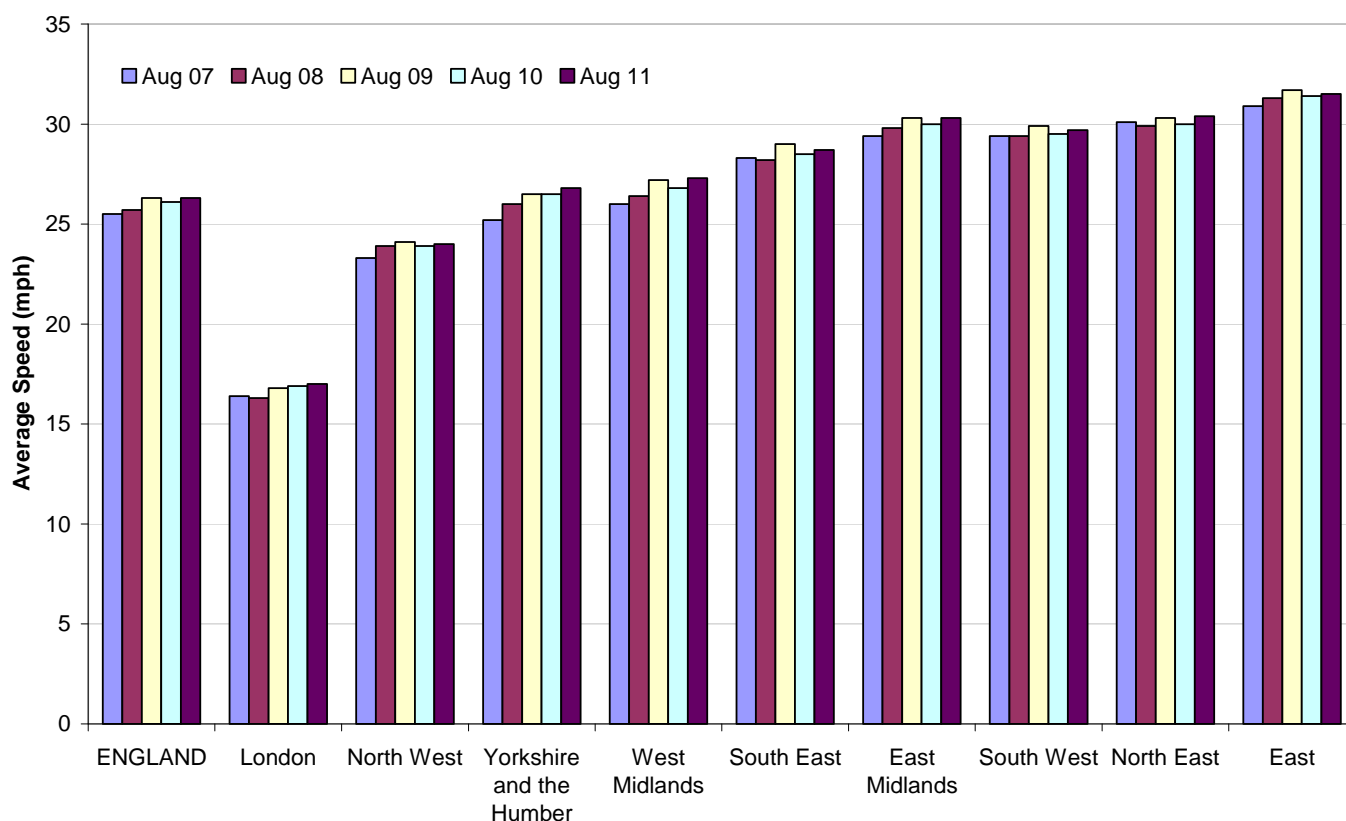


1. Morning peak defined as 7am to 10am. Weekdays falling within school holiday periods excluded.  
p = provisional

- Provisionally, the average speed achieved during the morning peak in September 2011 was 25.4 mph, 0.5 per cent faster than during September 2010 (25.3 mph).
- Regional quarterly data show that morning peak speeds on locally managed 'A' roads were faster in all regions in the quarter ending August 2011 than the equivalent quarter in 2010. Particular increases in speed were seen in the West Midlands, up 1.9 per cent.

### Average vehicle speeds (flow-weighted) during the weekday morning peak<sup>1</sup> on locally managed 'A' roads: regional, quarters ending August 2007 to August 2011

(Congestion web table [CGN0903](#))



1. Morning peak defined as 7am to 10am. Weekdays falling within school holiday periods excluded.

Detailed statistics (tables and maps) on "Congestion on local authority managed 'A' roads" can be found in the Congestion Statistics web tables, table numbers [CGN0201](#) to [CGN0206](#) and [CGN0901](#) to [CGN0903](#).

Flow weighted average speeds on 'A' roads managed by Transport for London have been published for the first time and can be found in tables [CGN0207](#) and [CGN0208](#).

## 2. Strengths and weaknesses of the data

The Department currently publishes two different data series related to congestion on local roads. The strengths and weaknesses of each are shown in the table below.

Data series	Strengths	Weaknesses
Flow-weighted vehicle speeds on locally managed 'A' roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes every locally managed 'A' road in England</li> <li>Weighted by traffic flow so busy roads are more important than quiet roads</li> <li>No cost/burden placed upon local authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires a small amount of data imputation (see related methodology document and imputation tables)</li> </ul>
Un-weighted vehicle speeds on locally managed 'A' roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes every locally managed 'A' road in England</li> <li>No cost/burden placed upon local authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not weighted by traffic flow so all roads count the same regardless of the number of vehicles using them</li> <li>Requires a small amount of data imputation</li> </ul>

The flow-weighted speed statistics published each quarter are classed as provisional until they are finalised along with the related annual estimates in November each year. This arrangement allows for the finalised figures to be weighted by the latest traffic flow data available for the network. The differences between the provisional statistics for 2010/11 published in previous releases and the final versions of the figures published today are as follows:

Month	Difference between final and provisional speed statistics
September 2010	0.00%
October 2010	-0.02%
November 2010	0.01%
December 2010	-0.01%
January 2011	-0.02%
February 2011	-0.02%
March 2011	0.04%
April 2011	0.02%
May 2011	0.08%
June 2011	0.00%

Please note that some larger differences exist at a regional and local authority level.

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## 3. Background notes

1. The web tables give further detail of the key results presented in this statistical release and statistics on other related topics. They are available here:

[http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics?post\\_type=table&series=congestion-and-reliability](http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics?post_type=table&series=congestion-and-reliability)

2. Full guidance on the methods used to compile the new flow-weighted vehicle speeds on locally managed 'A' roads can be found here:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/congestion-and-reliability/flow-speed-calculation.pdf>

The related imputation tables can be found in the technical information section here:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/congestion-and-reliability/>

3. A short paper outlining the differences between the flow-weighted and un-weighted vehicle speeds on locally managed 'A' roads can be found here:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/congestion-and-reliability/vehicle-speed-estimates.pdf>

4. There are many interlinking factors that may have a bearing on the statistics published in this release. Amongst others, these include traffic volumes, road conditions, localised traffic interventions, driver behaviour and the weather. Recent statistics published by the Department relating to some of these areas are available at:

- Traffic volume and flow:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/traffic/>

- Road conditions:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/road-conditions/>

- Public attitudes towards road congestion:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/trsnstatsatt/roadcongestion>

- British social attitudes survey: attitudes to transport:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/2010-british-social-attitudes-survey-attitudes-to-transport>

5. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

6. Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/congestion-and-reliability/pre-release-urban.pdf>

7. The next Congestion Statistics release will be published in February 2012. It will contain provisional estimates of vehicle speeds on locally managed 'A' roads between October 2011 and December 2011.