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# Primary Shopping Frontages

## Supplementary Planning Guidance

April 2016



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**Monmouthshire County Council  
Local Development Plan**

**Primary Shopping Frontages  
Supplementary Planning  
Guidance**

**April 2016**

**Planning Policy Service**

**Monmouthshire County Council**

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This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg.

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- B. Policy RET1 Checklist for Assessing Development and Change of Use Proposals for Non-retail Uses in Primary Shopping Frontages
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### *Front Cover Photographs Clockwise from Top Left:*

*Cross Street, Abergavenny*

*Church Street, Monmouth*

*Newport Road, Caldicot*

*St Mary Street, Chepstow*

## 1 Introduction: Purpose of this Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 1.1 Maintaining and enhancing the vitality, attractiveness and viability of primary shopping frontages in Monmouthshire's main town centres of Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth is a key objective of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan (LDP) and reflects the aims of national planning policy on retail and town centres. Policy RET1 - Primary Shopping Frontages - of the Monmouthshire LDP seeks to protect the predominant shopping role and character of the main towns by controlling the loss of retail uses in the primary shopping frontages.
- 1.2 This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is intended to provide certainty and clarity for applicants and the Council in the interpretation and implementation of Policy RET1 relating to proposals for new development/redevelopment and change of use of ground floor premises in the County's primary shopping frontages from retail to non-retail uses. The SPG is a material consideration in relation to planning applications and appeals and helps guide applicants and the Council through the planning process with regard to proposals for development/redevelopment and changes of use in primary shopping frontages.
- 1.3 The SPG will assist decision making by setting out guidance on the criteria based approach for assessing proposals for non-retail use classes in the County's primary shopping frontages. In particular, it will provide clarity on the proportion of ground floor units in non-retail use that the Council considers acceptable within the specified frontages.
- 1.4 The SPG contains the following information:
  - **Section 2** provides an overview of the national and local planning policy context in relation to primary shopping frontages;
  - **Section 3** explains the designation of primary shopping frontages in Monmouthshire; and
  - **Section 4** provides guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the criteria set out in Policy RET1.
  - **Appendices:**
    - Appendix A Monmouthshire Primary Shopping Frontages – Background Information and Maps
    - Appendix B Policy RET1 Checklist for Assessing Development and Change of Use Proposals for Non-retail Uses at ground floor level in Primary Shopping Frontages
    - Appendix C Sources of Advice

### National Planning Policy

- 2.1 National planning policy on retail and town centres as set out in Chapter 10 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW, Edition 8 January 2016) favours the location of retailing, leisure and other complementary functions within town, district, local and village centres which are readily accessible and minimise the need to travel. Paragraphs 10.2.3-10.2.8 specifically provide guidance in relation to support for existing centres and advise that local planning authorities may distinguish between primary and secondary frontages in such areas and consider their relative importance to the character of the centre. Primary shopping frontages are those characterised by a high level of shopping uses, while secondary frontages contain a greater mix of commercial uses, including banks and other financial institutions, and restaurants. PPW clearly states that such non-retail uses should not be allowed to dominate primary shopping areas in a way that can undermine the retail function.
- 2.2 While national planning policy encourages diversity in town centres as a whole, it highlights the importance of ensuring that ground floor use class changes to non-retail uses are not permitted where they create a predominance of such uses, unacceptably dilute the shopping street frontage or undermine the vitality, attractiveness and viability of a centre. These principles are reflected in the LDP's retail planning policy framework and this SPG.
- 2.3 Technical Advice Note 4 Retailing and Town Centres (TAN4, 1996) provides advice on the information that can be of value in measuring the vitality, attractiveness and viability of town centres. This approach has assisted in identifying the central shopping areas and primary shopping frontages in each of the County's main town centres.

### Monmouthshire Local Development Plan (LDP)

- 2.4 The Monmouthshire LDP was adopted in February 2014 and provides the planning framework for this SPG. It builds on the positive approach of previous development plans to ensure that the County's main town centres thrive as successful shopping and visitor destinations. A key objective of the LDP is to '*sustain and enhance the main County towns of Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth as vibrant and attractive centres serving their own populations and rural hinterlands*'. This is reflected in the LDP's retail policy framework, including Strategic Policy S6 - Retail Hierarchy - which seeks to focus new retail and commercial developments in the identified retail hierarchy.
- 2.5 Policy RET1 - Primary Shopping Frontages - which this SPG supports, specifically focuses on primary shopping frontages and sets out the criteria for considering non-retail proposals within these frontages. The policy gives priority to retail (A1 uses) in ground floor premises of the town centres' primary shopping frontages and seeks to protect the predominant shopping role and

character of the main towns by controlling the loss of retail units within such frontages. In providing an enhanced level of protection for the most important shopping frontages in Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth, the policy aims to ensure that development/redevelopment and change of use proposals are only permitted if they do not harm the shopping character and function of the primary shopping frontages. This SPG provides further guidance on the criteria-based approach set out in Policy RET1 to controlling non-retail uses at ground floor level in these key frontages.

- 2.6 With regard to proposals for the development and change of use of premises above ground floor level in primary shopping frontages consideration will be given to Policy RET2 Central Shopping Areas of the LDP. This policy seeks to encourage a diversity of uses within central shopping areas providing that this would not harm their role/character or undermine their vitality, attractiveness and viability.

### **Monmouthshire LDP Evidence Base**

- 2.7 A number of studies/ assessments have been carried out to inform the LDP which provide valuable baseline information on the County's main towns and have assisted in identifying the central shopping areas and primary shopping frontages. These include:

- **Retail Background Paper**

This sets out the Council's annual retail 'health check' of the County's main towns which involves monitoring the diversity of uses, retailer representation/demand, vacant units, environmental quality and pedestrian flows. The most recent data available is for October 2015 and is set out in the latest Retail Background Paper dated February 2016.

- **Floorspace and Household Surveys**

These surveys are undertaken every five years and form another important element of the County's retail / town centre evidence base. The most recent floorspace and consumer surveys were undertaken in 2015, the results of which are reported in the 2016 Retail Background Paper.

- **Monmouthshire Retail and Leisure Study (Drivers Jonas Deloitte, 2009)**

Undertaken to inform the evidence base of the LDP, this study assesses the need for further retail, leisure and other main town centre uses in Monmouthshire. As part of the study, consideration was given to the suitability of existing primary shopping frontages within the main towns.

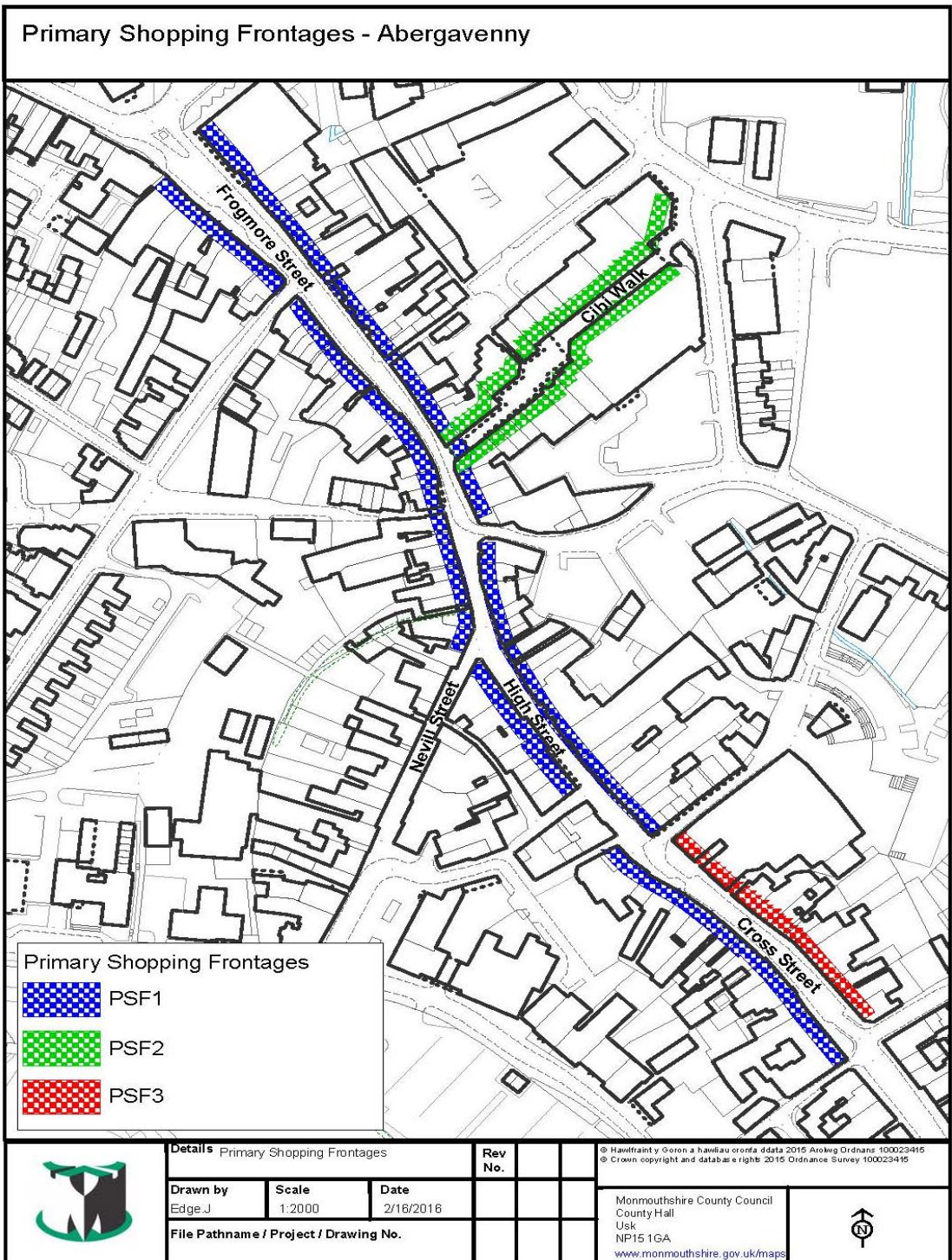
### 3 Designation of Primary Shopping Frontages in Monmouthshire

- 3.1 The designation of primary shopping frontages in the LDP is a key element of the Council's strategy to protect and enhance the vitality, attractiveness and viability of the County's main town centres. Primary shopping frontages have been designated to cover those areas of the County's main town centres of Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth where retail uses (Use Class A1) predominate. It should be noted that primary shopping frontages relate only to the ground floor level of premises.
- 3.2 The clustering of retail uses can significantly contribute to the vitality, attractiveness and viability of the town centres. Whilst it is recognised that other non-A1 uses, such as financial and professional services and restaurants and cafés can complement and contribute to the vitality of shopping centres, there is a need to ensure that they do not reach such a level that the main retail function of a centre, or a particular frontage, is diluted and/or the vitality, attractiveness and viability of a centre is undermined. It is essential, therefore, that the retail core of the County's main centres is protected and that developments which undermine this function are resisted.
- 3.3 The designation of primary shopping frontages in Monmouthshire has been informed by consideration of the following:
- The LDP evidence base including the annual 'health check' surveys (e.g. presence of national retailers, pedestrian counts etc.) and the Monmouthshire Retail and Leisure Study. In view of the latter, one amendment was made to the Caldicot primary shopping frontage through the LDP process, whereby a number of units at the eastern end of the centre were removed from the primary shopping frontage on the basis that they did not warrant such designation.
  - The character and function of the frontages within the town centres (e.g. frontages with the greatest provision of existing shops).
  - The Council's adopted LDP retail objectives, strategy and policies.
- 3.4 Maps of the towns' designated primary shopping frontages are set out below. Further background detail on these frontages, including the maximum thresholds sought for non-retail (A2/A3) uses within these frontages, together with maps showing their extent and use classes at ground floor level (at October 2015), is provided in **Appendix A** of this SPG.

## Primary Shopping Frontages (PSF) in Monmouthshire

### ABERGAVENNY

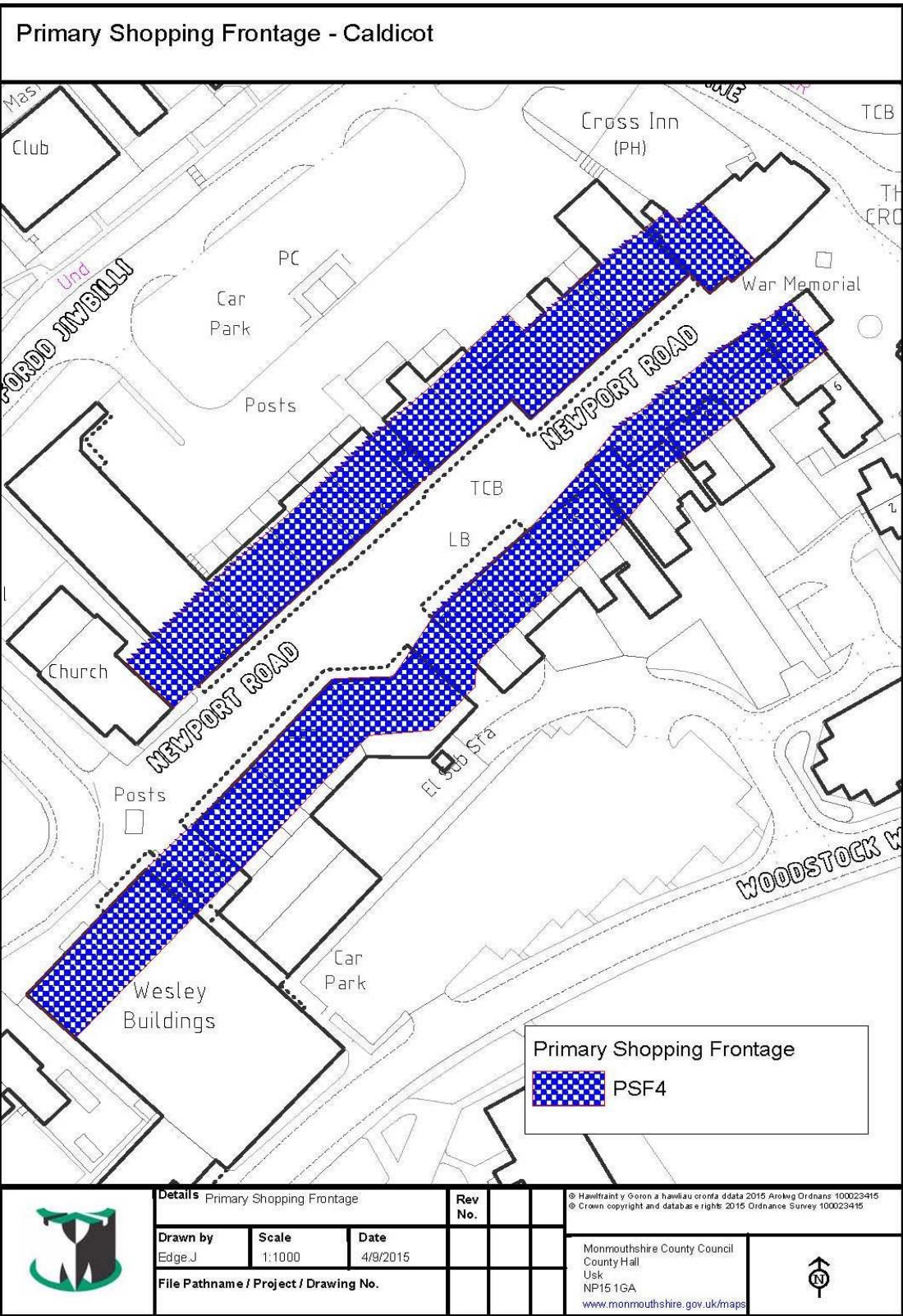
<b>PSF1</b>	Cross Street (1-15 & The Angel Hotel), High Street, Frogmore Street and 1 Nevill Street
<b>PSF2</b>	Cibi Walk (1-18)
<b>PSF3</b>	Cross Street (51-60 & Town Hall)





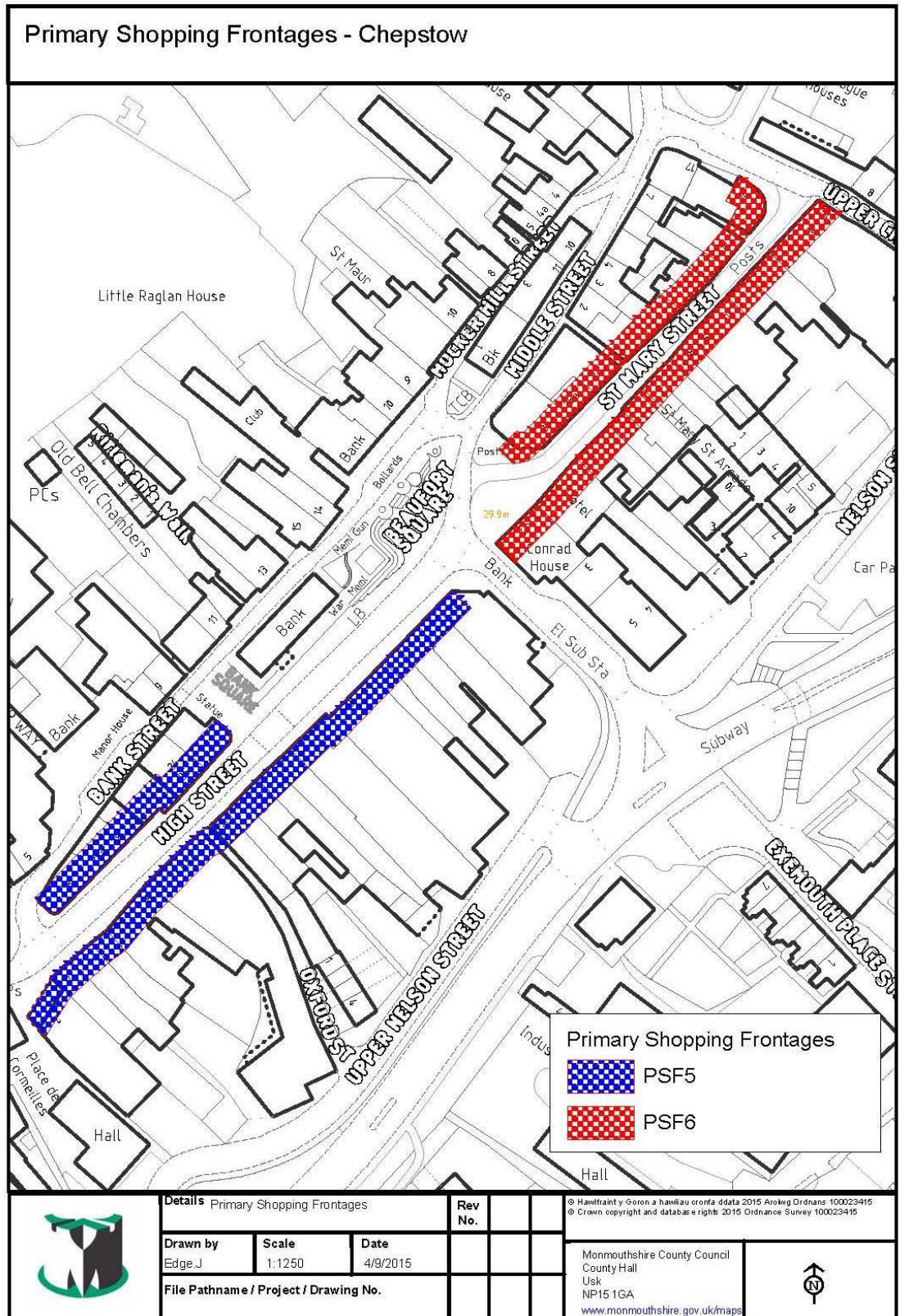
# CALDICOT

<b>PSF4</b>	Newport Road (7-43 & 14-Wesley Buildings)
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## CHEPSTOW

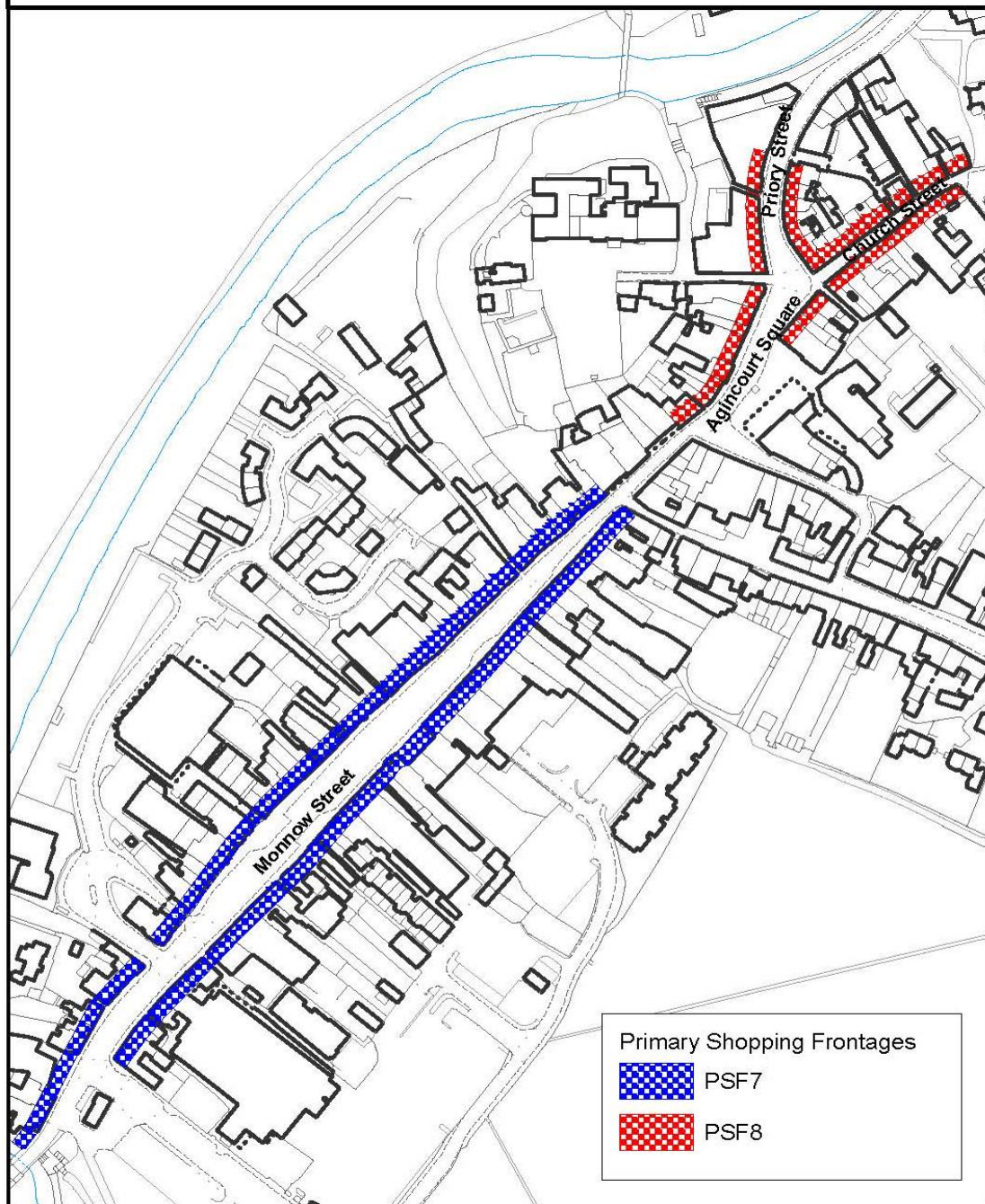
<b>PSF5</b>	High Street (2-29)
<b>PSF6</b>	St Mary Street





## MONMOUTH

<b>PSF7</b>	Monnow Street (12-126)
<b>PSF8</b>	Church Street, Agincourt Square & Priory Street (1-4)

### Primary Shopping Frontages - Monmouth



	<b>Details</b> Primary Shopping Frontages		<b>Rev</b> No.	<small>© Hantrefni y Goron a hantiau orionfa ddata 2015 Arrolwg Ordianc 100023415 © Crown copyright and database right. 2015 Ordnance Survey 100023415</small>
	<b>Drawn by</b> Edge.J	<b>Scale</b> 1:2300	<b>Date</b> 2/18/2018	Monmouthshire County Council County Hall Usk NP15 1GA <a href="http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/maps">www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/maps</a>
	<b>File Pathname / Project / Drawing No.</b>			

## **4 Interpretation and Implementation of Policy RET1: The Approach to Assessing Development and Change of Use Proposals for Non-retail Uses in Primary Shopping Frontages**

- 4.1 This section of the guidance provides further detail on the interpretation and implementation of the criteria set out in Policy RET1, with particular consideration given to criterion c). Primary shopping frontages have been identified in the County's main towns within which a specific criteria-based approach set out in Policy RET1 will apply when assessing proposals for new development/redevelopment and change of use from A1 to non-retail (A2/A3) uses at ground floor level. This approach seeks to protect the predominant shopping role and character of the main towns by controlling the loss of retail uses within the primary shopping frontages. Non-retail in the context of this policy and SPG applies to all uses outside class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, as amended and applied in Wales.

### **Policy RET1 – Primary Shopping Frontages**

**Primary Shopping Frontages are designated in Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth as shown on the Proposals Map. Within Primary Shopping Frontages, development or redevelopment proposals for Classes A2 or A3 on ground floors, or a change of use on ground floors from Use Class A1 to Classes A2 or A3, will be permitted unless:**

- a) they would create (or further extend) a continuous frontage exceeding two or more non A1 units; or**
- b) they would result in the loss of A1 retail units in prominent locations, corner units or those with long frontages; or**
- c) the number, frontage lengths and distribution of Class A2 or A3 uses in the frontage create an over-concentration of uses detracting from its established retail character.**

**Where a proposal fails to meet the above criteria, an exception may be considered provided:**

- i) it can be demonstrated that the proposed use would not harm the vitality of the street frontage; or**
- ii) the premises have been vacant for a least 2 years and genuine attempts at marketing the existing use have been unsuccessful.**

4.2 In interpreting the criteria set out in Policy RET1, the following considerations will be taken into account:

**a) Distribution and Proximity of Non-retail Uses in Primary Shopping Frontages:**

Criterion a) seeks to ensure that consideration is given to the distribution and proximity of existing non-retail uses at ground floor level in primary shopping frontages. In order to prevent concentrations of non-retail uses occurring which could dilute shopping frontages and negatively impact on vitality, attractiveness and viability, no more than **two** adjacent non-retail uses will be permitted.

**b) Location and Prominence of Premises in Primary Shopping Frontages:**

Criteria b) seeks to prevent the loss of A1 retail units in prominent locations and corner units and those with long frontages at ground floor level. Such units are considered to have an important function in primary shopping frontages in maintaining vitality, attractiveness and viability and it is therefore essential that the loss of such units to non-retail (A2/A3) uses is controlled. Accordingly, it is unlikely that planning permission would be granted for any proposal in a primary shopping frontage involving development/redevelopment or a change of use from A1 retail use to a non-retail use in a prominent/corner location.

In determining whether a unit constitutes a prominent premises within a primary shopping frontage consideration should be given to the following factors:

- Is it a key /anchor store?
- Is it visually prominent? e.g. architectural quality and presence, junction location.
- Is it located in a central position within the frontage?
- Is it located immediately adjacent to transport facilities or in a key position in terms of pedestrian linkages?

Such factors should assist in establishing the importance of the premises in the shopping frontage.

This approach will also apply to proposals for development/redevelopment or a change of use to non-retail in those premises with a long frontage. For the purposes of this policy, specific consideration will be given to those units with a frontage of **10 metres** or more although the significance of a particular frontage will depend on its context.

**c) Proportion of Non-retail Uses in Primary Shopping Frontages:**

Criterion c) aims to prevent the number, frontage length and distribution of non-A1 uses from creating an over-concentration of non-retail uses in primary shopping frontages which can interrupt the flow of retail units, lead to 'dead frontages' and negatively impact on the established shopping role

and character of the centres. The number of existing non-retail uses within such frontages will therefore be a key factor in deciding whether to permit an additional non-retail use.

In order to avoid a concentration of non-retail uses in primary shopping frontages there will be a restriction upon the number of units in non-A1 use classes allowed within these frontages at ground floor level. To assist with the interpretation of this criterion, percentage figures are provided for the maximum proportion of non-retail (A2/A3) uses that the Council considers appropriate in each of the centres' primary shopping frontages. Development/redevelopment and change of use proposals which would increase the number of non-retail units to more than the identified percentages in each of the specified frontages, as set out in Tables 1-4 below and in Appendix A, are unlikely to be permitted.

Of note, A1 retail and non-retail uses within the primary shopping frontages are calculated from both the numbers of current A1 and non-A1 uses together with vacant units which were in A1 and non-A1 use prior to becoming vacant, and shops which have a valid A1 consent.

In identifying the maximum proportion of non-retail units considered appropriate in each of the primary shopping frontages, a number of factors have been taken into account including:

- The manner in which the balance of retail to non-retail (A2/A3) uses has been changing over time within a frontage;
- The contribution of the frontage to the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole;
- Existing/ baseline situation based on the centres' health check findings and Retail and Leisure Study.

The identified thresholds, as set out below and in Appendix A, are generally considered appropriate on the basis that a higher level of non-retail uses would be likely to dilute the established shopping role/character of the frontage and undermine the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the frontages and centres as a whole. Given the diversity of frontages in the County, it is not considered appropriate to apply a standardised threshold across all primary shopping frontages in all of the main towns. The thresholds therefore vary according to the function and character of the specified primary shopping frontage. Further background information on each of the frontages, including the justification for these thresholds and maps showing the extent of the specified frontages and ground floor uses (at October 2015) is provided in **Appendix A** and should be referred to accordingly.

**Table 1 Abergavenny Primary Shopping Frontages – Maximum Thresholds for Non-A1 Uses**

Primary Shopping Frontage		Maximum % of Non-A1 Units
PSF1	Cross Street, High Street & Frogmore Street	25%
PSF2	Cibi Walk	0%
PSF3	Cross Street (51-60 & Town Hall)	45%

**Table 2 Caldicot Primary Shopping Frontage – Maximum Thresholds for Non-A1 Uses**

Primary Shopping Frontage		Maximum % of Non-A1 Units
PSF4	Newport Road (7-43 & 14-Wesley Buildings)	35%

**Table 3 Chepstow Primary Shopping Frontages – Maximum Thresholds for Non-A1 Uses**

Primary Shopping Frontage		Maximum % of Non-A1 Units
PSF5	High Street (2-29)	25%
PSF6	St Mary Street	35%

**Table 4 Monmouth Primary Shopping Frontages – Maximum Thresholds for Non-A1 Uses**

Primary Shopping Frontage		Maximum % of Non-A1 Units
PSF7	Monnow Street (12-126)	25%
PSF8	Church Street, Agincourt Square & Priory Street (1-4)	35%

It should be noted that there may be circumstances where the maximum threshold for non-retail uses has already been undermined within a certain frontage. In such instances the threshold identified should be seen as an aspiration to address the existence of a weakened retail frontage and, therefore, further erosion by non-retail uses will not normally be permitted. This approach will allow for the development/redevelopment of retail uses and change of use from non-retail to retail use in order to enhance the retail function of a frontage, but importantly it would not enable a new retail use to revert to a non-retail use.

A checklist for assessing development and change of use proposals for non-retail uses in primary shopping frontages is provided in **Appendix B** and should be referred to accordingly. This enables an applicant/officer to quickly review whether a proposal is compliant with Policy RET1.

#### 4.3 Exceptions to Criteria a) to c) of Policy RET1

Policy RET1 sets out exceptions to these criteria where a proposed development/change of use to a non-retail (A2/A3) use in a primary shopping frontage may be considered acceptable. To deal with these issues in turn:

**i) The applicant can demonstrate that the proposed use would not harm the vitality of the street frontage**

While there is a presumption in favour of retaining retail units within the centres' primary shopping frontages, it is recognised that complementary A2 and A3 uses can add to the vitality of a centre by attracting customers and creating additional footfall. Coffee shops and cafés in particular can complement the retail offer and add to the attractiveness and vitality of the County's historic towns which have a considerable visitor clientele. Applications for proposals for development/redevelopment and changes of use to A2/A3 uses will need to be supported by evidence that the proposed use would comply with this element of Policy RET1. For example, this could include footfall estimates (which should be akin to a retail use) and evidence to demonstrate that the proposal would bring increased vitality to the area and incorporate active ground floor frontages. In addition, it is essential that uses within these frontages are appropriate in terms of their ability to attract passing trade within general shopping hours. This could be reflected in conditions attached to a planning permission.

In instances where A2 or A3 uses are permitted in primary shopping frontages it is important to ensure that they are dispersed to maximise the benefits of diversity and create frontages which provide increased interest and pedestrian flows. It is also important that non-retail uses maintain the vitality of the street by retaining an active ground floor frontage / attractive display window.

Or

**ii) The premises has been vacant for at least 2 years and there have been genuine attempts at marketing the property.**

The possibility of a premises remaining vacant for an extended period of time will be a material planning consideration in determining the suitability of a proposed use class change in a primary shopping frontage. The Council will balance concerns about the loss of retail units with the desire to avoid long term vacancies that would have a detrimental impact on the vitality, attractiveness and viability of town centres. Proposals for use class changes to non-retail uses for vacant premises will need to be supported by suitable evidence to demonstrate the extent of marketing undertaken to secure a retail occupier. Marketing and advertising should normally be for a minimum of **12 months** and be of a nature that is likely to reach potentially interested occupiers. The Council may request the applicant to provide an independent retail agent's report on the potential for letting a unit. It is considered that such a flexible approach will assist in avoiding long-term



vacancies that would have a detrimental effect on the established shopping role and character of the town centres' primary shopping frontages.

### **A3 uses**

- 4.4 Particular consideration will be given to assessing proposals for A3 uses within primary shopping frontages. While it is recognised that cafés and restaurants can complement retail uses, hot food take-away premises that are closed during the day make a limited contribution to the vitality of retail centres. Accordingly, further growth of such uses within these frontages will be discouraged. With regard to proposals for change of use from retail to A3 food and drink use, consideration will also be given to the amenity effects likely to arise from the proposed use. Conditions may be attached to a planning permission to restrict future trading to the particular use proposed and prevent an alternative use in the same use class e.g. a condition could restrict a restaurant from operating as a hot food take-away.

### **Mixed Retail (A1) and Non-retail (A2/A3) Uses in a Single Unit**

- 4.5 When considering proposals for a change of use from retail to mixed retail (A1) and non-retail (A2/A3) uses within a single ground floor unit, regard should first be given to whether planning permission is required i.e. whether the introduction of a non-retail use would constitute a material change of use of the premises. This will be a matter of fact and degree depending on the circumstances of each case. In instances where planning permission is required Policy RET1 will apply as detailed above.
- 4.6 The above approach will be adopted in relation to all applications involving new development/redevelopment and/or change of use proposals for non-retail uses within ground floor premises of the County's primary shopping frontages. The guidance is designed to clarify the Council's approach to non-retail uses in the County's main towns and to provide clear guidance to applicants and officers in the interpretation and implementation of Policy RET1.

## **Appendix A**

### **Monmouthshire Primary Shopping Frontages - Background Information and Maps**

## ABERGAVENTNY

### PSF1 – Cross Street (1-15 & The Angel Hotel), High Street, Frogmore Street & 1 Nevill Street

These historic streets form a core primary shopping frontage within Abergavenny town centre covering High Street, Frogmore Street, the western side of Cross Street and No. 1 Nevill Street. It is a sizeable, attractive, busy area characterised by:

- A range of national comparison goods retailers including Boots, Clarks, B&M Bargains, Burtons and Fat Face.
- A number of local / independent comparison goods retailers including W.M. Nicholls department store.
- A range of supporting services including banks, building societies and several national chain and local/independent cafés, restaurants and coffee shops.
- A limited number of convenience goods retailers.

This area has a high concentration of retail floorspace and continues to be the main focus of high street retailing in Abergavenny. The presence of a range of eateries in this area means that it also has an important function in supporting the town's evening economy.

At October 2015 there were 5 vacant units within this frontage, most of which were previously in retail use, with a notable number of large vacant units towards the northern end of Frogmore Street. The Council will seek to retain these key units in A1 retail use given their prominence in the street frontage.

The presence of key national chain stores, together with a range of local/independent retailers means that this area of the town centre is likely to retain its important shopping function for residents and visitors and remain the focus of retail investment/enhancement for the foreseeable future.

The 2015 retail health check indicated the following findings for this primary shopping frontage:

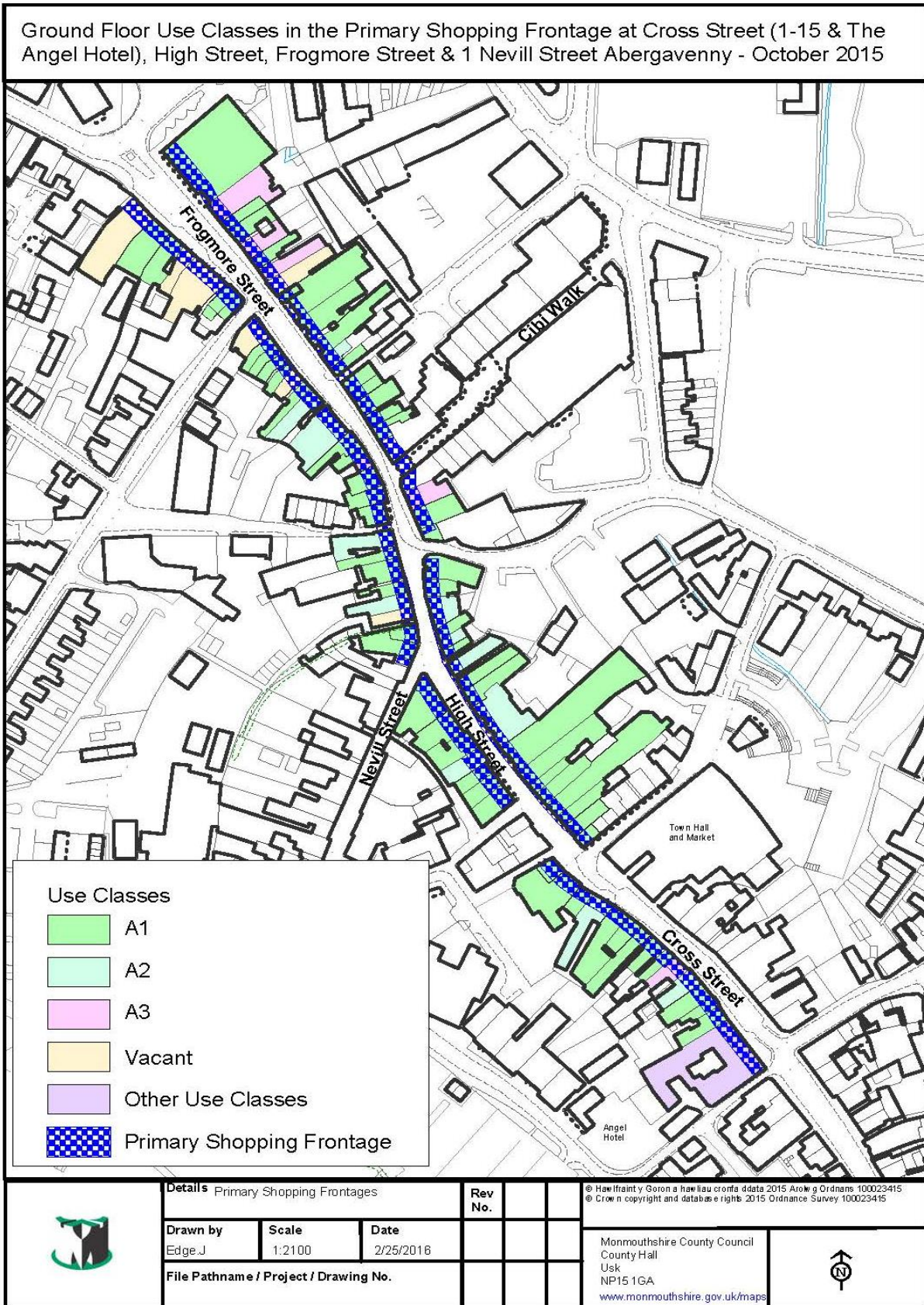
Total number of units	87
• A1 units	63 (67*)
• A2 units	12
• A3 units	6 (7*)
• Other	1
Number of vacant units	5
Length of defined retail frontage	732 metres
Average unit length	8.4 metres
Ground floor units retail/non-retail split (%)**	77% A1 retail/ 23% non-retail

\*Indicates situation if vacant units return to previous use class

\*\* Figures include vacant unit's current lawful use / previous use class

This is a key shopping area with a high proportion of retail units at ground floor level. In order to maintain and enhance the vitality, viability and retail character of this frontage and centre as a whole, decisions on planning applications for new development/redevelopment and change of use to A2/A3 uses should seek to ensure that the proportion of non-A1 uses at ground floor level does not exceed the identified threshold of **25%**. This figure broadly reflects historical and current levels of non-retail uses within this frontage and recognises the importance of maintaining the retail function /character of the frontage and centre as a whole but also allows some scope for diversification. It is considered that a higher level of non-retail uses would be likely to dilute the established shopping role and character of the frontage and undermine the vitality, viability and attractiveness of both the frontage and centre as a whole.

**MAP 1: Abergavenny PSF1 – Cross Street (1-15 & The Angel Hotel), High Street, Frogmore Street & 1 Nevill Street**



## PSF2 – Cibi Walk

This purpose built arcade situated off Frogmore Street opened in 1992 and is a key primary shopping frontage in Abergavenny town centre. Distinct from the historic retail core of Abergavenny, it is a busy shopping area characterised by:

- A range of predominantly national multiple comparison goods retailers, including WH Smith, Wilkinson, Clinton Cards, Superdrug and Thornton's.
- A number of large retail units (average unit length of 15.3 metres).
- A small number of local /independent retailers including Y Fenni Fruit and Veg.

All units in Cibi Walk were in A1 retail use at October 2015 with no vacant units present which indicates that the area is vital and viable, reflecting its designation as a primary shopping frontage and its importance for high street retailing in the town centre.

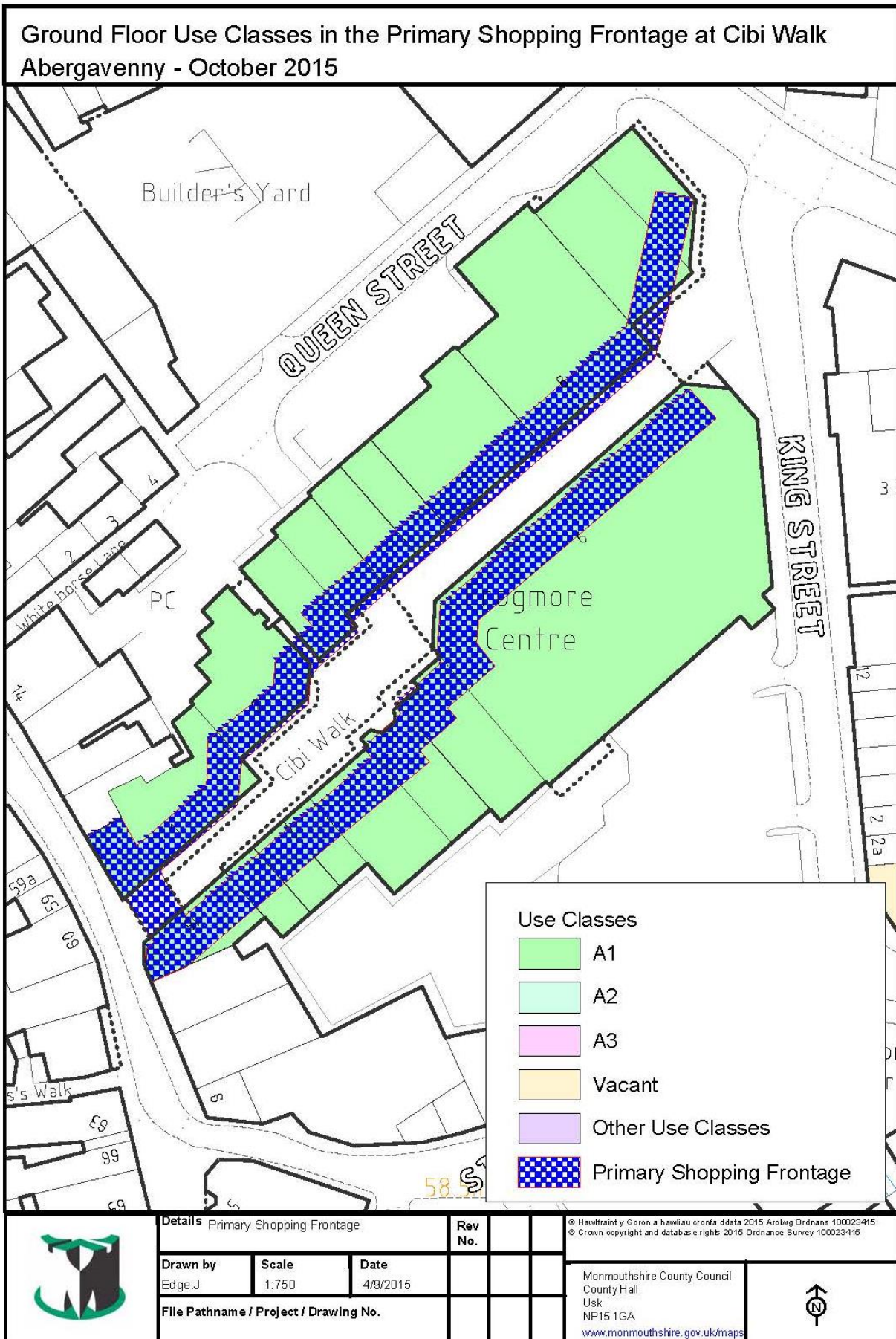
The presence of key national chain stores in mainly larger units means that this area of the town centre is likely to retain its important shopping function for residents and visitors and remain the focus of retail investment /enhancement for the foreseeable future.

The 2015 retail health check indicated the following findings for this primary shopping frontage:

Total number of units	16
• A1 units	16
• A2 units	0
• A3 units	0
• Other	0
Number of vacant units	0
Length of defined retail frontage	245 metres
Average unit length	15.3 metres
Ground floor units retail/non-retail split (%)	100% A1 retail /0% non-retail

This is a key shopping area with all units in A1 retail use at ground floor level (at 2015). In order to maintain and enhance the vitality, viability and retail character of this purpose built arcade and centre as a whole, decisions on planning applications for new development/redevelopment and change of use to A2/A3 uses should seek to ensure that the proportion of non-A1 uses at ground floor level does not exceed the identified threshold of **0%**. This figure reflects historical and current high levels of retail uses and extremely low levels of non-retail uses within this area and recognises the importance of maintaining the retail function /character of the frontage. It is considered that the introduction of non-retail uses would be likely to dilute the established shopping role of the area and undermine the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the frontage and centre as a whole.

**MAP 2: Abergavenny PSF2 – Cibi Walk**



### PSF3 – Cross Street (51-60 & Town Hall)

This eastern side of Cross Street is a relatively small primary shopping frontage within Abergavenny town centre comprising a diverse mix of retail and non-retail uses and is characterised by:

- A small number of retail uses including a national opticians and a few local independent retailers.
- A predominance of non-retail uses including a bank, estate agent, theatre, hotel and restaurant /café.

Whilst retail remains an important element within this frontage, it is recognised that its character and function has been subject to change with a higher proportion of non-retail uses now evident.

There were no vacant units within this frontage at October 2015. Although it is no longer a focus for high street retailing, it appears to be functioning effectively with its mix of retail and complementary supporting services and supports the town's evening economy.

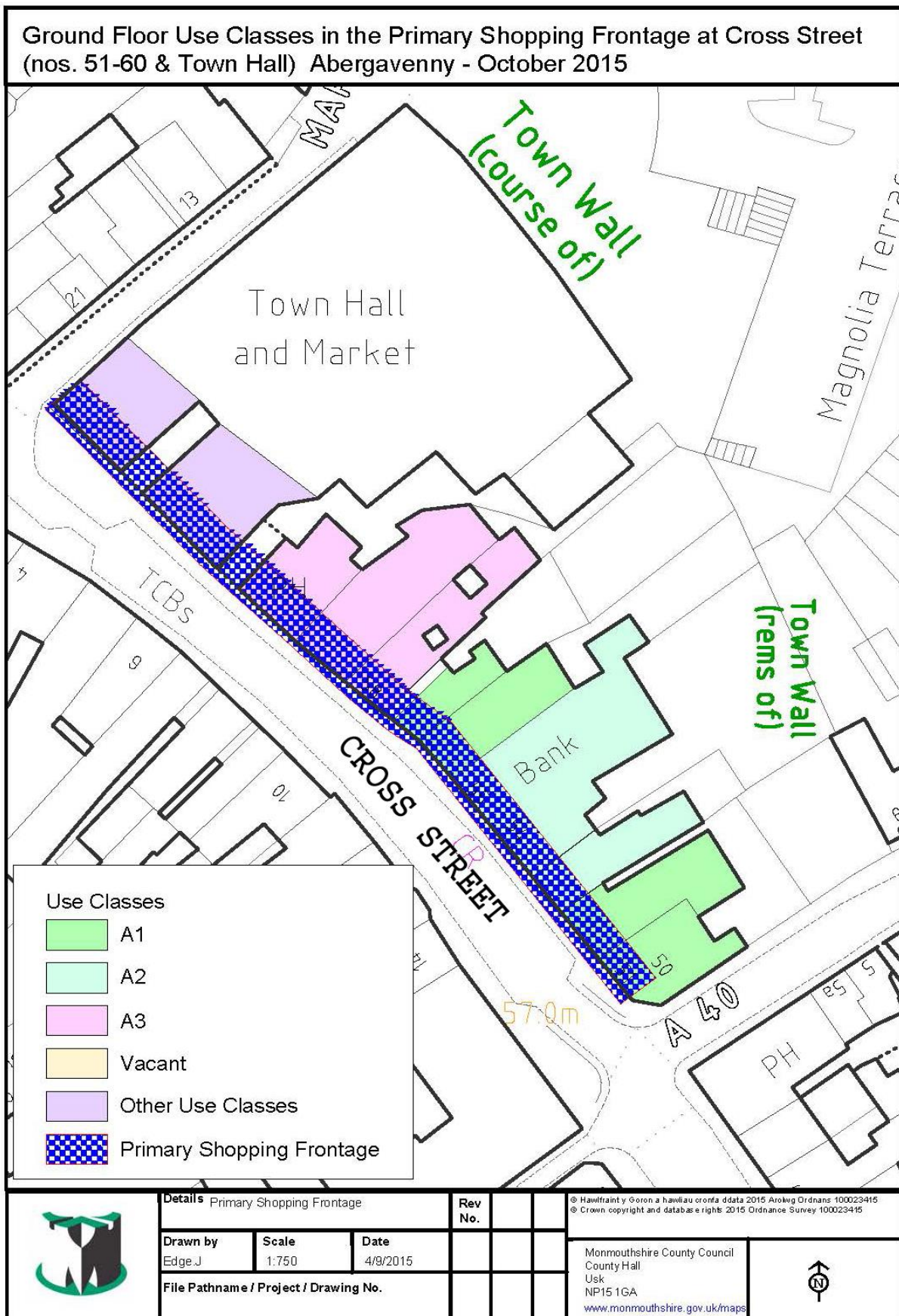
The presence of the Borough Theatre, MCC One Stop Shop and established hotel, restaurant /café together with a small range of retailers suggests that this part of Cross Street will remain an important frontage within the town centre for residents and visitors for the foreseeable future.

The 2015 retail health check indicated the following findings for this primary shopping frontage:

Total number of units	11
• A1 units	4
• A2 units	2
• A3 units	3
• Other	2
Number of vacant units	0
Length of defined retail frontage	100 metres
Average unit length	9.1 metres
Ground floor units retail/non-retail split (%)	36% A1 retail /64% non-retail

In view of the mix of retail and non-retail uses within this frontage, a higher proportion of non-retail uses will be considered acceptable than in the other primary shopping frontages in Abergavenny. Accordingly, decisions on planning applications for new development/redevelopment and change of use to A2/A3 uses should seek to ensure that the proportion of non-A1 uses at ground floor level does not exceed the identified threshold of **45%**. Whilst this figure will allow sufficient scope for a flexible /diverse range of uses within ground floor premises to complement the retail offer of the centre as a whole as the area changes and develops, it is recognised that the current level of non-A1 retail uses exceeds this threshold. There is, however, an aspiration to address this situation and enhance the retail function of this frontage meaning that further erosion by non-retail uses beyond the identified threshold which could undermine its designation as a primary shopping frontage will be prevented. The identified threshold of 45%, whilst generally lower than the historical and current levels of non-retail uses within this frontage, is considered appropriate in order to meet this objective.

**MAP 3: Abergavenny PSF3 – Cross Street (51-60 & Town Hall)**





## CALDICOT

### PSF4 – Newport Road (7-43 & 14-Wesley Buildings)

This area forms the primary shopping frontage within Caldicot town centre. It is a purpose built, relatively compact, pedestrianised area which serves an important local shopping function for residents and is characterised by:

- A range of comparison and convenience goods retailers comprising of predominantly local/ independent businesses, including RSVP Greeting Cards, Chappell Pharmacy and Country Flowers.
- A small number of national retailers comprising of mainly convenience goods operators, including Waitrose and Gregg's bakery.
- A range of supporting services including banks, estate agents and several local/independent cafés and takeaways.

This area has a reasonable concentration of retail floorspace and continues to be the main focus of high street retailing in Caldicot. It is recognised that this area contains a higher proportion of non-retail uses than the primary shopping frontages of the other main towns, however, its designation as a primary frontage reflects its role as a key local retail area serving the town's residents.

There were 4 vacant units within the frontage (at October 2015) constituting 10% of outlets which represents an increase in the number of vacant units in the frontage in recent years. The majority of vacant units were previously in use as retail. Given that this area is the main focus for high street retailing in Caldicot the Council will seek to retain these units in A1 retail use.

The presence of a range of local/independent retailers together with a small number of national operators means that this area of the town centre is likely to retain its important local shopping function for residents and provide opportunities for local retailers. The recent development of an Asda store in close proximity should generate further linked shopping trips to this area further supporting its retail function.

The 2015 retail health check indicated the following findings for this primary shopping frontage:

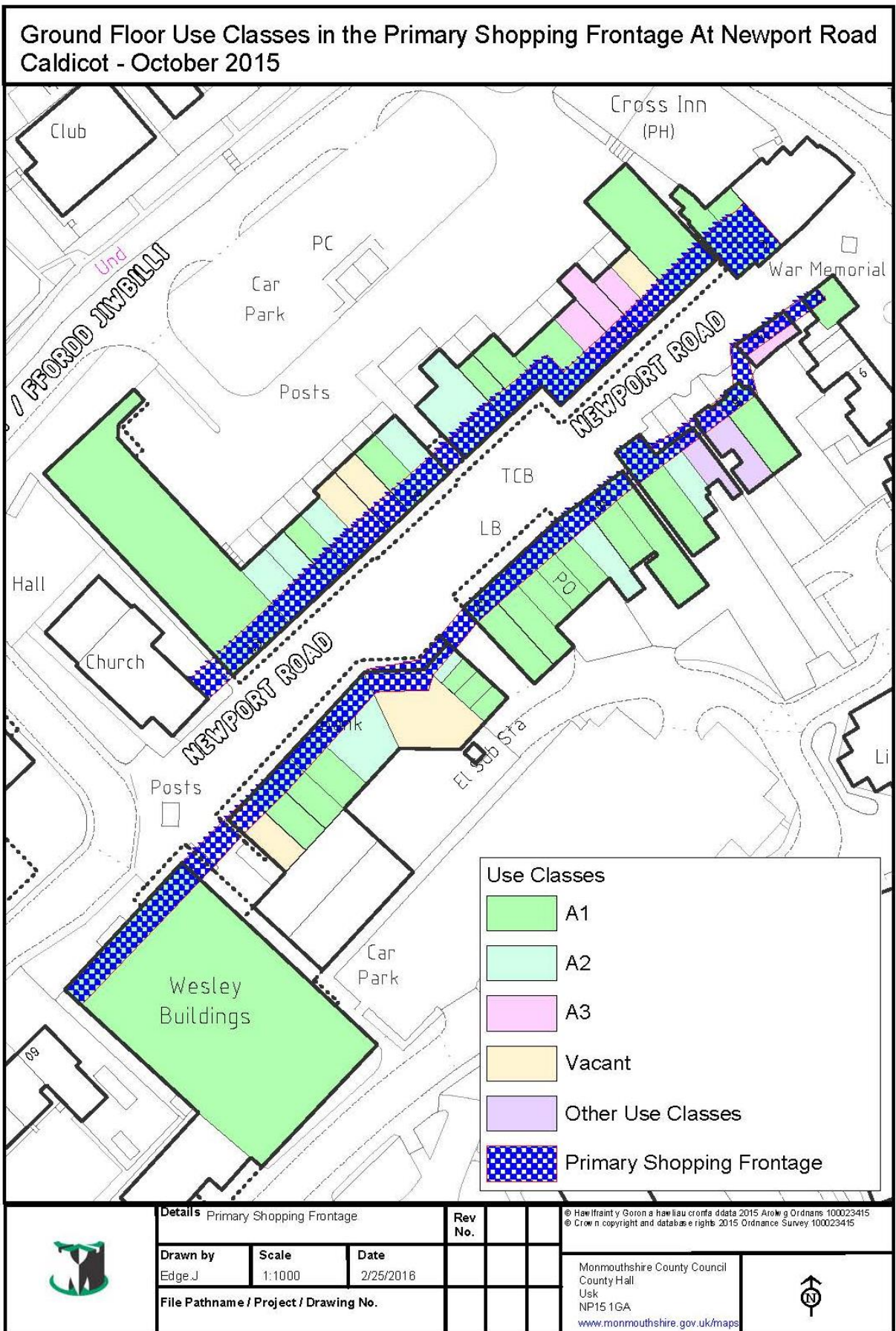
Total number of units	40
• A1 units	23 (26*)
• A2 units	8 (9*)
• A3 units	4
• Other	1
Number of vacant units	4
Length of defined retail frontage	376 metres
Average unit length	9.4 metres
Ground floor units retail/non-retail split (%) **	65% A1 retail /35% non-retail

\* Indicates situation if vacant units return to previous use class

\*\* Figures include vacant units' current lawful use / previous use class

In order to maintain and enhance the vitality, viability and local retail function of this frontage, decisions on planning applications for new development/redevelopment and change of use to A2/A3 uses should seek to ensure that the proportion of non-A1 uses at ground floor level does not exceed the identified threshold of **35%**. This figure broadly reflects the historical and current level of non-retail uses within this primary shopping frontage and the Council's desire to prevent further erosion of retail uses beyond this level. It is considered that a higher level of non-retail uses would be likely to dilute the established important local shopping role and character of the frontage and undermine the vitality and viability of the centre.

**MAP 4: Caldicot PSF4 – Newport Road (7-43 & 14-Wesley Buildings)**



## CHEPSTOW

### PSF5 – High Street (2-29)

This historic area forms a key primary shopping frontage within Chepstow town centre. It is an attractive, busy area during the day and is characterised by:

- A range of national comparison goods retailers including Boots, WH Smith, Peacocks and Specsavers.
- A number of local / independent comparison goods retailers including Herbert Lewis department store.
- A small number of supporting services including a building society, estate agents and a restaurant.

This area contains a high concentration of comparison goods retail floorspace and is the main focus of high street retailing in Chepstow, although it is notable that evening activity is limited.

There were no vacant units within this core frontage at October 2015 which indicates that the area is vital and viable, reflecting the key shopping function of this frontage within the town centre.

The presence of national comparison chain stores, together with a range of local/independent retailers means that this area of the town centre should retain its important shopping function for residents and visitors and remain the focus of retail investment /enhancement for the foreseeable future.

The 2015 retail health check indicated the following findings for this primary shopping frontage:

Total number of units	25
• A1 units	20
• A2 units	4
• A3 units	1
• Other	0
Number of vacant units	0
Length of defined retail frontage	234 metres
Average unit length	9.4 metres
Ground floor units retail/non-retail split (%)	80% A1 retail /20% non-retail

This is a core shopping area with a high proportion of retail units at ground floor level. In order to maintain and enhance the vitality, viability and retail character of this primary shopping frontage and centre as a whole, decisions on planning applications for new development/redevelopment and change of use to A2/A3 uses should seek to ensure that the proportion of non-A1 uses at ground floor level does not exceed the identified threshold of **25%**. This figure, whilst generally marginally higher than historical and current levels of non-retail uses within this frontage, recognises the importance of maintaining the retail function /character of the frontage and centre as a whole and allows some scope for diversification. It is considered that a higher level of non-retail uses would be likely to dilute the established shopping role and character of the frontage and undermine the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the frontage and centre as a whole.

**MAP 5: Chepstow PSF5 – High Street (2-29)**



## PSF6 – St Mary Street

St Mary Street is an historic, attractive, pedestrianised shopping area within Chepstow town centre located to the south of High Street. It is characterised by:

- Predominantly local independent operators, with only 2 national operators present (namely Costa and Coffee@1)
- A range of local independent comparison goods and speciality retailers, including two antique shops and gift shop, and hair/beauty salons.
- A relatively high number of supporting services including coffee shops/cafés and restaurants, clinics and a recruitment agency.

Whilst retail, particularly in relation to local /independent and speciality operators, remains important in this frontage it is recognised the area has been subject to the growth of a diverse range of supporting services with over a third of units in non-retail use at 2015. The presence of a range of eateries in this area means that it also supports the town's evening economy.

At 2015 there was 1 vacant unit within this frontage, which was previously in D1 use (dentist). Overall the area appears to be functioning effectively with its local / independent retail offer and supporting services.

The diverse range of uses in this area suggests that it will remain an important frontage within the town centre for residents and visitors. The focus of this frontage is expected to remain on local independent shopping and complementary supporting services. It is important that any proposals for change of use do not adversely impact on the area's character and function.

The 2015 retail health check indicated the following findings for this primary shopping frontage:

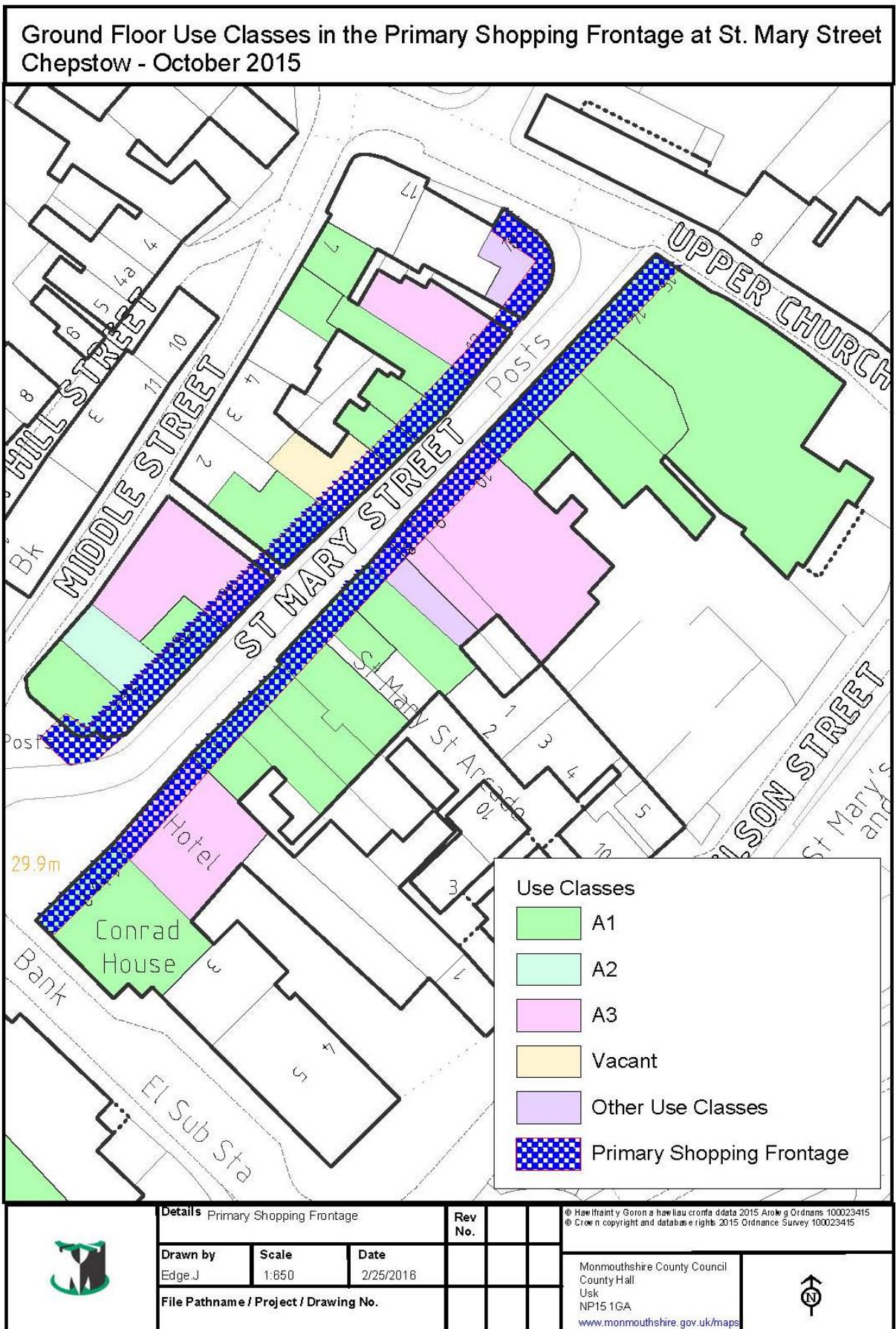
Total number of units	26
• A1 units	17
• A2 units	1
• A3 units	5
• Other	2 (3*)
Number of vacant units	1
Length of defined retail frontage	224 metres
Average unit length	8.6 metres
Ground floor units retail/non-retail split (%)**	65% A1 retail / 35% non-retail

\* Indicates situation if vacant units return to previous use class

\*\* Figures include vacant units' current lawful use / previous use class

In view of the mix of retail and non-retail uses within this frontage, a higher proportion of non-retail uses will be considered acceptable than in the adjacent primary shopping frontage at High Street. Accordingly, decisions on planning applications for new development/redevelopment and change of use to A2/A3 uses should seek to ensure that the proportion of non-A1 uses at ground floor level does not exceed the identified threshold of **35%**. This figure broadly reflects historical and current levels of non-retail uses within this frontage. Although this will allow for a flexible /diverse range of uses within ground floor premises to complement the retail offer of the centre as a whole, the Council would not wish to see further erosion of retail uses beyond the identified threshold which could undermine its function, character and designation as a primary shopping frontage in Chepstow.

**MAP 6: Chepstow PSF6 – St Mary Street**



## MONMOUTH

### PSF7 – Monnow Street

This historic street forms a key primary shopping frontage within Monmouth town centre. It is a sizeable, attractive and vibrant area characterised by:

- A broad range of national comparison goods retailers, including White Stuff, WH Smith, Superdrug, Boots and Fat Face.
- A number of national convenience goods stores – Marks and Spencer Food Hall and Waitrose.
- A broad range of local / independent comparison goods operators including Soames Shoes and Salt & Pepper Cookshop and Gift Shop.
- A number of supporting services including banks, estate agents, coffee shops/ restaurants and public houses.

This area contains a high concentration of both national and local/independent comparison goods retail units (total of 86) and is the main focus of high street retailing in Monmouth. It is also serves an important food shopping function with the presence of Marks and Spencer Simply Food and Waitrose stores.

At the time of the 2015 retail health check, there were 5 vacant units within this primary shopping frontage, 3 of which were in previous use as A1 retail and two in A2/A3 uses. Despite these vacant units, the area appears to be vibrant and functioning effectively, reflecting the core retail function and character of this area within the town centre.

The presence of national comparison retailers, together with a range of local/independent operators and supporting services means that this area of the town centre is likely to retain its important shopping function for residents and visitors and remain the focus of retail investment /enhancement for the foreseeable future.

The 2015 retail health check indicated the following findings for this primary shopping frontage:

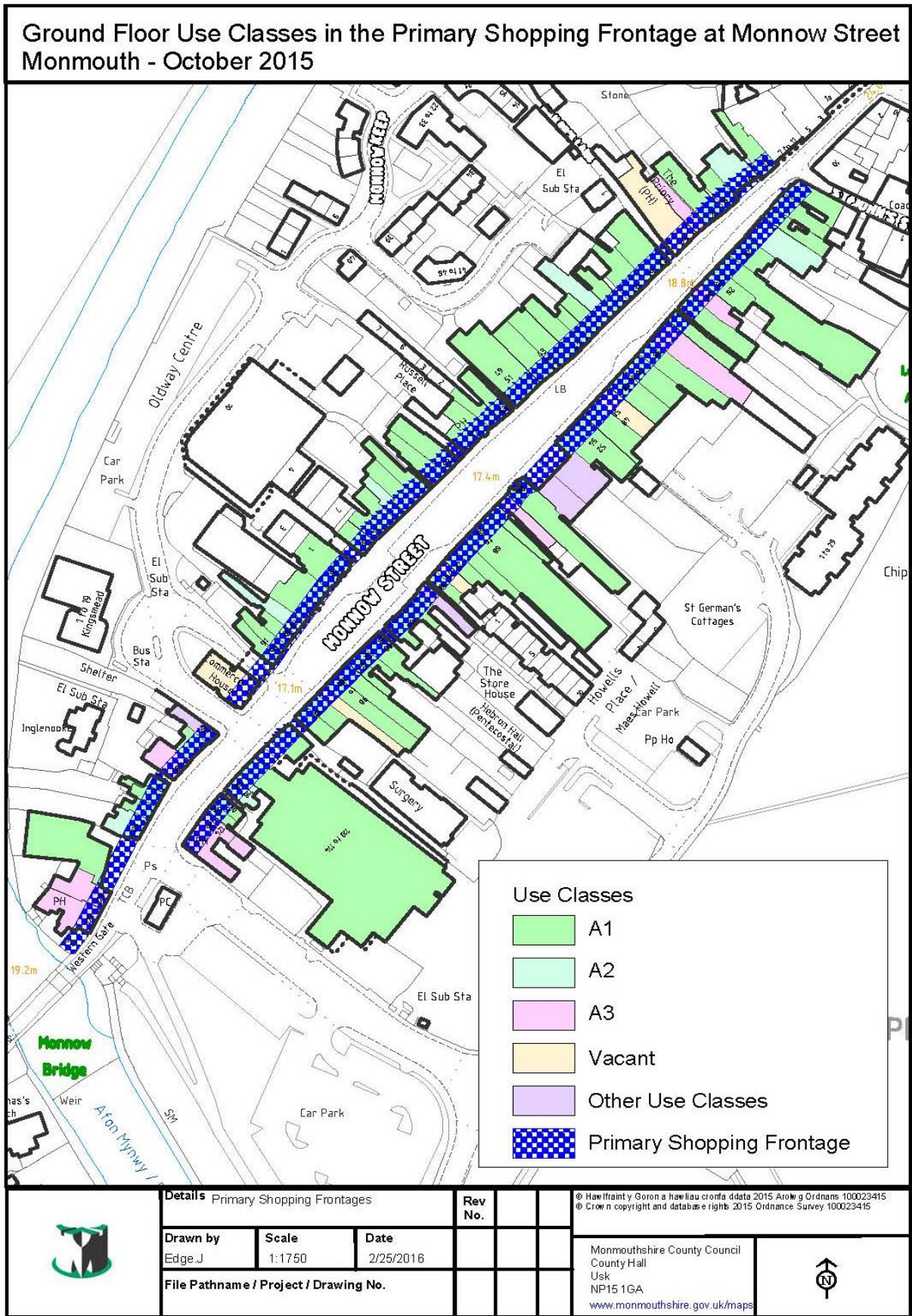
Total number of units	86
• A1 units	62 (65*)
• A2 units	7 (8*)
• A3 units	8 (9*)
• Other	4
Number of vacant units	5
Length of defined retail frontage	628 metres
Average unit length	7.3 metres
Ground floor units retail/non-retail split (%)**	76% A1 retail / 24% non-retail

\* Indicates situation if vacant units return to previous use class

\*\* Figures include vacant units' current lawful use / previous use class

This is a core shopping area with a high proportion of retail units at ground floor level. In order to maintain and enhance the vitality, viability and retail character of this frontage, decisions on planning applications for new development/redevelopment and change of use to A2/A3 uses should seek to ensure that the proportion of non-A1 uses at ground floor level does not exceed the identified threshold of **25%**. This figure broadly reflects historical and current levels of non-retail uses within this frontage and recognises the importance of maintaining the retail function /character of this prime retail area and centre as a whole but does allow some scope for diversification. It is considered that a higher level of non-retail uses would be likely to dilute the established shopping role and character of the frontage and undermine the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the frontage and town centre as a whole.

**MAP 7: Monmouth PSF7 – Monnow Street**





## PSF8 – Church Street, Agincourt Square & Priory Street (1-4)

This area is located to the north of the Monnow Street primary shopping frontage covering Church Street, Agincourt Square and part of Priory Street and comprises a mix of retail and supporting uses. It is an historic vibrant area characterised by:

- A range a predominantly local independent comparison goods retailers (focused on Church Street), with just two notable national retailers present (namely Joules and Iceland).
- A small number of local independent convenience goods operators.
- A wide range of supporting services including banks/building societies and estate agents (focused on Agincourt Square), theatre, MCC One Stop Shop, hairdressers/beauty salons, coffee shops/ cafés and restaurants.

Whilst retail remains important in this frontage, particularly for local /independent operators, it is recognised that its character and function has been subject to change with a relatively high proportion of non-retail uses now evident. The presence of a range of eateries and theatre in this area means that it also has an important function in supporting the town's evening economy.

At October 2015 there were 4 vacant units within this frontage, 2 of which were in previous use as A1 retail units, 1 previously in A3 use and 1 previously in sui generis use. Despite the presence of these vacant units, the area appears to be vital and viable with its diverse range of local /independent retailers and supporting services.

The variety of uses in this area suggests that it will remain an important frontage within the town centre for residents and visitors. The focus of this area is expected to remain on local/independent shopping and complementary supporting services. It is important that any proposals for change of use do not adversely impact on the area's character and function.

The 2015 retail health check indicated the following findings for this primary shopping frontage:

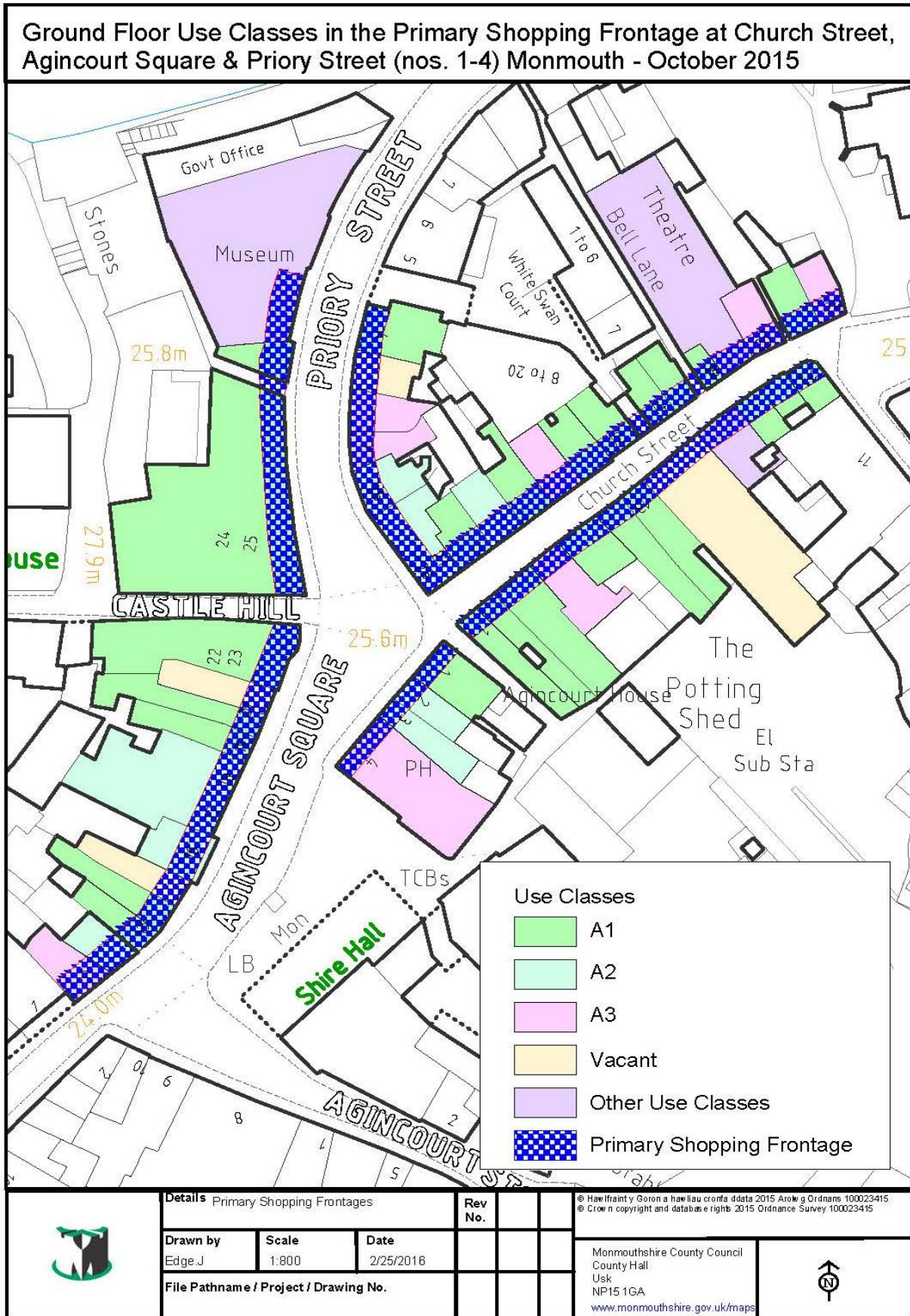
Total number of units	47
• A1 units	25 (27*)
• A2 units	8 (9*)
• A3 units	7
• Other	3 (4*)
Number of vacant units	4
Length of defined retail frontage	341 metres
Average unit length	7.3 metres
Ground floor units retail/non-retail split (%)**	57% A1 retail / 43% non-retail

\* Indicates situation if vacant units return to previous use class

\*\* Figures include vacant units' current lawful use / previous use class

In order to maintain and enhance the vitality, viability and character of this frontage, decisions on planning applications for new development/redevelopment and change of use to A2/A3 uses should seek to ensure that the proportion of non-A1 uses at ground floor level does not exceed the identified threshold of **35%**. Whilst this figure will allow sufficient scope for a flexible /diverse range of uses within ground floor premises to complement the retail offer of the centre as a whole, it is recognised that the current level of non-A1 uses exceeds this threshold. There is, however, an aspiration to address this situation and enhance the retail function of this frontage meaning that further erosion by non-retail uses beyond the identified threshold which could undermine its designation as a primary shopping frontage will be prevented. It is important that the area remains a focus for local independent and speciality retailers which will add significantly to both the area's and town's appeal to both residents and visitors.

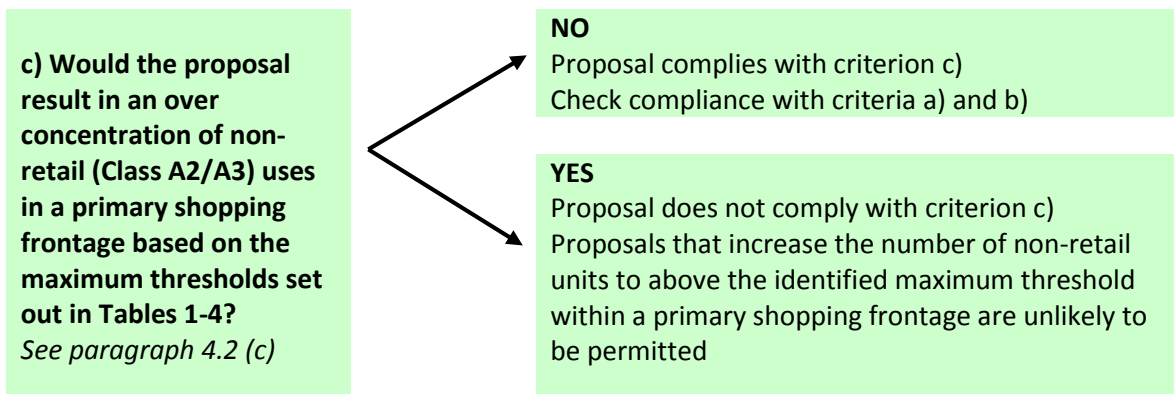
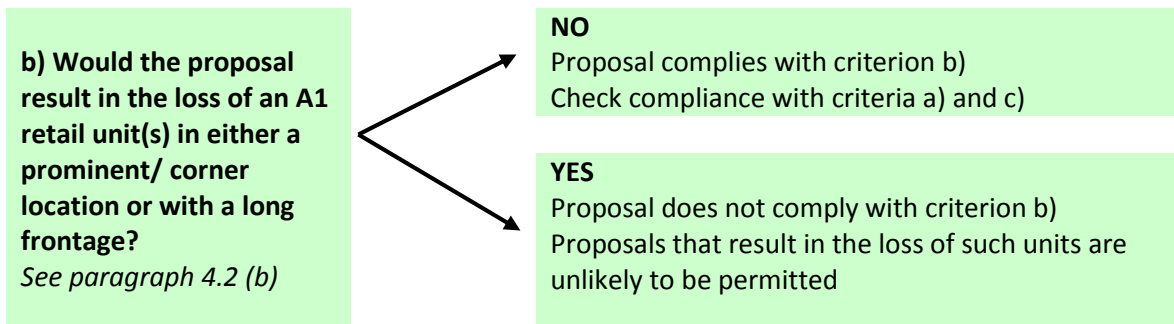
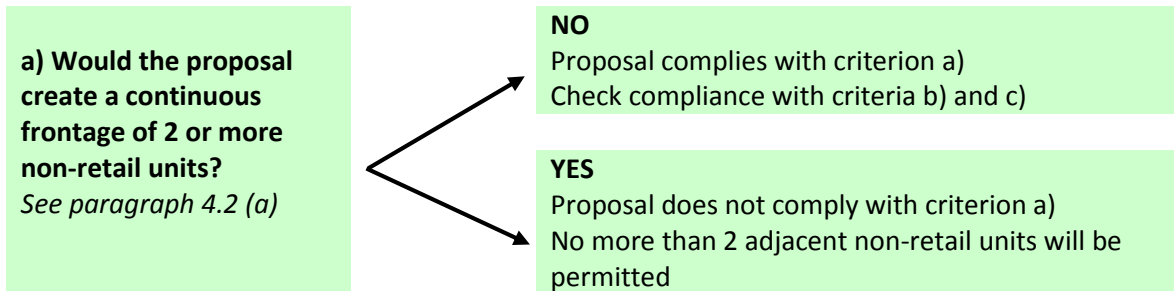
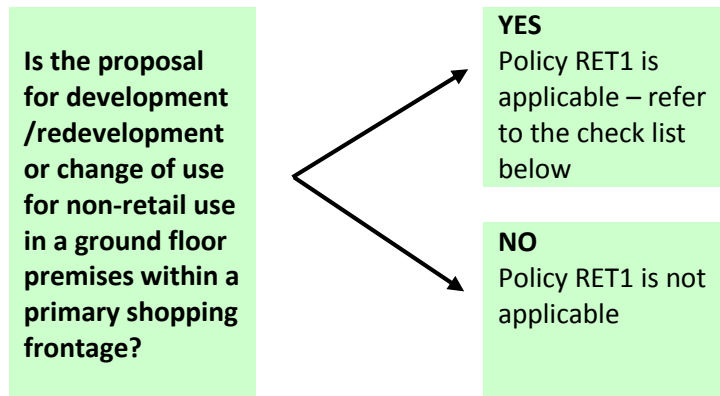
**MAP 8: Monmouth PSF8 – Church Street, Agincourt Square & Priory Street (1-4)**



## **Appendix B**

### **Policy RET1 Checklist for Assessing Development and Change of Use Proposals for Non-retail Uses at Ground Floor Level in Primary Shopping Frontages**

**Diagram 1: Policy RET1 Checklist for Assessing Development and Change of Use Proposals for Non-retail Uses at Ground Floor Level in Primary Shopping Frontages**



## Exceptions to Criteria a) to c) of Policy RET1

Could the proposal be considered as an exception to the policy criteria?

**(i) Can the applicant demonstrate that the proposal would not harm the vitality of the street frontage?**  
*See paragraph 4.3(i)*

**NO**

Exception would not apply

**YES**

Exception may apply subject to the submission and verification of appropriate supporting evidence

**(ii) Has the unit been vacant for at least 2 years and have there been genuine attempts at marketing the property?**  
*See paragraph 4.3(ii)*

**NO**

Exception would not apply

**YES**

Exception may apply subject to the submission and verification of appropriate supporting evidence

# Appendix C

## Sources of Advice

For retail research and retail planning policy advice please contact:

**Planning Policy Section**

County Hall, Rhadyr,

Usk, Monmouthshire

NP15 1GA

Tel: 01633 644429

Email: [planningpolicy@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

For advice on development and change of use proposals for non-retail uses within a primary shopping frontage please contact:

**Development Management Section**

County Hall, Rhadyr,

Usk, Monmouthshire

NP15 1GA

Tel: 01633 644800

Email: [planning@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:planning@monmouthshire.gov.uk)