

G TRAVEL

Main messages

People made about the same number of journeys per year in 1985/86 compared with 1996/98, but their journeys were much longer. They made a quarter more journeys by car, significantly fewer journeys by public transport, bicycle or on foot and nearly twice as many children travelled to school by car.

People who had the highest incomes in 1996/98 – those in the top fifth – travelled over three times further than those whose incomes were in the lowest fifth.

Traffic congestion is expected to increase significantly by 2006.

Relevance

Although the car has brought many economic and social benefits, it has also brought problems. The cost of congestion runs into billions of pounds each year. Road traffic is one of the fastest growing contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, which cause climate change, and adds substantially to local air pollution and noise levels, damaging health.

The extent to which the key objectives identified in the Strategy are being achieved, as reflected by the indicators, is illustrated in the following table.

Key strategies

- *A better quality of life. A strategy for sustainable development in the UK. (7.26-7.32)*
- *A new deal for transport: Better for everyone.* The Government's white paper on the future of transport.¹

Some other related indicators:

Energy efficiency of road passenger travel/Average fuel consumption of new cars (**D15**); Leisure trips by mode of transport (**D17**); Freight transport by mode (**D20**); Respiratory illness (**F2**); People finding access difficult (**J1**); Noise levels (**K8**); Carbon dioxide emissions by end user (**N3**); Concentrations of selected air pollutants (**P1**); Real changes in the cost of transport (**T4**)

¹ July 1998, ISBN 0-10-139502-7

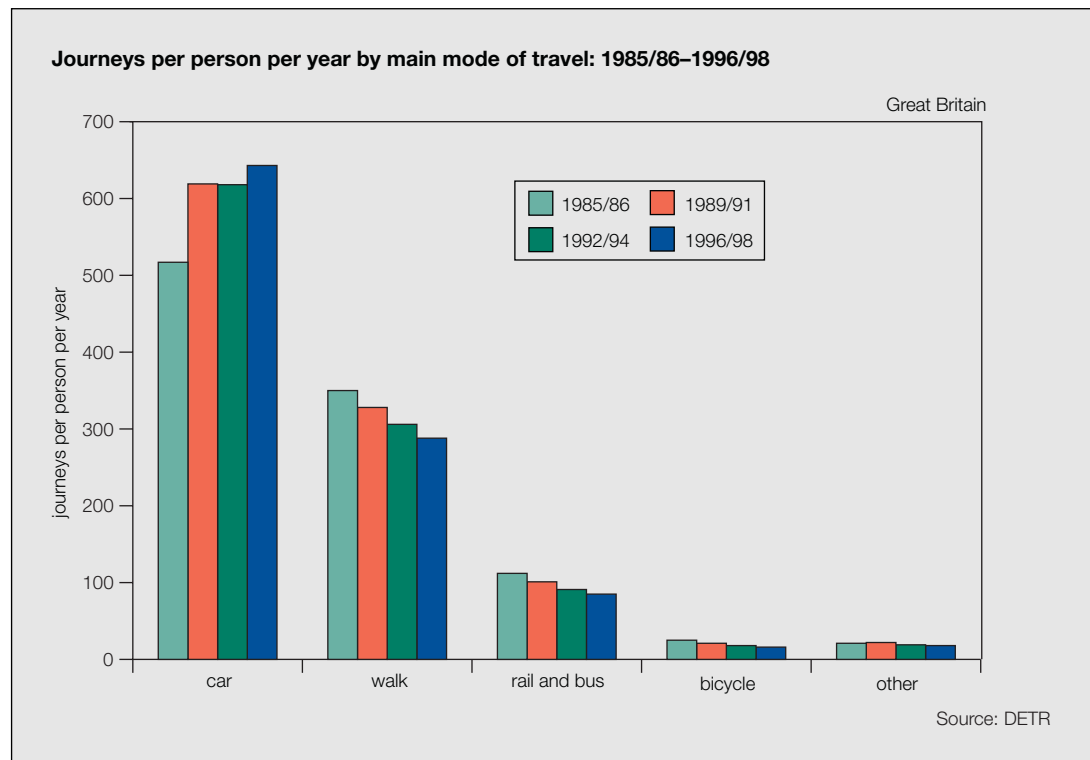
Objective	Ref no.	Indicator	Data used	Change since		Specific targets/goals
				1970	1990	
Improve choice in transport; improve access to education, jobs, leisure and services; and reduce the need to travel	H11	Road traffic (headline)	1950-1998	✗	≈	Reduce rate of growth, with an absolute reduction where environmental damage is greatest. Commission for Integrated Transport has remit to advise on target for England
	G1	Passenger travel by mode	1985/86-1996/98	✗	✗	Targets in place for railways in GB and cycling in UK
	G2	How children get to school	1985/86-1996/98	✗	✗	
	G3	Average journey length by purpose	1985/86-1996/98	✗	✗	
The cost of traffic congestion	G4	Traffic congestion	1996-1998	
The link between rising prosperity and increased travel must be broken	G5	Distance travelled relative to income	1985/86-1996/98	...	≈	

Key	
✓ significant change, in direction of meeting objective	✗ significant change, in direction away from meeting objective
≈ no significant change	••• trend is uncertain or no quantitative data available
na not applicable, in cases where the indicator is for contextual purposes	

Objective Improve choice in transport; improve access to education, jobs, leisure and services; and reduce the need to travel

Indicator Passenger travel by mode

G1



The number of journeys per person per year by car increased by 20 per cent in the second half of the 1980s, but by only a further 4 per cent between the surveys of 1992/94 and 1996/98. Journeys by public transport, bicycle and on foot all fell significantly over the period. There was little change in the total number of journeys each person made.

Relevance A key objective is to encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport more and their cars a little less, and to reduce the need to travel through better land use planning.

Targets and goals There is a target to achieve a 15 per cent increase in the number of rail passenger miles in GB between 1997/98 and 2001-2002. There also is a National Cycling Strategy target to double bicycle use in the UK between 1996 and 2002 to 32 bicycle journeys per person per year.

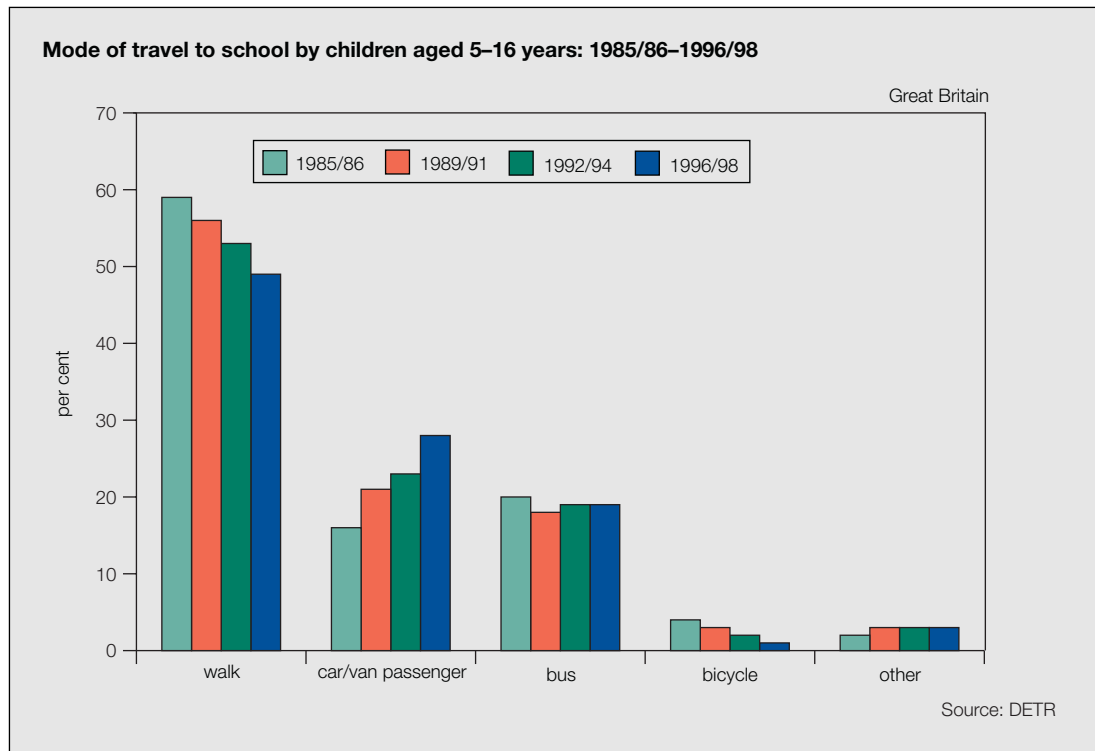
Trends Between 1985/86 and 1996/98 the number of journeys that were mainly on foot fell by 18 per cent and the number of bicycle journeys by 36 per cent. The number of rail journeys is now increasing after decades of little change and bus journeys have stabilised after a long decline.

Background The number of households with access to a car, the number of households with two or more cars, and the number of people holding a full driving licence all increased between 1985/86 and 1996/98, making it more likely that people would use a car.

Objective Improve choice in transport; improve access to education, jobs, leisure and services; and reduce the need to travel

Indicator How children get to school

G2



Between 1985/86 and 1996/98, the percentage of children (age 5-16) travelling to school by car nearly doubled from 16 to 28 per cent. The percentage walking or cycling to school has fallen commensurately.

Indicator A switch of school journeys to walking, cycling or bus would help to improve children’s health and reduce road traffic, congestion and air pollution.

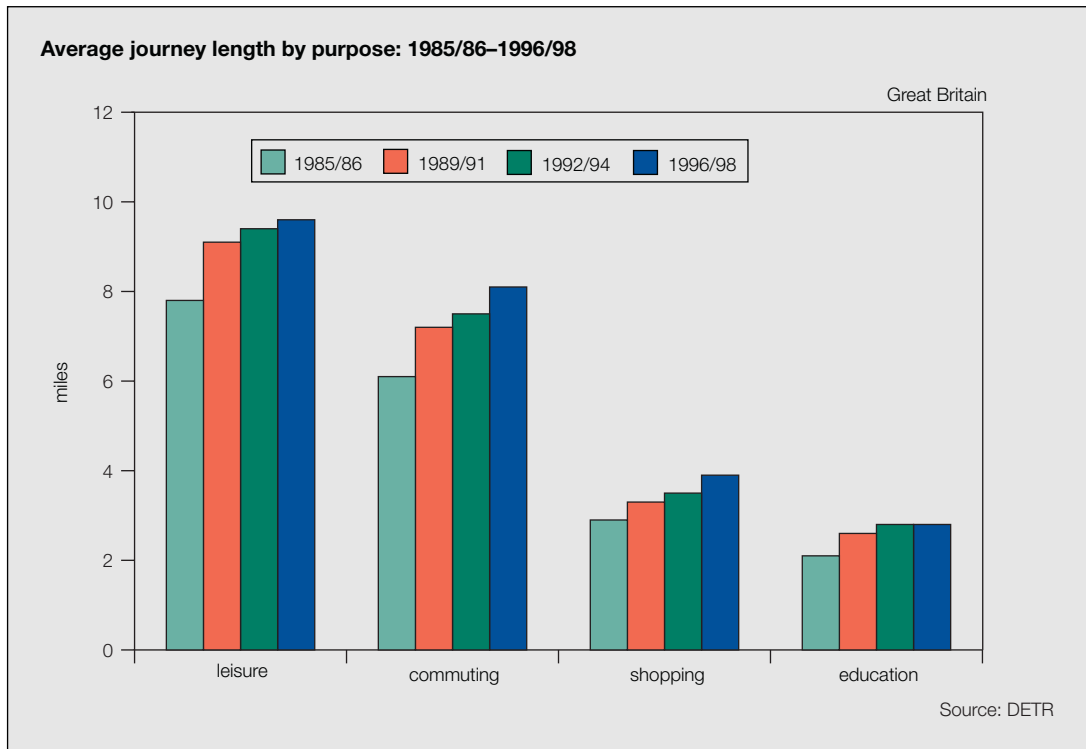
Trends Walking is still the dominant mode accounting for 49 per cent of journeys. However, car use has increased substantially, bus use has remained fairly constant, and cycling has decreased.

Background Cars taking children to school are an increasing share of road traffic in the morning peak period. The greatest volume in 1996/98 was at 8.50 am when 18 per cent of road traffic in urban areas was generated by the school run, compared with 14 per cent in 1989/91.

Objective Improve choice in transport; improve access to education, jobs, leisure and services; and reduce the need to travel

Indicator Average journey length by purpose

G3



Between 1985/86 and 1996/98, the average distance travelled by people for commuting, education and shopping have all increased by about a third and those for leisure by nearly a quarter.

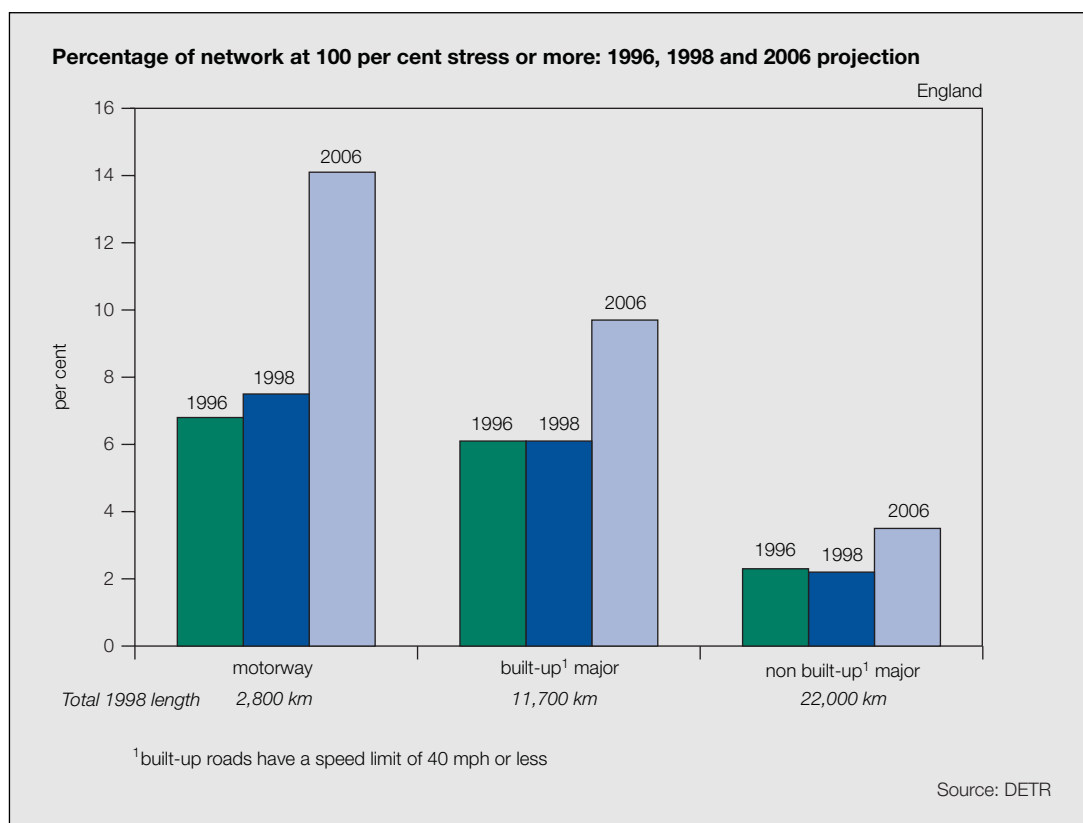
Relevance People need better access to services without having to travel further. Bringing shops, jobs and leisure facilities closer to where people live, through better planning, should help to reduce the need to travel.

Background Many journeys that were once short enough to walk are now much longer, caused by and contributing to the continued growth in car use. Examples are the growth of out-of-town shopping centres, multiplex cinemas, offices located near motorways and larger school and hospital catchment areas.

Objective The cost of traffic congestion

Indicator Traffic congestion

G4



If no action is taken, the likely effect of further traffic growth is to increase the proportion of the motorway network subject to 100% stress or more by about 90 per cent between 1998 and 2006, and that of major roads by about 60 per cent.

Relevance Estimates suggest that the cost of congestion amounts to billions of pounds each year. Congestion increases people’s journey times and causes additional air pollution.

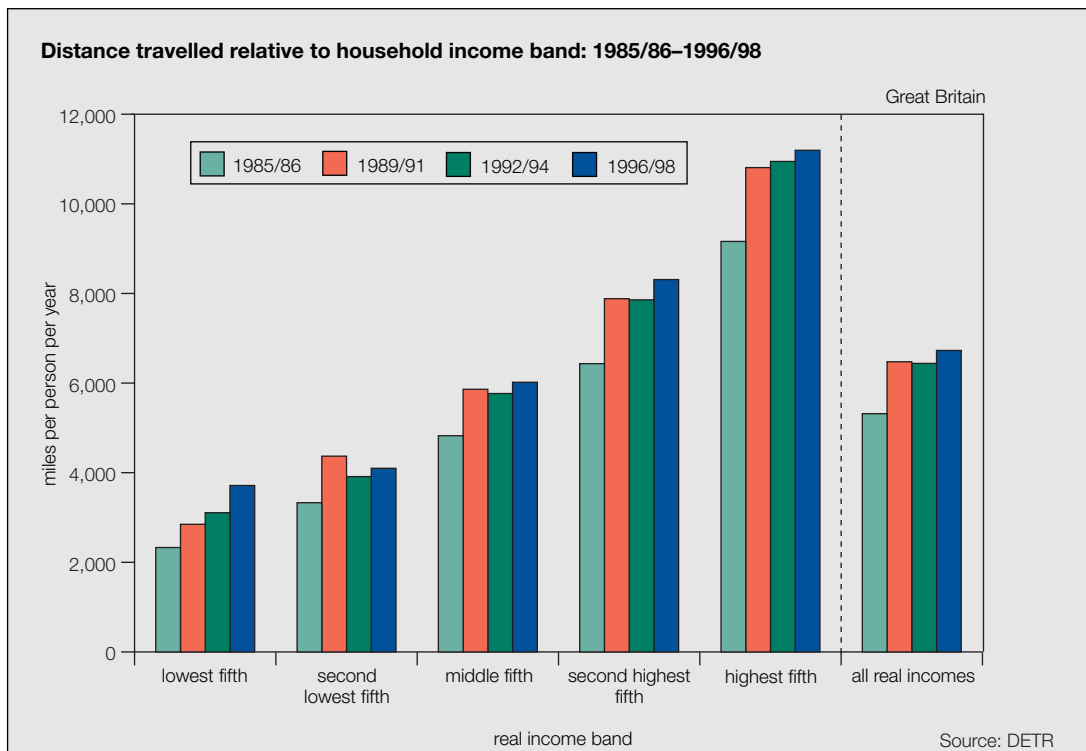
Trends Motorways are currently subject to more widespread stress than major roads, and this difference is projected to increase markedly by 2006.

Background Increases in congestion are directly related to increases in traffic. The road traffic forecasts underlying the chart above do not take into account the effect of the government’s new transport policies, set out in its 1998 White Paper. New forecasts are currently in preparation. It has been estimated that road traffic could increase by more than one third over the next twenty years if no action were taken.

Objective The link between rising prosperity and increased travel must be broken

Indicator Distance travelled relative to income

G5



In 1996/98, those in the highest income band on average travelled 3 times as far as those in the lowest (11,200 miles compared with 3,700 miles).

Relevance Giving people equal opportunities is a key sustainable development objective. People who do not have access to a car should not be at a disadvantage in terms of access to jobs, health care and services.

Trends Between 1985/86 and 1996/98, the distance travelled by people in the lowest income band increased by nearly 60 per cent, twice the rate of any other band, although it was still only a third of that in the highest income band.

Background Total distance travelled is closely related to household income, mainly because low income households are less likely to own cars and include many pensioner households who no longer need to travel to work. People on lower incomes travel further by bus, but less by train.