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Tuesday, 12 May 2026

Dear Councillor

INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

Notice is hereby given that the following decisions made by a member of the cabinet will be made on Wednesday, 20 May 2026.

1. **REVOKING THE USK AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA ORDER 2005** 1 - 64

Division/Wards Affected: Llanbadoc & Usk Ward

Cabinet Member: County Councillor Angela Sandles

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Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Ward
Mary Ann Brocklesby	**Leader** Lead Officers – Paul Matthews, Matthew Gatehouse, Peter Davies, Will Mclean Whole Authority Strategy and Direction Whole authority performance review and evaluation, including DDAT Relationships with Welsh Government, UK Government and local government associations Regional Relationships including CJCs. PSBs and cross boarder Emergency Planning	Llanelly
Paul Griffiths	**Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader** Lead Officers – Will McLean, Craig O'Connor Economic Strategy Skills and Employment Replacement Local Development Plan Placemaking and the development of market and affordable housing Placemaking and Transforming Towns Car parking and civil parking enforcement Development Management Building Control	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield
Ben Callard	**Cabinet Member for Resources** Lead Officers – Peter Davies, Matt Gatehouse Finance including MTFP and annual budget cycle Revenue and Benefits Human resources, payroll, health and safety Land and buildings Property maintenance and management Strategic procurement	Llanfoist & Govilon
Laura Wright	**Cabinet Member for Education** Lead Officers – Will McLean, Deb Hill-Howells Early Years Education All age statutory education Additional learning needs/inclusion Post 16 and adult education	Grofield

	School standards and improvement Community learning Sustainable communities for learning Programme Youth service School transport	
Ian Chandler	**Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services** Lead Officer – Jane Rodgers Children's services Fostering & adoption Youth Offending service Adult services Whole authority safeguarding (children and adults) Disabilities Mental health Wellbeing Relationships with health providers and access to health provision	Llantilio Crossenny
Catrin Maby	**Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment** Lead Officers – Deb Hill-Howells, Craig O'Connor, Decarbonisation Transport Planning Highways and MCC Fleet Waste management, street care, litter, public spaces and parks Pavements and Back lanes Flood Alleviation Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and River health	Drybridge
Angela Sandles	**Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement** Lead Officers – Matthew Gatehouse, Paul Matthews, Jane Rodgers, James Williams Community development, inequality and poverty (health, income, nutrition, disadvantage, discrimination, isolation and cost of living crisis) Citizen engagement and democracy promotion including working with voluntary organisations Citizen experience - community hubs, contact centre, and customer service and registrars, communications, public relations and marketing Leisure centres, play and sport Public conveniences Electoral Services and constitution review Ethics and standards Welsh Language Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Public	Town

	Protection, and Licencing	
Sara Burch	**Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing & Tourism** Lead Officers – Craig O'Connor, Jane Rodgers Local Food production and consumption, including agroforestry and local horticulture Homelessness, Temporary accommodation, private sector housing, (empty homes leasing schemes, home improvement loans, disabled facilities grants and adaptive technology), Allocation of social housing Broadband connectivity Active Travel Countryside Access and Rights of Way Tourism Development and Cultural Services	Cantref

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our Purpose

- to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.

Objectives we are working towards

- Fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced;
- Green place to live and work with reduced carbon emissions and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency;
- Thriving and ambitious place, where there are vibrant town centres and where businesses can grow and develop
- Safe place to live where people have a home where they feel secure in;
- Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued;
- Learning place where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential

Our Values

Openness. We are open and honest. People have the chance to get involved in decisions that affect them, tell us what matters and do things for themselves/their communities. If we cannot do something to help, we'll say so; if it will take a while to get the answer we'll explain why; if we can't answer immediately we'll try to connect you to the people who can help – building trust and engagement is a key foundation.

Fairness. We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

Flexibility. We will continue to change and be flexible to enable delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

Teamwork. We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved so we can achieve great things together. We don't see ourselves as the 'fixers' or problem-solvers, but we will make the best of the ideas, assets and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

Kindness: We will show kindness to all those we work with putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.

monmouthshire
sir fynwy

SUBJECT: REVOKING THE USK AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA ORDER 2005

MEETING: Individual Cabinet Member Decision – County Cllr Angela Sandles

DATE: 20th May 2026

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: Llanbadoc & Usk Ward

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To consider the proposed revocation of the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 To approve the revocation of the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005 (Appendix One) by the making of the Monmouthshire County Council Usk Air Quality Management Area Revocation Order 2026 (Appendix Two).

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Local authorities have a duty under the Environment Act 1995 to monitor the quality of air within their administrative areas, produce an annual report (to Welsh Government in Wales) and designate special management areas known as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) where pollutants exceed certain levels.

3.2 On the 14th November 2005 Monmouthshire County Council declared an AQMA by Order, largely focused on Bridge Street and parts of Castle Parade, Usk, as the annual objective level for nitrogen dioxide of 40µg/m^3 specified in the Air Quality (Wales) Regulations 2000 was not being met. The nitrogen dioxide pollutant is largely emitted by motor vehicles.

3.3 An Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for Usk was developed by the Council, approved by Welsh Government and took effect in September 2009. The AQAP, updated by the Council in January 2023, sets out a number of measures which may help reduce nitrogen dioxide levels. These are prioritised for action based on air quality impact, cost, feasibility, wider impacts and timescales. In particular the focus has been on actions that can help reduce congestion and improve the flow of traffic along Bridge Street.

3.4 Progress towards meeting the AQAP measures have been continually reviewed and assessed by the Usk Air Quality Steering Group, chaired by Environmental Health and has included representatives from Usk Town Council, Llanbadoc Community Council, Usk Civic Society, area County Councillors and officers from the Council's Highways, Planning, Trading Standards and Placemaking teams.

3.5 Air quality has been monitored throughout this period by the Environmental Health team with a network of diffusion tubes in the management area providing data each month on the nitrogen dioxide levels. The levels have been improving since 2012 and the annual objective level has not been exceeded at any of the monitoring locations since 2015. In 2025 the highest concentration was 20.7µg/m^3 which is almost half the objective level,

3.6 A significant factor for the improving air quality is the development of cleaner vehicle engine technology, but key measures taken in the Usk AQAP have included:

- Implementation of a 20mph zone.
- Enforcement of double yellow line parking.
- Lorry Watch scheme to help enforce a Road Traffic Order (a weight-based order to prevent Heavy Goods Vehicles entering the town unless they have business in Usk).
- Improved signage.
- Development of the Usk Town Masterplan.

3.7 The statutory guidance provides that revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of compliance with the objective level and there should not be any declared AQMAs where there has been compliance for a consecutive five - year period. When monitoring with diffusion tubes, as is the case in Usk, the levels should be below 36µg/m^3 which is 10% below the 40µg/m^3 annual objective level as this allows for a margin of error in the monitoring method.

3.8 The monitoring undertaken shows that 2025 was the eighth year below 36µg/m^3, which allows for the lower pollution levels that could be reasonably expected with reduced vehicle movements during the Covid pandemic in 2020 / 2021.

3.9 As endorsed by Cabinet Member (Recommendation 2.2 of report dated 14th January 2026) a public consultation was undertaken from 26th January to 2nd March 2026, which entailed a bilingual proposal note (Appendix Three) hand delivered to all residential and business properties in the AQMA (170+ addresses). It was also shared directly with the local area County Councillors, Usk Town Council, Usk Air Quality Steering Group members and provided on the Council's website.

3.10 The public consultation response was as follows:

- Verbal feedback from persons engaged during the hand delivery of the proposal note was all in favour of the proposed revocation.
- Usk Town Council provided a statement supporting the revocation.
- No other written comments were received. No concerns or objections raised.

3.11 In accord with statutory guidance Welsh Government (Environmental Protection Division) have been informed of the results of the public consultation and the proposed recommendation to revoke the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005, which has been acknowledged.

3.12 If the recommendation to revoke the 2005 Order and make the Monmouthshire County Council Usk Air Quality Management Area Revocation Order 2026 is agreed, it is proposed to provide a copy of the Order on the Council's website and inform the Usk

Town Council and Llanbadoc Community Council accordingly. This will be done promptly following decision and within one month of the revocation order coming into effect.

4.0 **INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT, (includes equality, future generations, social justice, safeguarding and corporate parenting):**

4.1 The completed Integrated Impact Assessment is provided in Appendix Four.

4.2 The proposal has no implications in relation to any of the protected characteristics:

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

5.1 To continue with the existing Usk Air Quality Management Area as designated by the Order made in November 2005 or, as proposed, revoke the Order.

5.2 Revoking the Order is in line with statutory guidance provided in Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (TG22) (May 2025) and The Local Air Environment Local air quality and soundscapes management in Wales Policy Guidance (PG25) 2025 (July 2025). It is important to revoke an AQMA at the earliest opportunity to properly reflect the air quality conditions and assist in the proportionate allocation of Council resources.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

6.1 Following the revocation, if agreed, Environmental Health will continue monitoring air quality in Usk the results of which will be provided in the annual review reports of local air quality in Monmouthshire to Welsh Government. In addition, the Usk Air Quality Steering Group has signalled its intention to continue to help focus efforts on improving air quality, informed by the continued monitoring and directed by the measures identified in the most recent Air Quality Action Plan update in 2023.

7. REASONS:

7.1 Revoking the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005 is justified, proportionate and in line with the requirements set by legislation.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 None directly arising from the revocation of the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005 if it proceeds.

9. CONSULTEES

Cabinet.
Strategic Leadership Team.
Social Care and Health Directorate DMT

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Monmouthshire County Council Usk Air Quality Action Plan Update January 2023.
Report for Individual Cabinet Member Decision dated 14th January 2026 'Revoking the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005'.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005.
Appendix Two: Monmouthshire County Council Usk Air Quality Management Area Revocation Order 2026 (draft).
Appendix Three: Revocation of Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005 Proposal Note
Appendix Four: Integrated Impact Assessment.

Monmouthshire County Council
Usk Air Quality Action Plan Update
In fulfillment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995
Local Air Quality Management

12st January 2023

Local Authority Officer	Paul White
Department	Environmental Health
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Report Reference number	MCC/LAQM/AQAP/Usk/2023
Date	12 January 2023

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1. Introduction

1.1 Air Quality in Usk

Generally, air quality in Monmouthshire is good; however, there are some hotspots of poor air quality close to busy or congested roads. As such, these roads are monitored closely for nitrogen dioxide, which is one of the main pollutants from vehicle emissions.

Two areas in Monmouthshire have exceeded the annual mean national objective level for nitrogen dioxide and have therefore been declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA). Both AQMA's have Air Quality Action Plans (AQAP) to address these exceedances. AQMA(s) are seen by local authorities as the focal points to channel resources into the most pressing areas of pollution as a priority.

Both AQMAs were declared due to traffic emissions that resulted in an annual mean of nitrogen dioxide at or above the objective level of 40μg/m^3. The objective level had to be achieved by 2005. It was not considered likely that the 1-hour mean objective level of 200μgm^{-3} (not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year) would be exceeded as measurements across the UK have shown that the 1-hour nitrogen dioxide objective is unlikely to be exceeded where the annual mean concentration is below 60 μgm^{-3}.

The AQMAs are: -

- The A472 along Bridge Street and parts of Castle Parade in Usk,
- The A48 (Hardwick Hill) In Chepstow.

The Usk AQMA was declared in November 2005 and the AQAP was finalised in September 2009.

A summary of AQMAs declared by Monmouthshire County Council can be found in Table 1.1 Further information related to declared or revoked AQMAs, including maps of AQMA boundaries are available online at http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/air-quality and https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/local-authorities?la_id=403

Table 1.1 – Declared Air Quality Management Areas

AQMA	Relevant Air Quality Objective(s)	Comments on Air Quality Trend	Description	Action Plan
Bridge Street, Usk	NO_2 annual mean	There have been improvements in air quality in the AQMA over the last 4 years. There have been no exceedances for 4 years	An area encompassing Bridge Street, from its junction with Newmarket Street up to and including the area around the junction with Castle Parade and Porthycarne Street	http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2013/08/Usk-Action-Plan-Final-September-2009.pdf
Hardwick Hill, Chepstow	NO_2 annual mean	There have been improvements in air quality in the AQMA over the last 4 years. One location continues to exceed.	An area encompassing properties either side of the A48, between the roundabout with the A466 to the west and extending east just beyond the junction with the B4293 at Hardwick Terrace	http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2013/06/Chepstow-AQAP-Final-31-August-2011.pdf

AMQA boundary maps within Monmouthshire can be viewed at https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/local-authorities?la_id=403 Usk AQMA Boundary is shown in figure 2.1

During the drafting of the 2009 Action Plan the Usk Air Quality Steering Group was set up as a means of consultation and all relevant stakeholders were invited to the meetings to discuss and have an input into the AQAP.

Since the finalisation of the AQAP the steering group has continued to meet two to three times a year with the purpose of continually reviewing and assessing the plan's measures and the progress made towards achieving them.

The AQAP is a live document and therefore has continued to evolve over time with full input from the steering group. Some of the original actions have been implemented (some have been successful and some have not), some of the actions have evolved as new information has come to light, some have been trailed or modelled, but found to not be feasible to implement fully, or found to have a negative effect on air quality.

During this time air quality monitoring has continued in Usk and in recent years has expanded south of the AQMA into Woodside and a continuous air quality sensor has been installed at Usk primary School, which is north of the AQMA boundary.

This monitoring has shown that there has been a clear improvement in nitrogen dioxide levels since 2012, and there were no exceedances of the objective level between 2015 and 2020.

In 2013, the highest recorded nitrogen dioxide concentration in Usk was 43.1µg/m^3 and the highest concentration in 2018 was 32.1µg/m^3.

In 2019 Monmouthshire County Council and Usk Town Council made a joint commitment to regenerating the town of Usk and is in the first stages of implementing the Usk and Woodside Improvement Master Plan. This plan is looking at a wide range of issues including traffic and air quality. It is hoped that many of the AQAP measures going forward will be considered and implemented through this Master Plan.

2 2009 Air Quality Action Plan

2.1 Introduction

The original Air Quality Action Plan is still available on Monmouthshire County Councils website and remains relevant. This update should be read alongside the original.

The original AQAP was prepared by Air Quality Consultants Ltd on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council with full input from the Usk Air Quality Steering Group. The Group is made up of relevant officers from MCC (e.g. Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Passenger Transport, Highways and Planning) County Councillors, Town Council, Police, Civic Society and Chamber of Commerce.

In preparing, the 2009 AQAP, and the Further Assessment that supported the plan, Air Quality Consultants undertook Air Quality Modelling to determine the extent of the AQMA and a source apportionment study to identify the emission sources contributing to the nitrogen dioxide concentrations. In addition, they calculated the air quality improvements necessary to meet the objective level and proposed an action plan of 14 measures that were assessed by their cost effectiveness, wider impacts, air quality impact and feasibility.

That work is not replicated in the AQAP 2021 update; however, it is summarised below.

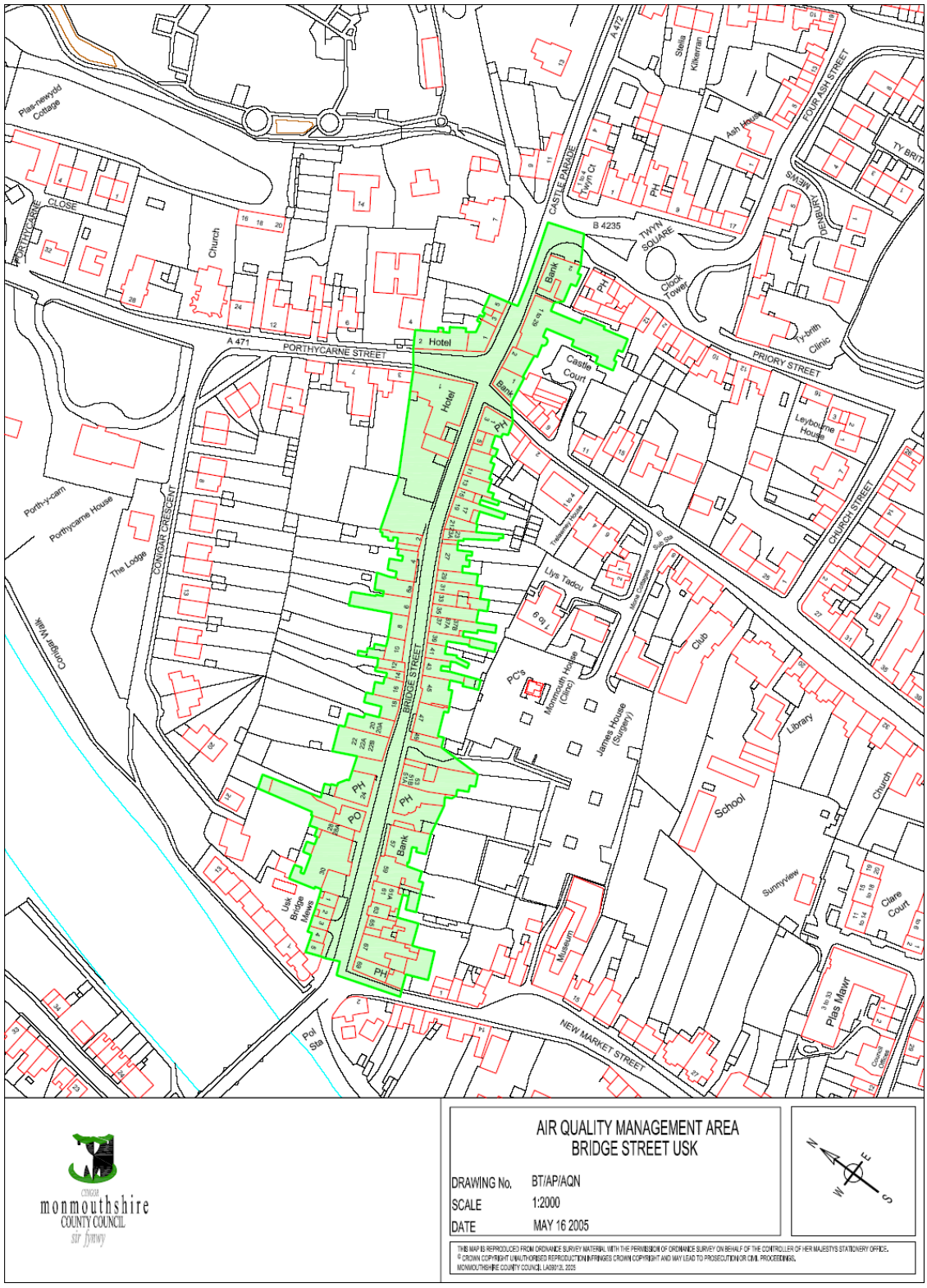
2.2 Usk AQMA Boundary

The results of both diffusion tube monitoring and modelling indicated that the area of likely exceeded of nitrogen dioxide included the A472 in Bridge Street and parts of Castle Parade. The AQMA boundary map is shown in Figure 2.1

Continued monitoring since the AQMA was declared, including expanded monitoring outside the AQMA boundary, has indicated that the original boundary is still valid, as no exceedances have been identified outside of the boundary.

The only monitored exceedances of the annual objective level are limited to a small section of Bridge Street between monitoring Locations USK5 and USK3 (Figure 3.1). Since 2014 the exceedances were limited to USK4 and USK5 and between 2015 and 2020 there were no exceedances.

Figure 2.1 – USK AQMA boundary on Bridge Street



2.2 Source Apportionment

Results from the original Further Assessment and AQAP indicated that the only emission sources contributing to the nitrogen dioxide with the AQMA were traffic emissions, and that there were no localised point source emissions (e.g. industrial), and no area source emissions (e.g. domestic heating) of any significance along Bridge Street. There have been no additional sources introduced since the time of the original AQAP.

Results from the ADMS modelling undertaken for the Further Assessment indicted that at worst case receptors the main sources of nitrogen dioxide were cars and light goods vehicles (LGV), however contribution from heavy goods vehicles (HGV) were also significant. This is summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Modelled Annual Mean (2006) Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations at the Worst-Case Receptors and the Contribution of Each Source to the Total.

Receptor	Background	Car+LGV	HGV	Buses	Total
Annual Mean Concentration (μgm^{-3})					
79[1]	9.1	22.6	11.2	0.8	43.8
USK5[2]	9.1	19.1	9.5	0.8	38.4
Percentage Contribution to the Total (%) [a]					
Bridge Street AQMA					
79[1]	20.7	51.7	25.7	1.9	100
USK5[2]	23.5	49.6	24.8	2.0	100

[a] contribution based on un-rounded results

[1] The Three Salmons Hotel at the northern junction of Porthycarne Street [A471] and Bridge Street, but as there are no permanent residents it is not classed as a relevant exposure, such as a house or school, but is included in this analysis to indicate worst-case conditions within the AQMA. The data is modelled.

[2] The location is diffusion tube U2 in the original AQAP. In recent years, it has been relabelled to USK5 (Figure 3.1).
It is located at 16 Bridge Street and due to the proximity of housing, it is considered as being representative of relative exposure. The data is measured.

2.3 Air Quality Improvements Needed

The 2009 AQAP identified the air quality improvements necessary to meet the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective level of 40µg/m^3. This was defined as the difference between the highest predicted concentration within the AQMA in 2006 and the objective level. It considered both nitrogen dioxide and nitrogen oxides and is summarised in Table 2.2

Table 2.2 Improvement in Annual Mean Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations and in Emissions of Oxides of Nitrogen at the Worst-Case Representative Receptor in 2006[1].

Receptor	Required reduction in annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentration µgm^{-3})	Required reduction in emissions of oxides of nitrogen from local roads (%)
79[1]	3.8	17
USK5[2]	0.7	3

[1] this location is not representative of relevant exposure, but is included in the analysis to indicate worst-case conditions within the AQMA.

[2] representative of relevant exposure – 16 Bridge Street. Labelled as U2 in original AQAP

In 2006 the monitored nitrogen dioxide concentration at USK 5 (previously labelled as U2) was 40.7µ/m^3 and the modelled concentration at the Three Salmons Hotel (model Location 79) was 43.8µg/m^3. Since 2006, no additional modelling has been undertaken however, USK5 has continued to be monitored and reported in the annual air quality progress reports. In 2007, USK5 increased to its highest concentration of 49µg/m^3 but has since reduced to 30.3µg/m^3 in 2019 (and was lower again in 2020). In 2019, the worst-case monitoring location was USK3 at 33.3µg/m^3. In 2020 the worst-case location was USK5 at 24.3µg/m^3.

Currently there is no improvement necessary to achieve the annual nitrogen dioxide objective level of 40 µg/m^3. The last year of recorded exceedances was 2014, when USK4 was 40.4 and USK5µg/m^3 concentrations was 40.9µg/m^3.

[1] These data are slightly different to those that can be derived using the NOx to NO_2 calculator published by Defra (2005). This is because the calculator is based on national default concentration relationships, but these data are derived directly from the model results and use the adjustment factors built into the model verification.

The Further Assessment made predictions at worst-case receptors using future year projection factors applied to modelled 2006 data. These projections identified that nitrogen dioxide concentration would decrease each year, however the objective level would not be achieved until 2009 (see Table 2.3)

Table 2.3 Modelled and Estimated Annual Mean Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations (μgm^{-3}) at the Worst-Case Representative Receptors – based on 2006 data

Receptor	2006	2007[a]	2008 [a]	2009 [a]	2010 [a]
79 (modelled)	**43.8**	**42.4**	**40.9**	39.3	37.9
USK5 (measured)	**40.7**	39.4	38.0	36.6	35.2
USK5 (modelled)	38.4	37.2	35.9	34.5	33.3
Statutory Objective for 2005	**40**				
EU Limit Value for 2010					**40**

[a] Estimated from 2006 measured values using the future year projection factors available on the UK Air Quality Archive**.**

However measured concentrations since 2006 did not follow this predicted decrease, and in fact concentrations increased at USK5 to 49μg/m^3 in 2007, and then remained variable until 2012, then they started to steadily decrease. However, the actual date when the objective level was met did not occur until 2015, eight years later than originally predicted.

It should be noted that this situation was not unique to Usk, as it was a UK wide issue, where the original future year projection factors did not follow the real-world circumstances.

Table 2.4 presents the actual USK5 monitored concentrations between 2006 and 2020

Table 2.4 Monitored Annual Mean Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations (µg/m^3) at USK5

Receptor	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
USK5 (measured)	**40.7**	**49.0**	**45.6**	**41.9**	**45.0**	39.7	**44.6**	**43.1**
	2014	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	
	40.9	38.2	37.8	35.2	30.0	30.8	24.3	

Concentrations in **BOLD** are exceedances of the annual mean objective level

2.3 2009 Action Plan Measures

A series of potential measures were identified by the consultant and MCC, and put through a number of screening tools and were consulted upon within MCC, the Usk Air Quality Steering Group members, and then the wider public and businesses of Usk. These measures were distilled down into 14 actions and prioritised for action based on air quality impact, cost, feasibility, wider impacts and timescale.

The full process is detailed in the original 2009 Action Plan and the 14 measures taken forward in the 2009 Plan are presented in Table 2.5.

The measures were given a ranking of 1 to 14. Those thought most cost-effective and likely to deliver the most effective solution to the problem in Usk were traffic management measures. Addressing the through-flow of heavy goods vehicles along the A472, together with a consideration of delivery times were the specific measures most likely to deliver improvements.

Table 2.5 Prioritisation of 14 measures – 2009 Action Plan

Ranking of measures (in order of priority)				
Measure	**Overall cost-effectiveness**	**Overall air quality improvement (and time-scale involved)**	**% people positively affected by option**	**RANKING**
6. Management of on and off-street parking consideration of delivery-time strategy.	Medium (low to medium costs)	Medium (short to medium-term)	Medium (residents & shoppers, not retailers)	**1**
5. HGV restriction along Bridge Street – To be informed by surveys and subsequent report (see para. 7.4)	Medium (medium costs- mainly to others and not Council)	Medium (medium-term)	High (residents, shoppers)	**2**
3. Encourage walking as a mode of transport	High (low cost)	Low (short-term)	High (residents, shoppers, retailers)	**3**
8. Increase the number of public transport services to and from Usk. To include community transport	Low-medium (high costs to others)	Low (medium to long-term)	Low-medium (residents and shoppers)	**4**
9. Contain indirect emissions from future development and from changes of land use that would generate traffic	High (low costs)	Low (short to medium-term)	Medium-high (residents, shoppers & retailers)	**5**
15. Travel Awareness campaigns e.g. Green Travel Days etc.	High (low costs)	Low (short to medium-term)	Medium (residents, retailers and shoppers)	**6**
New – Informed by Steering Group Work with school and others to produce community and school traffic plan	High (possible grant input)	Low (medium term)	Low (residents with emphasis on those with primary school age children)	**7**
1. Encourage more cycling; implement hierarchy of urban & inter-urban cycle routes	High (low cost)	Low (short-term)	Potentially high (residents, shoppers, retailers)	**8**
2. Support & promote facilities for cyclists at school and in town centres	High (low cost)	Low (short-term)	Potentially high (residents, shoppers, retailers)	**9**
13. Car club scheme	High (low-medium costs)	Low (short to medium-term)	Medium (residents and retailers)	**10**
New – Informed by Steering Group Develop kerb side recycling collections to reduce traffic to civic amenity site	High (costs factored into MCC waste strategy	Low (short term)	Low (percentage of local residents)	**11**
14. Flexible home-working, work-time	High (low costs)	Low (short-term)	Low-medium (residents and retailers)	**12**

7. Implement new 20mph speed limits/ zones	Low-medium (low to medium costs)	Low (medium-term)	Low (some residents only)	**13**
New – Informed by Steering Group Investigation of altering traffic flows through the town	To be determined	Could be high (long term)	Potentially high to residents, shoppers and businesses in the vicinity	**14**

2.5 Previous Reports in Relation to Usk Air Quality

Below is a chronological summary of previous air quality reports from 2003 until 2019 that relate to Usk. Further detail on each report can be found in the previous reports available on Monmouthshire County Council's website.

A chronological summary of previous air quality reports

Report Name	Date	Outcome
Updating and Screening Assessment (Round 2)	**June 2003**	**Detailed Assessment required for nitrogen dioxide at four roadside locations. Two in Monmouth, and one each in Usk and Chepstow**
Interim Detailed Assessment (9 months monitoring)	November 2004	AQMA required for Bridge Street in Usk.
Detailed Assessment (12 months monitoring)	February 2005	AQMA for Usk confirmed.
Progress Report	May 2005	Confirmed nitrogen dioxide exceedance in Usk.
AQMA declared for Bridge Street, Usk	November 2005	The location is shown in Figure 1
Further Assessment for Usk AQMA	April 2007	Confirmed the AQMA should be retained with no changes to the boundary
Progress Report	November 2008	NO2 exceedances limited to the two AQMA's.

Updating and Screening Assessment (Round 4)	**May 2009**	**Little changed in source emissions since 2006**
Usk Air Quality Action Plan	September 2009	Agreed by Welsh Assembly Government on November 2009. 14 proposed measures to improve air quality
Progress Report	May 2010	Only the two AQMA's exceeded nitrogen dioxide objective levels. No Detailed Assessment required.
Progress Report	June 2011	Nitrogen dioxide is still the only pollutant that exceeds the objective level, and these exceedances are contained in the two declared AQMAs in Usk and Chepstow.
Updating and Screening Assessment (Round 5)	**April 2012**	**Air quality within Monmouthshire continues to meet the relevant air quality objectives outside of the declared AQMAs Within the AQMAs there are still exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide objective at Hardwick Hill, Chepstow and Bridge Street, Usk.**
Progress Report	April 2013	Nitrogen dioxide was still the only pollutant that exceeded the objective level. The two Air Quality Management Areas still exceeded. Nitrogen Dioxide levels across the County increased sharply in 2012.
Progress Report	April 2014	Nitrogen dioxide was still the only pollutant that exceeded the objective level. The two Air Quality Management Areas still exceeded. Nitrogen dioxide levels were lower in 2013 than
Updating and Screening Assessment (Round 6)	**April 2015**	**The two AQMA's continued to experience exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean at two locations in each town. Concentrations in 2014 were fairly similar to those recorded in 2013 (which had seen a decrease from 2012). There were no exceedances outside the AQMA's**

Progress Report 2016	April 2016	Nitrogen dioxide, PM10 and PM2.5 concentrations decreased at all locations in the County and for the first year there were no exceedances in the Usk AQMA.
Progress Report 2017	September 2017	For the second year, all six monitoring locations the Usk AQMA were below the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective level.
Annual Progress Report 2018	September 2018	Third year with no exceedance in Usk AQMA. Concentrations broadly similar to 2017. Additional monitoring undertaken in Woodside south of Usk AQMA – the highest concentration was 29.6µg/m^3 at WS2
Annual Progress Report 2019	**September 2019**	**Fourth year with no exceedance in Usk AQMA and all locations recorded their lowest concentrations to date. The highest concentration in Usk was 32.1µg/m^3 (USK3). The first year in Usk that all locations were more than 10% below the objective level. The highest concentration from the three Woodside locations was 27.1µg/m^3 (WS2)**
Annual Progress Report 2020	**September 2020**	2019 was the fifth year with no exceedance in Usk AQMA, and second year with concentrations under 36µg/m^3 (10% of objective level). Generally, concentrations in Usk was similar to those recorded in 2018. The highest concentration in Usk was 33.3µg/m^3 (USK3) and in Woodside 27.8µg/m^3 (WS2)
Annual Progress Report 2021	**August 2021**	Air Quality improved significantly in 2020, due to the COVID pandemic and lockdowns. The largest decrease was during the March-June 2020 lockdown. This was the sixth year with no exceedances of the NO_2 objective level and third below 10% of the OL. The highest concentration in Usk was 24.3µg/m^3 (USK 5) and in Woodside – 18.5 µg/m^3 (WS2)
Annual Progress Report 2022	**September 2022**	Seventh year with no exceedances of nitrogen dioxide objective level and fourth below 10% of the OL. The range was 15.5 - 25ug/m^3 (Usk 6 and Usk 5).

3. Air Quality Monitoring in Usk

3.1 Monitoring between 2006 – 2021

Nitrogen Dioxide has continued to be monitored by diffusion tube in Usk, and from 2017 monitoring was extended west of Usk Bridge into Woodside with three locations around the junction with the bridge. Table 3.1 identifies the monitoring locations, which are shown in figures 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 3.2 and Figure 3.3 present the annual mean concentrations at all Usk and Woodside locations between 2006 and 2021.

As required by Technical Guidance, all diffusion tube annual means have been bias adjusted to the National bas adjustment factor. Further details can be found in each of the annual air quality reports on MCC website for the corresponding year of monitoring.

Table 3.1 Details of Usk Nitrogen Dioxide Diffusion Tube Sites

Site Name	ID	Site Type	OS Grid Ref		Site Height (m)	In AQMA	Relevant Exposure	Distance to receptor (m)	Distance to kerb of nearest road (m)	Worst-case exposure	Date of Installation/ removal
			X	Y							
14A Castle Parade, Usk	USK1	Roadside	337860	201039	2.3	No	Yes	0.16	1.6	Yes	04/07/2007
Castle Court, Usk. Rainwater Pipe	USK2	Roadside/ Urban Centre	337710	200936	2.45	Yes	Yes	0.16	1.35	Yes	02/08/2005
White Hart, 5 Bridge Street, Usk Rainwater Pipe	USK3	Roadside/ Urban Centre	337663	200906	2.4	Yes	Yes	0.15	1.3	Yes	02/01/2004
35 Bridge Street, Usk	USK4	Roadside/ Urban Centre	337596	200849	2.5	Yes	Yes	0.15	1.3	Yes	04/11/2003
Lamp Post adjacent to No.16 Bridge Street, Usk	USK5	Roadside/ Urban Centre	337562	200824	2.4	Yes	Yes	0.54	1.2	Yes	04/02/2003
4 Usk Bridge Mews, Usk Rainwater Pipe	USK6	Roadside/ Urban Centre	337473	200755	2.6	Yes	Yes	0.21	4.9	Yes	02/01/2004
13 Woodside, Usk, Rainwater pipe	WS1	Kerbside	337363	200707	2.5	No	Yes	0.15	1	Yes	03/01/2017
19 Woodside, Llanbadoc, Usk, Rainwater pipe	WS2	Roadside	337356	200736	1.8	No	Yes	0.23	2.6	Yes	03/01/2017
22 Woodside, Llanbadoc, Usk, Rainwater pipe	WS3	Roadside	337364	200749	2.5	No	Yes	0	1.5	Yes	03/01/2017

Figure 3.1 - Nitrogen Dioxide Monitoring Locations – Bridge Street, Usk

Figure 3.2 - Nitrogen Dioxide Monitoring Locations – Woodside, Usk

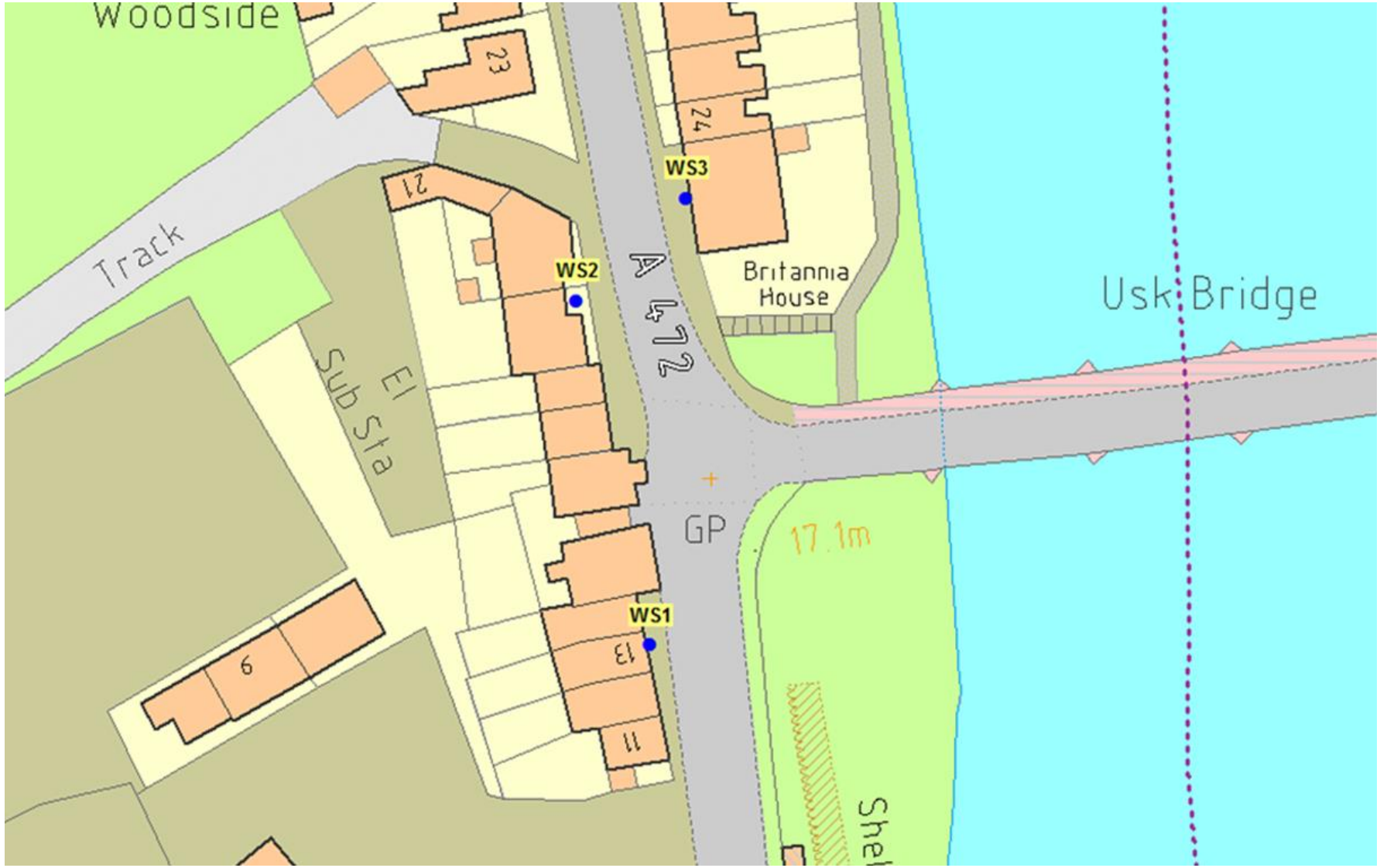


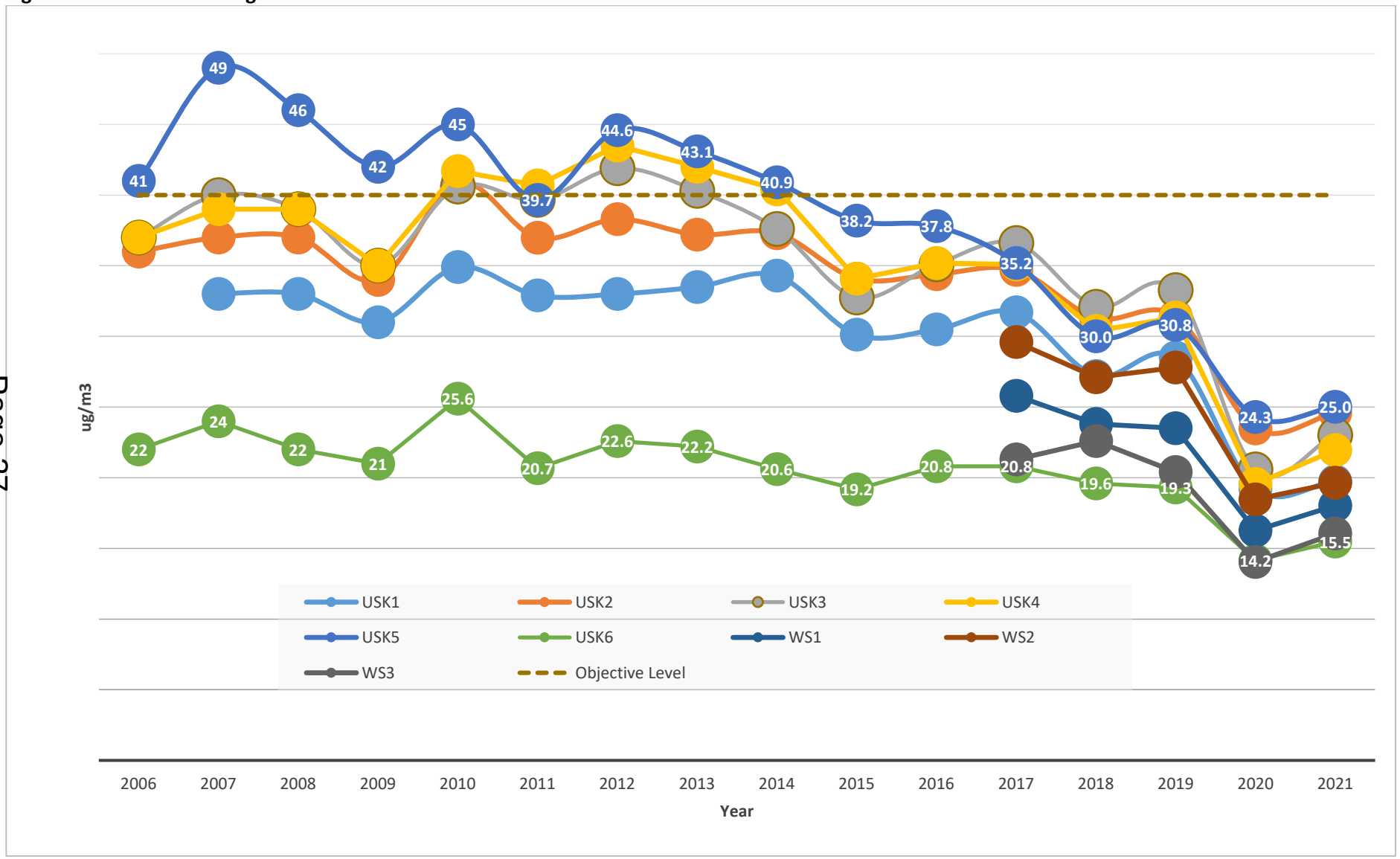
Table 3.2 Nitrogen Dioxide Annual Mean Concentration in Usk 2006-2021

Site ID	NO_2 Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m³) (1)															
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
USK1	Not monitored	33.0	32.8	31.1	34.9	32.9	33.0	33.5	34.3	30.1	30.5	31.7	27.2	28.5	19.2	19.7
USK2	36	37.0	37.2	34.4	**40.9**	37.0	38.3	37.2	37.3	34.1	34.4	34.7	31.3	31.4	23.5	24.6
USK3	37	**40.0**	38.9	35.3	**40.6**	39.7	**41.9**	**40.3**	37.6	32.8	35.1	36.6	32.1	33.3	20.6	23
USK4	37	39.0	39.0	35.4	**41.7**	**40.7**	**43.5**	**42.0**	**40.4**	34.1	35.2	35.1	30.4	31.3	19.6	22
USK5	**41**	**49.0**	**45.6**	**41.9**	**45.0**	39.7	**44.6**	**43.1**	**40.9**	38.2	37.8	35.2	30.0	30.8	24.3	25
USK6	22	24.0	21.6	20.9	25.6	20.7	22.6	22.2	20.6	19.2	20.8	20.8	19.6	19.3	14.2	15
WS1												25.8	23.8	23.5	16.3	18
WS2												29.6	27.1	27.8	18.5	19.7
WS3												21.3	22.6	20.4	14.0	16.1

Notes: Exceedances of the NO_2 annual mean objective of 40µg/m³ are shown in **bold**.

(1) As required by Technical Guidance, all diffusion tube annual means have been bias adjusted to the National bas adjustment factor. Further details can be found in the annual progress reports. Un-bias adjusted monthly diffusion tube data can be found in each year's annual report available on MCC website

Figure 3.3 Usk Nitrogen Dioxide Annual Mean Concentrations 2006 – 2021



3.2 Comparison of 2006-2021 Nitrogen Dioxide Monitoring Results with the Air Quality Objectives

Historically there are four monitoring locations which have exceeded the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective level of 40µg/m^3.

- USK2 (Castle Court) 2010
- USK3 (5 Bridge St) 2007, 2010, 2012, 2013
- USK4 (35 Bridge St) 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014
- USK5 (16 Bridge St) 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014

Since 2014, no locations have exceeded the annual mean objective level.

Annual summary of nitrogen dioxide trends 2007-2021

- 2007 to 2009 – Annual variations but a general decrease
- 2010 – All locations increased to highest concentrations to that date (apart from one). Four locations exceeded the objective level, which is the only year that this occurred. This was the only year that USK2 exceeded.
- 2011 – All locations decreased and only one location exceeded the objective level.
- 2012 – All locations increased. Three locations exceeded the objective level. Two locations were at their highest concentrations. Since 2012 no locations have recorded higher concentrations.
- 2013 – Decrease at all locations except one – hypothesised that 2012 was very high due to poor atmospheric conditions. Three locations exceeded the objective level.
- 2014 – Variation – four locations decreased again, two increased. Two locations exceeded the objective level.
- 2015 – Further decrease at all locations. Generally, the lowest concentrations since 2007 (up until 2015). The first year that there were no exceedances of the objective level.
- 2016 – Slight increase but remain lower than 2007-2014. Second continuous year with no exceedances of the objective level.
- 2017 – Slight increase again, but third continuous year with no exceedances of the objective level. First full year of data for the three Woodside locations, none of which were in exceedance of the objective level.

- 2018 – Decrease at all six Usk locations to lowest concentrations since monitoring began. Fourth continuous year with no exceedances of the objective level. First year with all locations under 10% of the objective level (i.e. under 36µg/ m^3). Two Woodside locations decreased, and one increased slightly. Important to note that 2 months early 2018 some of the town was closed for gas main works. Different sections were closed at different times, but this resulted in two months of lower concentrations.
- 2019 – Slight increase at most locations over 2018 (six of nine), however increases and decreases were so low it is fair to say concentrations have remained stable for two years, bearing in mind Bridge Street was closed for 2 months in 2018. A town wide average of all locations indicates that the town mean in 2018 and 2019 was 27 µg/m^3. It was the fifth continuous year with no exceedances of the objective level. Second year with all locations below 10% of the objective level.
- 2020 – Significant decreases in nitrogen dioxide at all nine locations in Usk and Woodside, due to the COVID pandemic. Concentrations in Usk ranged between 14.2 µg/m^3 and 24.3 µg/m^3, and in Woodside between 14 µg/m^3 and 18.5 µg/m^3. This was the sixth continuous year below 40 µg/m^3 and third below 36 µg/m^3.
- 2021 – Slight increase compared to 2020, but lower than 2019. The largest increases were USK 3 and USK4 which both increased by 2.4µg/m^3 to 23 and 24µg/m^3 respectively. The highest location in 2021 was Usk 5 at 25 µg/m^3. Historically the highest location in Usk was USK5 in 2007 at 49 µg/m^3. The lowest concentration in Usk in 2021 was USK 6 at 15.5 µg/m^3.

Typically, USK5 has been the location with the highest nitrogen dioxide concentrations. It was at its highest concentration in 2007 when it reached 49 µg/m^3. In 2018, it reached its lowest concentration at 30.0µg/m^3 (apart from 2020 and 2021 when it was 24.3 and 25 µg/m^3) which is a 19ug/m^3 decrease in 2018 and most recently (2021) a 24ug/m^3 decrease.

In 2017, 2018 and 2019 USK3 became the worst-case location in the town with a 2019 concentration of 33.3 µg/m^3, compared to USK5 which was 30.8 µg/m^3 in 2019. In 2020 and 2021 it decreased to the third highest location however, with both USK2 and USK5 recording higher concentrations.

Schools Monitoring Project

In August 2018, Environmental Health installed a continuous air quality sensor at Chepstow Comprehensive School and Usk Primary School, and then at St Mary's Primary School, in Bulwalk Chepstow and Monmouth Comprehensive School in June 2020.

The sensors are the Air Quality Transmitter AQT410 manufactured by Vaisala. They continuously monitor nitrogen dioxide, nitric oxide, ozone, carbon monoxide, air temperature, humidity, and air pressure. The schools have access to the data via a website and a number of educational packages. There is the potential for the data to be used by the school as an educational resource which will help raise awareness of the importance of improved air quality amongst staff, pupils and their parents, and highlight the contributions that each of us can make to improving air quality such as walking to school, switching engines off etc.

Usk R.C Primary School is just outside the eastern boundary of the Chepstow AQMA and the sensor was installed on the north side of the school building to monitor emissions at the classrooms and playground closest to the A472 (Monmouth Road, that becomes Bridge Street).

Table 3.3 – 2018 - 2021 Monthly & Annual Mean Concentrations for NO2, at AQT410 Sensor – Usk School

	Nitrogen dioxide average in µg/m³			
Month	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
January	Not installed	32.7	16.9	21.5
February		30.9	22.1	25.1
March		24.6	24.6	33.0
April		25.5	34.9	42.0
May		30.4	45.9	44.1
June		26.8	39.4	49.0
July		26.5	33.2	22.3
August	Settling	26.1	38.5	34.2
September		25.0	36.4	M
October	30	19.6	30.8	38.5
November	19	16.0	27.5	34.5
December	21	17.8	23.1	32.8
Average	**23**	**25.1**	**31.1**	34.3

4.0 Implementation of 2009 Action Plan

Monmouthshire County Council has taken forward a number of the identified Action Plan Measures since 2009 in pursuit of improving local air quality. Details of all measures completed, in progress or planned are set out in Table 4.1.

Key completed measures in Usk are:

- Implementation of a 20 mile an hour zone through the Usk Air Quality Management Area,
- Enforcement of double yellow line parking,
- Implementation of a Lorry watch scheme to help enforce the Road Traffic Order (RTO), as well as improved signage. The RTO for Usk is a weight based order to prevent Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV's) entering the town unless they have business in Usk
- Scoping/feasibility of creating a shared space (for vehicles and pedestrians in the Usk AQMA.
- Installation of bike stands on Bridge Street

Key measures that were not successful are:

- Creating of a new Road Traffic Order to prevent HGV's from the Caerleon RTO entering the Usk RTO
- Creating a time based RTO to restrict HGV access to Usk at peak traffic times
- Investigation of altering traffic flows through the town were investigated and modelled, however all options increased congestion and air pollution.

Table 4.1 – Progress on the original 2009 Usk Action Plan Measures to Improve Air Quality

Action Plan Measure No.	Measure	Lead authority	Implementation Phase	Indicator	Progress to date	Progress in the last 12 months	Estimated Completion Date	Comments relating to emissions reductions
6.	Management of on and off-street parking consideration of delivery time strategy	MCC	**Complete**	n/a	Police in Usk have increased enforcement of on street parking. M.C.C improved car park signage Chamber of Commerce re-established and members of Steering Group. Chamber of Commerce actively engaging with businesses (letters and emails and meetings) to promote non-roadside deliveries	M.C.C. have taken over enforcement of double yellow line parking, in bid to increase enforcement.	Complete, however ongoing work required to continually engage with police, Civil Enforcement Officers and chamber of commerce	Reducing on street parking has improved congestion at peak times.

Action Plan Measure No.	Measure	Lead authority	Implementation Phase	Indicator	Progress to date	Progress in the last 12 months	Estimated Completion Date	Comments relating to emissions reductions
					and/or off-peak deliveries			
5.	HGV Restriction along Bridge Street – to be informed by surveys and subsequent report	MCC	**Complete**	HGV numbers	There is a RTO in place, but difficult for police to enforce due to its length and proximity to the Caerleon RTO. As such enforcement is minimum and two Caerleon businesses have been allowed to breach the RTO without penalty. In addition, there are local businesses who use HGV's that are exempt. As such the RTO has not been successful in the past. MCC has spent a great deal of time working with the police and local businesses and town council to replace the RTO with a more effective one. First a shortened RTO was proposed, but opposed by local businesses, secondly a time ban (e.g. no HGV's at all in peak traffic times) but was again opposed. It has now been decided to no longer pursue the implementation of new RTO's however the current one is still in place.		Current RTO: - Signage in place Lorry Watch – ongoing All HGV's reported are contacted by MCC officers. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of HGV's using the town as a short cut. Typically once contacted the companies do not offend again.	Emissions reductions if HGVs are taken off the route through Usk. Likely to be the most beneficial measure in terms of reducing emissions and concentrations.

Action Plan Measure No.	Measure	Lead authority	Implementation Phase	Indicator	Progress to date	Progress in the last 12 months	Estimated Completion Date	Comments relating to emissions reductions
					Work has been undertaken, however, to try to make the exiting RTO more effective - Signage improved (sat nav signs and CCTV signs), and a Lorry Watch Scheme was implemented and run by a consultancy, but has now been taken over by Trading Standards. HGV's in breach of the RTO are recorded by local volunteers to TS, who send warning letters, and if necessary fines to the company.			
7.	Encourage walking as a mode of transport	MCC	On going	n/a	MCC undertaken Active Travel Act duties including identification of walking routes in Usk and improvements to routes.		On going	Unlikely to be significant emissions reductions.
8.	Increase the number of public transport services to and from Usk. include community transport	MCC	Ongoing	Numbers of public transport services	Bus companies report loss of money from routes and require additional MCC funding. Currently MCC priority is to return bus services to previous levels		Ongoing	Unlikely to be significant emissions reductions.
9.	Contain indirect emissions from future development and from changes of land use that would generate traffic	MCC	Ongoing	Numbers of air quality assessments requested	Proactive engagement with Planning authority that may have air quality implications		Ongoing	Could be significant depending on numbers of planning applications.

Action Plan Measure No.	Measure	Lead authority	Implementation Phase	Indicator	Progress to date	Progress in the last 12 months	Estimated Completion Date	Comments relating to emissions reductions
15	Travel Awareness Campaigns	MCC	Ongoing but not specifically targeting Usk at the moment	n/a	None in Usk	n/a	Ongoing	Sustained travel awareness campaigns coupled with improvements to alternatives could reduce car use and therefore reduce emissions.
New	Work with school and others to produce a community and school traffic plan	MCC in partnership	Ongoing	Numbers of Travel Plans in place	A member of the Steering Group is a Governor at Usk School and is proactively engaging with the School to encourage improve parking arrangements and to encourage walking on behalf of the Group.	Air Quality monitoring undertaken at School, coupled with potential education opportunities using the monitoring data. Educating the children should help inform parents of emissions from school drop-offs and encourage alternative.	On-going – Continuous monitoring installed at school in summer 2018, and school taking part in Eco School diffusion tube monitoring education package. Monitoring data from the sensor will be available to the school for teaching purposes via a website. Anti-Idling group set up within MCC	Could potentially provide reductions in emissions at locations close to schools, or at congestion hotspots.

Action Plan Measure No.	Measure	Lead authority	Implementation Phase	Indicator	Progress to date	Progress in the last 12 months	Estimated Completion Date	Comments relating to emissions reductions
							with intentions of promoting anti idling campaigns starting in 2020 and focused on School pick up and drop off times	
1.	Encourage more cycling: implement hierarchy of urban and inter-urban cycle routes	MCC	On-going	Numbers of cyclists	MCC working on Active Travel Act that will include Usk cycle and walking routes	MCC working through the stages of the Active Travel Act. Specific work to create new walking and cycling connections to Coleg Gwent and MCC County Hall, and then South towards Pontypool. – Planning applications made	On-going	Potential reductions in emissions if modal shift from car to cycling.
2.	Support and promote facilities for cyclists at school and in town centres	MCC	On-going	Numbers of cyclists	Provision of cycle racks on Bridge Street	Part of Active Travel Act work	On-going	Potential reductions in emissions if modal shift from car to cycling.

Action Plan Measure No.	Measure	Lead authority	Implementation Phase	Indicator	Progress to date	Progress in the last 12 months	Estimated Completion Date	Comments relating to emissions reductions
13.	Car club scheme	MCC	n/a	n/a	n/a	Not being progressed – unlikely to be effective	n/a	n/a
New	Develop kerbside recycling collections to reduce traffic to civic amenity site	MCC	**Complete**	n/a	Complete	n/a	n/a	Unlikely to have a major impact on emissions. Included in original Action Plan to reduce number of household trips to Municipal Refuse Site.
14.	Flexible home working, work times etc.	MCC	Ongoing	Number of work-related trips in private single occupancy cars.	Promoted within MCC.	Much greater levels of homeworking within MCC	Ongoing	Due to COVID 19 pandemic from early 2020 - home working is much more prevalent and acceptable for employers. The benefits to the environment have been seen. – especially March – June 2020. MCC has stated that they will encourage more home working and remote meetings
7.	Implement new 20mph speed limits/ zones on Bridge Street	MCC	**Complete**	n/a	This has now been put in place by MCC in 2018 Modelling undertaken for 20mph – however it showed increased	A Share Space Concept was considered by MCC and a consultant. This work has now been rolled into the	Completed	Traffic studies have shown that vehicles in Usk do not tend to exceed 20mph in the day. However, it is possible that less accelerating and braking up to and down from 30mph might reduce emissions, and a 20mph zone might discourage

Action Plan Measure No.	Measure	Lead authority	Implementation Phase	Indicator	Progress to date	Progress in the last 12 months	Estimated Completion Date	Comments relating to emissions reductions
					emissions, as it created additional queuing. Therefore, implemented without road obstacles that could increase congestion.	Strategic Vision Plan for Usk	On-going – early stages of viability work	certain vehicles, who could take a faster road. 2018 was the first full year of 20mph, and emissions in Usk were recorded at an all-time low (however this occurred Countywide), this continued into 2019 with only a slight increase in emissions. In addition, it is possible that this will be the first step in making Usk town centre a more pedestrian orientated place, rather than a vehicle through route. Options are being looked into to create a Shared Space.
New	Investigation of altering traffic flows through the town	MCC	**Complete**	n/a	Considered again in 2014 and modelled for a number of options. Each option, however, increased congestion and emissions. It was considered again as part of the Master Plan 'but no longer considered a feasible option following consultation		Will not be progressed	Increased emissions

5.0 Usk Air Quality Action Plan 2023 and The Future for Air Quality Improvements in Usk

The 2009 Action Plan has had some success at reducing traffic overall, reducing HGV's, improving traffic flow. Air quality has improved significantly, and it has been five years since the last exceedance of the annual objective level.

However, as all the actions have now been considered, and either implemented and completed, implemented and are ongoing, or been scoped or tried and been unsuccessful, it is time to move forward and to put in place a framework that will continue to improve air quality.

The Usk & Woodside Improvement Master Plan will be an integral framework for air quality improvements in the town.

This is a strategic vision for Usk that will outline the future of the town and is being worked on jointly by Monmouthshire County Council and Usk Town Council.

The 2009 Air Quality Action Plan measures are included in the Master Plan, to bring about holistic improvements to the town that will include reduction of traffic, encouragement of a more pedestrianised town centre, improved digital integration and as a result improved air quality and a safer and more health town.

The framework will direct change in the town over the next five years and beyond and will be based on extensive engagement with key stake holders and the wider community. It is currently on its 4th Draft and has already gone through a number of consultations.

The Air Quality Steering Group have fed into the strategy and many of the key air quality improvement goals will be included.

Some of the key themes of the Strategy are:-

- Action for Future Generations

Rethink and evolve thinking around localised energy production, the local environment and the way people travel.

- Business: Proudly Independent

  Recasting Usk as a specialist independent town by supporting local businesses
- Reclaiming Usk's streets and spaces

  Reversing decades of car orientated practices and returning Usk to a place for people not cars. For example, Twyn Square to become a public space to provide a place to meet, gather and showcase Usk. Trialling innovating street designs for Bridge Street to make it safer, more walkable, more attractive and to help improve air quality.
- Environment and botanics

  Capitalise on Usk's rural setting and identity as the Town of Flowers to provide wider benefits

To integrate the original 2009 Action Plan and the Usk Town Improvement Master Plan the Action Plan has been updated to a 2023 version as shown in Table 5.1.

The Action Plan was written in consultation with the Usk Air Quality Steering Group, that meets twice a year to review and update on progress of the Action Plan Measures.

Ranking is based on a combination of items that must be delivered first before further actions can be delivered, cost effectiveness, air quality improvement the action will deliver (and timescale for it to be realised) and the number of people positively affected).

MCC in consultation with the Steering Group, and Welsh Government will look to revoke the Air Quality Management Area if the objective level remains below 36µg/m^3 for six or seven consecutive years. This increase over the five years mentioned in LAQM.PG(W)16 is to take account of the reduced traffic associated with the 2020 and 2021 COVID 19 lockdowns.

If this occurs and the AQMA is revoked the AQAP could form the basis of a local air quality strategy to emphasis the council's role in delivering cleaner air and to ensure air quality issues maintain a high profile locally. It is Lilley that diffusion tube monitoring will remain in place, to ensure that if pollution does increase it can be identified early.

Table 5.1 – Usk Air Quality Action Plan 2023

Ranking of measures (in order of priority)				
Measure	**Overall cost-effectiveness**	**Overall air quality improvement (and time-scale involved)**	**% people positively affected by option**	**RANKING**
Procurement of ANPR traffic data and commission of parking survey to help inform future actions	Medium (medium cost)	No direct improvement but will help inform further actions	High – residents, shoppers, retailers	**1**
Traffic Enforcement Both 20mph zones by police and double yellow line parking by MCC Civic Enforcement Officers	Medium (low to medium costs)	Medium (this will be an ongoing action)	Medium (residents & shoppers, not retailers)	**2**
Town wide parking strategy Traffic Regulation Orders to restrict parking or limit waiting and improve pedestrian amenity and traffic flow. Improve carparks and introduce EVC points, consider residents parking permits and carpark charging or time restrictions	Medium to High – dependant on range of measures	Medium – approx. 12 months	Medium (residents)	**3**
Improved Public transport – additional bus routes to Pontypool & Abergavenny	Medium	Medium (1-5 years)	Medium (workers, shoppers, visitors residents)	**4**
HGV Lorry Watch to continue with letter warnings and enforcement by MCC	High (low costs – Volunteer spotters and enforcement by MCC)	Medium (medium-term)	High (residents, shoppers, retailers)	**5**
Improving Active Travel, including connecting Coleg Gwent campus, MCC offices (e.g. utilising the former railway line as a high-quality pedestrian cycle route) and Usk Island to the town and the two SUSTRANS routes (423 and 42). Improvement of SUSTRANS routes Create an active travel hub in Twyn Square	High (low cost)	Low (1-5 years)	High (residents, shoppers, retailers, visitors)	**6**
Increase the number of public transport services to and from Usk. To include community transport	Low-medium (high costs to others)	Low (medium to long-term)	Low-medium (residents and shoppers)	**7**

Contain indirect emissions from future development and from changes of land use that would generate traffic	High (low costs)	Low (short to medium-term)	Medium-high (residents, shoppers & retailers)	**8**
Bike Hire Scheme from Coleg Gwent	medium (low costs)	Low- medium dependant on uptake (12 months)	Medium (college students, MCC Staff, visitors)	**9**
Work with school and others to produce community and school traffic plan – School Air Quality Sensor to help with this	High (possible grant input)	Low (medium term)	Low (residents with emphasis on those with primary school age children)	**10**
Support & promote facilities for cyclists at school and in town centres	High (low cost)	Low (short-term)	Potentially high (residents, shoppers, retailers)	**11**
Public Realm improvements to Twyn Square (e.g. remove roundabout, restrict traffic, widen pavements, provide café/pub outside seating areas, improve green infrastructure)	High (medium-high costs)	Medium (1-5 years)	Medium (residents retailers, shoppers & visitors)	**12**
Pedestrian priority interventions for Bridge Street to reduce traffic, and encourage shoppers	High (High costs)	High (1-5 years)	High (residents, retailers, shoppers, visitors)	**13**
Implement new 20mph speed limits/ zones – Bridge Street Zone has been completed, other zones in the town could be beneficial)	Low-medium (low to medium costs)	Low (medium-term)	Low (some residents only)	**14**
River Usk Pedestrian Bridge (part of Active Travel) First – assess strategic need as part of active travel strategy. If case undertake feasibility assessment & determine location, costs, funding, design.	Medium (high cost)	Medium (1-5 years)	Potentially high to residents, shoppers and businesses in the vicinity	**15**

Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	Description
AQAP	Air Quality Action Plan - A detailed description of measures, outcomes, achievement dates and implementation methods, showing how the LA intends to achieve air quality limit values'
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area – An area where air pollutant concentrations exceed / are likely to exceed the relevant air quality objectives. AQMAs are declared for specific pollutants and objectives
APR	Air quality Annual Progress Report
AURN	Automatic Urban and Rural Network (UK air quality monitoring network)
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DMRB	Design Manual for Roads and Bridges – Air quality screening tool produced by Highways England
FDMS	Filter Dynamics Measurement System
LAQM	Local Air Quality Management
MCC	Monmouthshire County Council
NO_2	Nitrogen Dioxide
NO_x	Nitrogen Oxides
PM_{10}	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10µm (micrometres or microns) or less
$PM_{2.5}$	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5µm or less
QA/QC	Quality Assurance and Quality Control
SO_2	Sulphur Dioxide
WG	Welsh Government

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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT ACT 1995
PART IV

ENVIRONMENT ACT 1995 - PART IV

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

USK AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT ORDER 2005

Monmouthshire County Council (hereinafter called "The Council") has conducted a detailed assessment of air quality within the County and has concluded that the annual air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide, as specified in the Air Quality (Wales) Regulations 2000, is unlikely to be met by the relevant date in the area designated by this Order.

The Council, in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Section 83 (1) of the Environment Act 1995, hereby declare that:

1. The area shaded green on the attached plan to this Order, shall be designated as an Air Quality Management Area.

2 The Order shall be cited as the Monmouthshire County Council Usk Air Quality Management Order 2005.

3. The Order shall be in relation to annual objective for nitrogen dioxide only.

4. The Order shall come into force on 21 November 2005

This Order may be varied or revoked by a subsequent order pursuant to the provisions of Sections 83 (1) and (2) of the Environmental Protection Act 1995.

THE COMMON SEAL OF)
MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL)
WAS HERETO AFFIXED)
ON 14TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2005)

In the presence of

V. E. Smith

.....
A Member of the Council

.....
Authorised Signatory

monmouthshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
sir fynwy

AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA
BRIDGE STREET USK

DRAWING No.	BT/AP/AQN
SCALE	1:2000
DATE	MAY 16 2005

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W E
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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT ACT 1995

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL USK AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA REVOCATION ORDER 2026

Whereas Monmouthshire County Council (hereinafter called "the Council"), following an air quality review of the area of Bridge Street, Usk, Monmouthshire, being an area designated pursuant to the Monmouthshire County Council Usk Air Quality Management Order 2005 ("the 2005 Order") as an Air Quality Management Area as delineated and shaded in green on the plan attached hereto, is satisfied that the air quality standards and objectives in respect of Nitrogen Dioxide as specified in the Air Quality (Wales) Regulations 2000 as amended have been met and have continued to be met since 2015 within the designated area, the Council in exercise of the powers conferred on it under section 83 of the Environment Act 1995 hereby makes the following Order:

1. The 2005 Order and the Air Quality Management Area delineated and shaded in green on the attached plan are revoked.

2. This Order shall be cited as the Monmouthshire County Council Usk Air Quality Management Area Revocation Order 2026.

3. This Order shall come into force on [DATE].

CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

DEDDF YR AMGYLCHEDD 1995

GORCHYMYN DIDDYMU ARDAL RHEOLI ANSAWDD AER BRYNBUGA CYNGOR SIR FYNWY 2026

Gan ystyried bod Cyngor Sir Fynwy (a elwir o hyn allan "y Cyngor"), yn dilyn adolygiad ansawdd aer o ardal Stryd y Bont, Brynbuga, Sir Fynwy, sef ardal a ddynodwyd yn unol â Gorchymyn Rheoli Ansawdd Aer Brynbuga Cyngor Sir Fynwy 2005 ("Gorchymyn 2005") fel Ardal Rheoli Ansawdd Aer fel y'i amlinellwyd a'i liwio mewn gwyrdd ar y cynllun a atodwyd yma, yn fodlon bod y safonau ac amcanion ansawdd aer mewn perthynas â Nitrogen Deuocsid fel y nodir yn y Rheoliadau Ansawdd Aer (Cymru) 2000 fel y'i diwygiwyd wedi eu bodloni ac wedi parhau i gael eu bodloni ers 2015 o fewn yr ardal ddynodedig, mae'r Cyngor drwy arfer y grymoedd a roddwyd iddo o dan adran 83 o Ddeddf yr Amgylchedd 1995 drwy hyn yn gwneud y Gorchymyn canlynol:

1. Diddymir Gorchymyn 2005 a'r Ardal Rheoli Ansawdd Aer fel y'i amlinellwyd a'i liwio mewn gwyrdd ar y cynllun a atodwyd.

2. Dyfynnir y Gorchymyn hwn fel y Gorchymyn Diddymu Ardal Rheoli Ansawdd Awer Brynbuga Cyngor Sir Fynwy 2026.

3. Daw'r Gorchymyn hwn i rym ar [DATE].

Dated this	day of	2026
Dyddiedig y	diwrnod hwn o	2026

THE COMMON SEAL OF MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL)

WAS HEREUNTO AFFIXED IN THE PRESENCE OF)

)

GOSODWYD SÊL GYFFREDIN CYNGOR SIR FYNWY)

YMA YM MHRESENOLDEB)

)

.....

Authorised Officer

Swyddog Awdurdodedig

Sealing Number:

Rhif Selio:

Plan / Cynllun:

monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Revocation of Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005 Proposal Note

Following a successful and sustained reduction in air pollution at Bridge Street in Usk, we are writing to let you know that we propose to revoke the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) there.

This does not mean that air quality monitoring will stop, but it does mean that it will no longer show on searches as an AQMA, for example when people are buying and selling a property in the area.

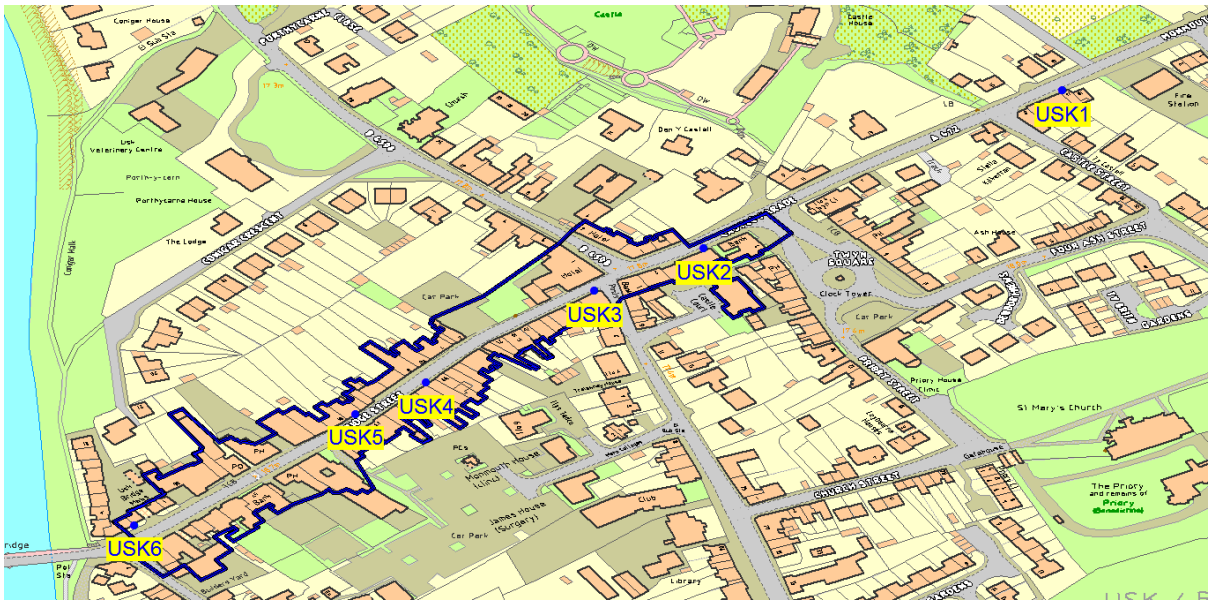
Background

The Usk AQMA was declared by Monmouthshire County Council in November 2005 due to an exceedance of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective level of 40ug/m^3 (micrograms per meter cubed) along the A472 Bridge Street and parts of Castle Parade.

Monitoring has been undertaken at six locations along Bridge Street since 2005, and three locations in Woodside since 2017 and an Air Quality Action Plan and Air Quality Steering Group was established in 2009 to address the issues that contributed to the exceedance of nitrogen dioxide.

Since 2012 it became apparent that air quality was improving and as of 2025 the objective level of 40µg/m^3 (micrograms of nitrogen dioxide per cubic meter of ambient air) has not been exceeded for eleven consecutive years.

Figure 1 Usk Air Quality Management Area Boundary and Nitrogen Dioxide Monitoring Locations



DEFRA and the Welsh Government have provided advice to Local Authorities as follows:

"The revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of compliance, **10% below** the relevant objective at the point of exposure. Where there have been no exceedances for the past five years, local authorities must proceed with plans to revoke the AQMA. The LAQM Technical Guidance 2022 is clear in this respect:

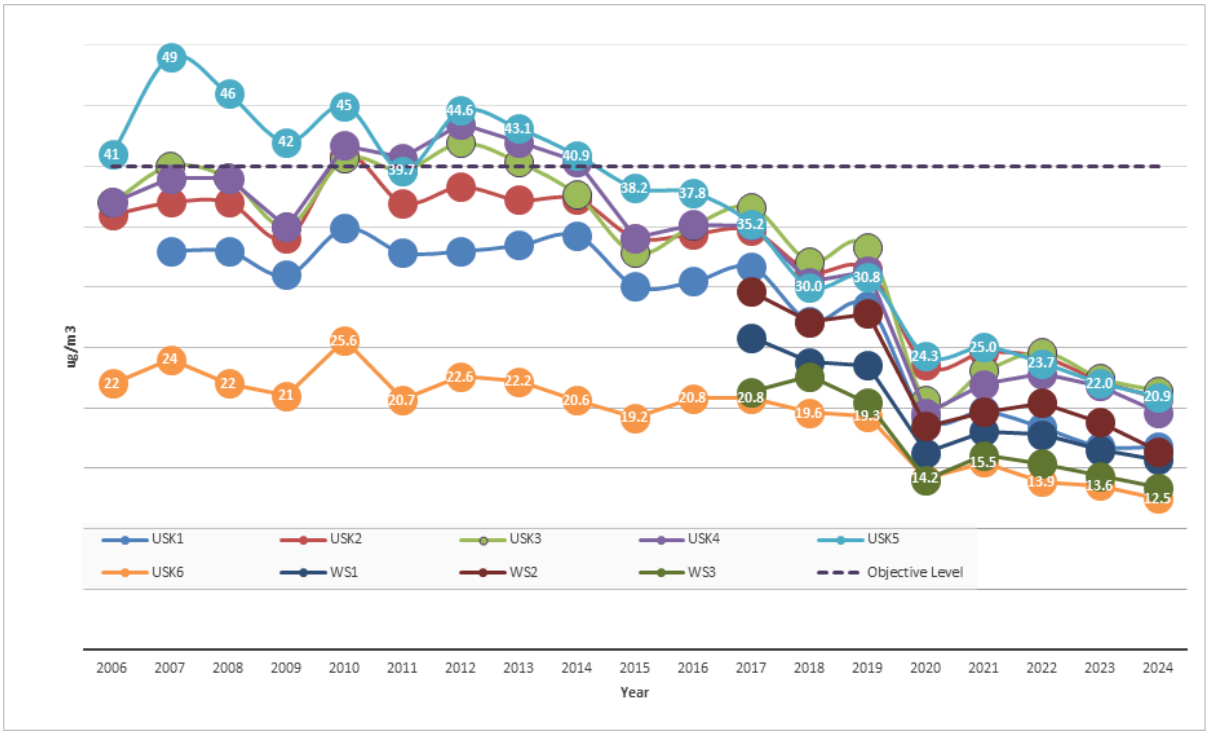
"There should not be any declared AQMAs for which compliance with the relevant objective has been achieved for a consecutive five-year period."

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic the "consecutive five-year period" below 10% of the objective level (36µg/m^3) was extended to a seven-year period to ensure the large decreases in pollution that occurred during 2020 did not reverse following the pandemic.

Current Air Quality Levels

2024 was the end of that seven-year period and monitoring has shown that there have been no locations above 36µg/m^3 since 2017 (seven consecutive years) and air quality has continued to improve since 2020, with the 2024 calendar year having the lowest concentrations in nitrogen dioxide ever recorded. In 2024 the highest concentration was 21.4µg/m^3 which is almost half of the objective level and a 20µg/m^3 decrease over its highest concentration in 2012. Preliminary 2025 concentrations show that concentrations remain similar to 2024.

Figure 2 – Annual Mean Nitrogen Dioxide Diffusion Tube Concentrations 2006-2024 –Usk & Woodside



*The dash line represents the annual mean objective level of 40µg/m^3

What does this mean for monitoring of pollution levels?

Revocation of the AQMA does not mean that Monmouthshire County Council are going to stop monitoring air pollution in Usk. We are committed to continuing monitoring both in Usk and throughout Monmouthshire. We are also committed to continuing our work to reduce levels of pollution throughout the County.

Why are we consulting if the area no longer meets the need for an AQMA?

We are writing to notify you on our intention to revoke the AQMA and to invite feedback should you think there are any other factors that need to be considered. If you wish to make any representation with regards to these proposals, please email us with your comments at environmentalhealth@monmouthshire.gov.uk by midday on 1ST March 2026

For more information
To view the the 2025 Air Quality Progress Report, this Proposal Note and the Draft Revocation Order please visit our website -Air quality - Monmouthshire

Integrated Impact Assessment document

(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio Economic Duty)

Name of the Officer completing the evaluation: Huw Owen, Principal Environmental Health Officer Phone no: 01873 735433 E-mail: huwowen@monmouthshire.gov.uk	**Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal** For Cabinet Member to consider the proposed revocation of the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005 by the making of the Monmouthshire County Council Usk Air Quality Management Area Revocation Order 2026.
Name of Service area Public Protection	**Date** 20th May 2026

1. **Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	Revoking the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005 will have a neutral impact on people or groups of people with protected characteristics. A public consultation was undertaken from 26th January to 2nd March 2026 and no concerns or objections to the proposal were raised.	None	N/A
Disability	None	None	N/A

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Gender reassignment	None	None	N/A
Marriage or civil partnership	None	None	N/A
Pregnancy or maternity	None	None	N/A
Race	None	None	N/A
Religion or Belief	None	None	N/A
Sex	None	None	N/A
Sexual Orientation	None	None	N/A

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	**Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.**	**What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?**
Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice	None	None	N/A

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

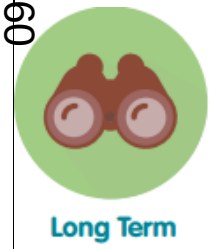
How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language no less favourably	The public consultation / proposal note undertaken between the 26th January to 2nd March 2026 was bilingual. The proposed Monmouthshire County Council Usk Air Quality Management Area Revocation Order 2026 will be bilingual.	None	N/A
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	None	None	N/A
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	None	None	N/A

4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	Positive: It is important to revoke an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at the earliest opportunity to properly reflect the air quality conditions and assist in the proportionate allocation of Council resources.	N/A
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and land, river and coastal ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	Positive: Domonstrates improving air quality which is inter related with all ecosystems.	N/A
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	Positive: Demonstrates improving air quality which has a direct link to health and well being.	N/A
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Positive: Demonstrates improving air quality.	N/A
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	Positive: setting an example on what can be achieved locally.	N/A
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People	No impact	N/A

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation		
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	No impact	N/A

5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future	The process undertaken, as set out in the report, is in accord with legislation and statutory guidance. Revocation of the Order will help focus on moving to a better air quality improvement plan.	
 Working together with other partners to deliver objectives	The Usk Air Quality Steering Group has been working with the aim of improving air quality for 15+ years and an essential part of helping to improve air quality.	Steering Group will continue post revocation to help focus on improving air quality.

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 Involving those with an interest and seeking their views	Steering Group has a wide representation. The consultation / proposal note was hand delivered to each residential and business property within the boundaries of the AQMA and other stakeholders (170+ addresses).	Steering Group will continue post revocation to help focus on improving air quality.
 Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse	Air quality monitoring since 2007 has been key to support evidence based decisions by the Steering Group and the data has been available to other agencies when considering matters that may have impacted on air quality.	Air quality monitoring will continue post revocation to help support evidence based decisions and focusing on measures that may help deliver improvements in air quality.
 Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies	Revocation of the AQMA will be a clear statement and an example of good partnership working.	

6. **Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?**

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	**Describe any negative impacts your proposal has**	**What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?**
Safeguarding	None	.None	N/A
Corporate Parenting	None	None	N/A

7. **What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?**

Air quality monitoring for approximately 20 years, 2/3 Steering Group meetings including local members since 2009 and annual air quality reports to Welsh Government which have been appraised and approved. Public consultation on the proposed revocation between 26th January and 2nd March 2026.

8. **SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?**

Demonstrates partnership working supported by a strong evidence base (air quality monitoring) and a good news message of improving air quality. Revocation of the Air Quality Management Area will help focus on improving air quality further.

9. **ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.**

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Await decision on the 20th May 2026 and if the recommendation is approved: - Liaise with the Council's Legal section to make the Monmouthshire County Council Usk Air Quality Management Area Revocation Order 2026. - A copy of the Order to be provided on the Council's website. - Inform the Usk Town Council and Llanbadoc Community Council of the decision.	Between 20th May and 20th June 2026.	Huw Owen. Environmental Health

10. **VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.**

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1.	ICMD 20th May 2026	20th May 2026	

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