



Update

Issue 8 – October 2005

Challenge hinders tunnel's progress

The decision by the Secretary of State for Transport to approve the building of the New Tyne Crossing is to face a legal challenge which could delay the project by up to nine months.

The challenge, which was lodged by a resident of South Tyneside at the end of August, means that a High Court judge will now decide whether or not the scheme as proposed by Tyne & Wear Passenger Authority (TWPTA) can proceed.

At the time of writing no date has been set for the hearing.

Commenting, TWPTA chairman Councillor David Wood said: "The challenge concerns the validity of the Environmental Statement which was prepared on the New Tyne Crossing.

"The challenge is deeply regrettable and will add to the daily frustration of local residents and those people and firms which suffer unacceptable delays when using the existing tunnel."

The TWPTA, North Tyneside and South Tyneside Councils will be keeping local people informed as the scheme progresses.

Cllr Wood said: "The legal challenge has added uncertainty to an already complex project, which we appreciate will have some impact on the lives of local people. I want to assure residents that we will be working

closely with them and North Tyneside and South Tyneside Councils to do everything in our power to ensure that any effects are minimised."

The TWPTA and North and South Tyneside Councils remain confident that the New Tyne Crossing represents the best solution for residents and drivers across the area.

John Harrison, Elected Mayor of North Tyneside, added: "I am hopeful and confident that the New Tyne Crossing will eventually be allowed to proceed, giving a huge boost to our programme of attracting jobs and regeneration along North Tyneside's A19 development corridor and ending the queues and pollution experienced by residents and motorists at both ends of the existing tunnel."

South Tyneside Council Leader, Cllr Paul Waggott, said: "The challenge may seem frustrating to motorists who use the existing Tunnel. The decision to move forward would support the developments and new jobs South Tyneside Council and partner organisations are working hard to attract. It would also put an end to the long queues of traffic at the Tunnel and help local people to travel more quickly and easily across the Tyne."

Inside this newsletter you will find more information about the timetable and what the scheme means for residents, businesses and drivers near the new tunnel and across the wider region.

Also in this issue: ■ What next? ■ Why we need a new crossing ■ Keeping in touch

■ Businesses support new crossing ■ Impact on tolls

Check out the website at www.newtynecrossing.info

What next?

...for construction

The legal challenge may affect the TWPTA's timetable to appoint a successful consortium, known as the Concessionaire, which will finance, design, build and operate the New Tyne Crossing for a period of about 30 years.

The TWPTA has already gathered expressions of interest from construction groups and has short-listed four potential bidders who will be invited to put forward detailed proposals. The intention was to issue the tender documents in the autumn this year but this may be delayed because of the legal challenge

The bidders will be given a number of months to develop their proposals and this will be followed by a period of analysis and negotiation to ensure the people of Tyne and Wear get best value. Work could then begin on the new tunnel in 2007, with a projected opening date of 2010 – although the challenge may affect this programme.

It is currently anticipated that the Concessionaire will take over operation of the existing vehicle, cycle and pedestrian tunnels as soon as it is appointed and be responsible for their smooth running for about 30 years.

Shortly after the Concessionaire is appointed it will be possible to give you a more precise idea of when work will take place.

The new tunnel will be used for vehicles travelling south, while the existing tunnel will take traffic northbound.

The TWPTA will agree the construction schedule and scope of works with the Concessionaire and will ensure the agreement is honoured.

A Code of Construction Practice will also be agreed to ensure the Concessionaire is aware of its responsibilities to protect both the environment and local people during the course of the construction work.



...for residents and businesses

The New Tyne Crossing would bring many benefits to individuals and businesses across Tyneside and beyond. But communities near the tunnel will be affected by construction and new road layouts.

The TWPTA and its partners at North Tyneside and South Tyneside Councils have pledged to work closely with the affected communities. They are also working together to ensure public transport services and motorists would continue to have access to local areas during the construction work.

Commenting on the impact in South Tyneside, Council Leader, Cllr Paul Waggott, said: "I will ensure that the needs of the residents and businesses in Jarrow are fully addressed, that disruptions are managed as efficiently as possible and that the needs of all those who live, work and travel through the area affected by the New Tyne Crossing are considered throughout."

John Harrison, Elected Mayor of North Tyneside, added: "We will also be working closely with the TWPTA to address the needs of the residents living nearest to the construction site."



Outline plans for the major proposed works affecting communities on both sides of the river are included here:

On the north side

The current toll plaza at the northern end of the existing tunnel will be re-configured to accommodate northbound traffic only.

The road will then run through an open cutting for a distance of approximately 650 metres as far as the tunnel entrance. At this point, it will enter a cut and cover tunnel section, approximately 320 metres long which will extend as far as the river bank and connect with the tunnel tube positioned within the river bed.

A new toll plaza for southbound traffic will be built near to the existing Metro bridge over the A19 at Howdon and East Howdon.

A vehicle inspection area will also be provided and any vehicle prohibited from entering the tunnel would be directed to the East Howdon bypass via a newly constructed access road.

Buses entering the tunnel from the north will use a dedicated one-way link from the northern roundabout (Howdon Road) of the East Howdon bypass. They will also have dedicated facilities to bypass the tollbooths. This move would help Nexus should they look to extend the Stephenson Jobslink.

Why we need a new crossing

- The existing tunnel carries 38,000 vehicles per day – 13,000 more than its capacity. This is expected to rise to 52,000 vehicles per day by 2021
- It will relieve severe congestion at the existing Tunnel & other cross-Tyne routes
- Allow better public transport services to operate between North and South Tyneside
- Improve safety for users by making both tunnels one way
- Complete the dualling of the A19
- Improve prospects for economic development and access to jobs

On the south side

Some demolition work has already taken place in Jarrow. The TWPTA and South Tyneside Council are currently talking to residents of the small number of homes which would need to be demolished in High Street, Commercial Road and Salem Street about their re-housing preferences and other needs should the NTC proceed.

Major works will take place from Jarrow Riverside Park (between the gas holder and the entrance to the pedestrian and cycle tunnels) to Howard Street where the New Tyne Crossing emerges. A replacement road bridge will be built to carry Howard Street.

Work in Jarrow will result in a series of temporary and permanent road closures, which will affect pedestrians, cyclists and traffic. Diversions will be put in place where necessary.

During the construction process Dunn Street School will lose access to part of its playing fields but would use grounds at the former St Peter's School. Its fields will be restored after construction. Riverside Park will not be accessible to the public during construction but afterwards the park will be reinstated and improved. The Charles Palmer statue will be relocated to a position in the vicinity of Jarrow Town Hall. A decision on the future of the Grade II listed Gaslight Pub has been deferred.

South of the Jarrow entrance to the tunnel a new road interchange will be built to connect the local road system with the A19. This will have an impact on residents of Epinay Walk who will lose open land in front of their houses. The TWPTA and Council are looking at opportunities to create new open space nearby.





Impact on tolls

The New Tyne Crossing will be paid for from money raised by tolls – just like the existing tunnel.

The initial estimated £185 million cost of construction will be raised through a Public Private Partnership. This means that the Concessionaire who is appointed to build the tunnel will be required to find finance for it.

The current toll for cars is £1. This is expected to rise in stages to between £1.55 and £2.15 at today's prices by the time the new tunnel opens. Buses will not be charged.

It is the policy of the TWPTA and of North Tyneside and South Tyneside Councils to work with the Concessionaire to keep tolls as low as possible in order to benefit the local economy and ensure people aren't priced out of using the tunnels.

Keeping in touch

The TWPTA and North Tyneside and South Tyneside Councils will do everything they can to reduce the impact of the construction process on local communities, road users and businesses.

While there will be nothing to see until 2007 when the New Tyne Crossing is currently programmed for the Concessionaire to start work, the lead authorities recognise that people will have a number of questions about the scheme.

With that in mind, they are offering to visit community groups over the coming weeks and months to bring them up to date on the proposals and answer questions.

Any groups interested in talking to the TWPTA and their local councillors should, in the first instance, contact Clare Maxwell at Bradley O'Mahoney Public Relations on 0191 281 8833 or email her at claremaxwell@bradleyomahoney.co.uk

Anyone seeking information on an issue which is specific to them should contact the project director Paul Fenwick on (0191) 211 6058 or email him at ntc@newcastle.gov.uk

The TWPTA and local Councils have also pledged to keep local communities up to date via this newsletter and through the local press. There is also a website for the New Tyne Crossing, which can be found at www.newtynecrossing.info

Businesses support new crossing

Businesses warmly welcomed the go-ahead for the New Tyne Crossing and have expressed their frustration at the potential delays caused by the legal challenge.

In recent years the A19 corridor has seen the development of new business parks and job opportunities which are vital to the region's economic prosperity.

However, congestion at the Tyne Tunnel is proving a barrier to linking people with job opportunities. The New Tyne Crossing will remove that barrier and will also help businesses become more efficient by enabling them to move goods more freely.

The New Tyne Crossing supports the strategic plans that both North Tyneside and South Tyneside Councils have for economic development. The Councils and TWPTA will

also be encouraging the Concessionaire to employ as much local labour as possible during the construction period, which will in turn stimulate the local economy. Current estimates suggest 300 jobs could be created during the building of the new crossing.

George Cowcher, chief executive of the North East Chamber of Commerce, the region's largest business membership organisation, said: "The decision to go ahead was the best possible news for the region. NECC has campaigned for years for the New Tyne Crossing to be built.

"The delay is extremely worrying for businesses but we remain convinced that a second crossing provides the solution which is needed to address existing capacity issues and support the region's economic development."