

## Jobs boost to new tunnel



*PTA vice chair Cllr Muriel Green and PTA deputy vice chair Cllr Tom Hanson*

**The announcements of thousands of new jobs in North Tyneside has underlined the importance of building a second vehicle tunnel under the Tyne.**

One of the the principal reasons for building a second vehicle tunnel is to remove the existing bottleneck and improve access to jobs in the area.

“The recent job announcements at companies such as Orange and Atmel Corporation are great news for the whole of Tyneside,” said PTA deputy vice chair Cllr Tom Hanson and vice chair Cllr Muriel Green.

“It means there is an even greater imperative to build a second vehicle tunnel to link people and jobs on both sides of the river. At present the single carriageway tunnel is a barrier to employment because of congestion, particularly at peak times. The sooner we can build the new tunnel the better.”



# New Jarrow school takes shape

**One of the many positive aspects of the proposed new Tyne crossing – the merging of two Jarrow schools as part of a £2 million development – is now beginning to take shape.**

Financed by the Tyne & Wear Passenger Transport Authority (PTA), the scheme includes the purchase of St Peter's JMI in Ormonde Street and its relocation to Borough Road, where it will merge with Ellison JMI.

St Peter's is in the line of the new Tyne crossing and is to be demolished.

Plans for the new school include the construction of buildings and the modification of the existing premises.

South Tyneside councillor and PTA vice chair Tom Hanson, pictured with Paul Fenwick of the PTA at the site of the new school in Jarrow, said: "On completion Jarrow will have a top quality, well equipped school that we can all be proud of.

"In total the scheme will cost over £2 million. This level of investment reflects the commitment of the PTA to the people of Jarrow."

Pupils and teachers will transfer to the school in September 2002.



*Deputy vice chair Cllr Tom Hanson and Paul Fenwick, PTA*

## VAT a headache

The European Court is insisting that VAT should be charged on tunnel and bridge tolls where they are owned and operated by the private sector.

This could have implications for the Tyne Tunnels which was planned to be owned and operated by the private sector when the contract to build the new tunnel is awarded.

It is vitally important to the local economy that tolls are set at a level which will not discourage traffic from using the tunnel.

PTA vice chair Cllr Muriel Green said: "We are looking with our advisers for a solution to the VAT issue. This has regrettably led to a delay in the decision-making process. However, we hope to make a decision on the new tunnel in the New Year."

# Your questions answered

A major project like the building of a new tunnel invariably raises concerns amongst residents most directly affected. Here, some of the questions raised by residents at recent public meetings are answered.

**Q** We have always been led to believe the new tunnel would be two-lanes wide. Why have we not been told that it might be four lanes wide?

**A** In all their presentations to local groups, PTA advisers Ove Arup have always been quite clear that part of their role is to consider all the possible options and they show a slide at every meeting which shows two-lane, three-lane and four-lane tunnels. As the public body responsible for ensuring Tyne and Wear has an efficient and effective transport system, the PTA would be failing in its duty to future generations if we did not take a long hard look at the four-lane option to ensure good traffic flows well into the future. No decision has yet been taken on the size of the tunnel.



**Residents have their say in East Howdon**

**Q** The new tunnel has hit house prices in my area and created blight. What are you going to do about it?

**A** The PTA is listening to the views of residents and we have commissioned a survey to study whether the plans for the new tunnel have had any impact on property prices. However, even if we find that the tunnel plans have affected house prices, there is nothing we can do – by law – by way of offering compensation.

**Q** What are the toll levels going to be when the new tunnel is opened?

**A** At the moment we do not know exactly what the new tolls will be – the final figure depends on issues such as whether VAT has to be charged and how many lanes the

tunnel will have. We do know that the tolls will have to be higher than they are now. But we want to spread the social and economic benefits of the new tunnel as widely as possible and this means keeping tolls to a level which will not deter local people from using it.

**Q** Won't the increase in traffic created by the new tunnel lead to increased noise and air pollution?

**A** The reduction in traffic congestion, especially at peak times, should actually reduce noise and air pollution levels. Our advisers Ove Arup have undertaken extensive monitoring of current pollution levels and monitoring will continue when the new tunnel is operational.



## 'We will keep you informed' pledge

**A pledge to keep communities informed about proposals to build the new Tyne tunnel has been reaffirmed by Tyne Wear Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) members on both sides of the river.**

Jarrow councillor and PTA deputy vice chairman Tom Hanson said: "People have expressed concern about the possibility of the new tunnel being four-lane instead of two and some have been surprised that this option is being considered.

"The Passenger Transport Authority, in conjunction with its partners North Tyneside and

South Tyneside Councils, is currently looking at both options in terms of financial viability, impact on toll levels, and impact on communities and the environment. No decision has yet been taken and is unlikely to be taken until the New Year."

PTA vice chair Cllr Muriel Green added: "We want to ensure that the transport network in Tyne and Wear meets the economic and social needs of business and communities now and well into the future. The new tunnel will be a vital link between people and jobs on both banks of the Tyne and we are determined that, if it is at

all possible, we build a crossing which will serve local transport needs for many years into the future, not just the next 10 or 20.

"In the meantime we will continue to consult with local communities, listen to their concerns and keep them informed."

### For more information

As part of its communication programme the PTA and its advisers are keen to meet with residents' associations and other parties who feel they will be affected by the construction of the new crossing. For further details contact:

Paul Fenwick  
Planning & Transportation  
Division  
Civic Centre  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 8PD

Questions can also be sent by e-mail to:  
[ntc@twpta.demon.co.uk](mailto:ntc@twpta.demon.co.uk)

Alternatively, log-on to the web site at  
<http://www.tynewear-pta.gov.uk/ntc>  
and find out more about progress on the proposals for the new tunnel.

## Who's who...

### Tyne & Wear Passenger Transport Authority (PTA)...

the body which oversees public transport issues in Tyne & Wear

### Professional advisers

Appointed by the PTA to develop the scheme and provide the authority with advice on all engineering, environmental, financial, legal and property matters relating to the tunnel.

The advisers consist of the Newcastle office of Consulting Engineers Ove Arup, fellow Newcastle-based consulting

engineers Posford Duvivier, legal advisers Herbert Smith, financial consultants KPMG and Newcastle-based chartered surveyors Lamb & Edge.

### Concessionaire

The consortium of private firms which will finance, build and operate the new tunnel and take over the running of the existing road and pedestrian/cycle tunnels. The concession will be for approximately 30 years, after which ownership of the tunnels returns to the PTA.