

Preston New Road

September 2018

Background Air Quality Monitoring

In August 2017 we deployed a Mobile Monitoring Facility (MMF) in the vicinity of Cuadrilla's shale gas exploratory site at Preston New Road, Little Plumpton.

The purpose of carrying out monitoring at this stage is to understand the background level of the types of pollutants that may be detectable before the hydraulic fracturing and well testing stages commence. We will use this information to assess the concentrations of each substance in the environment before contributions are made during the flaring stage of operations. Our monitoring of air quality will continue during these stages to identify any changes. We also carry out a comparison of before, during and after operations for both surface water and groundwater monitoring.

The pollutants that have been measured are oxides of nitrogen (NO_x , NO , NO_2), particulates (PM_{10} and $\text{PM}_{2.5}$), methane (CH_4), benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and m&p-xylene (BTEX), wind speed and wind direction.

This is the tenth report to be produced since we started monitoring air quality. We shall publish subsequent reports to our citizen space page.

Figure 1. Photograph of a Mobile Monitoring Facility



This report looks at levels of pollutants recorded between the 23 August 2017 and the 24 September 2018. The BTEX data is only reported from the 9th September 2017, due to technical problems with the instrument prior to this date.

The TEOM instruments that measure particulate matter were turned off on the 6th March 2018 due to complaints about noise coming from the monitoring station by a local resident. This has hopefully now been resolved and measurement of particulate data at the site resumed on the 6th April 2018 for PM₁₀ and the 12th April 2018 for PM_{2.5}.

The gap in the CH₄ data, between the 26th April 2018 - 1st May 2018, was due to a technical problem with the analyser.

The gap in the BTEX data between the 29th June 2018 - 6 July 2018 was due to the instrument being removed for servicing.

Results

Provisional data for each pollutant, from the 23 August 2017 until the 24 September 2018, is shown in a series of time series plots below. Comparison with the AQS objectives, where applicable, has been made using a years' worth of data ending with the most up to date data. For this report the annual data period is from 24 September 2017 - 23 September 2018.

Particulates

Figure 2 shows the hourly particulate concentrations (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) at the monitoring site. The particulate data was collected using TEOM instruments. PM₁₀ data has been adjusted using the King's College London (KCL) Volatile Correction Model (VCM), which allows you to make a small adjustment to TEOM measurements to correct for the loss of volatile components of PM₁₀. The VCM uses FDMS instrument data from sites within 130km distance of the MMF in order to adjust the PM₁₀ measurements to be comparable with the reference method. There is not currently a validated correction factor for PM_{2.5} TEOM data.

The AQS has two objectives for PM₁₀, the first is to limit the annual mean concentration to 40µg/m³ and the second objective states that the 24-hour mean (midnight – midnight) must not exceed 50µg/m³ on more than 35 occasions during one year.

The mean PM₁₀ concentration between the 24 September 2017 and 23 September 2018 at the MMF was 14.9µg/m³. If the assumption is made that the conditions during the monitoring period were representative of a typical year, then the results would indicate that the AQS annual mean objective would not be exceeded at the monitoring site. However, it is important to note that this does not take into account changes in weather conditions or changes to the site operations that might occur outside of the monitoring period.

Figure 3 shows that for PM₁₀ the 24-hour (midnight-midnight) mean concentration at the MMF site was greater than 50µg/m³ on 1 day during the period, the maximum concentration being 53.8µg/m³. This exceedance was the result of the build of emissions from bonfire night below the atmospheric boundary layer (see Figure 4). If the assumption is made that the conditions during this period were representative of a typical year (subject to the limitations mentioned in the paragraph above) then the AQS for 24-Hours (midnight-midnight) mean PM₁₀ concentrations would not be exceeded at the monitoring site.

The AQS objective for PM_{2.5} is an annual mean concentration of 25µg/m³. The mean PM_{2.5} concentration between the 24 September 2017 and 23 September 2018 at the MMF was 7.05µg/m³. If the assumption is made that the conditions during this period were representative of a typical year (again subject to the

limitations explained above), then the results would indicate that the AQS annual mean objective for PM_{2.5} would not be exceeded at the monitoring site.

As well as the spike in particulate caused by bonfire night emissions, Figure 2 also shows a spike in the 1-hour PM₁₀ data at the beginning of March and in May - July. The spikes in March may be associated with the start of water main works by United Utilities at the entrance to the PNR site. However, the rise in concentrations at these times did not cause exceedances of the PM₁₀ 24-hour AQS and the air quality index for the days in question was still in the low banding.

Figure 2. Time series plot of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} 1-Hour Mean Concentrations.

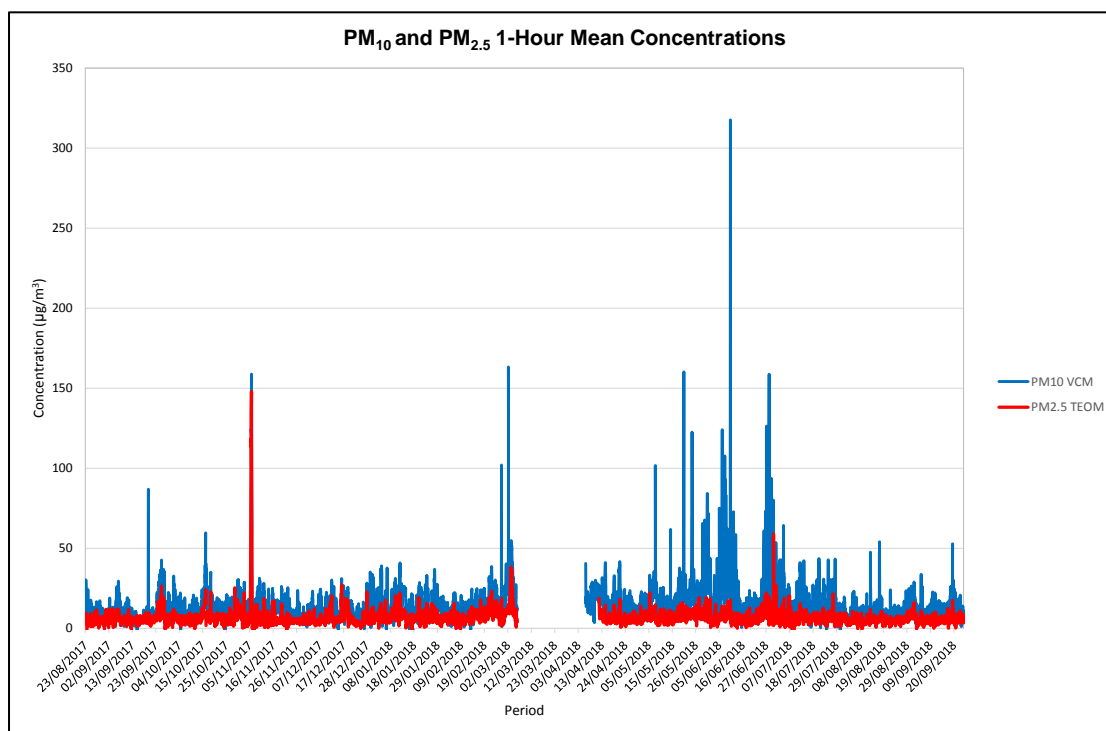


Figure 3. 24-hour (midnight-midnight) mean PM₁₀ concentrations at the monitoring site

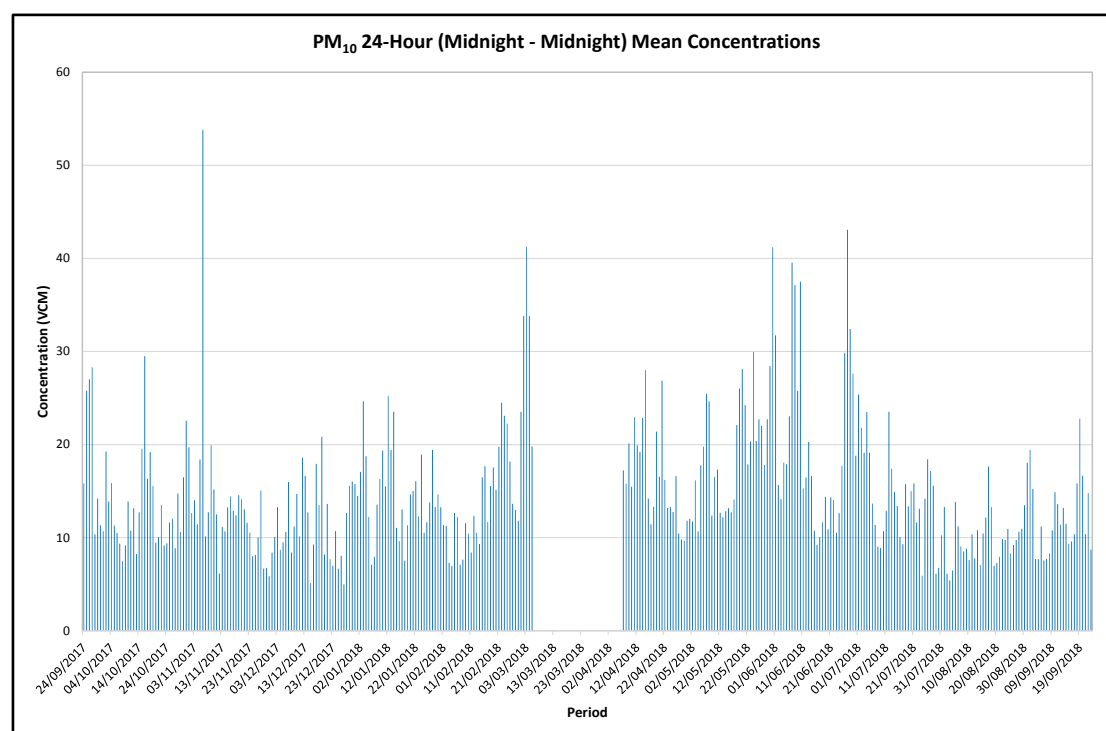
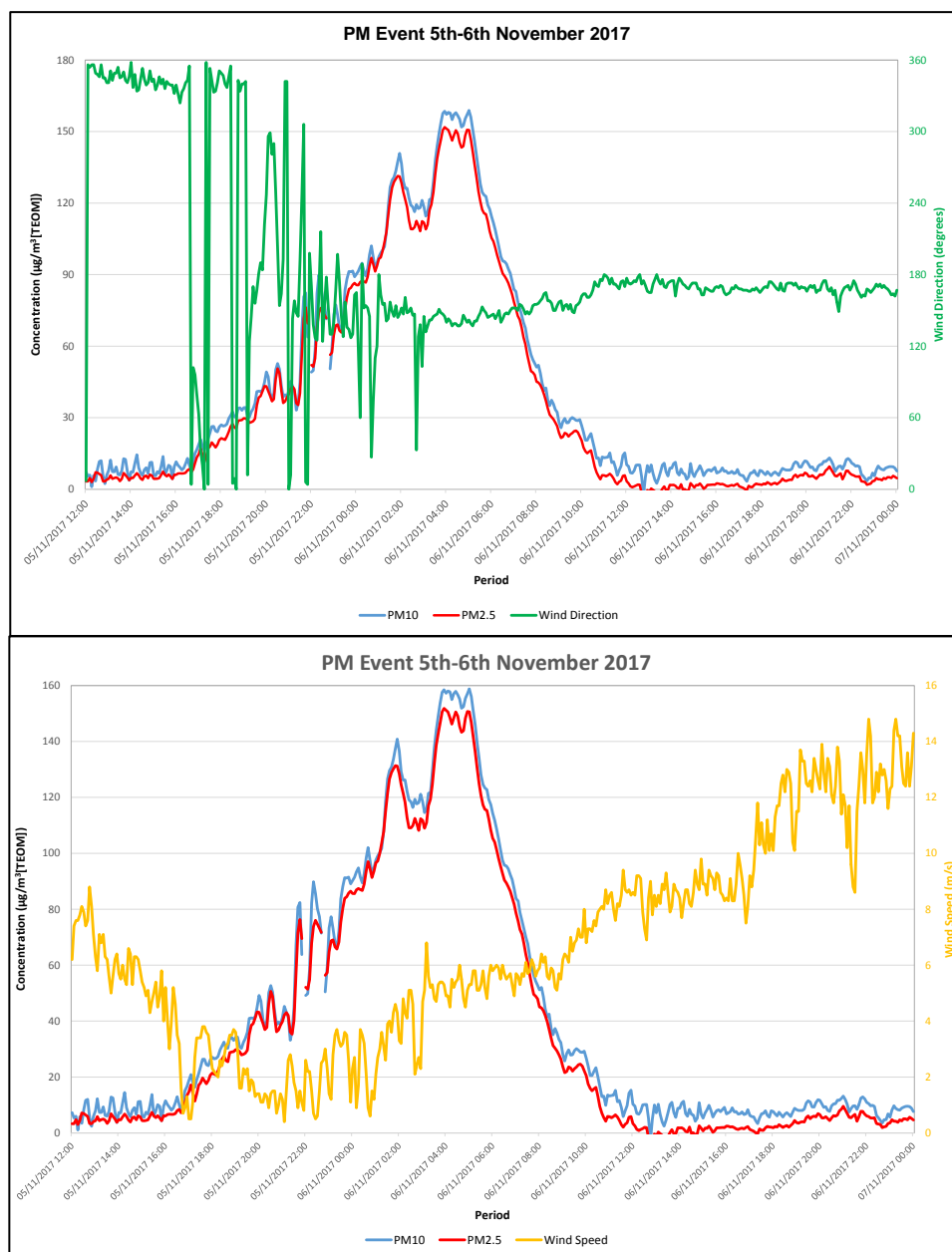


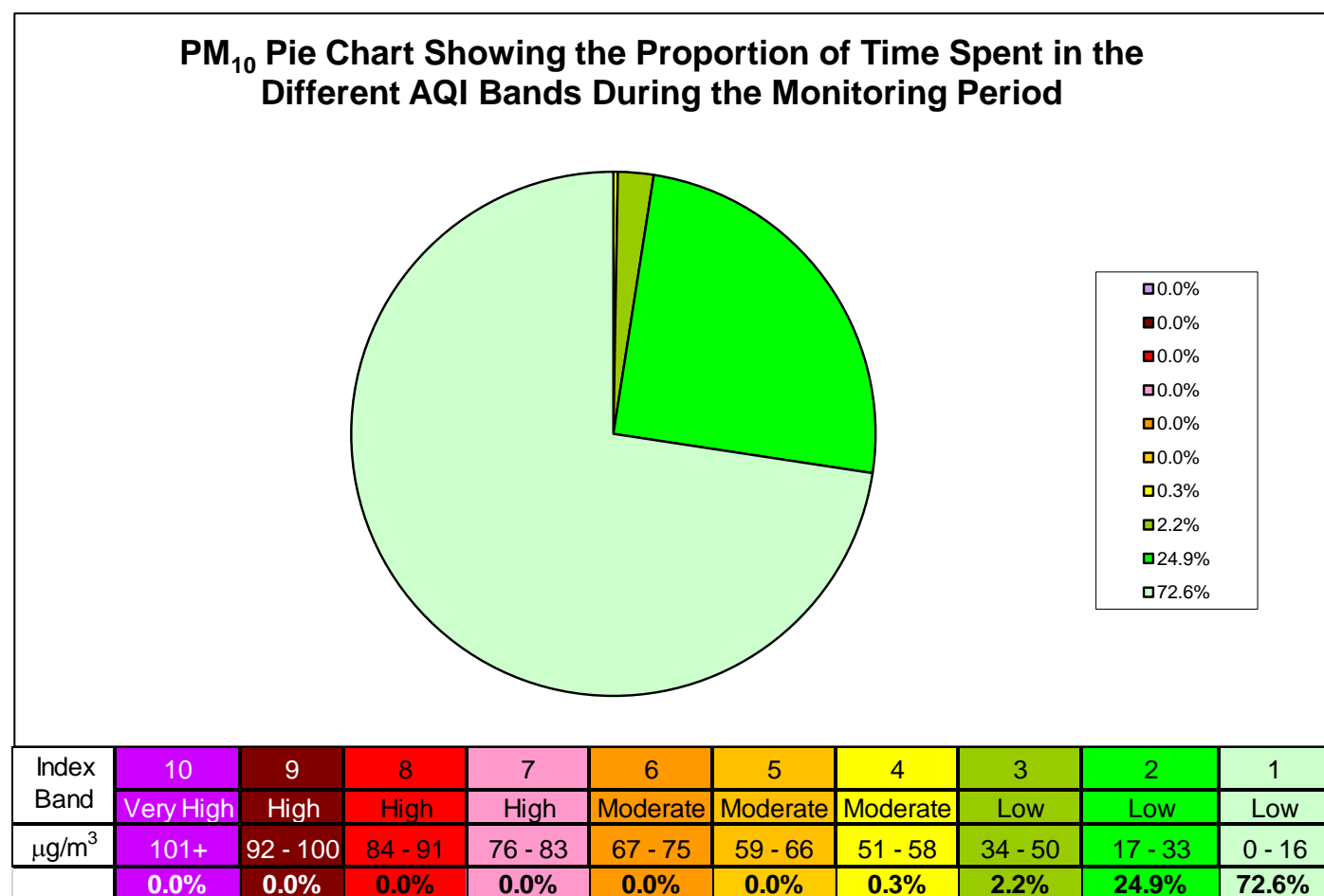
Figure 4. Comparison of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} event on the 5th-6th November 2017 with wind direction (degrees) and wind speed (m/s)



In the United Kingdom a daily Air Quality Index has been developed. The system uses an index numbered 1-10 (low – high pollution), divided into four bands to provide more detail on a daily basis about air pollution levels to the general population and those at higher risk from air pollution.

Figure 5 looks retrospectively at the daily PM₁₀ concentrations at the monitoring site in relation to the Air Quality Index banding. The plot shows that PM₁₀ 24-hour concentrations were all in the low banding at the monitoring site, apart from one day in the moderate banding, which was associated with bonfire night.

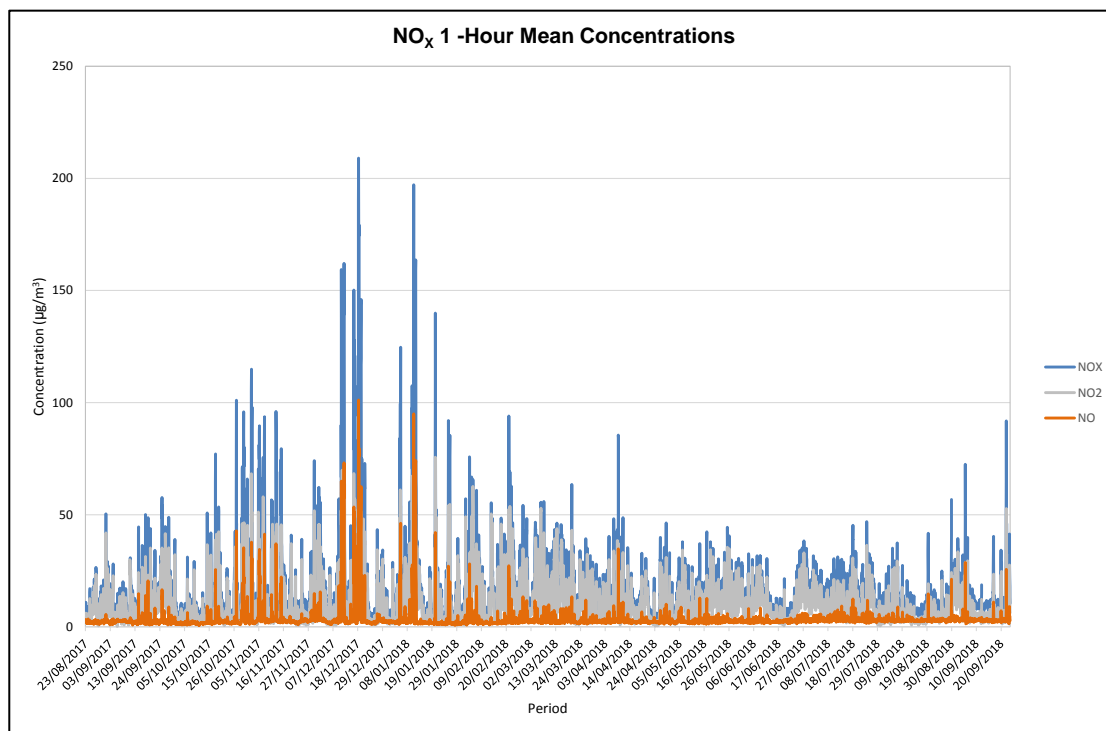
Figure 5. PM₁₀ AQI Pie Chart.



Oxides of Nitrogen

Figure 6 shows that levels are relatively low at the monitoring site.

Figure 6. Time series plot of the oxides of nitrogen 1-Hour Mean Concentrations ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$).



While consideration of NO_x levels can be more informative when determining the source of pollution, the level of NO₂ concentration is more important from a human health stand point. NO₂ is the constituent of NO_x that is harmful to health and consequently a National Air Quality Strategy Objective exists for NO₂ levels. NO₂ has therefore been considered, in addition to NO_x, as it is a pollutant in its own right.

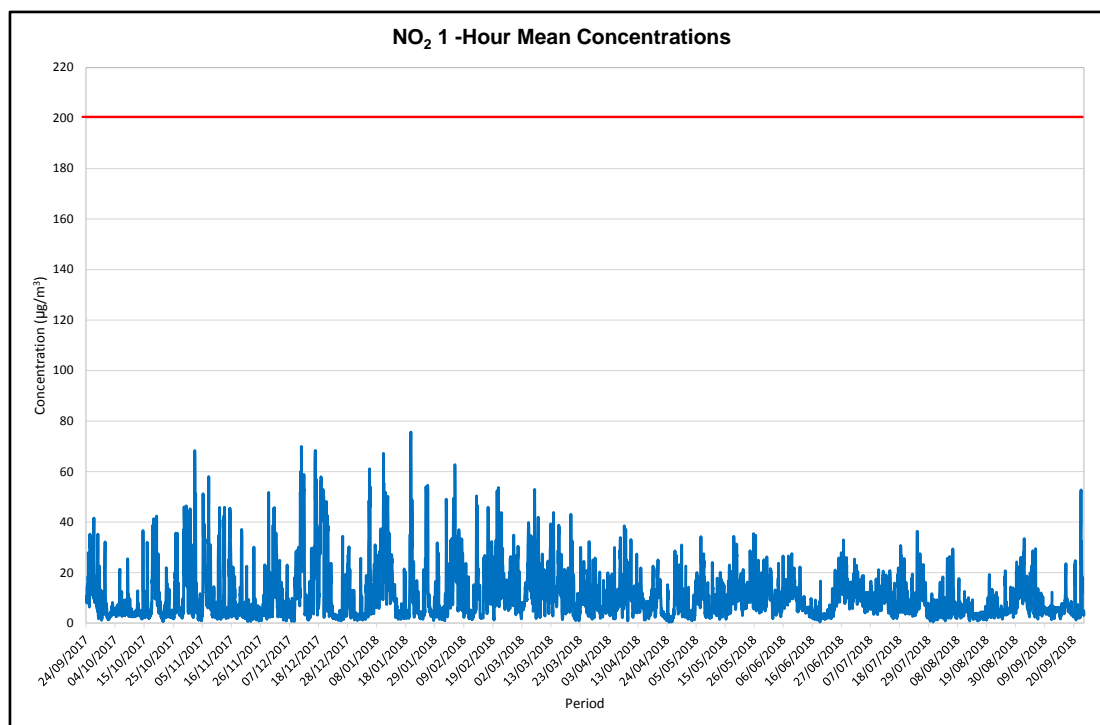
The AQS has objectives for 1-hour mean and annual mean NO₂ concentrations. The AQS objectives for the 1-hour mean concentrations states that a value of 200 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ must not be exceeded on more than 18 occasions during one year. A time series plot of 1-hour concentrations of NO₂ measured at the monitoring site is shown in Figure 7.

The 1-hour NO₂ concentrations were never greater than 200 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ between the 24 September 2017 and 23 September 2018, the maximum concentration being 75.6 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. If the assumption is made that the conditions during this period were representative of a typical year then the AQS for 1-Hour mean NO₂ concentrations would not be exceeded at the monitoring site.

The annual objective states that an average concentration value of 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ must not be exceeded in one year.

The average NO_2 concentration between the 24 September 2017 and 23 September 2018 was $10.4\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. If the assumption is made that conditions during this period were representative of a typical year, then the results would indicate that the annual AQS objective for NO_2 would not be exceeded.

Figure 7. Time series plot of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) 1-Hour Mean Concentrations ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)

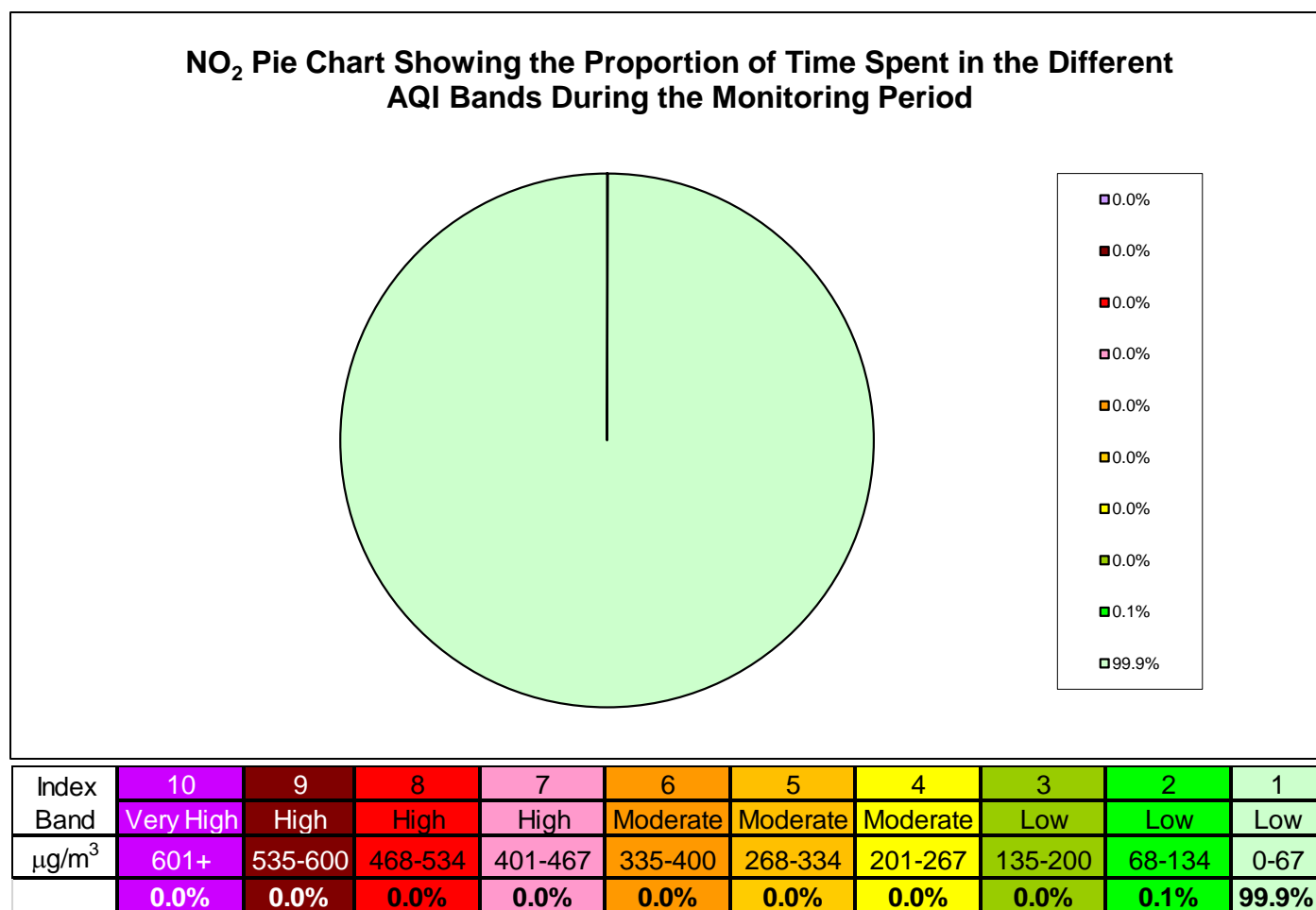


The AQS objective has an annual standard for NO_x of $30\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, for the protection of vegetation and ecosystems. The mean NO_x concentration between the 24 September 2017 and 23 September 2018 was $15.6\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

In the United Kingdom a daily Air Quality Index has been developed. The system uses an index numbered 1-10 (low – high pollution), divided into four bands to provide more detail on a daily basis about air pollution levels to the general population and those at higher risk from air pollution.

Figure 8 looks retrospectively at the daily NO_2 concentrations at the monitoring site in relation to the Air Quality Index banding. The figure shows that during the monitoring period the NO_2 1-hour concentrations remained in the low banding of the Air Quality Index.

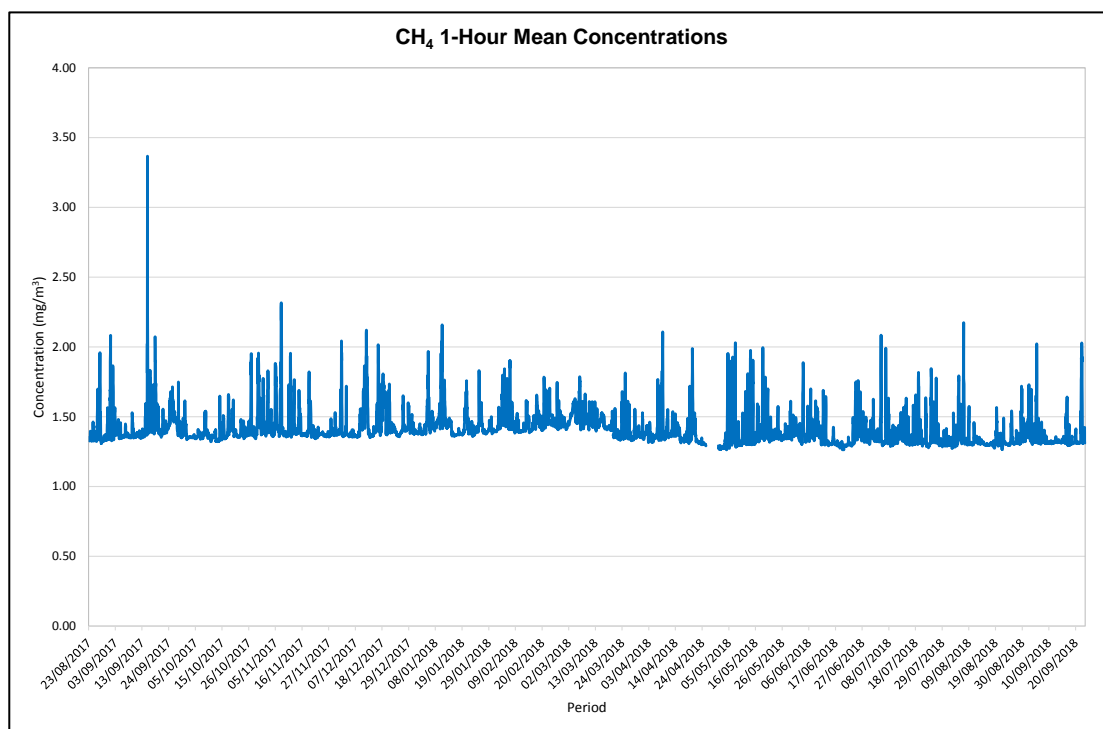
Figure 8. NO₂ AQI Pie Chart.



Methane

Figure 9 shows that the CH₄ levels are relatively low at the monitoring site. The average CH₄ concentration during the monitoring period was 1.41mg/m³.

Figure 9. Time series plot of the methane (CH₄) 1-Hour Mean Concentrations (mg/m³).



BTEX

Figure 10 shows that the BTEX levels are relatively low at the monitoring site. Table 1 shows the average concentration of each of the BTEX between the 24 September 2017 and 23 September 2018. The build-up of emissions from bonfire night is also evident in the BTEX data, especially in the benzene data, where the hourly average benzene concentration was $7.83\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ at 05:00 on the 6th November. This corresponds with the peak in particulate concentrations.

Benzene is the only BTEX recorded at the monitoring site that has an AQS. The AQS objective for benzene is expressed as an annual mean and is currently set at $5\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. The mean benzene concentration between the 24 September 2017 and 23 September 2018 was at $0.30\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. If the assumption is made that conditions during this period were representative of a typical year, then the results would indicate that the annual AQS objective for benzene would not be exceeded.

Table 1. Average BTEX concentrations ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)

VOC	Average ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)
Benzene	0.30
Toluene	0.65
Ethylbenzene	0.24
m&p-Xylene	0.97

Figure 10. Time series plot of the BTEX 1-Hour Mean Concentrations ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$).

