

## Bus lane just the ticket



A new bus priority lane has opened at the north end of the Tyne Tunnel in an effort to improve service reliability and timekeeping, and encourage the creation of new routes across the river.

Opening the bus lane, PTA deputy vice chair Councillor Tom Hanson said: "Congestion is the single biggest issue at the Tyne Tunnel. It has affected the ability of bus operators to provide a good service to passengers on both banks of the river.

"This new bus lane is a step in the right direction and will help operators to improve reliability and increase passenger numbers. The investment reflects the PTA's continued commitment to public transport. It must be recognised, however, that the fundamental problems will not be addressed until the opening of the New Tyne Crossing."

Martin Harris, commercial director of bus operator GO North East, which operates two services that use the tunnel, said: "It is vital that new infrastructure provides for better public transport. The new bus priority lane at the north end of the Tyne Tunnel is therefore very important and welcome.

"Clearly if the infrastructure for buses continues to improve in this way and reduces the damaging effects of traffic congestion, we will see more and better services using the Tyne Tunnel. This is why we support a new tunnel."

### The scheme

- The current single carriageway Tyne (vehicle) Tunnel was opened in 1967.
- It was designed to carry 25000 vehicles per day but currently carries 34000, leading to serious congestion at peak times.
- When it opened it carried 5000 vehicles per day.
- The proposed New Tyne Crossing will be built using an 'immersed tube' technique involving dredging of the river and the dropping of pre-fabricated tunnel units into the trench.
- The proposed crossing will be just to the east of the existing vehicle tunnel and will also link Jarrow and East Howdon.
- It will cost an estimated £139 million, making it one of the biggest civil engineering projects in Britain.
- It will be built, financed, designed and operated by a concessionaire.

## Have your say

Local residents and other interested parties who responded to the legal notices issued by Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) in June and July will be able to air their views on the proposed New Tyne Crossing at a Public Inquiry to be held at the Jarrow Community Association, Cambrian Street, Jarrow on 4 March 2003.

PTA vice chair Coun Muriel Green said: "I am confident that the PTA will win its case for a new vehicle tunnel under the Tyne between Jarrow and East Howdon. The present tunnel is a bottleneck, the only stretch of single carriageway on one of the region's major roads.

"Congestion at the existing vehicle tunnel is bad and only likely to get worse. The New Tyne Crossing will be a major benefit to communities on both banks of the river as well

as to people and businesses further afield. It is a major part of the transport and regeneration policies for the region."

A pre-inquiry meeting will be held at Jarrow Community Association on 6 January to discuss practical arrangements for the Public Inquiry. Anyone who intends to present evidence or be represented at the Public Inquiry may attend.

*Inside this issue of Update we look forward to the Public Inquiry – why is it necessary and what will it do? Your questions answered.*



The New Tyne Crossing will relieve congestion

## Level of support encouraging

Out of the 901 representations made about the proposed New Tyne Crossing by the 19 July deadline, 705 opposed the scheme and 190 supported it. The balance are representations that make no positive or negative comment on the proposal.

Letters of support were received from individuals, local authorities, bus operators, MPs, the local MEP, One NorthEast, business organisations, businesses, motoring organisations and members of the public.

A number of objections have been received from people, businesses

and agencies who may be directly affected by the proposals.

Some of these objections are "holding" objections to reserve positions whilst negotiations take place to address the concerns of objectors. The PTA is committed to working with all objectors to try and resolve the issues, and to enable these objections to be withdrawn.

One of the first objectors to withdraw its objection was English Nature.

Coun Muriel Green, PTA vice chair, said: "The level of support we have received is very encouraging although opposition to the New Tyne

Crossing has been vocal and well organised.

"I am particularly pleased the scheme has received the support of the bus operators. They all recognise the opportunity that the New Tyne Crossing could bring to enable them to enhance their cross-Tyne services between North and South Tyneside.

"In spite of appearances, many objectors do not object in principle to the construction of the New Tyne Crossing, but have interests that may be affected by it. We are working hard with them to resolve their concerns before the Public Inquiry is held."

# School merger success



Stepping out to a brighter future – Coun Tom Hanson with Jarrow Cross pupils and head teacher Peter Hall

Jarrow councillor and PTA deputy vice chair Tom Hanson has expressed his delight at the success of the merger of Ellison Street and St Peter's schools to form Jarrow Cross Church of England Primary School.

Around 60 children transferred from St Peter's to Ellison Street in June where new buildings have been constructed and old ones refurbished to accommodate the larger number of pupils. The newly merged school in Borough Road has a new management team in place.

Councillor Hanson said: "I have spoken to staff, pupils and parents. Everyone seems to be delighted by how well the new school is beginning to take shape and how quickly it is growing into its new identity.

"I am confident that Jarrow Cross will make a significant contribution to the lives of our young people and to the community as a whole in the years to come."

Head teacher Peter Hall said: "Everyone who visits the school is impressed by what they see. The school is light and airy with both the new and the remodelled buildings providing an excellent learning and working environment. We have made a super start with staff, children and parents working together. The future looks very positive with 'value in everyone' as our statement of intent."

## Public Inquiry - what to expect

The public inquiry will be conducted by Stuart Nixon, an independent, government-appointed inspector, assisted by a programme officer who will help plan the inquiry, and record and send out inquiry documents.

Pre-inquiry procedures are designed to make sure that everyone can exchange as much information as possible before the inquiry opens.

**Statements of case.** The Deputy Prime Minister has written to everyone who has expressed an interest in taking part in the inquiry to request a statement of case setting out in greater detail why they support or object to the proposals. Parties who submitted statements of case by 1 November 2002 are entitled to appear at the inquiry.

**Statement of matters.** This is prepared by the Deputy Prime Minister after he sees the statements of case and sets out the particular issues on which he wishes to be informed in order to make a decision. This has been served on the PTA and all parties entitled to appear at the inquiry.

**Pre-inquiry meeting.** The inspector will hold a pre-inquiry meeting at Jarrow Community Association at 2pm on 6 January 2003, which will be open to the public, to discuss the practical arrangements for the inquiry and to set a programme. He will explain how members of the public can keep themselves informed and how they can participate in the inquiry.

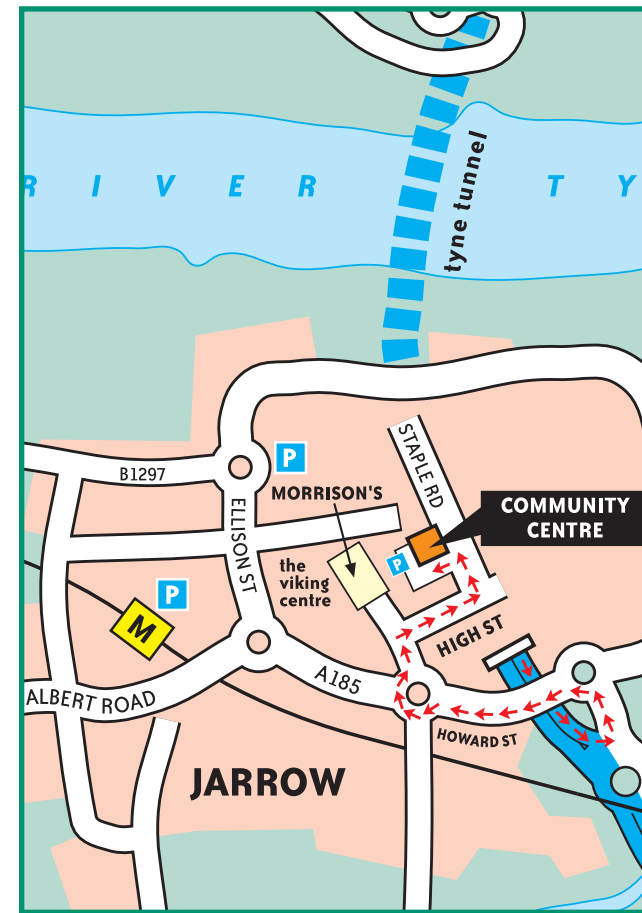
**Proofs of evidence** setting out the full case to be presented by each person should be submitted to the inspector and exchanged with other parties no later than 3 weeks before the inquiry opens, unless the inspector requires a different timetable.

**The inquiry.** The inspector will determine the procedures to be followed at the inquiry, the order in which evidence is given and how questions can be asked. It is expected that the Inquiry will last for between 4 and 6 weeks, sitting Tuesdays to Fridays.

The inquiry will provide an opportunity for all parties

to present their cases and to test the arguments of other people. The inquiry will focus on the main issues of dispute and the issues the Deputy Prime Minister has asked about in his statement of matters. The PTA and statutory objectors are entitled to give evidence and cross-examine other parties. Other people may also speak if the inspector decides that this is appropriate. The inspector will say how people may participate at the pre-inquiry meeting and at the beginning of the inquiry.

Once the inquiry closes the inspector will write a report with recommendations and submit it to the Deputy Prime Minister. There is no set length of time in which the inspector has to produce this report. This will be determined by the issues raised and the length of the inquiry. The Deputy Prime Minister will consider the inspector's report, then decide whether to permit the New Tyne Crossing.



For further information on the New Tyne Crossing or on the Public Inquiry contact: Paul Fenwick, Assistant Engineer to the Tunnels, Tyne & Wear Passenger Transport Authority, Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8PD



## Fish on video

The River Tyne is England's premier salmon river and now has one of the most sophisticated fish and water monitoring facilities in the UK thanks to the New Tyne Crossing.

Video cameras, sensors and a fish trap have been installed at Riding Mill in Northumberland to monitor the river's populations of salmon and sea trout before, during and after the construction of the proposed New Tyne Crossing about 20 miles downstream between East Howdon and Jarrow.

Environmental and fisheries organisations have worked closely with the PTA and its lead consultants Arup to put measures in place to provide better information than ever before on migratory fish in the river.

Sarah Peaty, ecological appraisal team leader of the Environment Agency, said: "With such a significant development as the New Tyne Crossing, measures must be taken to minimise the potential impact of pollution upon the River Tyne and mitigation put in place to protect aquatic life. This facility is one of a number of measures that the Agency believes are necessary to effectively manage any environmental impacts of the proposed tunnel."

Paul Torday chairman of the Tyne Fisheries District Owners and Occupiers Association that represents owners of land next to the river said: "This project demonstrates the PTA's recognition of the symbolic and practical value of having a clean river and a healthy salmon fishery.

"The Tyne is now the premier salmon river in England and Wales and one of the top UK fishing destinations.

"It brings substantial benefits to the region from angling tourism and related tourist activities which is worth several million pounds a year. It is an environmental triumph, considering the poor state of the river 20 years ago, and is an important symbol of regeneration."