

# One thing we have learnt this week – average driving speed

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[average traffic speed](#) The average driving speed (in England but I'm sure the story is the same on other nations) is falling according to Department for Transport figures. I've downloaded the data and plotted it out (shown above). The point is that with the average driving speed falling will it soon be quicker to cycle? The average speed has fallen from about 20mph to under 18mph in 4 years. Its easy to see from the trend line I've fitted to the data that the trend in the data that has a very regular pattern to it and that within another 8 years the average driving speed will be about 12mph. The average cycling [speed](#) is about 14mph for men and 12mph for women. So it does look like on the current trend in England it will soon be quicker to cycle than to drive. There are two very different conclusions you could draw from this data. The first is to build more roads and build your way out of the problem. History suggests this won't work. Besides in urban areas the scope for building more or wider roads is very limited. The second conclusion is that to reduce congestion you need to encourage the alternatives like walking, cycling and public transport. The advantages of this are obvious, better health, less pollution and a more pleasant cityscape. As you can see there are up and down spikes in the speed. These are higher during the summer holidays and fall again in November. Presumably as the weather worsens people start driving again and also snow can reduce speeds. This fact must have lessons to get people out their cars. You have to make as easy, cheap and pleasant as possible. Thanks to [Make Wealth History](#) for alerting me to this story. Neil

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