

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, Environmental Health, Monmouthshire County Council, are writing to let you know that we propose to revoke the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Usk.

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.

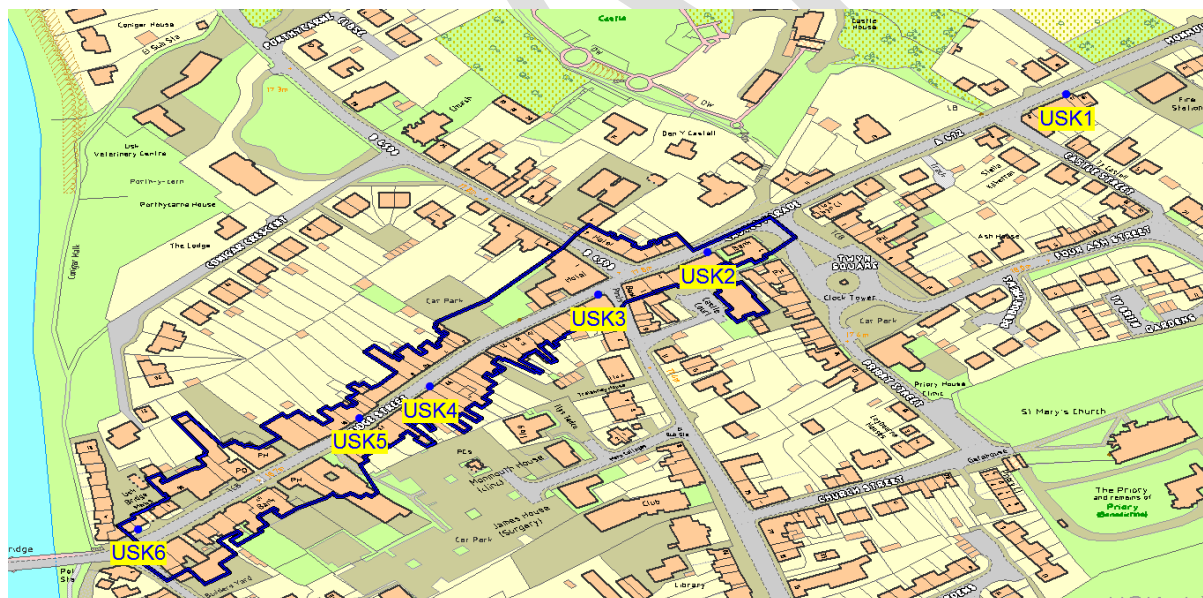
Background

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 $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (micrograms of nitrogen dioxide per cubic meter of ambient air) 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 air quality has been improving and as of 2025 the objective level of $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ 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."

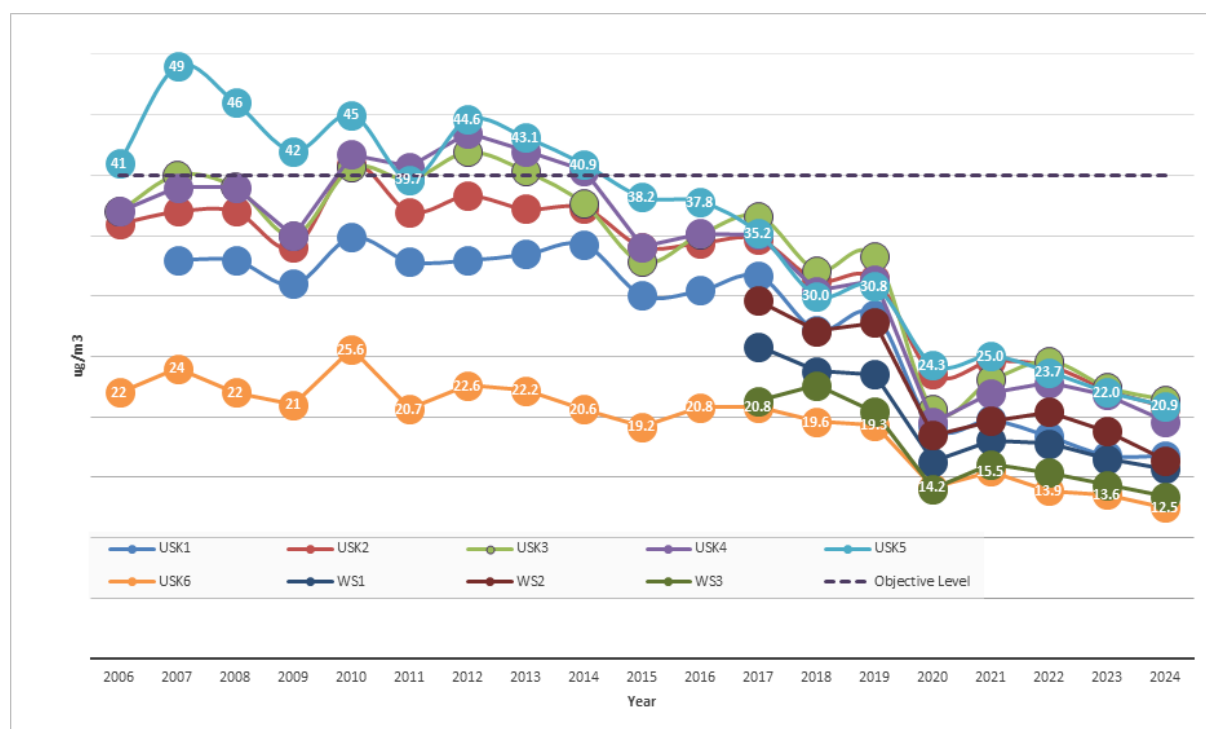
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Because of the COVID-19 pandemic the “consecutive five-year period” below 10% of the objective level ($36\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) was extended to a seven-year period to ensure the large decreases in pollution that occurred during 2020/21 did not reverse following the pandemic.

Current Air Quality Levels

Monitoring has shown that there have been no locations above $36\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ 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 $21.4\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ which is almost half of the objective level and a $20\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ 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 $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

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 xxxxxxxxxxxx

For more information, please see the 2025 Air Quality Report – LINK

This consultation is also on our website – LINK

The Draft Revocation Order can be viewed on our website - LINK TO DRAFT ORDER