



Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority

Minutes of the 92nd meeting of the TYNE TUNNEL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
3RD DECEMBER 1998
(10.30 a.m. – 11.04 a.m.)

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PRESENT:

Councillor M.A. Green in the Chair
Councillors Bate, Bohill, Hanson, Mulgrove, Ord, Spring, Wood and Young.

IN ATTENDANCE

J.F. Miller, B. Middleton, P. Fenwick, P. Hedley, M. Buckingham, N. Greig and S. Wilson.

19. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Flynn, Hodgson, Holt, Keating, McElroy and Marshall.

20. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 5th November 1998 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

21. TOLLS INCOME 1998/99

RESOLVED - That the circulated Report of the Engineer and the Deputy Clerk and Treasurer profiling income against anticipated receipts be noted.

22. REVISION OF TOLL CHARGES

Submitted: Report of the Engineer and the Deputy Clerk & Treasurer proposing an increase of 5p in the toll for motor cars and light vans.

Outlining the process to be followed in revising toll charges, the Engineer explained that the proposed increase represented a balanced approach towards meeting the requirements of debt repayment, the costs of maintenance and expenditure likely to be incurred in the near future in promoting the New Tyne Crossing. The proposed increase was considered modest when compared with the level of tolls that would have been in place had they risen in line with inflation. Additionally, account had been taken of the potential impact on the local economy as well as the environmental considerations of avoiding the displacement of heavy goods vehicles into other parts of the conurbation.

Answering questions as to why it was necessary to consider a further increase only eleven months after the implementation of the last rise, the Chairman emphasised that the intention was to raise income sufficiently to meet the latest projection of costs. Therefore it seemed prudent for this to be approached flexibly. This explained the irregular timing of increases over the years. The Engineer added that while the proposal was being brought forward eleven months after the last rise, the process involved would mean it could be some fifteen months before any rise was introduced. There was also an overall plan in place in line with the previously agreed strategy to repay the outstanding debt by 2006. The Tunnel did not receive any capital allocations from the Government and all maintenance had to be financed from revenue. The proposed increase was deemed to be the minimum necessary to cover the immediate future without imposing an undue burden on users. He would be reporting to the Authority in due course on the toll regime that would be needed for the New Tyne Crossing. The increase would also eliminate the need to handle 5p coins. This did not necessarily mean that future increases need be limited to multiples of 10p. Wider use of the PERMIT system would enable the application of percentage increases of any size. Faster throughput of traffic would also reduce environmental pollution.

RESOLVED - That it be recommended to the Passenger Transport Authority that, subject to the consent of the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions in accordance with Section 13(1)(a)(ii) of the Tyne and Wear Act 1976, the toll for Class 3 vehicles (motor cars and light vans) be increased from 75p to 80p.

23. PEDESTRIAN/CYCLIST TUNNEL: STATUS

RESOLVED - That the circulated Report of the Engineer outlining the implications of obtaining listed building status for the pedestrian/cyclist tunnel be noted.

24. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - That the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business on the Agenda.

25. REGRAIDING AND REDESIGNATION OF POST OF RELIEF SUPERVISOR

RESOLVED - That, as recommended in the circulated Report of the Personnel Officer, the post of Relief Supervisor be redesignated Technical Maintenance Supervisor (Systems) and regraded from Scale 4 to Scale 6 and that the vacant post of Electronics Technician Scale 3 be deleted from the establishment.