



Department for Transport

Travel time measures for the Strategic Road Network and Local 'A' roads, England: January to December 2020

About this release

This statistical release presents information about travel times on Strategic Road Network (roads managed by Highways England) and Local Highway Authority managed 'A' roads in England. The measures in this release are estimated using in-vehicle Global Positioning Systems. (GPS) observations.

In 2020, activity on the road network was impacted by events related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Take caution when comparing data with previous time periods (see Page 3).

Average delay on the Strategic Road Network decreased by 2.8 seconds per vehicle per mile (down 29.5%) and average delay on the local 'A' roads decreased by 10.1 seconds per vehicle per mile (down 23.0%).

On the Strategic Road Network (SRN) in 2020:

- ▶ The **average delay** is estimated to be **6.7 seconds per vehicle per mile compared to speed limits**, a 29.5% decrease on the previous year.
- ▶ The **average speed** was **61.8 mph**, up 5.1% from 2019.
- ▶ Reliability of travel times is measured using the Planning Time Index. This shows **42.1% of additional time is needed compared to speed limits**, on average, on individual roads sections to ensure on time arrival. This is down 25.2 percentage points compared to 2019.

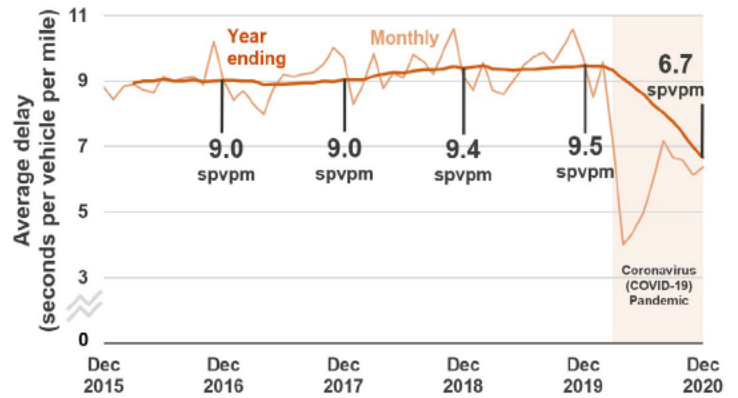


Figure 1: Average delay, compared to speed limits, on the Strategic Road Network (Table [CGN0402a](#))

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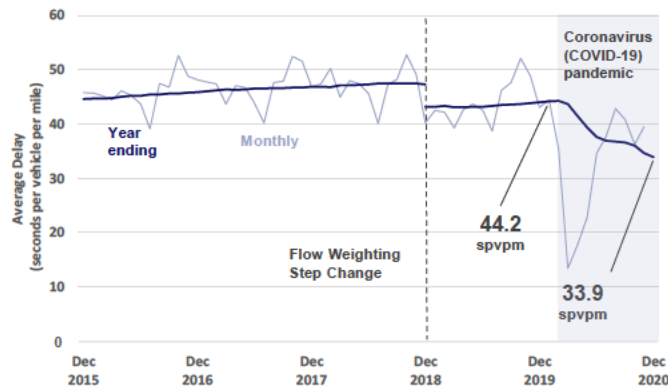


Figure 2: Average delay, compared to free flow, on local 'A' roads (Table [CGN0502a](#))

On local 'A' Roads in 2020:

- ▶ The **average delay** is estimated to be **33.9 seconds per vehicle per mile compared to free flow**, down 23.0% compared to 2019.
- ▶ The **average speed** was **27.3 mph**, up 7.9% from 2019.

Strategic Road Network, in 2020

Definitions

Average speed is in miles per hour and is an estimate of the physical level of congestion.

Free flow speed is the estimated speed of the traffic if there was no congestion. This is calculated differently for SRN and local 'A' roads.

Average delay is the difference between speed limit (SRN) or free flow (local 'A' roads) travel times and recorded average journey times.

LCV - Light Commercial Vehicles

Average delay

seconds per vehicle per mile

6.7 spvpm
 ↓ **2.8** spvpm
 29.5% decrease on 2019

Average speed

miles per hour (mph)

61.8 mph
 ↑ **3.0** mph
 5.1% increase on 2019

Reliability



42.1%

additional time is needed compared to speed limit flow



down 25.2 percentage points on 2019

Sample

100 % cars



Monthly average, over 18,000 cars

Local 'A' Roads, in 2020

Average speed

miles per hour (mph)

27.3 mph
 ↑ **2.0** mph
 8.2% increase on 2019

Sample



62%

38%

Monthly average, over 82,000 cars and LCVs

Average delay

seconds per vehicle per mile (spvpm)

33.9 spvpm

↓ **10.1** spvpm
 22.8% decrease on 2019



Weekday morning
 (7am - 10am)

37.7 spvpm



Weekday inter peak
 (10am - 4pm)

38.7 spvpm



Urban

56.4 spvpm



Rural

16.7 spvpm



Weekday evening
 (4pm - 7pm)

43.2 spvpm



Weekday off peak
 (7pm - 7am)

17.1 spvpm

Notes on the Methodology and sample

Multiple methods were evaluated to find the best predictor of the congestion metrics without the impact of the pandemic.

As a comparator to the observed levels of speeds and journey times, both free flow speeds and journey time from 12 March 2020 onwards were replaced with the equivalent days' data from 2019. This method is in line with the approach adopted by other related statistical series.

Validation of the model was conducted by comparing the estimates for January and February 2020.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Effect on Congestion

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had a marked impact on everyday life, including on congestion on the road network. As these data have been affected by the ongoing pandemic, caution should be taken when interpreting these statistics and comparing them with previous time periods.

Exploratory analysis was conducted to estimate the impact of the coronavirus on congestion. A fall in the number of vehicles on the roads can be seen from when the national lockdown was announced in March. Therefore in the exploratory analysis, data has been considered as "affected by the pandemic" from 12th March 2020.

On both the SRN and the local 'A' roads, delay dropped drastically in April. While delay on the local 'A' roads were similar to expected levels in August and September, delay on the SRN has remained low since March. A more indepth analysis, with interactive maps, is available on [ArcGIS online](#).

On the SRN:

- ▶ In April 2020, the delay was half of the delay estimated without the impact of coronavirus on travel.
- ▶ In December 2020, the delay is still two thirds of the estimated delay without the impact of coronavirus on travel.

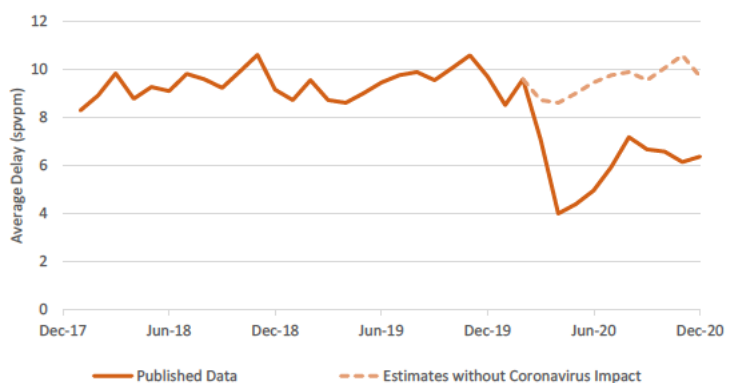


Figure 3: Average monthly delay, compared to estimates without coronavirus impact on the SRN.

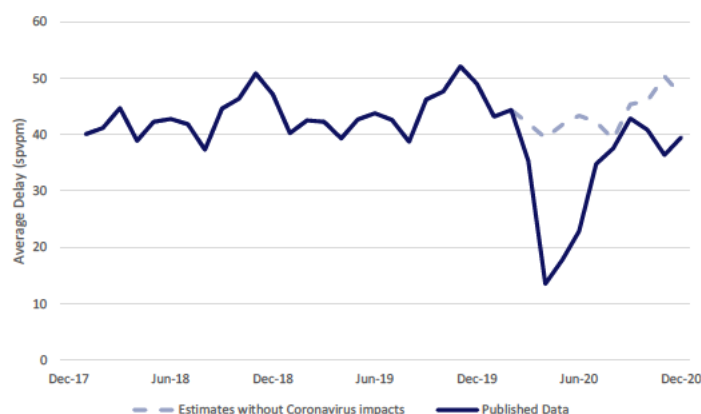




Figure 4: Average monthly delay, compared to estimates without coronavirus impact on Local 'A' Roads.

On the local 'A' roads:

- ▶ In April 2020, the delay is almost two thirds lower than the estimated delay without the impact of coronavirus on travel.
- ▶ In August and September 2020, the average delay is almost the same as the estimated delay without the impact of coronavirus on travel.

Notes about Strategic Road Network (SRN) and Local 'A' Road metrics

This release brings together figures from the SRN and local 'A' roads. There are multiple measures that are included in this report to demonstrate the levels of congestion including average speeds, reliability, and delay. Details on this data and the considerations that must be accounted for are included in the table below.

What do Congestion Statistics tell us?	 Understanding The Data	 Important Considerations
<i>What Comparisons Can be Made?</i>	<p>Trends across all years can be compared on the 'SRN'.</p> <p>Due to a step change in 2019 the local 'A' roads data can only be compared on a rolling year basis from December 2018 onwards.</p>	<p>Methodological differences prevent comparisons between road types, while seasonality makes quarter on quarter comparisons inadvisable. Details are available in the Background Quality Report</p>
<i>Interpreting Average Delay</i>	<p>Delay is recorded across all 24 hours of a day on a seconds per vehicle per mile (spvm) basis. Delay here is compared to free flow conditions or the maximum speed limit journey time.</p> <p>This can be an indication of the relative congestion on the network.</p>	<p>Road users do not expect free flow conditions so consciously build in additional time for journeys. Delay may therefore be perceived as relative to expected conditions.</p>
<i>Interpreting Average Speed Data</i>	<p>Average Speeds are weighted by road traffic flows to represent the volume of traffic at different locations and times of day.</p> <p>This can indicate the level of physical congestion on the network.</p>	<p>SRN average speeds only include cars. The local 'A' Roads include cars and vans and additionally weight by day type, urban/rural and Local Authority distinctions.</p>
<i>Interpreting Reliability Measures</i>	<p>The reliability measures provide the additional journey time required to travel across one link compared to free-flowing conditions.</p>	<p>Reliability measures are calculated for the daytime hours (6am-8pm).</p>

Introduction to Average Speed on the SRN

This measure reflects the average speed of cars on the SRN across the entire day (24 hour period).

The measure weights speed observations from a sample of vehicles by associated traffic flows so that it is representative of traffic volumes on the roads in different locations and at different times of day (as for average delay).

Geographical Network for SRN

These travel time measures are based on data matched to Highways England's National Traffic Information Service (NTIS) network in England.

Strategic Road Network (SRN): Summary figures

The summary table below (Figure 5) presents average speed and delay on the SRN in England for 2020. The values for the previous year (2019), and the percentage change in average speeds and delays are also shown.

	Year ending Dec-2020	Year ending Dec-2019	% Change
Average speed (miles per hour)	61.8	58.8	⬆️ 5.1%
Average delay (seconds per vehicle per mile)	6.7	9.5	⬆️ 29.5%
Reliability (% additional time)	42.1%	67.3%	⬆️ 25.3pp

pp = percentage point

Figure 5: Summary of recent changes in average speed, average delay compared to speed limit, and reliability on SRN in England (Tables [CGN0401a](#), [CGN0402a](#) and [CGN0403](#))

SRN: Average Speed

For 2020, the average speed on the SRN was 61.8 mph. This is a 5.1% increase on 2019, which means on average vehicles were moving at a much higher speed in 2020 compared to 2019. Previously, the annual average speed had remained broadly stable from March 2016 up until March 2020, decreasing by 0.5 mph (a 0.8% decrease) over this period. However, between March 2020 to December 2020, the average speed increased steadily by 3.0 mph, a 5.1% increase.

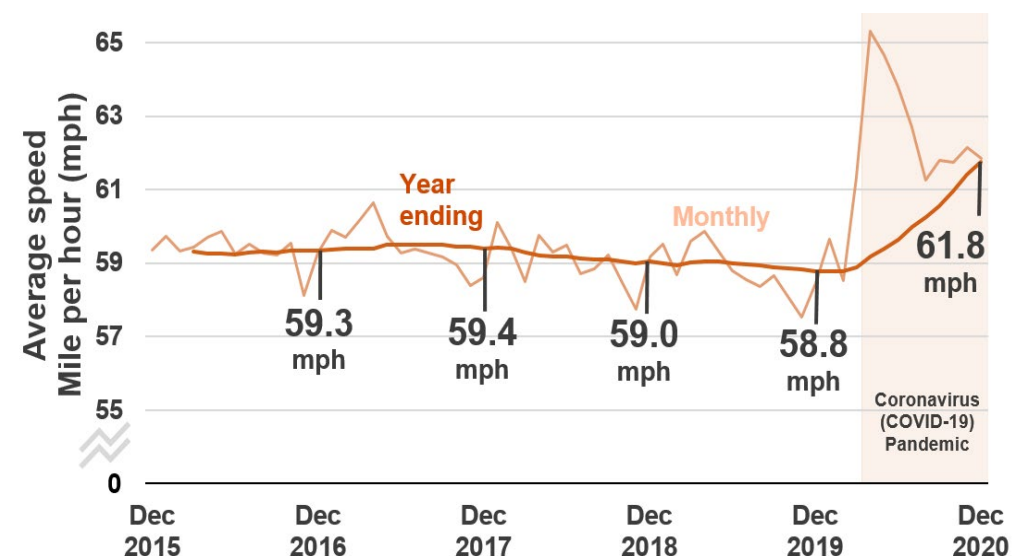


Figure 6: Average speed on the Strategic Road Network (Table [CGN0401a](#))

SRN

Background

The SRN accounts for less than 3% of the road network in England by length and traditionally carries around a third of all the traffic.

Free Flow on SRN

Free flow travel times, which apply to both the average delay and reliability measures, are currently set equivalent to the speed limit, for each individual road section.

SRN: Average Delay

For 2020, the average delay on the SRN is estimated to be **6.7 seconds per vehicle per mile (spvpm)** compared to speed limits. This is 29.5% lower compared to 2019, which means on average there was notably less delay in 2020 compared to 2019.

Longer term trends usually show some seasonality particularly when we move to and from British Summer Time. The average delay is slightly higher when clocks go back at the end of October, which might be attributed to darker mornings leading to people getting up later and therefore more people on the roads during peak time. In April, when we move to British Summer Time, the average delay is slightly lower, which could be attributed to people getting up earlier as it is lighter so there is fewer people on the roads during peak time. These trends have not been observed in 2020,

Previously, the annual average speed had remained broadly stable from March 2016 up until March 2020, increasing by **0.4 spvpm (up 4.5%)**. However, between March 2016 to December 2020 the average delay decreased by **2.6 spvpm (down 28.0%)**.

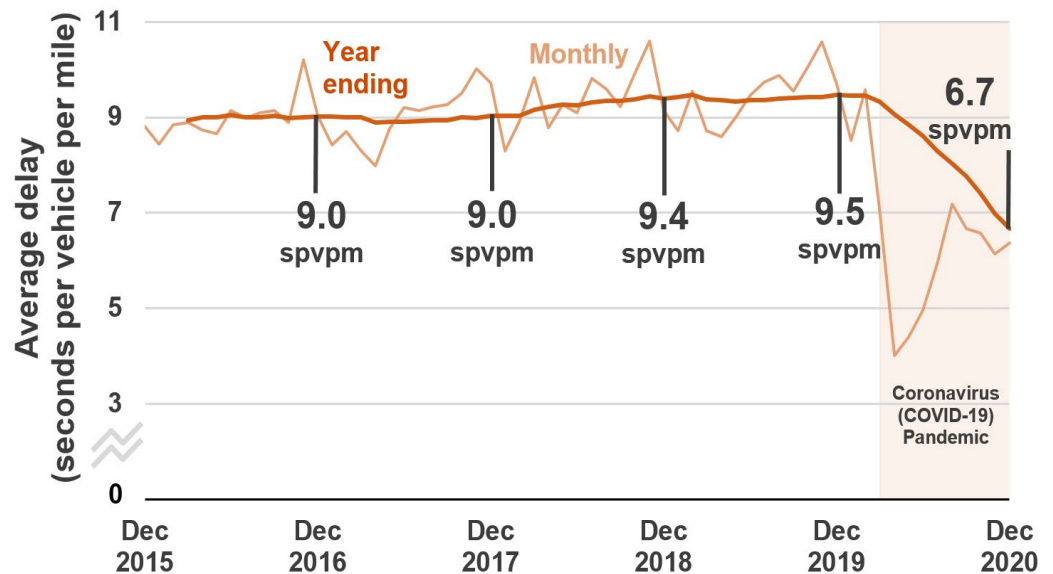


Figure 7: Average delay on the SRN (Table [CGN0402a](#))

Average Delay Example

Consider a road section of 10 miles, with a free flow speed of 60 mph. If a vehicle was able to travel at the free flow speed, it would take 10 minutes to traverse this section of road.

If, instead, the vehicle is only able to travel at an average speed of 50 mph, it would take 12 minutes to traverse the road section.

As this would take an extra 2 minutes (or 120 seconds) to travel the 10 miles, the average delay for this vehicle per mile would be 12 seconds.

Technical note for reliability on SRN

For reliability measure, there are several further definitions. A 'journey' represents travel across one link on the network. An 'on time journey' is defined as one which is completed within a set reference time. Free flow reference times are based on actual speed limits.

Unlike the average delay and average speed figures, which are calculated across all 24 hours of the day, the reliability figures are calculated across daytime hours (6am to 8pm) - where network demand is at its highest.

SRN: Reliability

For 2020, on average, **42.1% of additional time was required compared to speed limits**, to ensure on time arrival on individual road sections of the SRN. This is **25.2 percentage points lower** compared to 2019 so, on average, a **much smaller proportion of additional time** is required to ensure on time arrival. This means on average the network is a lot more reliably.

The index of reliability remained broadly stable from March 2016 up until March 2020, decreasing by **0.1 percentage points** from December 2019, so on average a **slightly higher proportion of additional time** was required to ensure on time arrival. However, between March 2020 to December 2020 the index of reliability decreased by **24.2 spvpm**.

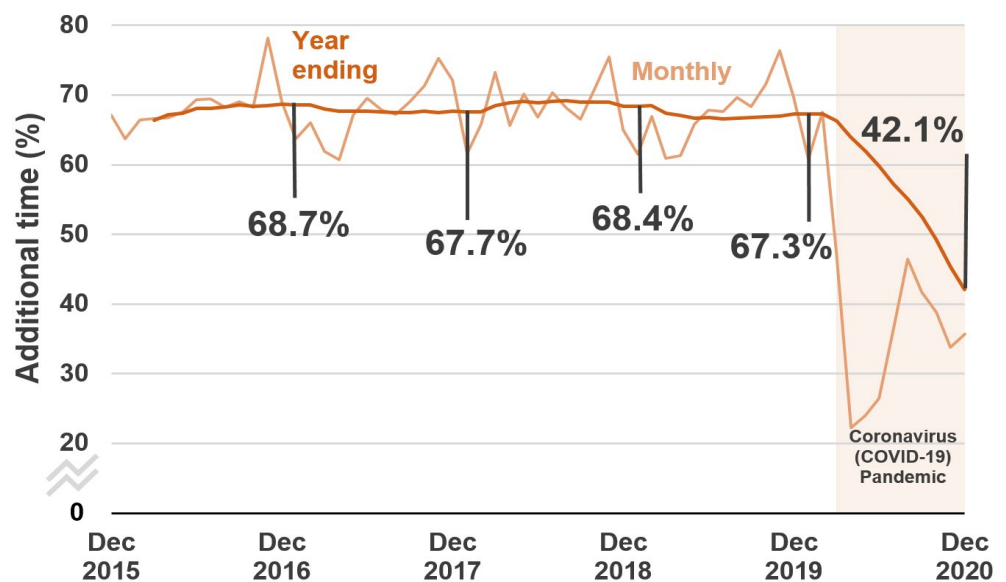


Figure 8: Additional time needed compared to free flow to ensure on time arrival on the Strategic Road Network (Table [CGN0403](#))

The Planning Time Index (PTI or Reliability) monitors the amount of time that would need to be added to speed limits travel times to have a 95% chance of arriving at a destination on time. This is measured as a percentage.

Reliability on the SRN as a whole is calculated by averaging the Planning Time Index (PTI) across individual road sections, weighting by daytime (6am to 8pm) traffic flows for each section. The PTI does not represent the reliability of start to end journeys, across several road sections.

Reliability Example

As an illustrative case, consider an individual road section with a PTI of 60%, for a given year. If the travel time for this section in free flow conditions is 10 minutes, 95% of users leaving 16 minutes to traverse that road section would have arrived on time. Equivalently, users leaving 16 minutes to traverse the same road section would have been on time 19 times out of 20 in the year.

STBs

The Subnational Transport Bodies are transport bodies, formed of multiple local highways authorities to provide large-scale strategic governance. STBs are given statutory power through secondary legislation, with Transport for the North being the first.

SRN: Subnational Transport Bodies (STBs)

Average speed

The majority of STBs recorded an average speed over 61 mph in 2020, with Greater London Authority the only STB recording a speed below 59 mph. This is a noticeable increase on the 2019 figures, where only Western Gateway and Peninsula Transport recorded speeds above 60 mph.

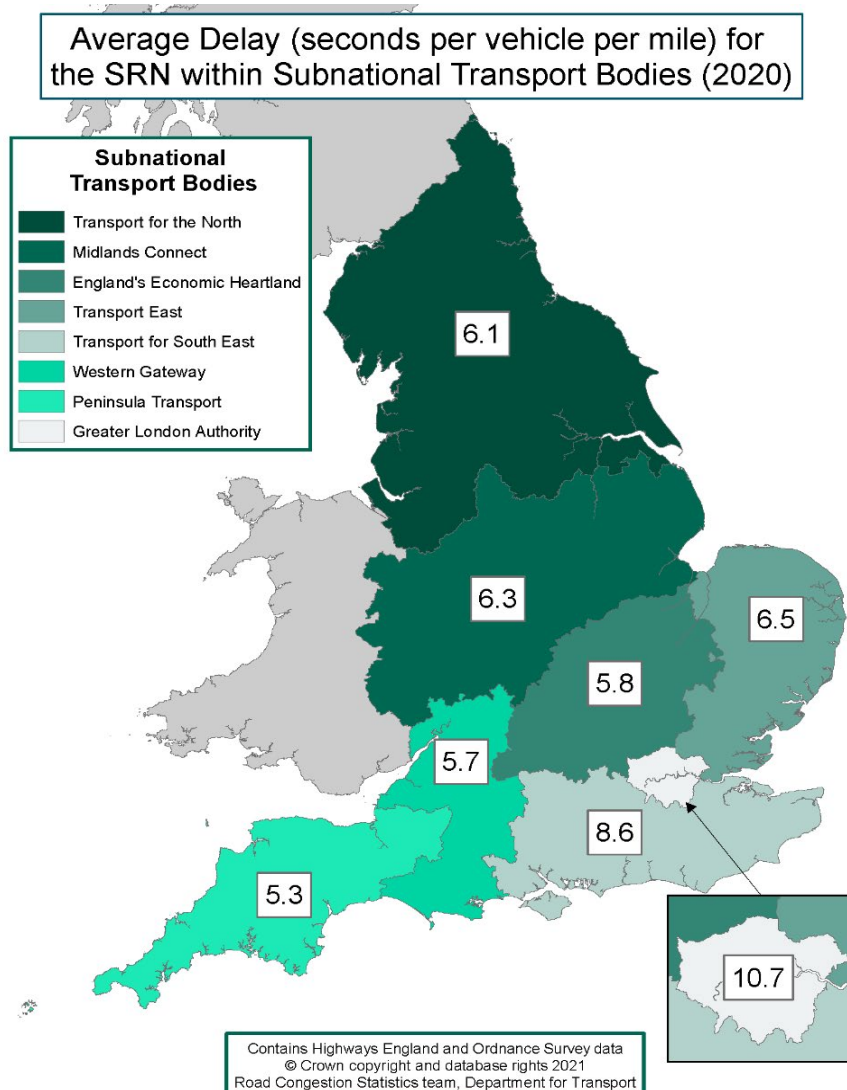
Average delay

The majority of STBs recorded an average delay of between 5.3 and 6.5 seconds per vehicle per mile (spvpm) in 2020, with Transport for South East and Greater London Authority recording much higher delay. However the SRN roads within these STBs have historically tended to record high levels of delay. Delay in all STBs is noticeably lower than in 2019, where the majority of STBs recorded delay figures above 8.0 spvpm.

STB level tables

Travel time measures for individual junctions on the SRN are available from January 2019 onwards.

The monthly **average speed** and **average delay** for SRN roads within STBs can be found in Tables [CGN0401c](#) and [CGN0402c](#).



Figures 9: Average delay on the Strategic Road Network in England, 2020

Junction level figures

While changes in speed and delay between years may appear large in some cases, the variations should be interpreted with caution. When travel time figures are based on data from a single road they are more sensitive to disturbances such as road works and other local events. Therefore, road level speed and delay are expected to have greater variation from year to year than national figures.

Junction level tables

Travel time measures for individual junctions on the SRN are available from 2017 onwards.

The annual **average speed** and **average delay** figures for individual junctions can be found in Tables **CGN0401b** and **CGN0402b**.

SRN: Junction Level Measures

Figure 10 shows the average delay on the SRN in England at a junction level to give more granularity. An interactive version of this map for average delay and speed is available on [ArcGIS Online](#).

Average speed

The majority of junctions had an average speed over 60 mph in 2020. Around a fifth of junctions had average speeds of less than 45 mph such as the A27 in West Sussex or A49 in Herefordshire. Several roads in and around major cities, such as the A57 in Tameside, recorded average speeds of 40 mph or below. This may be due to the road type, as it is harder to achieve high speeds on single carriageways or where junctions and roundabouts are closer together.

Average delay

The average delay is less than 9 spvpm across England in 2020, however, around major cities, the delay increases to around 15 spvpm. This could be due to the high demand on the network around them relative to their capacity. The roads with the greatest increases in delay also tended to have the greatest decreases in average speed. These were primarily in areas with ongoing roadworks, implemented as part of the Road Investment Strategy (RIS), reducing lane availability, such as on the M4 in the South East and the M6 in the North West.

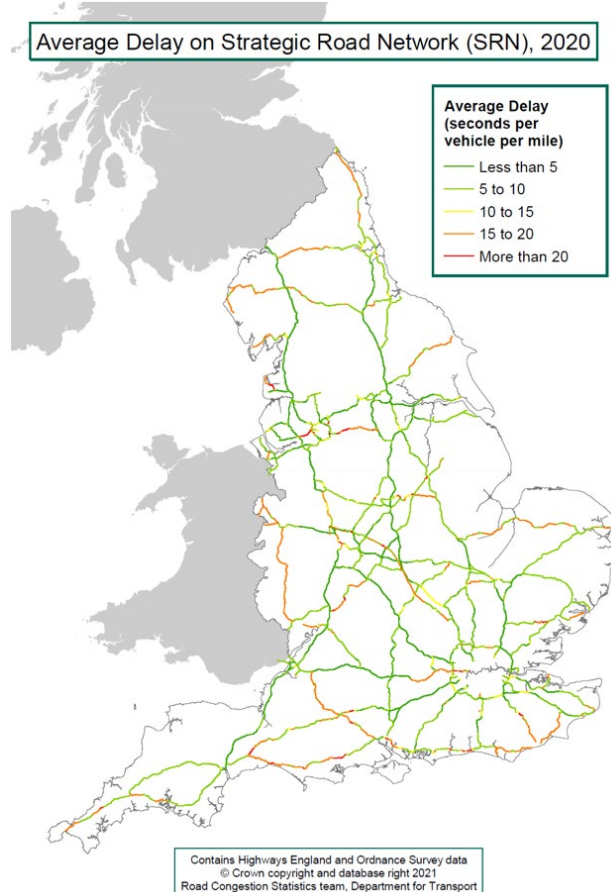


Figure 10: Average delay on the Strategic Road Network in England, 2020

Local 'A' roads fact

The local 'A' road network accounts for around 10% of all English roads by length, but traditionally carries around a third of all traffic.

Local 'A' Roads: Summary figures

The summary table below (Figure 11) presents average speed and delay on local 'A' roads in England in 2020 for specified time periods and road type. The corresponding values for the previous year (2019), and the percentage change in average speeds and delays are also shown.

The speed and delay statistics in 2020 were affected by changes in travel behaviour associated with the measures to limit the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic and thus the percentage change from previous year is more pronounced than usual.

	Year ending Dec-20	Year ending Dec-19	% Change	
Average speed (miles per hour)				
All day (24 hour period)	27.3	25.3	⬆️	7.9%
Time periods				
Weekday morning peak (7am-10am)	26.5	23.7	⬆️	11.8%
Weekday inter peak (10am-4pm)	26.3	24.8	⬆️	6.0%
Weekday evening peak (4pm-7pm)	25.5	22.2	⬆️	14.9%
Weekday off peak (7pm-7am)	31.7	30.8	⬆️	2.9%
Road classification				
Urban roads	20.3	18.0	⬆️	12.8%
Rural roads	37.3	35.9	⬆️	3.9%
Average delay (seconds per vehicle per mile)				
All day (24 hour period)	33.9	44.0	⬇️	-23.0%
Peak times				
Weekday morning peak (7am-10am)	37.7	53.4	⬇️	-29.4%
Weekday inter peak (10am-4pm)	38.7	46.2	⬇️	-16.2%
Weekday evening (4pm-7pm)	43.2	63.4	⬇️	-31.9%
Weekday off peak (7pm-7am)	17.1	19.0	⬇️	-10.0%
Road classification				
Urban roads	56.4	75.7	⬇️	-25.5%
Rural roads	16.7	20.5	⬇️	-18.5%

Figure 11: Summary of recent changes in average speed and average delay compared to free flow on local 'A' roads in England (Tables [CGN0501a](#) and [CGN0502a](#))

Introduction to average speed on local 'A' roads

This measure reflects the average speed of vehicles on local 'A' roads across the entire day (24 hour period).

The measure weights speed observations from a sample of vehicles by associated traffic flows so that it is representative of traffic volumes on the roads in different locations and at different times of day (as for average delay). The weighting for local 'A' roads also weights by hour, day type, month, urban and rural classification and local authority.

Geographical network for local 'A' roads

These travel time measures are based on data matched to the Ordnance Survey Highways Network representation of the local 'A' road network in England.

Local 'A' roads: Average speed

National overview of average speed

The **average speed on local 'A' roads in England** across 24 hours in **2020** is estimated to be **27.3 mph**. This is **7.9% higher** than in 2019. Due to changes in the underlying road traffic data, which is used to flow weight local 'A' roads data, there has been step change in average speeds from 2019 onwards. Therefore, it is not possible to compare average speeds from 2019 to those prior.

From January 2019 to March 2020, the rolling annual average speed has remained broadly stable, changing less than 0.1% from the previous months (Figure 12). However, the ongoing effects of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from March 2020 on wider travel activity has led to the average speed steadily increasing by up to 1.6% from the previous months.

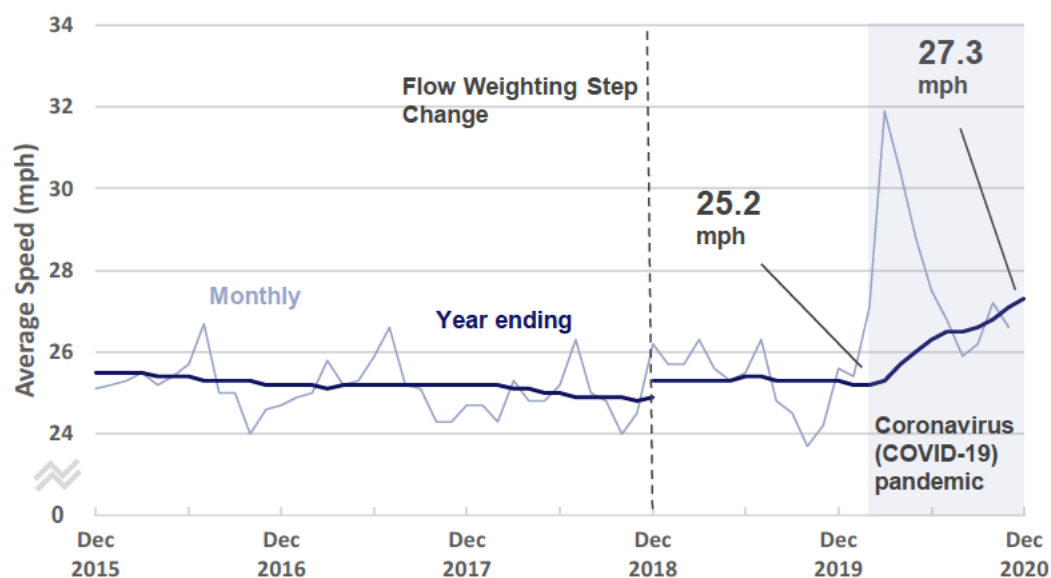


Figure 12: Average speed on local 'A' roads in England (Table [CGN0501a](#))

Average speed at peak times

Average speed on local 'A' roads during the **weekday morning peak** (7am to 10am) is **26.5 mph** in 2020. This is an increase of 11.8% compared to 2019. For the **weekday evening peak** (4pm to 7pm), the average speed in 2020 is **25.5 mph**, corresponding to an increase of 14.9% relative to 2019.

The average speed in 2020 for **weekday inter peak** (10 am to 4 pm) is **26.3 mph**, an increase of 6.0% compared to 2019. To a smaller extent, the **weekday off peak** (7 pm to 7 am) average speed is **31.7 mph**, corresponding to an increase of 2.9% relative to 2019.

Definition

For statistical purposes, DfT defines 'urban' roads to be those within a settlement of 10,000 people or more. This is consistent with the [Rural and Urban Area Classification 2011](#). All other roads are defined as 'rural'.

Free flow on local 'A' roads

Free flow travel times (used to calculate the average delay measure) are currently calculated using the 85th percentile speed observation, for each individual road section. These are 'capped' at national speed limits.

Average speed on urban and rural roads

On **urban classified local 'A' roads**, average speed is **20.3 mph** in 2020, an increase of 2.3 mph, or 12.8%, from 2019. On **rural classified local 'A' roads**, the average speed is **37.3 mph** in 2020, corresponding to an increase of 1.4 mph (3.9%) relative to 2019.

Despite the differences in speed between the two road types, drivers on urban and rural Local 'A' roads may perceive changes in speed levels differently.

Local 'A' roads: Average delay

National overview of average delay

The **average delay on local 'A' roads in England** across 24 hours in **2020** is estimated to be **33.9 seconds per vehicle per mile (spvpm)** compared to free flow. This is a 10.1 spvpm decrease, or **23.0% decrease**, compared to 2019. This means that, on average, there was considerably less delay in 2020 than in 2019, related in changes to travel behavior associated to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Due to changes in the underlying road traffic data used to weight the local 'A' roads data, there is a step change in the average delay (Figure 13) from January 2019. Therefore, a comparison to the years prior to 2019 is not possible.

From January 2019 to March 2020, the average delay has remained broadly similar with change being less than 1.4%. However, the ongoing effects of the coronavirus pandemic on travel behaviour has led to a steady decline in average delay from April 2020 onwards, sometimes as

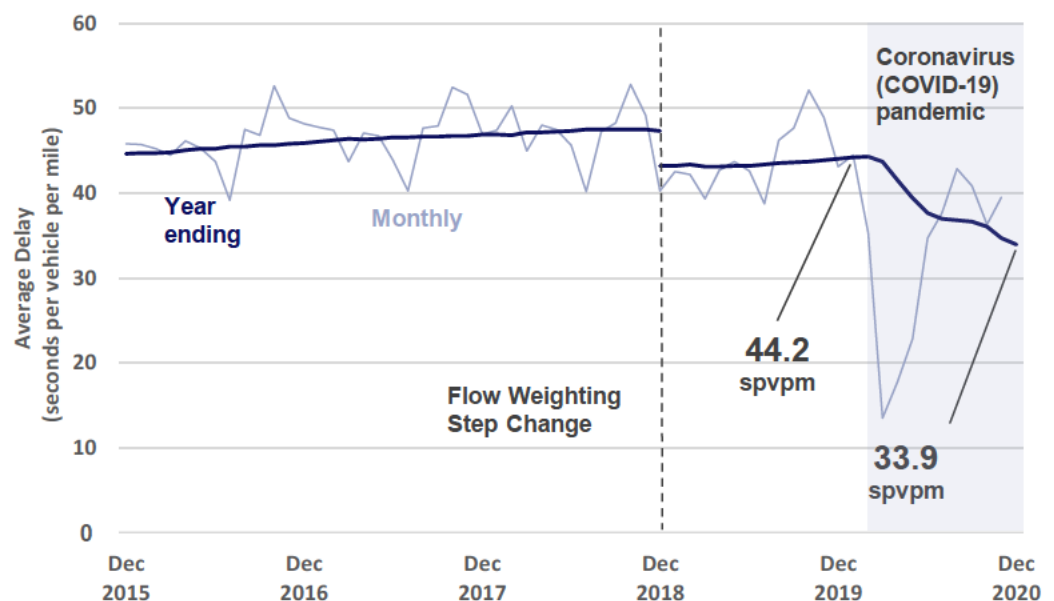


Figure 13: Average delay on Local 'A' roads (Table [CGN0502a](#))

Local 'A' roads fact

Almost one third of the English local 'A' road network is classified as urban with the remaining two-thirds classified as rural.

Average delay at peak times

In 2020, average delay on local 'A' roads during the **weekday morning peak** (7am to 10am) is **37.7 spvpm**. This corresponds to a decrease in delay of 15.7 spvpm, or 29.4% decrease, compared to 2019.

The average delay in 2020 on local 'A' roads during **weekday evening peak** (4pm to 7pm) is **43.2 spvpm** compared to free flow. This represents a decrease of 20.2 spvpm (or 31.9%), compared to 2019.

Outside of peak hours, in 2020, the average delay in the **inter peak** period (10am to 4pm) is estimated to be **38.7 spvpm** (down 16.2%), while the weekday off peak period (7pm to 7am) was **17.1 spvpm**, down 10.0% compared to 2019.

Average delay on urban and rural roads

On **urban classified local 'A' roads**, average delay was **56.4 spvpm** in 2020, compared to **16.7 spvpm on rural classified local 'A' roads**. These have both decreased compared to 2019, by 25.5% and 18.5%, respectively.

Example: Average delay on urban and rural local 'A' roads

It is important to note that urban roads generally have lower free flow speeds than rural roads. As a result, a fixed absolute decrease in observed speeds will generally translate into a higher level of delay on urban roads relative to rural roads. An example of this is illustrated in Figure 14.

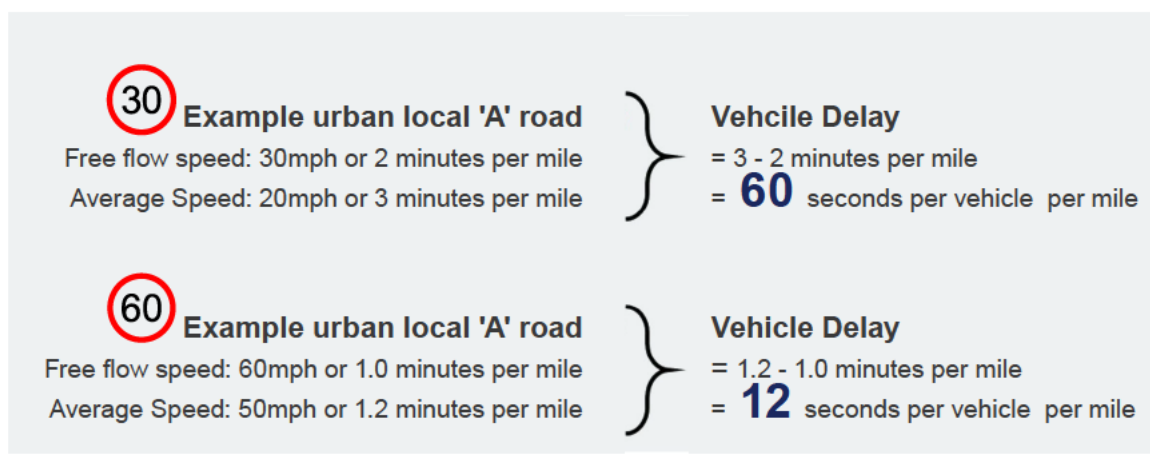


Figure 14: Illustrative example of average delay on urban and rural local 'A' roads

STBs

The Sub-national Transport Bodies are transport bodies formed of multiple local highways authorities to provide large-scale strategic governance. STBs are given statutory power through secondary legislation, with Transport for the North being the first.

The monthly **average speed** and **average delay** for Local 'A' roads within STBs can be found in Tables **CGN0501b** and **CGN0502b**.

Local 'A' roads: Sub-national Transport Bodies (STBs)

Average Speed

Both in 2020 and in 2019, the average speeds in the Greater London Authority has been lowest whereas the average speeds have been highest for the Transport for South East STB. In every STB, the speed has increased relative to 2019, although the increase ranges from 1.3 mph to 3.3 mph, corresponding to rates of change varying from 4.2% to 22.4%.

Average Delay

Figure 15 shows the average delay in each STB in 2020. The average delay in 2020 is lower than it was in 2019 in every STB however, the amount by which it decreased ranges 3.8 spvpm to 30.9 spvpm, corresponding to a decrease between 14.9% and 29.4%.

Both the average speed and delay have been affected by related changes in travel behavior associated with Coronavirus pandemic response.

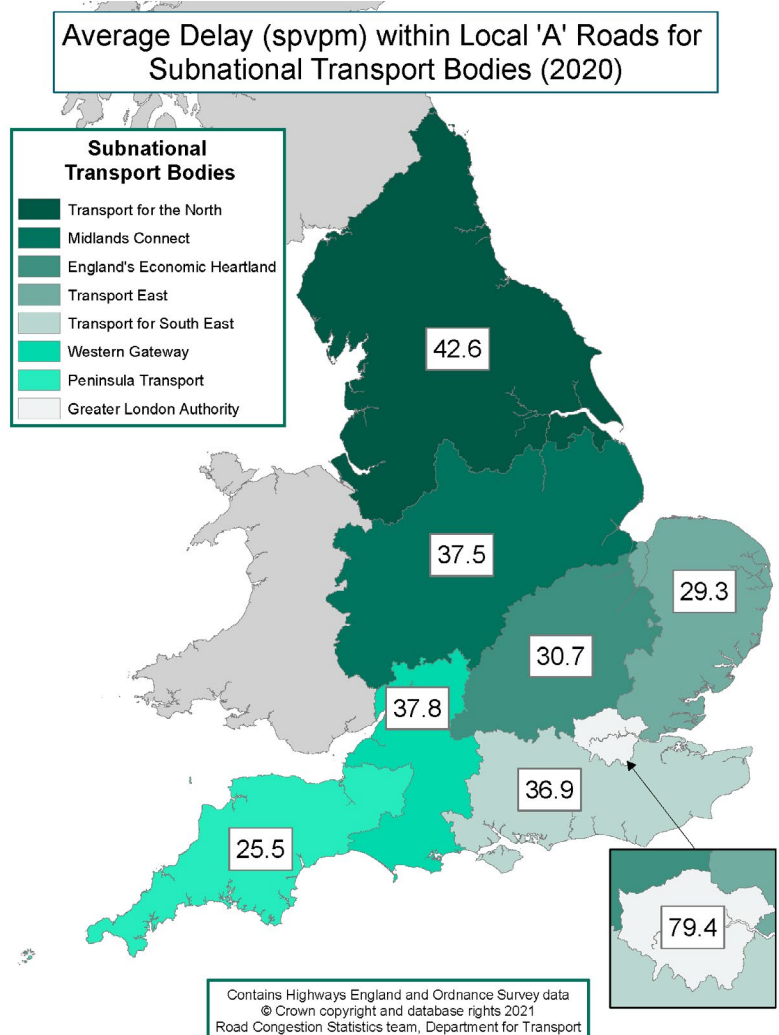


Figure 15: Average delay compared to free flow on local 'A' roads in England for Sub-national Transport Bodies (Table [CGN0502b](#)), 2020.

Regional and Local Highway Authority figures

The annual average speed for each region and Local Highway Authority can be found in Table [CGN0501b](#).

The annual average delay for each region and local highway authority

Local Highway Authority Boundaries

In April 2019 the geographical boundaries between Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch were changed. The local highway authority maps have been created with the boundaries as at 1st January 2019.

Local 'A' roads: Local authority

Average speed

As is the case for speed at the national level, the average speed at the local authority level also increased in 2020. There are only four local authorities where the speed decreased though the change is small (less than 2.3% or 0.8 mph): Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, North Lincolnshire and Dorset.

London has the lowest speed in England at 18.0 mph in 2020, though this is still an increase of 3.4 mph or 22.4% from 2019. The average speed in some boroughs such as Kingston upon Thames, Redbridge, Waltham Forrest and Ealing have increased by over 6.1 mph (40%).

Halton in the Northwest of England has the highest speed in 2020 at 41.6 mph, corresponding to an increase of 1.7 mph, or 4.3%, from 2019.

Average delay

The average delay in each local authority for 2020 is shown in Figure 16. The delay in almost every local authority has decreased relative to 2019 in relation to the changes in travel behaviour associated with coronavirus

pandemic. The only exception is Redcar and Cleveland where delay increased from 17.6 spvpm in 2019 to 19.7 spvpm in 2020, possibly linked to roadworks on the A19 since July 2020.

Local Authorities in Inner London continue to experience the highest levels of delay at 123.0 spvpm delay. This is followed by areas in the North West of England such as Manchester, Tameside and Liverpool, all having delay between 70 and 90 spvpm.

The East of England has the lowest delay at 23.7 spvpm.

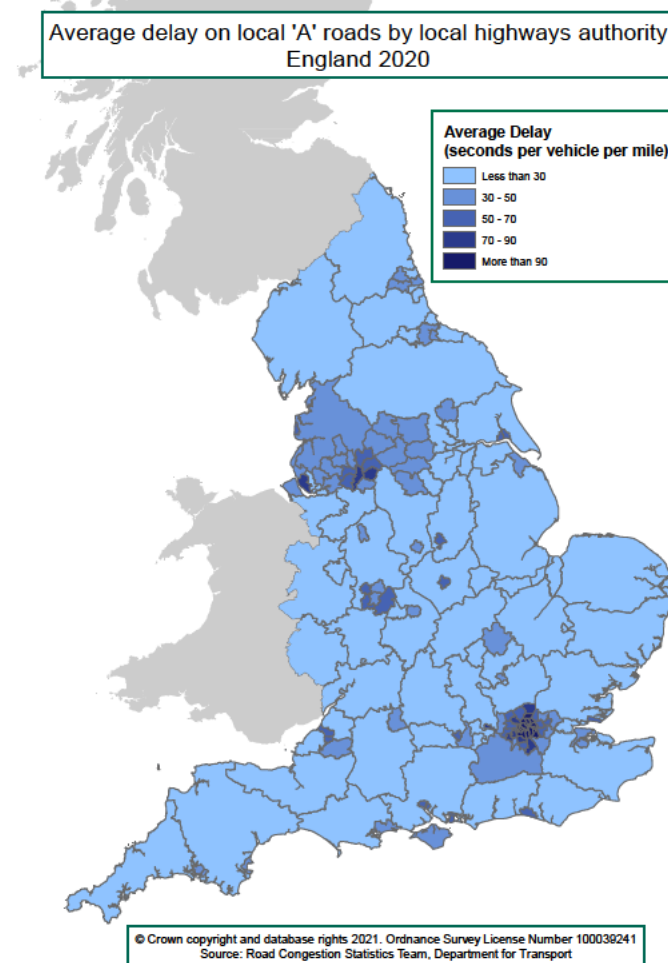


Figure 16: Average delay on local 'A' roads by Local Highway Authority in England, 2020

Road level speed and delay

Travel time measures for individual local 'A' roads are available from 2017 onwards.

The annual **average speed and average delay** for individual roads can be found in Tables **CGN0501c** and **CGN0502c**.

Local 'A' roads: Road level speed and delay

Average Speed

As in previous years, average speeds were the lowest on roads in London and other large cities such as Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool and Birmingham. On the vast majority of roads, the speed in 2020 has increased compared to 2019. The majority of roads where the speed has decreased are in London as well as some in Cornwall and Hertfordshire.

Average delay

On the vast majority of the local 'A' roads network, the average delay has decreased. As in the previous years, delay is highest in London. Figure 17 shows the average delay on the local 'A' road network.

An interactive version of the average delay and speed map is available on [ArcGIS Online](#).

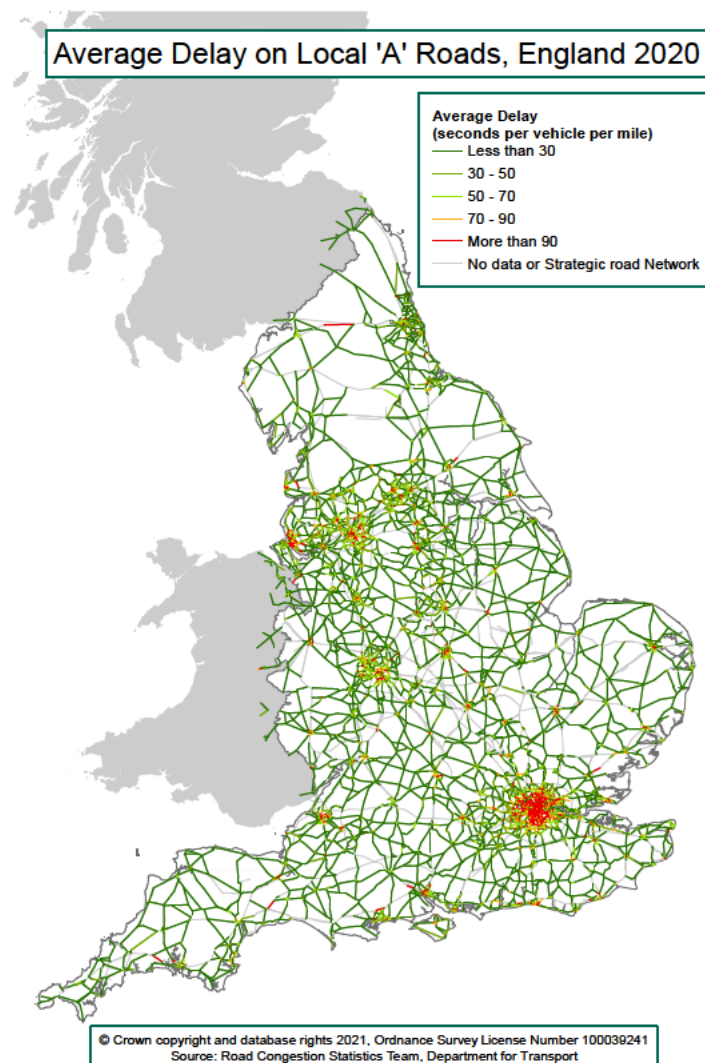


Figure 17: Average delay on local 'A' roads in England, 2020

Request for feedback



We are 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 listed on the front page of this release.

Context and user feedback

Measures for the Strategic Road Network (SRN) were developed as part of the first Road Investment Strategy (RIS1), which sets out a long-term programme for England's SRN.

The local 'A' road measures presented in this release were developed to provide a more complete picture of travel times on local 'A' roads and also to align with measures introduced for the SRN.

Following user feedback this release has developed the statistics to include Subnational Transport Body level data for the SRN and local 'A' roads. Interactive maps have also been developed using ArcGIS Online.

We will continue to review the content and presentation of these statistics, which we expect to develop further over time. Please contact us using the details at the bottom of the front page with any feedback you have, or if you would like further information.

National Statistics

Statistics on Road Reliability and Congestion were [designated as national statistics in 2012](#) signifying that they are produced to the high professional standards set out in the [Code of Practice](#) for Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs.

Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found [here](#).

Methodology and technical details

It is important to note that although there are figures for average speed and average delay on both networks, they are not directly comparable. A full explanation and further information on the data used, methodology, quality assurance and other sources of data can be found in the [Background Quality Report](#).

Due to methodological changes in the underlying traffic flow data used to weight the local 'A' road data, a break in the time series has been introduced to the 2019 estimates of average speed and delay. The 2018 data was calculated for quality assurance purposes, to calculate the 12 month rolling average, and the percentage change. Further information on this change, including a comparison of the 2018 data, can be found in the [methodology note](#).

Next update

The next tables in this series are expected to be published in June 2021. This will contain monthly, and annual (year ending) figures, for the period April 2020 to March 2021. This will include new figures for the period January 2021 to March 2021.

The next written report is expected to be published in February 2022, and will contain annual figures for 2021.



Department for Transport (DfT) statistics Twitter feed

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