



**TYNE AND WEAR PASSENGER TRANSPORT
AUTHORITY**

New Tyne Crossing

**Summary Proof of Evidence on the Rationale for the New Tyne
Crossing**

By

John Miller
Engineer to the Tyne Tunnels

February 2003

1. QUALIFICATIONS

- 1.1 I am John Francis Miller and I hold a degree in Engineering Science from the University of Leicester, which I obtained in 1975. I have been a Chartered Engineer since 1980 and I am a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers. In addition I have gained 26 years experience in the field of planning, highways and transportation.
- 1.2 I am Head of Planning and Transportation at Newcastle City Council, a post I have held since 1999 and which includes responsibility for planning and transport policy, development control, building control, countywide conservation, local plans and traffic management. Additionally, I have been the Engineer to the Tyne Tunnels since 1995 on behalf of the Tyne & Wear Passenger Transport Authority (TWPTA) and a Non Executive Director of the Tyne & Wear Passenger Transport Executive.
- 1.3 The Engineer to the Tyne Tunnels is responsible for the overall management of the tunnels, their improvement and maintenance and all staff (approximately 100) employed through the Tyne Tunnel Manager, Mr. Peter Hedley. The Engineer is also responsible for the financial management of both capital and revenue programmes, expenditure and income. On significant matters of policy and financial relevance, the Engineer reports to the TWPTA or where appropriate the Tyne Tunnel Working Group (sub group of the TWPTA).

2. THE TYNE & WEAR PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

TWPTA's Strategic Objective

- 2.1 The strategic objective of the TWPTA as set out in its Policy Statement 2000 (Appendix A) is *"to promote and encourage safe, integrated and efficient transport facilities and services for Tyne and Wear and its surrounding area through the development of partnerships between other local authorities, transport operators, public service providers, Nexus and local communities"*.
- 2.2 The TWPTA supports the continued regeneration of Tyne & Wear both economically and socially and sees transport policy and its implementation as a key element in achieving this aim, as set out in the Policy Statement 2000. The TWPTA believes transport policy has a role to play in the reduction of social exclusion, regeneration of the economy, improvement of the environment and reduction of traffic congestion and its associated effects.

TWPTA Initiatives

- 2.3 In recent years there have been a number of major improvements to Tyne & Wear's transport infrastructure and related facilities, led and funded (wholly or partly) by the TWPTA, with a total of £143.5M invested in transport infrastructure over the last 5 years.
- 2.4 Looking forward, the TWPTA is promoting two major infrastructure projects to enhance transport in and around Tyne & Wear. These are:
- the New Tyne Crossing , with an estimated capital cost of £138M.
 - 'Project Orpheus' an enlargement of the Metro system, the total capital cost is estimated to be £1,200M.

The TWPTA as Operator of the Tyne Tunnel

- 2.5 Until the local government reorganisation in 1986 the Tyne Tunnels were operated by the County Council. Following the abolition of the Metropolitan County Councils the question of who should operate the tunnel was debated by a joint Committee comprising County Councillors of Durham and Northumberland and District Councillors from Tyne and Wear in late 1985/early 1986. It was the view of that Committee that the Tyne Tunnel, being an important transport link, should be operated by the Passenger Transport Authority as the most appropriate joint body in the metropolitan area of Tyne & Wear . This decision was implemented by the Tyne Tunnel Order 1986 (S.I. 1986 No. 298) pursuant to the Local Government Act 1985.

- 2.6 On April 1 1986 all the property comprising part of the Tyne Tunnel and all other property rights and liabilities in respect of the tunnel which had been vested in or attached to the former Tyne and Wear County Council were vested in the TWPTA by virtue of the Tyne Tunnel Order 1986. The functions conferred on the former County Council by the Tyne Tunnels Acts 1946, 1960 and the Tyne and Wear Act 1976 in relation to the tunnel were also conferred on the TWPTA.
- 2.7 The Tyne Tunnels Act 1998 subsequently gave the TWPTA, *inter alia*, the power to take all such steps as it may think fit to facilitate the provision and operation of a new tunnel crossing.
- 2.8 The lead authority for the TWPTA and therefore for the operation and management of the tunnels is Newcastle City Council. Whilst it may appear unusual for a PTA to operate part of the local road infrastructure it has been the model adopted for both the Metropolitan Areas of Merseyside and Tyne and Wear.

Tyne Tunnels Policies and Initiatives

- 2.9 In addition to the general policies of the TWPTA, which relate to its statutory function, it has also developed policies specifically relating to the Tyne Tunnels, which are detailed in the TWPTA Policy Statement 2000 (Appendix A). A key element in achieving these policies will be development of the New Tyne Crossing which will:
- “Improve cross Tyne movement for all vehicles;
 - Dual the last stretch of single carriageway along the entire length of the A19; and
 - Remove the congestion on approach roads and through the tunnel itself aiding inward investment”
- as set out in the 2001-2002 Best Value Performance Plan and which is in accordance with the TWLTP.
- 2.10 The objectives that TWPTA is seeking to achieve by construction of the New Tyne Crossing are:
- to solve the problems of congestion in the tunnel at the entrances and its approaches;
 - to improve safety and lower the risk to the travelling public in the tunnels;
 - to improve public transport access through the tunnel and in the vicinity;
 - to promote wider economic benefits in the region.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TYNE CROSSING

- 3.1 The 1979 Tyne & Wear Structure Plan described the Tyne Tunnel as “*a sub standard link in the Trunk Road route*”, and Policy T12 identified a route for duplication of the vehicular Tyne Tunnel. Subsequently the County Council protected a route for a second tunnel.
- 3.2 The TWPTA became operator of the Tyne Tunnels in 1986 when studies commenced into the need for additional cross Tyne capacity with the Phase 1 study by the MVA Consultancy. This study concluded there was a demand for additional capacity and that a new crossing would be best located to the east of the Tyne Bridge. The Phase 2 study undertaken by a Technical Steering Group under the chairmanship of Professor Peter Hills of Newcastle University, investigated four potential crossing alignments – St. Bede's (adjacent to the existing Tyne Tunnel), St. Anthony's (Walker), St. Lawrence's (Gateshead to Newcastle Quaysides) and Walker. As a result of the Technical Steering Group's findings it was agreed that the St Bede's option should be considered further. This recommendation was supported by all of the participating local authorities.
- 3.3 Discussions with Government identified that public funding would not be available for a New Tyne Crossing and as such a review of the feasibility of a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) was undertaken on behalf of the TWPTA by a consortium led by Hambros Bank. The report concluded that a PFI would be a suitable vehicle to deliver the New Tyne Crossing, and on the basis of this recommendation the TWPTA has progressed a scheme to duplicate the Tyne Tunnel between East Howdon and Jarrow. Further detailed studies have confirmed that the most appropriate form of crossing is a two lane immersed tube tunnel option as this could be privately financed and therefore be financially freestanding with a toll level that would be acceptable; and with short term environmental impacts that could be mitigated.
- 3.4 The TWPTA formally resolved to apply for a Transport and Works Act Order pursuant to Section 239 of the Local Government Act 1972 at its meeting on 28 February 2002. Following this resolution the TWPTA with its advisors have progressed the preparation and submission of a Transport and Works Act Order application, which has culminated in this Inquiry.
- 3.5 The evidence of the witnesses that follow will set out in more detail the case for the New Tyne Crossing.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 My evidence has described the role of the TWPTA as the owner of the existing Tunnels and promoter of a New Tyne Crossing using finance raised by tolls.
- 4.2 I have outlined the studies that have taken place over a period of 16 years explaining why the TWPTA is promoting the New Tyne Crossing at St Bedes.
- 4.3 The TWPTA's approved 'Towards 2010' Forward Plan, its Best Value Performance Plan 2002-3 and Policy Statement 2000 provide a clear, policy basis to support the crossing. The high priority awarded to the Crossing in the TWLTP (Centre of Excellence), the Regional Economic Strategy, the draft Regional Transport Strategy, and the development plans of North and South Tyneside gives a clear indication of the importance of the project to the region.
- 4.4 The evidence presented by and on behalf of the TWPTA demonstrates that there is a need for a New Tyne Crossing and that it is most appropriately located at St Bede's. Although there will be some temporary environmental disbenefits these can and will be mitigated.
- 4.5 The provision of New Tyne Crossing will meet the TWPTA's objectives summarised as:
- solve the problems of congestion in the tunnel at the entrances and its approaches;
 - improve safety and lower the risk to the travelling public in the tunnel;
 - improve public transport access through the tunnel and in the vicinity;
 - promote wider economic benefits in the region.
- 4.6 The provision of the New Tyne Crossing will provide a welcome relief to the millions of travellers who cross the Tyne at this location every year and who are regularly experiencing delays and inconvenience. They and the many businesses in the region have made it clear that a New Tyne Crossing is considered a matter of priority. Failure to address the issues of current and forecast traffic levels at the Tyne Tunnel will result in compounded congestion delays and related environmental and safety problems that will also have a detrimental impact on the ability of the area to attract new investment.