

## 4. ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE ACCESSIBILITY

### 4.0 Introduction

As Section 2 illustrated, the high level of out-commuting to work is a significant sustainability issue for Monmouthshire. This is compounded by a heavy reliance on the private car and limited opportunities for the use of public transport, particularly in the County's rural areas where access to services can be a difficult problem. Concerns about climate change require that efforts are made to reduce the reliance on the private car and the consequent impact of carbon dioxide emissions. Conversely, the rural nature of Monmouthshire means that there is an extensive public rights of way network offering ample opportunities for countryside recreation, bringing health benefits for the resident population and economic benefits for the tourism industry. One way of achieving sustainable accessibility is ensuring that retail development takes place in urban areas that have good access to public transport and this chapter provides information on the health of Monmouthshire's existing town centres. Planning for compact urban settlements requires the use of existing developed land for new housing schemes. This issue has been considered earlier in the section on Soil and Land in section 3.

## Transport

### 4.1 Roads

**Table 36: Road Length by Road Class 2007 (KM)**

Location	Motorway	Trunk	County	B & C Road	Minor Surfaced
Monmouthshire	22	102	59	608	823
Newport	25	9	52	189	391
Torfaen	0	14	26	102	299
Blaenau Gwent	0	10	41	68	307
Powys	0	431	238	2,698	2,097
Wales	133	1,576	2,731	12,777	16,892

Source: Welsh Transport Statistics 2007

Whilst Monmouthshire accounts for 4.7% of the total Wales road network, it accounts for 16.5% of the Welsh motorway network. In the Monmouthshire Unitary Development Plan there are three safeguarded proposed highway schemes:

- (a) M4 Relief Motorway around Newport – Magor to Castleton (Assembly Government Scheme)
- (b) A465T Heads of the Valleys Dualling – Abergavenny to Hirwaun (Assembly Government Scheme)
- (c) B4245 Magor/Undy Bypass (Monmouthshire County Council Scheme)

### 4.2 Volume of Traffic

**Table 37: Volume of Traffic (Billion Vehicle Kilometres)**

	1997	2005	+/- %
Monmouthshire	1.17	1.34	+14.5
Newport	1.62	1.82	+12.3
Torfaen	0.52	0.60	+15.4
Blaenau Gwent	0.35	0.40	+14.3
Powys	1.31	1.46	+11.5
S E Wales	11.48	12.92	+12.5
Wales	24.18	27.28	+12.8

Source: Department of Transport (Welsh Transport Statistics 2007)

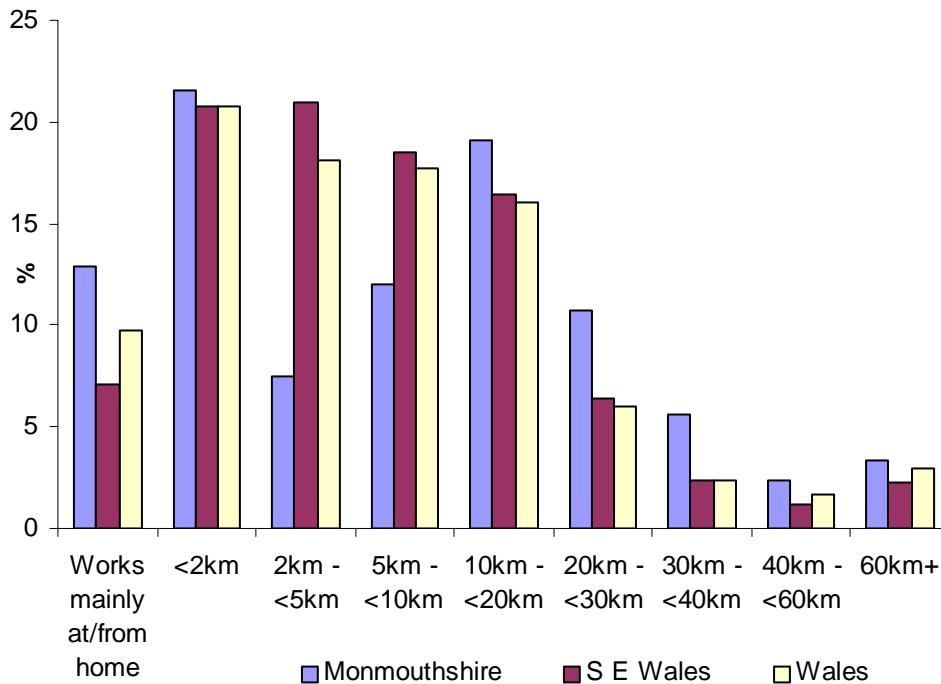
The South East Wales area accounts for 47% of the volume of traffic in Wales. There has been an increase in traffic volume of 12.5% since 1997 in the area, with the increase in Monmouthshire exceeding this at 14.5%.

### 4.3 Travel to Work

Section 2 showed that there was a high level of commuting amongst Monmouthshire's residents. There is also a higher percentage of the resident population travelling further than 30km to their place of work (11.3%) when compared to South East Wales (5.9%) or Wales (7.1%) as a whole, although at the same time Monmouthshire has a higher percentage of its resident

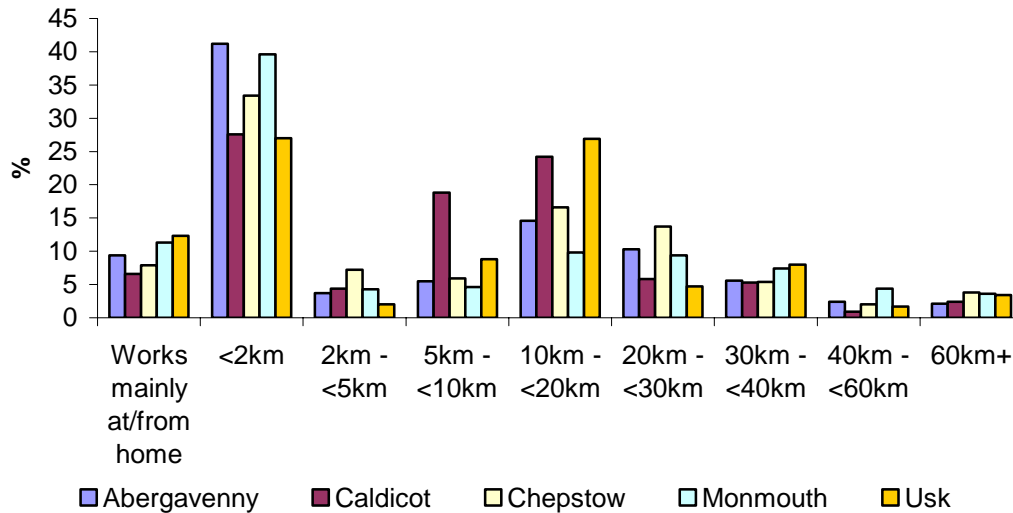
population working mainly at or from home (12.9%) than either the South East Wales region (9.7%) or Wales (9.7%) as a whole.

**Chart 29: Distance travelled to work (resident population) 2001**



Source: ONS Census 2001

**Chart 30: Distance travelled to work (resident population) 2001, main settlements**



Source: ONS Census 2001

- 4.4 Of the main settlements Abergavenny and Monmouth have the highest percentage of their resident population working within 2km of their place of residence. In Caldicot 43% of the resident population are travelling between 5 and 20km to their place of work. In Chepstow 30% of the resident population travel between 10 and 30km to their place of work.

#### 4.5 Mode of Travel to Work

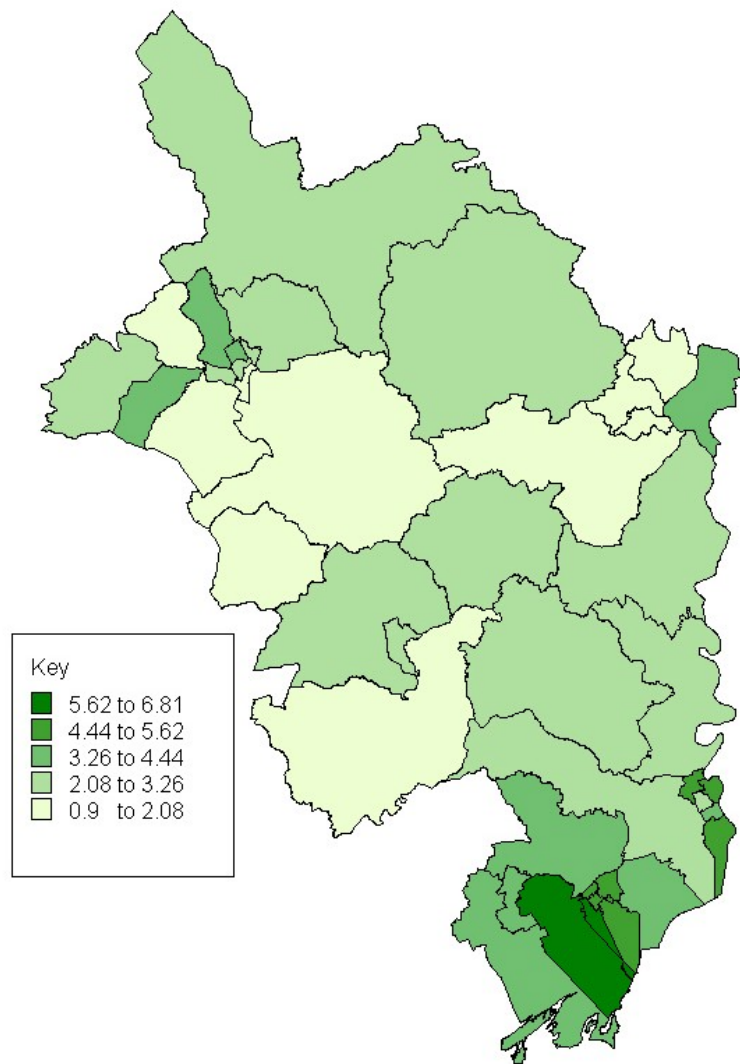
**Table 38: Mode of travel to work – resident population (excluding those working mainly from home)**

	Monmouthshire	South East Wales	Powys	Wales
Underground, metro, light rail	0.1	0.1	-	0.1
Train	1.4	2.1	0.4	1.4
Bus, minibus or coach	1.9	7.2	1.5	5.8
Taxi or minicab	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.6
Driving car or van	73.9	65.9	70.6	67.8
Passenger in car or van	7.6	10.4	7.6	9.9
Motorcycle, scooter, moped	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.8
Bicycle	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.5
On foot	11.5	11.2	16.2	11.5
Other	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.6

Source: ONS Census 2001

At the time of the 2001 Census 81.5% of the resident population of Monmouthshire were travelling to work by car or van. This compares to 76.3% in South East Wales and 77.7% for Wales as a whole. In Powys, which in common with Monmouthshire is a rural border County, the figure is also lower than that for Monmouthshire at 78.2%.

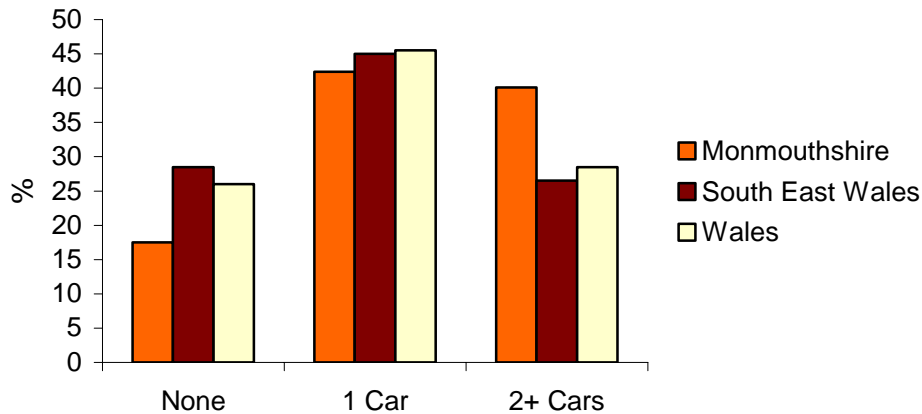
## Map 26 : Travel to Work – use of public transport



Source: ONS Census 2001

- 4.6 Monmouthshire has a lower percentage (3.4%) of its resident working population travelling to their place of work using public transport than either South East Wales (9.4%) or Wales (7.3%) as a whole. Although the South East Wales figures are influenced by Cardiff and Newport who have higher percentages, 13.9% and 12.1% respectively, of their resident population using public transport. The above map shows the spatial distribution of the travel to work data. The highest percentages of the resident population using public transport are in those wards with transport hubs, namely Rogiet and West End with their proximity to Severn Tunnel Junction, and wards in Chepstow with their proximity to Chepstow Station.

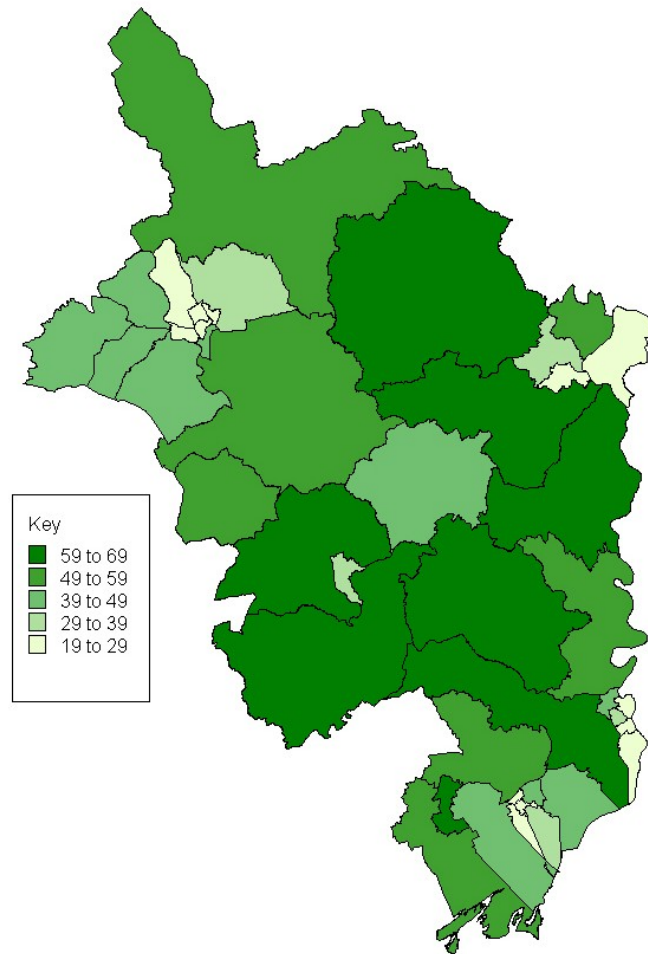
**Chart 31 : Car ownership by households**



Source: ONS Census 2001

- 4.7 Monmouthshire has a higher percentage of households with 2 or more cars than either South East Wales (26.5%) or Wales (28.5%) as a whole. There has also been an intercensal increase in the number of cars per household. At the time of the 1991 Census 33.7% of Monmouthshire households had 2 or more vehicles, this had risen to 40.1% of households by the time of the 2001 Census. At the same time the number of households with only one vehicle or no vehicles at all declined.
- 4.8 Map 27 shows the distribution of car ownership throughout the County. As would be expected the level of car ownership is lower in the towns where there is access to greater levels of public transport than in the more rural areas where access to services is more limited.

## Map 27 : % Households with 2 or more cars or vans



Source: ONS Census 2001

### 4.9 Public Transport Provision

Monmouthshire is served by a number of both local and national bus routes. The main towns of Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth all have bus stations with bus services extending to the surrounding towns and villages and to the sub-region, including Bristol, Gloucester, Hereford, Newport and Cardiff, as illustrated in Map 28. From the map, however, it can be seen that in the north of the County in particular there is a lack of provision in the rural areas. This has been partly addressed by the introduction of a 'grass routes' bus service, which is a demand responsive bus service available during the week for all residents of Monmouthshire and accommodation providers who are members of the scheme.

- 4.10 In terms of rail provision, Monmouthshire has three railway stations, Chepstow and Severn Tunnel Junction in the south of the County and Abergavenny in the north. The centre and north east of the County are poorly served for rail travel.

**Map 28: Monmouthshire Bus and Rail Services**





#### 4.11 Public Rights of Way and Cycling

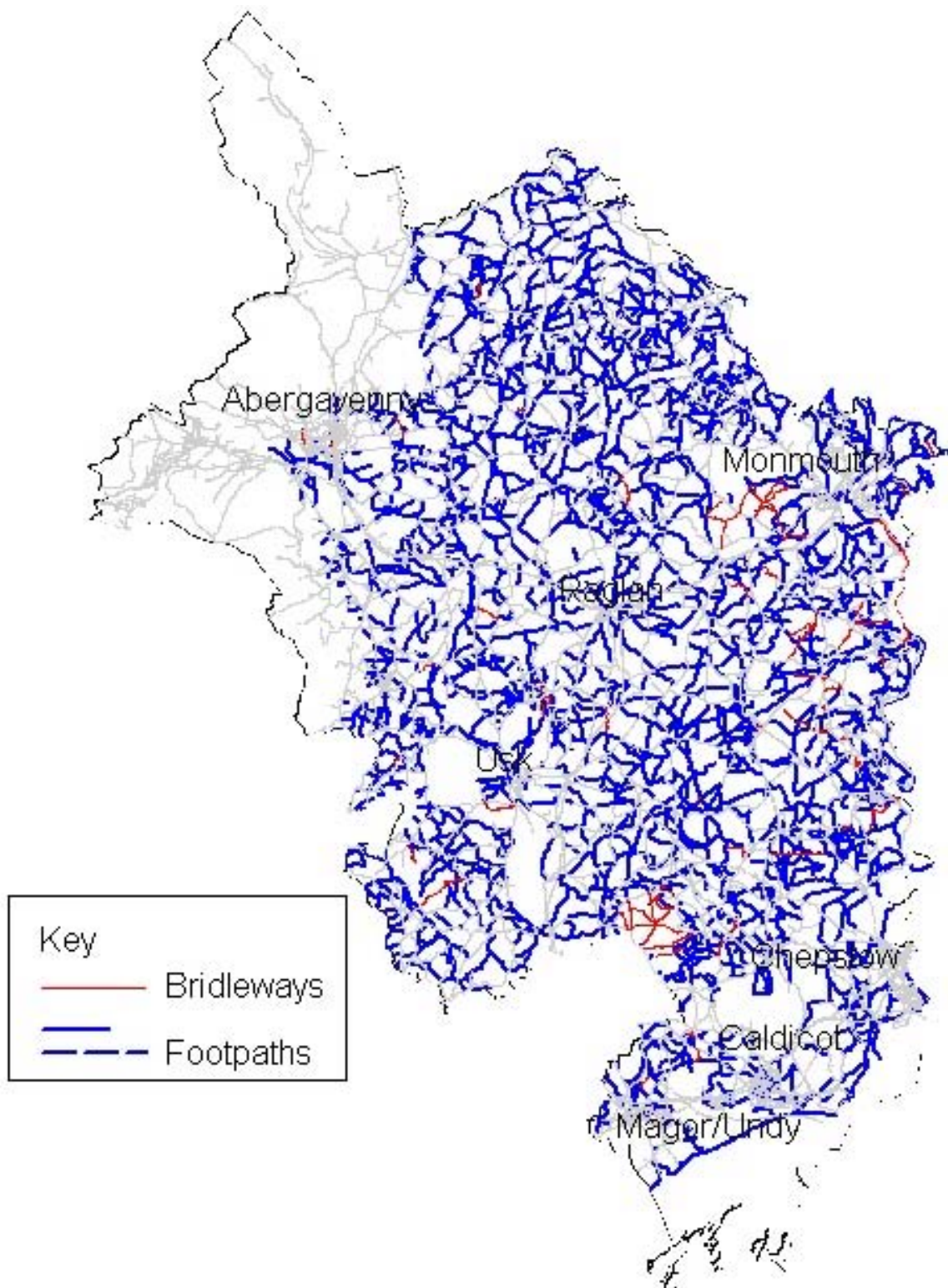
**Table 39 : Extent of PRow network**

Status of Path	% of Network	Total km
Bridleway	4%	71
Footpath	91%	1,499
Restricted Byways	5%	84.5
Byway	0%	1.5
Total km of PRow in Monmouthshire (excluding BBNP)		1,656
Total km of PRow in Wales		33,200

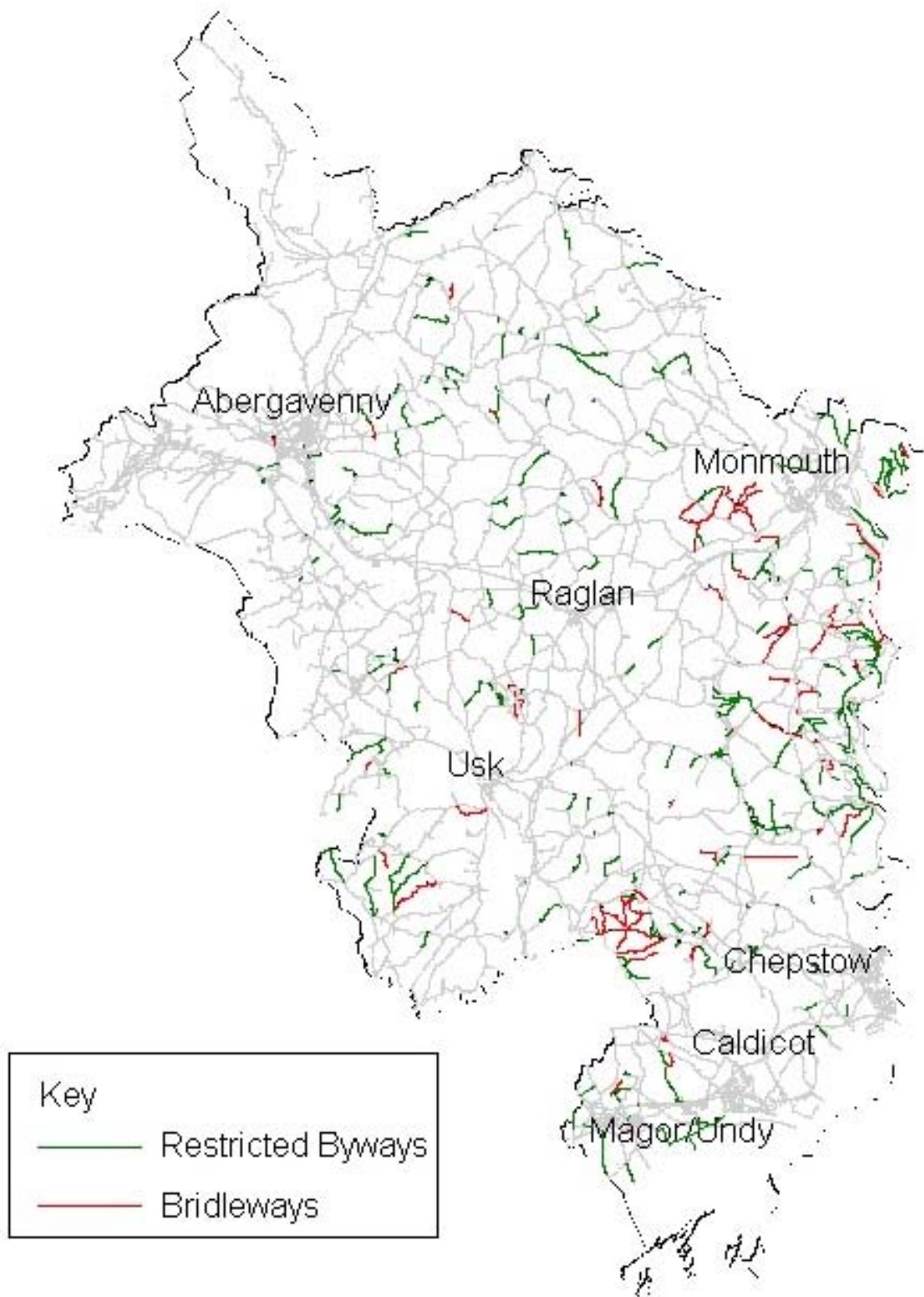
Table 39 shows the extent of rights of way that are present in Monmouthshire. One immediate conclusion can be drawn from looking at these figures is that there are not many routes available to horse riders and cyclists, compared with the network available for pedestrians. There are a very low percentage of networks available for the driver of a horse drawn carriage or recreational motor vehicle. Map 29 shows that although there is localised fragmentation, there is generally a high density and good coverage for walking within the county. Generally there is good network of footpaths all over Monmouthshire but there are gaps in provision where there are Ministry of Defence Sites (such as in Caerwent) and in areas of privately owned estates such as The Hendre in Monmouth and along part of the coast (Source: Monmouthshire ROWIP). There are 4 long distance trails within the County the; Wye Valley Walk, The Three Castles Way, The Usk Valley Walk and the Monnow Valley Walk. There is also one national trail, the Offa's Dyke Path.

4.12 Map 30 identifies the network for off road cyclists and horse riders. The map reveals a highly fragmented network, with little chance of connectivity possible without including the highways network. There are two national cycle routes within the county, both of these run from Chepstow; number 4- The Celtic Trail (Severn Bridge to Pembrokeshire) and number 42 (Chepstow to Glasbury, Powys). There are however currently no maps available to show all of the existing cycle ways within the county and this is therefore considered to be a data gap.

## Map 29: Networks of Rights of Way



**Map 30 : Network for off road cyclists and horse riders**



## Retail

### 4.13 Retail Hierarchy

The Retail Hierarchy for Monmouthshire is defined by the Unitary Development Plan as follows:

#### COUNTY TOWNS:

Abergavenny  
Caldicot  
Chepstow  
Monmouth

#### LOCAL CENTRES:

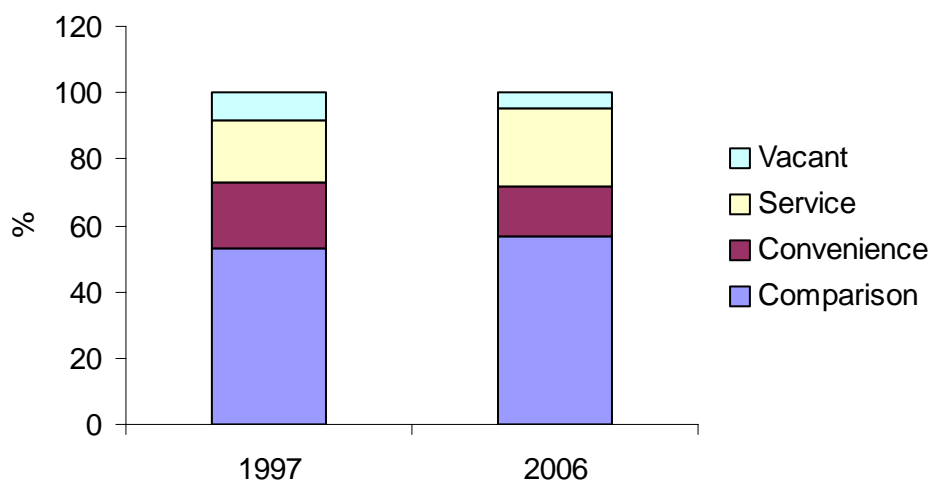
Magor  
Raglan  
Usk

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES:

Hillcrest Road, Abergavenny  
Rother Avenue, Abergavenny  
The Mardy, Abergavenny  
West End, Caldicot  
Bulwark, Chepstow  
Thornwell, Chepstow  
The Albion, Monmouth  
Overmonnow, Monmouth  
Rockfield Road, Monmouth  
Wyesham, Monmouth

### 4.14 Retail uses in town centres

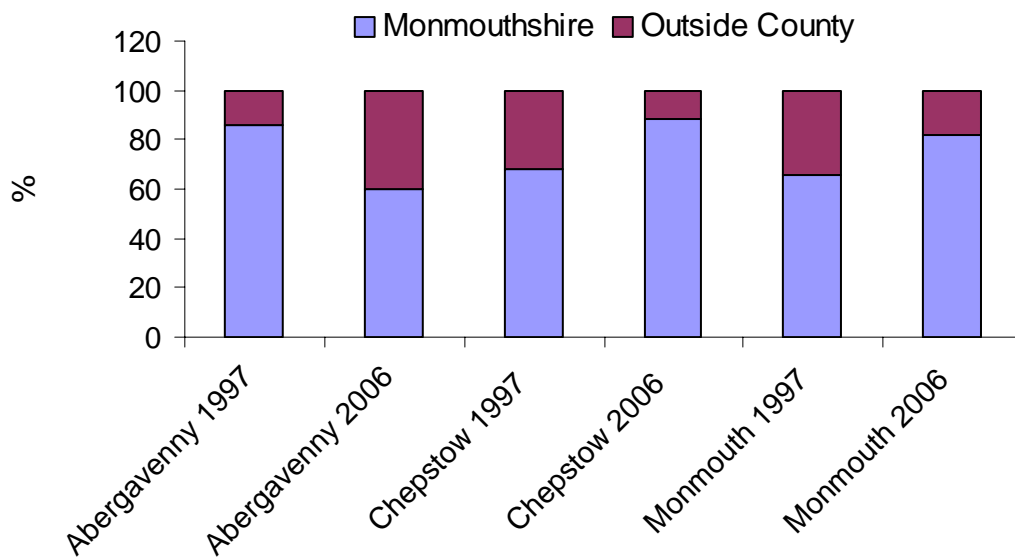
**Chart 32: Central Shopping Area Retail Types**



Source: Monmouthshire County Council Annual Retail Background Paper

Over the past 10 years there has been a marked decrease in the amount of floor space accounted for by convenience uses in the central shopping areas of the main towns. There has also been a decline in the amount of vacant floorspace during this time. The largest increase is in service uses, which have seen an increase of 17.6% in the past decade. In 2006 a consumer survey was undertaken by the Council to inform the Retail Background Paper. Overall more than 76% of respondents in the three main market towns undertake their main food shopping in outlets within Monmouthshire. In Abergavenny this figure falls to 60%.

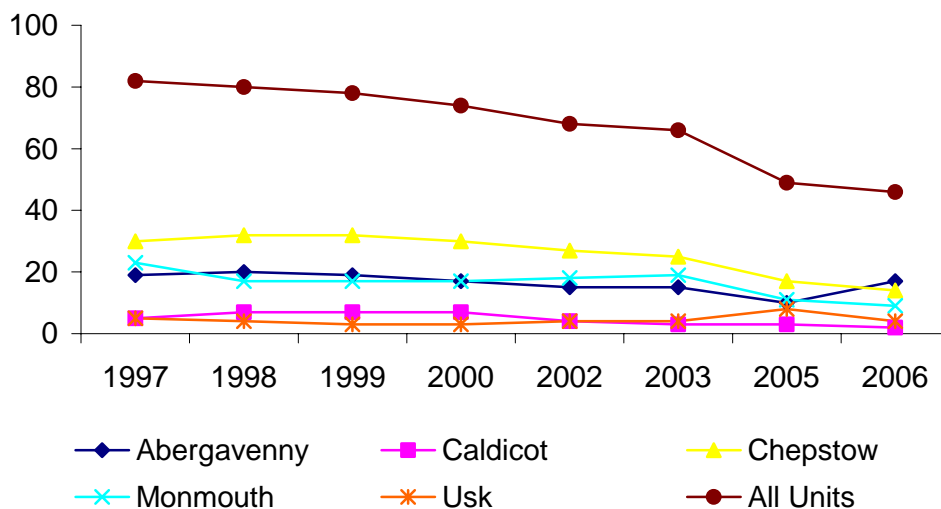
**Chart 33: % Respondents doing main food shop in the County**



Source: Monmouthshire County Council Retail Background Paper

4.15 Vacancies

**Chart 34: Number of vacant units in the Central Shopping Areas**



Source: Monmouthshire County Council Retail Background Paper

4.16 The number of vacant units in the Central Shopping Areas of the main towns has steadily declined in the past decade. The highest number of vacant units is found in Chepstow, although again this has shown a steady decline, from 17.1% of units in 1997 to 8.5% of units in 2006.

**Table 40: Retail centre vacancy rates (% units)**

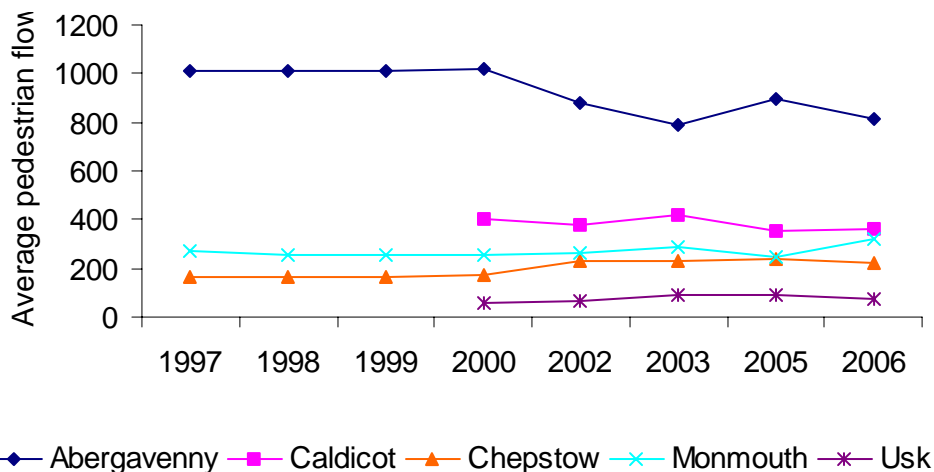
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2002	2003	2005	2006
Abergavenny	6.7	7.0	8.6	8.4	8.1	7.3	4.1	6.7
Caldicot	6.4	8.9	8.9	8.9	5.7	4.3	4.3	2.9
Chepstow	17.1	11.2	11.3	15.6	15.5	13.8	9.7	8.5
Monmouth	12.6	8.9	8.9	8.9	9.5	9.9	6.1	5.1
Usk	8.8	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	12.3	6.6
All Units	10.1	9.4	9.5	8.9	9.1	8.8	6.5	6.2

Source: Monmouthshire County Council Retail Background Paper

#### 4.17 Footfall

As part of an annual retail survey carried out by the Council the average footfall in each of the retail centres is recorded, although data is only available for Caldicot and Usk from 2000 onwards. From the chart below it can be seen that whilst average footfall in Chepstow, Monmouth, Caldicot and Usk has remained fairly stable over the period for which data is available, Abergavenny has seen a decline since 2000.

**Chart 35: Average footfall by retail centre**



Source: Monmouthshire County Council Retail Background Paper