



# Tyne & Wear Passenger Transport Authority

**Minutes of the meeting of the TYNE TUNNEL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**10th July 1997**  
**(10.30am)**

**Minutes of the 83rd meeting of the TYNE TUNNEL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor P.V. Conaty (in the Chair)  
Councillors: Bate, Holt, Lennox, Moore, Murray, Russell and Young.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

J.F. Miller, B. Middleton, P. Hedley and S. Wilson.

**11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Hanson, Keating, Marshall, Nugent, Ord, Spring and Wood.

**12. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th June 1997 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**13. COUNCILLOR LENNOX**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor John Lennox who was attending his first meeting of the Committee since being appointed to the Authority as a representative of the City of Sunderland.

**14. TOLLS INCOME 1997/98**

**RESOLVED** - That the circulated joint Report of the Engineer and the Treasurer detailing the likely outturn position on tolls income from usage of the Vehicle Tunnel together with the tabled appendices showing weekly and monthly traffic flows be noted.

**15. PEDESTRIAN/CYCLIST TUNNEL: PROPOSED CABLE EASEMENT**

**RESOLVED** - That, as recommended in the circulated Report of the Engineer, negotiations be entered into with National Grid as agents for Energis Communications Limited in respect of an easement for the laying of a fibre optic cable through the Pedestrian/Cyclist Tunnel.

**16. PERMIT PRE-PAID TOLLING SYSTEM: ACCEPTANCE OF TENDER**

**RESOLVED** - That, as recommended in the circulated Report of the Engineer:

(i) the tender of PDS Limited of Coventry in the sum of £112,500 for the installation of the pre-paid tolling system, being the lowest received in response to invitation to specialist suppliers, be accepted and that such expenditure be financed from Reserves; and

(ii) the Capital Programme be amended accordingly.

## **17. PERMIT PRE-PAID TOLLING SYSTEM: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

**Submitted:** Report of the Engineer putting forward a strategy for the implementation of the system.

Following a brief recapitulation of the background to the project for the benefit of new Members, the Engineer explained that, in response to comments made in previous discussions, an initial marketing strategy had been developed as a basis on which to grow the use of the system. Based on the experience gained from this it was intended to review the strategy after one month and six months' operation.

In addition to the circulated Report a location plan illustrating the current demand pattern for pre-paid tolls was tabled. This showed that the area of take up was fairly widespread although the majority of regular users were clustered quite closely around the Tunnel itself. This information, along with that from other sources as outlined in paragraph 4 of the Report, was being used to target existing and potential customers.

From discussion it was agreed that marketing opportunities at Newcastle International Airport should also be explored. Asked whether local taxi firms might also wish to take advantage of the system, the Tunnel Manager explained that there would be no take up from them as the toll was added directly to the fare paid by the customer. In response to a query by the Chairman, he explained that there was some delay to traffic throughput in respect of disabled drivers. This was because the entitlement to free transit through the Tunnel was based on the requirement to display an exemption from vehicle excise duty and its position on the vehicle's windscreen required staff to leave their toll booths to verify the fact. It was unfortunate that the new system would not apply to such drivers but he confirmed that the service to them would continue to be provided by the Tunnel.

**RESOLVED** - That, subject to the above comments, the Implementation Strategy be approved.