



TYNE AND WEAR INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

The Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels

'Looking to the future'

**A report for the Tyne & Wear Integrated Transport Authority
Compiled by Bradley O'Mahoney Public Relations**

1. The Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels

The Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels were opened in 1951 to improve access for workers to employment in industries, primarily shipbuilding, along the river.

The decline of industry coupled with the rise in the importance of the motor car has seen significant reduction in usage of the tunnels since their heyday. Nevertheless, around 250,000 people a year use the Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels. At its peak, this number used the tunnels every month.

The tunnels are Grade II Listed structures served by two wooden escalators and a lift at each end. When the tunnels opened the escalators were the highest single-rise escalators in the world at 85ft (26 metres).

At present, work is underway to produce a detailed virtual reality model for use.

2. The brief

Bradley O'Mahoney was commissioned by officers of the Tyne & Wear Integrated Transport Authority to:

- Find out stakeholder perceptions of the Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels
- To ask stakeholders what improvements they would like to see to the tunnels to increase usage

In order to encourage creative suggestions we avoided reference to potential financial or conservation constraints.

3. Tyne & Wear Integrated Transport Authority policy and the regional strategy context for this report

The Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels are relevant to several regional policies around sustainable transport, health and fitness, the environment, leisure, employment and culture and heritage.

The Transport Authority's own policy aims and objectives are:

- Improving quality of life is a general aim of national, regional and Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan policy
- Improved accessibility, regeneration and renewal will help achieve this. National policy is directed towards urban renaissance, sustaining rural areas, to economic and environmental sustainability and to sustainable development
- An integrated local transport strategy is set out and implemented through the Local Transport Plan (LTP). In Tyne and Wear, the LTP is prepared through a joint partnership comprising the ITA Nexus (the Public Transport Executive) and each of the five constituent districts of Tyne and Wear

In order to contribute effectively to the aspirations set out in the LTP for improving the quality of life for people in Tyne and Wear the ITA has adopted the following overarching objectives through its Policy Statement for 2007/08 to 2009/10:

- Actively promoting the use of better public transport as a real alternative to travelling by car and thereby contributing to reducing road traffic congestion
- Reducing transport-related social exclusion
- Protecting, preserving and enhancing the natural and built environments
- Assisting in stimulating economic regeneration

These objectives support the broad social, economic and environmental objectives of our regional and LTP partners and contribute directly to the shared LTP priorities of:

- Economic regeneration
- Sustainability
- Equity/social inclusion
- Environmental protection
- Health and safety

- Economic efficiency

The over-arching policy objectives, currently under review, reflect the (then) Public Transport Authority's (PTA's) approach to transport policy Tyne and Wear.

Understandably the focus was on public transport even given the PTA's responsibility for the Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels. However, moving forward on transport policy in Tyne & Wear, the Integrated Transport Authority will pay greater attention to walking and cycling as modes of transport in their own right and as part of an integrated transport infrastructure.

Relevant policies in the Regional Spatial Strategy include:

Policy 1 NORTH EAST RENAISSANCE

Strategies, plans and programmes should support a renaissance throughout the North East by:

Conserving, enhancing and capitalising upon the region's diverse natural and built environment, heritage and culture; and improving connectivity and accessibility within and beyond the region.

Policy 2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Planning proposals and Local Development Frameworks should support sustainable development and construction through the delivery of the following environmental and social objectives:

2.1 Environmental Objectives:

- (e) to make better use of our resources, including the built fabric;
- (j) to protect and enhance the region's cultural heritage and diversity

2.2 Social Objectives:

- (f) to improve health and well-being while reducing inequalities in health;
- (g) to ensure good accessibility for all to jobs, facilities, goods and services in the region particularly by public transport, walking and cycling;
- (h) to reduce the need to travel by private car

Policy 3 CLIMATE CHANGE

All strategies, plans and programmes in the region shall contribute to mitigating climate change and assisting adaptation to the impacts of a changing climate by:

3.1. Helping the region to contribute to meeting national policy as set out in the Energy White Paper to put ourselves on a path to cutting the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by some 60% by about 2050, with real progress by 2020, by including policies and proposals that:

- (a) focus substantial new development on locations with good accessibility by sustainable transport modes, particularly public transport, walking and cycling;
- (b) reduce road traffic growth and promote sustainable alternatives to the private car

Policy 7 CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Strategies, plans, programmes and planning proposals should seek to improve and enhance the sustainable internal and external connectivity and accessibility of the North East by:

- (a) reducing the impact of travel demand particularly by promoting public transport, travel plans, cycling and walking;
- (b) reducing the need to travel long distances, particularly by private car, by focusing development in urban areas that have good access to public transport and for cyclists and pedestrians;
- (d) making best use of resources and existing infrastructure;
- (e) ensuring safe transport networks and infrastructure

Policy 8 PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT

Strategies, plans, programmes and planning proposals should seek to maintain and enhance the quality, diversity and local distinctiveness of the environment throughout the North East by:

- (d) seeking to conserve and enhance historic buildings, areas and landscapes

Policy 16 CULTURE AND TOURISM

Strategies, plans, programmes and planning proposals should promote culture and tourism, including provision for sport and leisure and the resources which support these, by:

(b) ensuring that the development of culture, sports, leisure, recreation and tourist facilities and attractions protects, invests in and enhances and maintains the region's natural, built and heritage environments

Policy 32 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Strategies, plans, programmes and planning proposals should seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment of the region by:

(c) encouraging the refurbishment and re-use of appropriate disused or under-used buildings and incorporating them into regeneration schemes

Policy 51 STRATEGIC PUBLIC TRANSPORT HUBS

Particular priorities for sub-regional and local hubs in the Main Settlements, Regeneration Towns, the main Rural Service Centres, metro stations and district level interchanges that act as hubs for their surrounding areas are to:

(d) increase the level of cycling and walking accessibility to these hubs

There are two objectives in the North East Environmental Strategy relevant to the tunnels.

The Transport Objective seeks to develop sustainable transport solutions by adopting more sustainable practices – including walking and cycling.

The Cultural Heritage Objective seeks to promote and enhance the region's historic environments and ensure that their worth is recognised and invested in, thus enhancing their benefits to society.

4. Local development context for this report

North Tyneside: Plans are being developed to regenerate the Tyne North Bank. The first phase will be the creation of a Learning Village. One recommendation in the regeneration final report was to strengthen the riverside communities of Walker, Wallsend, East Howdon and North Shields.

Key factors identified in the delivery of the plan include developing existing assets such as land, marine infrastructure, people and heritage, as well as linkages to adjacent communities. The Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels could serve to support the regeneration plans for Tyne North Bank.

The Port of Tyne intends to redevelop the former Howdon Basin for industrial and commercial use once the New Tyne Crossing is complete, thus creating new job opportunities close to the northern entrance to the tunnels.

South Tyneside: The line of the second vehicle tunnel is to be landscaped to create a linear park, encouraging cycling and walking.

The Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels will provide a vital link in an increasingly dense network of footpaths and cycleways on both banks of the river.

In addition, there is a bid to have the former monastery of St. Paul's Jarrow designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. If successful, this will have the potential to increase custom through the Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels and prove an additional attraction to supplement Bede's World.

5. Conclusion

The Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels are well-regarded amongst users and local communities close to the entrances in Howdon and Jarrow. Users see the tunnels as a key connector, enabling them to cross the river easily and at no cost. Local people are particularly proud of the heritage the tunnels represent.

There is evidence that usage of the tunnels by cyclists in particular is increasing (North Tyneside Council figures show a 100% increase in cycling in the borough over the past three years, as well as an 83% growth in the cycle network), reflecting a general increase in cycling both as a leisure pursuit and as a means of commuting. However, there is also widespread ignorance of the tunnels' existence by both members of the local population and wider communities.

In policy terms, the dual purpose of the tunnels is a major potential asset for Tyne & Wear. It would not be an exaggeration to say that their future could be significantly brighter than their recent past if opportunities are seized to realise this potential.

Cycling and walking are now subject to major policy initiatives, both nationally and regionally. They are integral to agendas around health and exercise, transport modal shift and the environment.

In addition, the heritage and tourism potential of the tunnels remains largely untapped.

2011 sees the 60th anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) of these tunnels. This is an excellent opportunity to celebrate the past, present and future role of the tunnels in linking the two banks of the Tyne and for raising awareness of their existence.

The free-use of the Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels is now a legal requirement set out in the River Tyne (Tunnels) Order 2005. Most users regard the fact that the maintenance and operation of these tunnels is paid for from tolls revenue generated at the Tyne vehicle tunnel as a good, ethical principle.

Developments on both banks of the river near to the tunnels' entrances, namely the proposed linear park in Jarrow and the North Bank regeneration on North Tyneside, will further encourage cycling and walking.

Steps to achieving a renaissance

We suggest the immediate steps necessary to beginning the revival of the Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels are:

- Improved reliability of lifts and escalators
- Improved signage to the tunnels
- Better information to users about operational issues including the creation of a website
- Preparation for next year's Diamond Jubilee celebrations
- Apply to host a Heritage Open Day in September
- Apply to Heritage Lottery Fund to fund a community project on the history of the tunnels, building on the Spence and Dower conservation plan

6. Overview of findings

Reliability

The first and vital step to securing a brighter future for the tunnels is to improve the reliability of lifts and escalators. A programme of work has already commenced to address the chronic problems of lift equipment failure and their general wear and tear. It is to be hoped that reliability will be improved sufficiently to enhance user experience and frequency.

Some respondents expressed the view that chronic equipment failure is the most likely factor in discouraging them from using the tunnels.

“Each time I have used the tunnel the lift was not working and I had to use the escalator. Had the escalator not been working I would have changed my route and turned back rather than be forced to carry my bike down the stairs. Not a problem for me as it was for leisure purposes but it would have been a different matter if I was using it to cycle to work.” – Officer, DWP PDCS Change & Transportation

Directorate

There is also expectation from users that this will be addressed sooner, rather than later. The social media pages created for the purpose of this consultation exercise continue to attract critical comments about equipment failure in the tunnels.

User experience

The tunnels present a tired and down-at-heel appearance to users.

“The tiles are still there from when it was built. Murals would brighten it up and you could have piped music and promotional events in there too.” – North Tyneside resident.

A refurbishment would provide an exciting opportunity to provide a more interesting, flexible space. It may even be possible to utilise the space imaginatively enough, for example through LED lighting or artwork, so the tunnels become something of an attraction in their own right. The approaches to the tunnels are also in need of improvement. They present a rather poor image in terms of environment, access and the quality of the built environment.

Accessibility

Cycles: The development of an extensive network of cycleways on both banks of the Tyne provides cyclists with reasonably good access to and from the tunnels.

*“The tunnels need an image and to be part of wider leisure routes for cyclists.” –
Officer, South Tyneside Council.*

However, survey respondents were critical of the maintenance of cycleways, reporting regular incidences of broken glass and debris. Others were critical of cycle links to the tunnels through South Tyneside.

Pedestrians: Pedestrians have more problems. There is no controlled crossing at Bewicke Street (Howdon) or Chaytor Street (Jarrow) to encourage journeys on foot, to and from the tunnels. Bewicke Street has a 40 mph speed limit and has a relatively high percentage of heavy goods vehicles using it.

Buses: Integration with public transport is poor. Bus services to Bewicke Street near the north entrance and along Chaytor Street in Jarrow have declined in number and frequency over recent years.

Metro: There are Metro stations within a 10-minute walk of the tunnel entrances on either bank. However, the Metro does not accept bikes.

“There are Metro stations within half a mile of the tunnel entrances, yet you still can’t take bikes on Metro trams. Even if they just allowed them on Sundays it would be something...” – Cyclist.

Better integration between cycling and the Metro system would improve opportunities for modal shift from car usage.

Signage: Signage to the Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels is poor although this is currently being investigated. Improved signage to the tunnels from bus interchanges and nearest Metro Stations will help raise awareness and increase usage.

“There’s a lack of signage (to the tunnels) at Jarrow Metro and Bus Station. It needs some proactive marketing and a political will around travel plans.” - Officer, South Tyneside Council.

Some respondents suggested better signage to attractions on the opposite side of the river, claiming ignorance of what was there.

Car parking: There is a car parking near the south entrance but only disabled parking at the north entrance. Our consultation revealed a difference in views about better integration with cars. Some think car parking should be improved.

“There should be secure parking at either end. People who don’t have far to go on the other side should be able to park and walk without needing to drive through the vehicle tunnel” – North Tyneside resident.

Others believe it would detract from the purpose of the tunnels, encourage greater car use, adding to congestion and leading to possible nuisance in neighbouring areas.

“If you put car parking in it will quickly become over-subscribed. Then you will have people parking in inappropriate places and that would cause problems for others...” – Cyclist.

Visibility

While signage can go some way to improving awareness of the tunnels, the buildings on the surface are still largely invisible and consequently both suffer from this lack of visibility.

“It’s not advertised. Nobody knows it’s there...” – North Tyneside resident.

This is especially true on the north bank where the entrance (rotunda) is situated amongst industrial buildings and is at a lower level than its access from Bewicke Street. The river is invisible from the rotunda and is fenced off. On the south bank, the visibility of the entrance is slightly better, although some respondents expressed the view that the Jarrow entrance was difficult to locate.

“You can’t see the (south) access. It’s behind roads and bushes.” – Resident, South Tyneside.

The view from the south rotunda is also better because there is a river vista. More could be made of the views along the river by creating better facilities to view the river and link in with the landscape improvements to be made in this part of Jarrow once the second vehicle tunnel is complete.

Security and safety

While most users feel safe using the tunnels, a number of women in particular expressed the view that they would not use them if travelling alone.

“It can be quite daunting. My wife’s experience is that the tunnels link some rough areas and she wouldn’t want to be using the tunnels on her own” – Anonymous, South Tyneside.

“On a personal note, there’s no way I would walk through the tunnels by myself. The lifts aren’t pleasant. It’s not a pleasant experience.” – Female officer, South Tyneside Council.

Whilst the tunnels are CCTV monitored, some expressed the view that staff visibility plays an important part in creating a perception of safety and security.

For some, especially older people, the noise and age of the escalators create a perception of unsafeness.

“It’s unnerving. Those wooden escalators are really rickety” – North Tyneside resident.

What’s in a name?

The ‘Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels’ - while having the virtue of being long-established and descriptive of who is expected to use them, is an unwieldy name. We consulted with stakeholders about a possible name change and there was little enthusiasm for it.

“There’s no need to change its name.” – North Tyneside resident.

“You must keep pedestrian and cyclist in the name.” – Cyclist.

However, the proposed new signage designed by Arup has had to wrestle with the practicalities of directing the travelling public to the tunnels and has called them 'Walk and Cycle Tunnel'. We believe it is important to settle on a single name and further work should be undertaken to test stakeholder opinion on whether 'Walk and Cycle Tunnel' is a more appropriate name while promoting their free use.

Promotion

Next year's Diamond Jubilee (the 60th anniversary falls on July 24, 2011) is an excellent opportunity to celebrate the past, present and future of the tunnels, to raise awareness of their existence, to engage stakeholders and to build on the tunnels' considerable synergy with current health and exercise and transport modal shift policies.

"I hope something will be made of the 60th anniversary. I hope the pct will keep its original fabric as much as possible. It tells us a good deal about engineering and 'quality'. It may have been one of the first projects after the War to have reasonable resources available to contractors." – A member of the public.

This will require investment in creating an organisational infrastructure to create, deliver, manage and communicate activity.

Beyond the 60th anniversary celebrations there will be a need for a level of promotional and operational support to ensure the benefits of the tunnels continue to be communicated and realised through visits, annual events and linkage with other stakeholders, particularly the riparian councils.

Linking in more effectively with events like the Mouth of the Tyne Festival and the BUPA Great North Run would improve awareness and usage.

Several television dramas and advertisements have been filmed in the tunnels. More active promotion could increase their use as a location and help promote the region too – this could be achieved by loop broadcasting previous examples through onsite plasma screens.

Information provision

Many respondents were critical at the lack of information and notice provided about equipment breakdowns at the tunnels. They also requested more information about future intentions regarding improving reliability. Some consideration should be given about improving methods of communication at the tunnels as well as creating a dedicated website and integration of social media tools (suggested by several users).

'From roots to routes'

An effective and inexpensive way of increasing usage would be to develop interesting walks and bike rides featuring the tunnels. A cycling enthusiast has already developed a number of Tyne Loop routes utilising the cycle tunnel.

"I would use (the pct) more if I was aware of more places south of the river which I could cycle to from home. The network of trails seems good north of the river with Waggonways and the Rivers trails but I do not have much knowledge of what they are like to the south." – A member of the public.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there used to be and may still be an annual walk from Arbeia, the Roman Fort in South Shields, to Segedunum in Wallsend. A Hadrian's Wall Cycle Adventure has taken place utilising the tunnels. The potential to develop routes or trails linking the history, heritage and natural history of the Tyne is significant. Bede's World is within easy walking distance of the tunnels and, if the bid for World Heritage status is successful, St. Paul's in Jarrow will become an attraction.

Also, the NewcastleGateshead Great North Way was the first to introduce a network of under street electronic timing systems to trigger timing mechanisms for runners, walkers and cyclists. This could be extended to the tunnels to create regular racing events, subject to satisfactory risk assessments for both competitors and other tunnel users. The DFDS ferry service connecting North Shields and Amsterdam brings many inveterate cyclists from Holland and Germany to the region, yet they will be largely ignorant of the existence of the tunnels.

Several respondents expressed the view that there are insufficient high quality attractions on either bank to promote increased usage of the tunnels.

Heritage and history

A community project on the history and interpretation of the tunnels should be initiated to coincide with the Diamond Jubilee.

“The Tunnel represents part of the North East Heritage and with the decline of old industry people really need to touch something like the Tunnel with all its history. It should be marketed as a heritage place with a use and an experience for children because it feels very special to our identity. Perhaps a coffee shop built to overlook the Tyne above would help.” – A member of the public.

The Heritage Lottery Fund is funding a similar project on the Transporter Bridge in Teesside which is also celebrating its Diamond Jubilee next year. An application for funding should be made to The Heritage Lottery Fund as soon as possible in conjunction with communities on both sides of the river. Their work could culminate in an exhibition which could be displayed in the tunnels. Another idea is to create a commemorative book celebrating the role the tunnels have played in the recent history of Tyneside.

“It’s the one place you can stand in (the former) Northumberland and County Durham at the same time...” – North Tyneside resident.

The tunnels have been open to the public on Heritage Open Days in the past and this has proven popular. The next Heritage Open Days initiative will take place in September providing another good opportunity to promote the tunnels and raise awareness of the investment taking place.

Connecting people with work

The tunnels were built to connect workers to the thousands of jobs in shipyards and engineering which once existed on both banks of the river. Their decline mirrors the decline in industry along the river banks.

However, the future includes plans to develop employment opportunities in the North Bank regeneration and as part of this there will be green travel plans incorporated into the final scheme.

“There are increasing employment opportunities on the north bank with the development of wind turbine manufacturing. People on the south will decide whether to take these up depending on how quickly they can get through the tunnels.” –

Officer, South Tyneside Council.

Much redundant riverside infrastructure is being brought back into economic use through the building of wind turbines. Further job creation developments and the trend towards increased cycling for commuting will increase the significance of the tunnel as a key connector between people and jobs.

In their own right – the tunnels as an icon

Public art exists near the entrances to the tunnels. An issue with public art is that it soon becomes invisible once the novelty has worn off. Thinking has moved forward in step with advances in technology which can create imaginative effects through light and sound.

“From a tourism development point of view, the development of leisure use is key.

We’re trying to promote cycling and improve the visitor experience so there is something for people to do and see. Having a gallery or exhibitions in the tunnels would be really good, something to draw people to them.” – Officer, South Tyneside

Council.

Ideas that have come forward include a poem on an inlay strip through the length of the tunnel and the construction of the world’s biggest wind turbine to celebrate the Tyne as a centre for renewable energy.

Possible additional uses

A range of ideas included holding a market, creating a café, developing a ‘bunk house’ for long distance cyclists, a cycle repair facility, bike hire, a party venue and an art gallery.

Children

There is evidence that local children are largely ignorant of the existence of the tunnels.

“The theatre group in Jarrow had around 45 young people at an event. I mentioned the Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels and none of them knew they existed...” – South Tyneside resident.

A special programme of events, linking with schools, would improve awareness, create a spirit of adventure and help to meet the educational and health needs of children. One suggestion was to make the tunnels a ‘living classroom.’

“The tunnels are a massive adventure for children, a living classroom...” – TT2 employee.

Funding

A suggestion by an officer of South Tyneside Council may provide a promising mechanism for attracting future funding. He suggested that setting up a ‘constituted group’, for example Friends of the Tunnels, would be able to access funding streams not available to the Transport Authority. This is certainly worthy of further investigation.

Sponsorship and advertising

This was mooted in our presentations as a possible method of bringing revenue to the tunnels to pay for improvements. Obviously, there would be costs involved in creating the necessary infrastructure to manage such innovations and at present it is doubtful whether giving the tunnel over to sponsorship or selling advertising would create a meaningful income. Reaction to the suggestion was mute.

7. Research methodology

Bradley O'Mahoney used a combination of methods to elicit views. These included presentations and surveys via online survey tool Survey Monkey received over 300 responses.

We utilised social media such as Twitter and Facebook to drive interest towards the on-line survey. A vox pop of users at the tunnels resulted in 34 responses.

Media coverage in the Shields Gazette, News Guardian Series and the Evening Chronicle helped to raise awareness of the consultation and thereby the tunnels themselves.

8. Acknowledgements

Bradley O'Mahoney would like to thank all the individuals and organisations that took part in the consultation.

Presentations were made to:

- Officers of North Tyneside Council
- Officers of South Tyneside Council
- East Howdon Community Association and the 'A Team'
- Jarrow Community Area Forum
- New Tyne Crossing Cycling Forum

9. Appendix: Quotes and Comments

"It's not advertised. Nobody knows it's there."

"It's unnerving. Those wooden escalators are really rickety."

"On a personal note, there's no way I would walk through the tunnels by myself. The lifts aren't pleasant. It's not a pleasant experience."

"From a tourism development point of view, the development of leisure use is key. We're trying to promote cycling and improve the visitor experience so there is something for people to do and see. Having a gallery or exhibitions in the tunnels would be really good, something to draw people to them."

"I'd hate to see it close. It just needs updating and upgrading."

"Could they put a travelator type thing in? It would help when I come back from Morrisons in Jarrow with my shopping."

"The tiles are still there from when it was built. Murals would brighten it up and you could have piped music and promotional events in there too..."

"There should be secure parking at either end. People who don't have far to go on the other side should be able to park and walk without needing to drive through the vehicle tunnel."

"I wouldn't put a café there. A snack shop would be better."

"From the south the approach to the tunnels is not attractive. There's usually a line of cars in front of the entrance. The entrance is not an attractive building, there's no gateway feature. You can drive past and not know it's there. That's true for both sides."

"It can be quite daunting. My wife's experience is that the tunnels link some rough areas and she wouldn't want to be using the tunnels on her own."

"The tunnels need an image and to be part of wider leisure routes for cyclists."

"There's no need to change its name..."

"You must keep pedestrian and cyclist in the name..."

"There are Metro stations within half a mile of the tunnel entrances, yet you still can't take bikes on Metro trams. Even if they just allowed them on Sundays it would be something..."

"If you put car parking in it will quickly become over-subscribed. Then you will have people parking in inappropriate places and that would cause problems for others..."

"Being Grade II-listed is a problem."

"No-one knows it's there..."

"There's a lack of signage (to the tunnels) at Jarrow Metro and Bus Station. It needs some proactive marketing and a political will around travel plans."

"There are increasing employment opportunities on the north bank with the development of wind turbine manufacture. People on the south will decide whether to take these up depending on how quickly they can get through the tunnels."

"People park their cars in East Howdon and get their bikes out before heading for the tunnels. There should be a dedicated car park."

"It's the one place you can stand in (the former) Northumberland and County Durham at the same time."

"The tunnels are a massive adventure for children, a living classroom."

"There's no way I'd use it if the stairs (escalators) were off..."

"I wouldn't walk through them on my own."

"It needs to be signposted more. People don't know it's there."

"Jarrow's a better shopping centre but it's expensive to get there by bus if you've got three or four kids."

"There is some opportunity to create a gateway feature on the south as part of the landscaping plan for the second vehicle tunnel."

"The theatre group in Jarrow had around 45 young people at an event. I mentioned the Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels and none of them knew they existed."

"We need better public transport. Buses used to run down there (to the south entrance)."

"You can't see the (south) access. It's behind roads and bushes."

"Churches Together in Jarrow would be very interested in community based work jointly with North Tyneside."

"You could get the Milk Race to go through it."

"Extend the path from the tunnel to Hadrian's Wall and use it as a cycle route."

"Increase employment and link tunnel with various cycle routes that follow the Tyne north and south."

"There are no attractions on either bank to give people reason to travel through the tunnels. Present condition extremely poor and dated. Spending money doesn't solve the problem of giving public reasons to use it. Could develop a café or outdoor venue but surroundings need to be pleasant to attract visitors. Could develop a visitor centre focused on industrial heritage. Need an integrated bus service along both banks of the river."

“A car parking scheme within easy walking distance of the tunnel entrances, perhaps linked with a park and ride scheme.”

“30 years of planning and transportation policy have led us to live in a world centred on mobility not local accessibility and we travel faster and further than ever before to meet our needs. Coincidental improvements in walking and cycling green infrastructure...has not happened and we are presented with a largely obesogenic (sic) environment that does not encourage or even allow people to choose to travel in ways which benefit them and the environment. Walking and cycling budgets have only afforded broken and piecemeal network developments in recent decades and this has to change if the country is to become more active, healthy, prosperous and less reliant on carbon-based energies. To merely say nothing can be done (to the pct) due to their listed status is absurd. Engineering solutions can be found where money and political weight exists. The lifts, elevators and general access and appearance of the pct all need urgent and proper attention to bring them inline with future LTP3 and DaSTS targets as useable and appropriate transport conduits.”

“The entrance doors on either side of the river could be reshaped as a mouth with roller shutters for security.”

“Unless you live/work near (within two miles); are a recreational walker/cyclist; are one of those people that cycles 5+ miles to work; why would you need to use the pct?”

“Have some kind of pass card system to operate the lifts. Pay a nominal amount for the card to give exclusive rights to use the lifts. Regular users would have no objection if they got a reliable service. This will also generate income for some maintenance. Escalators will be there for people who do not want to pay or can carry push bike up or down.”

“As the George Stephenson Trail is adjacent to the pct and there is a lot of historical information in and around the tunnel, it may be worthwhile inviting educational establishments to make historical visits. This would enlighten children and parents that the pct exists and is in working order.”

“I would use (the pct) more if I was aware of more places south of the river which I could cycle to from home. The network of trails seems good north of the river with Waggonways and the Rivers trails) but I do not have much knowledge of what they are like to the south.”

“I am a scout leader in Whitley Bay and sometimes I use the pct as a different way to travel during activities, i.e. to Bede’s World. Parents are shocked that the tunnel is there as most have never heard of it. The ones who have don’t know where it is. The main problems are the escalators are extremely slow which causes a safety risk with young people. The tunnel has a very dingy feel to it. The controller is always very accommodating when we arrive. The major area to improve on is publicity so people are aware the tunnel is actually there.”

“I love walking through the tunnel. We use it as a short cut to walk along the river. My husband always comes with me as I think I should not like to enter alone. I think it should have security and larger lifts for cyclists. An event such as a walk and cycle ride might promote more interest. An open day with the tunnel history and a guided walk would be lovely. The flower beds ought to be weeded so that the lovely fish ornaments are clearly visible. A bit of tarting up on both sides would be worth it.”

“Put them on Earthcam. This way they will be a tourist attraction for overseas visitors to the area.”

“I would love to use the cycle tunnel to get to work. I live in Whitley Bay and work in Washington (beside Nissan). The routes are fine in North Tyneside getting to the tunnel but there is no safe and quick route in South Tyneside to get to Nissan. A cycle route direct to Nissan would be advantageous also to explore south Tyne.”

“Even though I have lived in the northeast for 20 years, my impression is that (the pct) is not a widely known facility. Perhaps an awareness campaign would be useful. This could be tied into increasing awareness that it is possible to do a circular ride down the Tyne and back using the tunnel and bridges. Although the pct are mentioned on cycle maps it could be more prominent. Perhaps organisations like Sustrans can help promote the tunnel. Each time I have used the tunnel the lift was not working and I had to use the escalator. Had the escalator not been working I would have changed my route and turned back rather than be forced to carry my bike down the stairs. Not a problem for me as it was for leisure purposes but it would have been a different matter if I was using it to cycle to work.”

“I hope something will be made of the 60th anniversary. I hope the pct will keep its original fabric as much as possible. It tells us a good deal about engineering and ‘quality’. It may have been one of the first projects after the War to have reasonable resources available to contractors. I wonder who designed the tunnel and the rotundas. I think more people might use the pct for recreational/educational purposes if car parking was readily available on both sides of the river.”

“The Tunnel represents part of the North East Heritage and with the decline of old industry people really need to touch something like the Tunnel with all its history. It should be marketed as a heritage place with a use and an experience for children because it feels very special to our identity. Perhaps a coffee shop built to overlook the Tyne above would help.”

“Have Cleaner Greener Travel events and promote www.cyclescheme.co.uk at rush hour locations like the Tyne Bridges and entrances to the Tunnel.”