



**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY  
EMERGENCY PLANNING UNIT**

***Committee Report***

**Meeting : CIVIL CONTINGENCIES COMMITTEE : 15 MARCH 2010**

**Subject : TYNE TUNNEL EXERCISE**

***Report of the Chief Emergency Planning Officer***

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of Exercise 'Start' held at the Tyne Tunnel on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2010. The exercise provided an early opportunity to familiarise Category 1 responders with emergency response arrangements specific to the operation of the new tunnel, due to open in February 2011.
- 1.2 The exercise focused on the early stages of emergency response to a multi vehicle collision and a fire in the new tunnel. The scenario and exercise was designed in partnership by the Tyne Tunnel and Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit specifically to provide an introduction for Tyne Tunnel Control personnel and emergency responders into the emergency procedures being developed for the new river crossing.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Multi-agency major incident table top exercises are an integral part of testing and validation procedures for the Tyne Tunnel Integrated Emergency Plan.
- 2.2 The official opening of the second tunnel in February 2011 necessitates the successful testing and exercising of the emergency response arrangements prior to the issue of a 'Permission to Use' (PTU) Licence by the Highways Agency on behalf of the Department of Transport. The tunnel cannot operate without this licence.
- 2.3 These exercises will look at the new arrangements being developed to respond to an incident in the new tunnel crossing. Two validation exercises have been scheduled via the Northumbria LRF Training and Exercise Group prior to the tunnel opening:
  - September 2010 (Multi-agency tabletop)
  - January 2011 (Live on-site exercise)

NB: when the new crossing opens, the existing tunnel will close for comprehensive refurbishment.

### **3. TYNE TUNNEL EXERCISE FEBRUARY 2010**

3.1 The exercise planning team decided to utilise the scheduled February 2010 exercise to provide responders with an introduction into the new procedures currently under development. Aim and Objectives were identified as follows:

#### **3.2 AIM**

The Aim of the exercise was to 'Familiarise Emergency Response personnel with the new response procedures'.

#### **3.3 OBJECTIVES**

- Familiarise TT2 staff and Emergency Services with the physical layout of the new tunnel.
- Demonstrate the facilities and equipment within the tunnel available for use when dealing with emergencies.
- To introduce TT2 staff to emergency procedures for the new tunnel and the changes in actions they will be expected to perform.
- To introduce Emergency Services to the change in TT2's emergency response and how their approach to an incident will be affected.
- To elicit feedback from TT2 staff, Emergency Services and Local Authorities in formulating emergency procedures for the new tunnel.
- To comply with TT2's obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act and associated legislation including Road Tunnel Safety Regulations.

### **4. EXERCISE 'START' PROGRAMME**

4.1 The exercise format enabled the provision of elements of scenario initial response, new crossing infrastructure, emergency procedures awareness and a plenary workshop.

09.30 Registration

10.00 Welcome and Introduction

10.15 Tyne Tunnel Overview – New tunnel details, site plans, resource locations, emergency response systems, evacuation procedures

10.30 Presentation – North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) provided an overview of the new Hazardous Area Response Team (HART)

10.45 Exercise 'Start' – Scenario response

11.45 Exercise Review – Plenary session

12.00 Close

- 4.2 Participants were encouraged during the exercise to discuss the response procedures under development for the new tunnel with the purpose of highlighting gaps in those procedures and where possible identify improvements.
- 4.3 The open plenary session proved extremely useful and informative with all participants entering into lively debate. The session ran well beyond schedule.
- 4.4 The opportunity was taken to include a short presentation by NEAS to provide information on the role of the HART and how it fits into emergency response procedures. HART will be fully functional by April 2010.

## **5. EXERCISE PARTICIPATION**

- 5.1 The exercise was well attended with representation from:
- Tyne Tunnel - management, control room and operational team leaders
  - Northumbria Police - local and headquarters officers
  - Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service – Area Managers
  - North East Ambulance Service – Resilience and HART Officers
  - Environment Agency – Resilience Officer
  - North Tyneside Council – Resilience Officer
  - South Tyneside Council – Resilience Team
  - Tyne and Wear EPU - Facilitator

## **6. EXERCISE EVALUATION**

- 6.1 Participants completed evaluation reports, the combined results of which will be tabled on the day of the meeting.

## **7. LESSONS LEARNED**

- 7.1 A post exercise debrief meeting is scheduled to be held at the Tyne Tunnel following the distribution of the Evaluation Report. Recommendations and actions will then be incorporated into the TT Integrated Emergency Plan in readiness for the Table Top Exercise in September 2010.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Exercise 'Start' was a well attended event and provided a timely opportunity for Tyne Tunnel and Category 1 responders to consider the procedural changes to the operational emergency response arrangements that the new tunnel will require.

7.2 Those considerations will be utilised within the new tunnel response procedures in readiness for the forthcoming Tyne Tunnel Validation exercises in September 2010 and January 2011.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 Members are requested to note this report.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Exercise Evaluation Report