



Home to School Transport Consultation
School Bus Services to Bolton Schools
June 2023

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Background

Some children benefit from free Home to School Transport either because of the distance they live to their nearest school or through specific family circumstances.

Local Authorities must provide free transport for all pupils of compulsory school age (5-16) if their nearest suitable school is:

- Beyond 2 miles (if below the age of 8) or
- Beyond 3 miles (if aged between 8 and 16).
- They must also make transport arrangements for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk.

In addition, Local Authorities must provide free transport where pupils are entitled to free school meals or their parents are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit if the nearest suitable schools are:

- Beyond 2 miles (for children over the age of 8 and under 11).
- Between 2 and 6 miles (if aged 11-16 and there are no more than three suitable nearer schools).
- Between 2 and 15 miles and the school is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief (aged 11-16).

Due to changes over several years, the Council is concerned that some of the services are operating outside of the current policy. The Council must ensure that all services provided are in line with current arrangements and policy while still fulfilling its statutory duties for all children who are eligible for free home to school transport.

The Consultation

On 6th March 2023 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council launched a consultation in respect of proposals to review a number of designated school bus services taking children who live in the Borough to schools in Bolton. The consultation concluded on Friday 19th May 2023.

An online questionnaire was available to persons resident in the Borough of Blackburn with Darwen

Consultees were firstly asked three questions:

Question 1:

Does your child attend Canon Slade School or Turton School or will commence Year 7 in September 2023?

Question 2:

Does your child or children qualify for free home to school transport provided by the Council?

Question 3:

Does your child or children travel to a Bolton School as a fare-paying passenger on a bus provided by the Council?

Secondly, consultees were presented with three statements:

Statement 1:

The Council currently subsidises home to school transport for fare-paying children in the Borough to travel to schools in the Bolton area, which is an opportunity not available elsewhere in the Borough.

Consultees were asked if they thought this was fair and were given the opportunity to express their views.

Statement 2:

The Council proposes to review and possibly remove bus routes which are not required to transport children who are eligible for free home to school transport.

Consultees were asked if they agreed with the proposal and were given the opportunity to express their views.

Statement 3:

The Council proposes to continue to allow, at its discretion, fare-paying children who are not eligible for free home to school transport and have been offered a place at a Bolton School commencing in September 2023 to use its Bolton school bus services until they complete their secondary education in Summer 2028.

Consultees were again asked if they agreed with the proposal and were given the opportunity to express their views.

In addition to the online consultation, a wide range of stakeholders was also invited to state their views. These included:

- Headteachers of Primary and Secondary schools in Darwen and the south of the Borough;
- Headteachers of Bolton Schools: Canon Slade School, Turton School, Sharples School and Thornleigh Salesian College;
- The Church of England Dioceses of Blackburn and Manchester;
- The Roman Catholic Diocese of Salford;
- The two Members of Parliament.

84 responses have been received either online or sent directly.

Responses to Questions

Q1. Child attends (or will in September 2023) Canon Slade HS or Turton HS.		
Yes	44	63%
No	26	37%
Q2. Child gets free Home to School Transport		
Yes	17	24%
No	53	76%
Q3. Child travels to Bolton schools as a fare-paying passenger on a bus provided by the Council.		
Yes	21	30%
No	32	46%
No response	17	24%
Statement 1. Is it fair to provide transport for children who do not get free transport - not available elsewhere in the Borough?		
Yes	44	63%
No	26	37%
Statement 2. The council proposes to revise or withdraw routes which are not required to transport children who are eligible for free home to school transport. Agree?		
Yes	10	14%
No	60	86%
Statement 3. The Council proposes to continue to allow, at its discretion, fare-paying children who are not eligible for free transport who have been offered a place at a Bolton school commencing in September 2023 to use its Bolton school bus services until they complete their secondary education in Summer 2028. Is this fair?		
Yes	53	76%
No	17	24%

Online Survey comments

Consultee number	<p>Question 1: The Council currently subsidises home to school transport for fare-paying children in the Borough to Travel to schools in the Bolton area, which is an opportunity not available elsewhere in the Borough.</p> <p>Consultees made the following comments on Question 1:</p>	<p>Question 2: The Council proposes to review and possibly remove bus routes which are not required to transport children who are eligible for free home to school transport.</p> <p>Consultees made the following comments on Question 2:</p>	<p>Question 3: The Council proposes to continue to allow. At its discretion, fare-paying children who are not eligible for free transport who have been offered a place at a Bolton school commencing in September 2023 to use its Bolton school bus services until they complete their secondary education in Summer 2028.</p> <p>Consultees made the following comments on Question 3:</p>
16590313	No comments		
16590315		The bus service is vital to attend a Bolton school and do not qualify for free transport	The route needs to continue being an option even if there is a cost
16592352	My son has/will have no opportunity To travel by bus to Canon Slade. I would be willing to pay without any subsidy.	Removing transport for the majority of the children because they don't qualify for free transport would be disastrous, for the children welfare, safeguarding and the environment.	As a village, Blackburn with Darwen council benefits massively from revenue as many properties are large with high council tax bands. We have no public transport and therefore the children have no other option to use to get to school. Our 2 closest schools are in Bolton, and sending children further to go to school in BwD would cost the council and environment more in the long term.

16595331	<p>My child is due to start Canon Slade in September. I believe there was a bus from pole lane in Darwen which a large number of students who attend Canon Slade used daily to commute but this has now been withdrawn. I am more than happy to pay the fees for a service for my child to attend a school outside the Borough but currently worried about how a just 11 year old come September will travel safely. Within the admissions policy for Canon Slade, students who reside outside the Borough who meet the threshold of points under faith, point 2 of the policy can receive an offer of a place. I feel it's important that a large school like Canon Slade that has a high number of students on roll each year into year 7 from Darwen that they are supported along with the council with travel. Why has the provision of the service been withdrawn from the bus on Pole Lane Darwen to Canon Slade?</p>	<p>These should only be removed if there is no requirement. Currently, within the Darwen area, there is justification for a service for students who reside in Darwen to travel to Canon Slade. There is a need and parents don't want anyone to pay they are happy to pay but the service needs to be there.</p>	<p>This is reassuring to hear. Can more information be shared with Canon Slade who can share this with parents for September?</p>
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16595609	<p>It is fair as the area has no public transport as an alternative. It leaves Canon Slade pupils unable to access any transport at all. There is no option to attend any schools without public transport regardless of faith and eligibility criteria. The geographical location to the south of BwD makes walking a dangerous route for all children attending high schools in Bolton. The distance is too far to walk on unsafe and unlit roads. As an adult you would not do this in the dark do why consider a child doing this? It poses a huge safeguarding risk. If buses were to be taken away to other schools as well as Canon, then how does that get explained to the DfE in terms of attendance? Surely attendance needs to be considered as it is high on DfE agenda this year. There is no option or choice to attend schools other than Turton at present as lack of public transport means this choice has been taken away for working families. Children that are in college or want to start apprenticeships are at a huge disadvantage due to geographical location of their home. Children can't attend work experience placements as part of their wider school curriculum as there is no transport. Reducing this further puts children at a huge disadvantage. Some areas of the south of Blackburn still have a subsidised service and some have no service at all, where is the equality? The education adjudication report for submissions to Turton has cited Edgworth as affiliated with Bolton, it is also under the same faith Diocese of Manchester whereas other of BwD are under BwD Diocese. Geographical location needs to be considered as nearest local schools other than Bolton schools are further away and still</p>		
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	<p>need transport in line with the transport policy. Private fares to Canon Slade school are £4.50 per day per pupil based on 11 children sharing a taxi and people carrier. A minibus is over £10 a day per child. A coach shared with another school is nearly £40 a week.....is this a fair cost to pass to families in the current climate? Costs would be similar to Turton and more to BwD schools. Having no public transport puts outlying rural communities at a disproportionate advantage to other areas of BwD especially when parents are working as well. If you don't reach the criteria for free school transport and there are no public buses, you have to work to pay bills how do you hold down a job and get children to school? Decisions and consultations on an already lacking service are putting families at risk of collapse when discretionary decisions can be made. Where there is no public transport or other school transport, children's primary need to be safeguarded in attending a school of their choice and doing so safely is being neglected by BwD Council.</p>		
16596839	<p>This currently doesn't happen for children living in Edgworth travelling to Canon Slade School.</p>	<p>You need to make schools accessible for children who go there. Edgworth has no options for Canon Slade pupils to travel to school. This needs to change asap as it is having a detrimental effect on the pupils.</p>	
16602794		<p>For some parents this is the only way of getting children to school, I live in Belmont and the public bus is very unreliable and once every 2 hours</p>	
16604605	<p>Bus service is very poor. No service from Edgworth</p>	<p>Appalling! My child will have transport to school</p>	

16605170		I feel that children should be transported to a good school outside of the Borough for safeguarding purposes and so not to discriminate on faith school choices as the schools within the Borough are not of a good standard and results are low.	This would be fair to the parents
16608759			
16617603	If it's not available for other children in the borough it shouldn't be available for these children just because they are travelling to Bolton schools. Parents have chosen to send their children to schools further away and it's their responsibility to get them to school.		Just because parents have chosen a Bolton school shouldn't mean they automatically get transport available.
16620277	Yes, agree but the cost is still expensive and the reliability and times of the service is poor.	Fine however, children need access to transport for attending high school as parents have work commitments and so require a value for money and reliable service. Thornleigh School must be considered in such plans for school transport as bus routes are currently poor and not fit for purpose.	This is a must - 100% this has to continue especially from the outer villages including Belmont to local secondary schools in Bolton.

16623478	<p>Children should have the opportunity to travel to the schools in Bolton. If this is removed, what school do the council want children to attend? Would it not cost more money in petrol getting them to school further away in the borough? We pay our council tax for this service and it is unfair to expect parents to not be able to send their children to a school out of the borough. Where are the closest high schools after Turton and Canon Slade? We are a small village and I simply feel we are forgotten about and ignored. My son is of a young age. I live in Belmont and pay my council taxes to BWD. I want to send him to a high school in Bolton. I expect he will be able to attend those schools and as a fare paying child I can't understand why he can't. I almost feel like you're secluding him for living in a small village. He has a right to a fair education of where he sees fit and I do not find it acceptable that a council seems a bus to be able to attend those said schools should result him being excluding from that.</p>	<p>You are excluding a child's right to education based on their family's income.</p>	<p>It should be extended after 2028. What about children who are due to start school in the next few years?</p>
16624637	<p>From my understanding the buses cover villages / areas, including Belmont, where there are no suitable public transport alternatives. I live in Belmont. My daughter is in year 4 currently. She is due to move to secondary school in 2025. The current proposed changes will leave my daughter and many of her peers who live in the village with no transport to a local school. We live in a more remote area and approximately 5 miles from the nearest school. There are roads without pavements which are also national speed limit. Walking is therefore not a safe or viable option.</p>	<p>Removing services for children eligible for free transport will also prevent fare paying children from accessing school which is in fact their only means of transport to and from school.</p>	<p>Children already have their secondary school places confirmed for September 2023. Parents will have made their decisions about school choice based on a number of factors, including location, accessibility and transport. It is essential that these families continue to be provided with a service.</p>

16626071	Children on the outskirts of Bolton but live in BwD will be at a massive disadvantage if the council didn't fund this. BwD should provide alternative options during this consultation as we don't know what these are so how can we comment effectively.		
16641520	Our bus to Canon Slade was cancelled And isn't subsidised We have to pay a private bus service or catch the train!	We have a child in Year 9 and her bus route from Darwen Centre was cancelled	There no longer is a bus
16650754		If they are paying fare students on this route then they will miss out if the service is stopped because there are no free home to school transport students travelling. Maybe better to cut down the stops rather than cancel the route fully.	It's an excellent service that people need to get to schools that aren't as local and struggle to get transport other ways, the bus also provides a safe place for the students.
16662256	My child used to travel to and from school on the fare-paying bus until it was cancelled this year. We now have to drive both ways every day since it's sudden and unconsulted (with us as parents, anyway) cancellation. At no point were we even given the choice to pay more for the service. The statement used to be true and fair. And it was probably heavily subsidised. But it isn't true or fair now		For the proposed provision to be \"fair\" for those of us whose children started at Canon Slade on the basis of the fare-paying provision and long before the service cancellation, we need to have the same or similar route reintroduced. I am aware there is one other bus offered currently but its route goes entirely the other side of Darwen and would be no use to us.
16597628		To do so would isolate Belmont children and prohibit them from going to the faith school of their choice. I am not quite sure what the criteria is to be eligible for free home to school transport - perhaps you could enlighten me? Here in Belmont we are BWD council ratepayers too.	Why should it stop at 2028 - what about children who are in years 5 and below at primary school now and wish to attend a faith school?
16690526			

16691832	The children are unable to get a public bus to school, regardless of which school they go to as there is no service at a time suitable for the start of the school day so are unable to use a bus pass so their travel should be subsidised	As mentioned previously. There MUST be a transport system in place for children to get to school independently and this service is currently the only one available	It should remain in place permanently
16692139	Where we live the closest secondary school is in Bolton and is called Turton High School and was built to provide for the children of Turton/Edgworth. There are no public bus services at all from Edgworth. It makes a lot more sense environmentally to provide a bus service to the closest secondary schools than expect parents to drive children to schools further afield. TBH I would prefer Edgworth to revert back to being part of Bolton as it is by address anyway.	There are no public bus services from Edgworth at all to anywhere, how are children supposed to get to school!!!	Bus services to Bolton should be available in some capacity anyway.
16692151		How do children get to school if there is no public transport or school buses, Turton School is too far away for children to walk.	
16694299	Why does it matter why the school is if it is the best one for my child? I am paying 3.75 a day for fares and I am happy to do so to get to the school of our choice (I would pay more if needed).	Allow people the choice.	
16702020			
16708651	It doesn't seem particularly subsidised - £2.50 per day still equates to a high cost for families. And it can be an unreliable service at times too Plus presumably it's caused by not having any other schools to access nearby - the schools in Darwen would be even further and surely more costly to provide transport too.	I don't particularly understand the statement. If bus services are not needed then yes they should be removed. But if the service to Turton school was removed then it would simply mean many cars being used to drive the kids to school twice a day, which I'm sure is not what anyone is trying to achieve.	Kids need transport to access the school

16743580	It increases parental choice of school for their child	This is an essential service particularly for rural pupils	It is essential service
16757011			There is no public transport the children can use to get to school from Edgworth.
16767200			What about children beyond this period?
16774100	Edgworth does not have a public bus service. The children can only get to school by lifts from parents. There is a need for a school bus and also a public service bus,	Canon Spade school, Turton High School and Thornleigh pupils need transport from Edgworth	Please provide some kind of transport from Edgworth.
16787903			
16790219			
16804589	I think most parents are willing to pay a reduced fare as long there is a service available near to home that will take them to and from school their school	There MUST be a wider consideration made than just eligibility for free home to school transport. The Council's own local transport policy priorities; to improve access to services, reduce carbon emissions, increase safety & security, improve road safety - Must also be considered if transport to schools is removed then this will significantly impact on all those priorities as many children are taken by car as well as being left to walk part way & cross busy roads to get to school every day.	Yes this would be welcomed. It is essential the Edgworth to Canon Slade and Turton services are included in this proposal and reinstated. There are many children in the village and surrounding area that will rely on this service from Sept 2023. Without the service they will be cut off from public transport from what are their local high schools. Numerous working parents having to ferry children back and forth in their cars has a significant impact on the already congested roads and on air quality in the area, also children potentially having to make their own way home walking long distances, when parents are at work, raises safeguarding concerns and is a worrying situation.
16819128	My son is at Sharples the service can be late & occasionally hasn't turned up	The service is crucial for children to get to school what else do they do?	

16823871	Actually you do not make provision for children travelling to Canon Slade currently so the statement is not accurate. I think this should be an option for those who choose the closest school, which is out of borough or because it is the closest faith school	The bus routes are invariably also for fare paying children and local residents. Rural areas bus services need to be protected for all. Often these rural areas pay considerably higher council tax due to house bandings and yet are denied good connectivity. This is not helpful in promoting less car use or reducing isolation of elderly populations.	Again this is not an accurate statement as the service has already been removed. It needs to be reinstated to support the educational outcomes of children, provide choice based on faith and/or distance and support successful year 7 transition from rural primary schools such as Turton and Edgworth and Hoddlesden
16835120	Loaded question as a Bolton school is the closest school so should be subsidised. Really needs rewording.	As a council that we pay council tax to a basic requirement should be a bus service for all areas of your borough especially when you have had funding to achieve this	For some areas this is essential as there is no bus service at all and therefore children can't get to school unless parents take them which puts enormous strain on working families who need employers who understand lateness in the morning and early finishes.
16835615	As Turton and Canon are the closest schools	Think you need to offer transport for all your children in your borough	There is no bus service in Edgworth so a bus to Turton and Canon Slade is vital
16864490		There should be school transport available to get my children to their NEAREST school, which is Turton high school	Again, it is only right to provide transport to Turton which is the nearest school to where we live.
16876878	Note: we would pay for a bus if one was available.	The availability of bus services to schools for the rural community is required regardless of eligibility for free home to school transport. No school / public bus services to allow children to attend schools within a reasonable distance or a chosen faith is poor. Also, children from Edgworth would qualify for free home to school transport, incurring a cost to the council, if they attended a school in BwD	And beyond. This should cover nearest schools including those of chosen faith. Again note if children from rural village had to attend a BwD school then free transport would have to be provided

16876926	<p>Although this may be a fair statement it does not apply universally to all schools. There was previously a school bus for fare-paying children from Darwen to Canon Slade via, Crowthorn and Edgworth however, this was abruptly stopped with 2 weeks' notice prior to the summer holidays in 2022. The consequence of which has been inconvenience and added stress to parents, who have had to make alternative arrangements and it has also led to a significant increase in traffic congestion and air pollution. How ironic given the push to achieve net zero!!</p>	<p>This again will lead to further significant rises in traffic congestion and air pollution, completely at odds with the drive to net zero. It could also force many parents to place their children in schools within Blackburn with Darwen, thus significantly increasing the financial burden on the council!</p>	<p>This right and proper.</p>
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16891874	<p>The whole of North Turton, i.e. Belmont, Chapeltown and Edgworth, only has transport links with Bolton schools i.e. Sharples, Turton and Canon Slade; there is no public transport to Blackburn or Darwen. There is a deep rooted social and cultural connection between North Turton and Bolton as many residents attended these schools as have their children over the generations. The boundary commission back in the 1970s split Turton into North Turton and South Turton and the former was transferred to BwD. However BwD Council has never realigned its strategy and therefore policies to embrace and support these rural communities, consequently all healthcare needs, transport and education needs are provided by Bolton Council. If these transport plans are enacted it will, in effect, mean the annexation of North Turton. Families have made fundamental and far reaching lifestyle decisions when choosing to reside in North Turton, this move by BwD Council will turn all that upside down and will cause considerable hardship and disruption to those families. BwD Council must either provide safe and robust transport links from the whole of North Turton to schools in Blackburn or continue with the present arrangements.</p>	<p>The council has a statutory obligation to these children.</p>	
16927530	<p>Schools in the Bolton area are the nearest secondary schools for children living in Belmont. These children cannot walk to school as it is too far. It is appropriate that the Council continues to subsidise or even pay the whole cost of transporting children to secondary schools in the Bolton area as there are no nearer schools in the Blackburn area.</p>	<p>The Council should leave things as they are, not all children are eligible for free home to school transport.</p>	

16965407	However, the bus that my children did get has been stopped which means it's harder for my children to get to school		
16965523	The fares are 75% more expensive than greater Manchester travel	Surely all children should have a choice of which school they attend, we are dazed in Belmont and it is the closest church school	Again what about children going forward, you are taking away choice and these are the closest schools
16965702	The council also has school buses for children to attend Walton me dale which is not in the area		
16966373			
16968864	Parental choice where children go to school is vital. Whilst we live Blackburn with Darwen, our nearest church school is Canon Slade		
16969697	It is much needed.	It shouldn't all just be about people on benefits - lots of families need this transport.	No all children going to those schools should be allowed to continue to use the transport
16994757	Living in Crowthorn the nearest high school are situated in Bolton to therefore not provide a means for those children to get to school and back safely is a major concern for a lot of families due to the remote location. I would happily pay an increase in fees to ensure the service is provided and continues to be.	As previously mentioned the closest schools are situated in Bolton. There is no available public transport from Crowthorn to Canon Slade which seriously impacts the safety of children getting to and from school	I have one child going to Canon Slade and a second who would start in 2026 and therefore I believe this service should continue beyond 2028
17031863	The Council currently do not subsidises home to school transport for fare-paying children in our area, no bus is available.		
17116852	I don't think the council should provide this service as children should be encouraged to attend their local high schools.	Children shouldn't be encouraged to travel out of area to schools that aren't in our local authority as this never gives the local schools the chance to improve and improve their intake if children keep travelling out of area.	

17116809	<p>This consultation is too narrow. My child will hopefully travel to Turton in 2025. This is the closest school, historically linked with Edgworth schools and where our children go for sports activities, dancing, swimming, etc. You would have to subsidize a bus to Darwen or Blackburn, so what really is the difference?</p> <p>An alternative would be a general bus service to Bolton and Darwen, for everyone to use.</p> <p>Could some of the parish precept money be used to support buses?</p>	<p>It is not our children's fault that there are no regular bus services they can use. They are too young to drive. If the village was inhabited only by people without children or who did not go to work, the borough would be the poorer for it.</p>	<p>But what about their younger siblings?</p>
17116901	<p>Edgworth is placed on the boundary with of Bolton, Bury and Blackburn/Darwen. There are no secondary schools locally that are a safe walk, making many reliant on buses of independently getting to school.</p> <p>As walking is not a feasible option, the expense of daily buses, especially if multiple children can be a significant financial burden.</p> <p>TURTON and canon spade school are the most popular schools for children in the area. We have a Bolton postcode but obviously Blackburn and Darwen council, which can often lead to difficulties with services such as children's centres and midwives and secondary schools, as those that apparently service the area aren't local or preferable to many.</p>	<p>This will lead to more cars on the already gridlocked roads. More parents having to take time off work.</p>	<p>Yes and no - what happens after 2028?</p>
17117727	<p>The children of Edgworth do not live in walking distance to any secondary school and therefore need to be able to get transport that is safe. This is a safeguarding issue and should not be withdrawn.</p>	<p>I feel many children would be at a disadvantage if this happened. It would also become a serious safeguarding issue for children who are residents of Edgworth, Turton.</p>	<p>But many children would be in this position who will start secondary education after 2023. I don't think it's fair as any local school to Edgworth is not walking distance.</p>

17117805	The only reason that my child doesn't catch a public bus to school is that there isn't that provision in Edgworth. We don't have a public bus service provided by the council from Edgworth in any direction, especially not into Bolton which is the direction required for most people, this not only includes children, but the elderly.	Are you not considering the safety of children who may have to walk through unsafe areas to school? The impact on the environment where parents need to transport individual children to school, and the social independence created through the use of public transport.	What happens to the next generation of school children from this remote rural location?
17118192	There is no bus transport currently available from Edgworth to Canon Slade. The removal of this service by your council is completely unacceptable and a despicable dereliction of your duties and responsibilities. I am disgusted that you deemed it fair and reasonable to remove all public transport options to get our children from Edgworth to their nearest faith school. You should be ashamed of yourselves.	See my previous statement. Removing all public transport options for children of Edgworth to their nearest secondary schools is completely despicable and you should be ashamed of yourselves.	If only there was a Bolton school service from Edgworth to Canon Slade.
17118332			Why end it in 2028? Let's not have an end date, surely?
17118776		We rely on the bus service from Edgworth to Turton School	
17119803			
17120365		Council should provide bus access for all those that require it - not just those that are eligible. This is not fair.	Although demographics are unlikely to change and same number of children will require transportation so why cap at 2028?
17120927			
17121051			

17127497	Due to our location and circumstances (he works 6am - 2pm, she does not drive), without council assistance to transport our daughter to school the only option would be taxi's which are well outside of our economic ability to cover.	This could force our daughter to attend a Darwen school where she has no friends and does not know the area, putting massive emotional strain and stress upon her and the family. Plus there are no public bus services between where we reside and Darwen, as we live in a remote location. Again our own working hours and lack of own transport would not enable us to transport our daughter to Darwen schools for school opening time. Private taxi costs are outside of our economic ability.	This only covers those stating secondary school from Sept 2023 and takes no account of those who would transfer to secondary school in 2024 and onwards who will be left to attend various schools all over Bolton or Blackburn areas being separated from friends and thrown into unknown schools. This will cause massive upset and stress on these children at what is already a difficult transitional time for them.
17146927			
17148260	This is a misleading statement. Regardless of council boundaries children should be able to access home to school transport to their closest schools. My child's closest school(s) are NOT in the borough so why would it make sense for us to send them there.	I am appalled that the council believes that restricting public transport to get children SAFELY to school would be considered. So if we all decided to send our children to schools further away in the Borough a bus service would have to be provided - where then is the cost saving?	A service should be provided to get children in the borough to their closest school indefinitely. I am appalled at this idea of removing it. It is a really sad state of affairs that we are not looking after the best interests of our children as a priority.
17220536	I don't understand the statement.	I don't know.	My children go and one will go to Sharples school and live in Belmont, how did this affect them?

17222774	<p>Since we live so close to the boundary, it is correct and appropriate for children to be able to access their closest schools and have options to select between Canon Slade and Turton, in order to provide them with the best and most efficient ways of getting to school. Since we have no other public transport options from our villages of Edgworth, Chapeltown and Crowthorn is only fair and right that the council sees providing vital services as a key priority on behalf of its residents and our youngsters. The council has discretionary powers to maintain these services (and to reinstate these for the unfortunate children and families of Canon Slade who have been so severely and adversely affected by the ending of the commercial service in September 2022). The council should make these services a priority.</p>	<p>This is destructive and damaging to the welfare of children and families who are living close to the boundary and wish to access their closest schools - and also have a choice between Canon Slade and Turton. This whole situation is unique in that we have no other public transport possibilities. The council should be providing both school services and public transport options to its constituents which take into account the movement across and between boundaries. This is a totally unfair, destructive and inconsiderate move if the council do not use their discretionary funding to protect vital services for residents who contribute fairly to the council budget.</p>	<p>No, these services - school services and public transport which links the villages on the boundary to both Blackburn and Bolton should be available into the longer term. These villages are otherwise cut off and isolated, to the detriment of children, families and residents. The council should be using its discretionary funding to protect and preserve what is necessary for the people living in these areas close to the boundary.</p>
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17236283	<p>The council does not currently provide any school transport to Canon Slade school which is the closest faith school for children living in Edgworth. This was cancelled at very short notice. There are no trains and there is no public transport provided within the village. There is no option for parents (or anyone living in Edgworth) other than to drive. As work hours prohibit this we rely on friends and family to help out or on taxi's which leaves safeguarding concerns. Moving schools in the middle of GCSE and A level studies is also not an option we should be forced to have to consider. The location of Edgworth means that Bolton schools are closer but we have been left with no options. Blackburn with Darwen need to review transport provision as a whole for all its rural communities.</p>		<p>The council should continue to provide school transport for its rural communities living close to the Bolton borders to attend schools in Bolton.</p>
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17240181	<p>North Turton (i.e. Belmont, Chapeltown and Edgworth) only has transport links with Bolton Schools (Sharples, Turton and Canon Slade).</p> <p>There is no public transport between North Turton and Blackburn or Darwen.</p>	<p>Many residents in North Turton attended Bolton schools, as have their children and this has created a deep seated connection between North Turton and Bolton schools for its educational needs.</p> <p>Despite North Turton being transferred to BwDBC after the dissolution of Turton in 1970, it never adjusted its policies to embrace the needs of the rural communities that make up North Turton.</p>	<p>Should the proposed changes to the transport plan be implemented, not only will it mean the isolation of the children of North Turton educationally and socially, it will create an additional financial burden on families that are already struggling in the current economic situation, ultimately resulting in many leaving the area to villages closer to the schools their children already attend.</p> <p>This would no doubt have a financial impact on the economic welfare of the North Turton region as a whole.</p> <p>When considering your proposed plans, I would suggest, in line with the duty of care we must all consider for younger generations, you either provide safe and reliable transport routes from the whole of North Turton to schools within the Blackburn district, or continue with the present arrangement, so we may all continue to benefit from the presence of these families and children within North Turton.</p>
17250518	<p>It is very expensive and not subsidised.</p>	<p>How are children meant to get to Canon Slade or Turton if no bus is provided? I chose Canon Slade because I wanted a faith school; such a proposal would actually be discriminatory towards church-goers.</p>	<p>Children offered places after 2023 should also be entitled to transport as they have been for more than 20 years.</p>

Summary of Direct Responses

Date	From	Comments
1: 7 th March 2023	Ms C Bach – Turton High School	Thank you for your email regarding the consultation about school transport. A number of our students rely on the school buses to get to and from school, they would find it difficult to get to school without the service being provided. You mention that a potential solution might be to withdraw a little used bus; can you tell me which one this would be and if students would be able to get a bus on another route?
2: 10 th March 2023	Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education, Diocesan Offices, Clayton House, Walker Office Park. Blackburn. BB1 2QE	<p>I have been asked to provide a response on behalf of the Board of Education.</p> <p>Further to your email regarding the consultation process on home to school bus services from the Darwen area to Bolton schools, an area of potential concern is the preservation of parental choice for church schools for parents across the borough.</p> <p>St Wilfrid's Church of England Academy's admissions criteria gives preference to children of a parent who is a member of the UK Interfaith Network. As a result of the review children whose parents met such criteria would, it could be argued, have their choice of faith school limited as they may be unable to access or afford transportation to more than one faith school; this is due to the fact that the school is the only Church of England secondary school within Blackburn with Darwen.</p> <p>An additional, more pressing, issue which the review may cause is the fact that should any parent within the borough, and whose child currently attends a faith school in Bolton, be unable to continue to send their child to the school for financial reasons the child would be unable to automatically gain admittance to St. Wilfred's as the school is already oversubscribed. This would, unless any appeal were successful, result in the pupil attending a community, as opposed to a faith school.</p> <p>Clearly both issues represent a limiting of choice and provision for parents of faith.</p>

<p>3: 10th March 2023</p>	<p>Ms W</p>	<p>I am responding to an email that was forwarded to Belmont residents. We live on the High Street in Belmont and have done so for 5 years. We have 3 children all attending Canon Slade School. My youngest is in Year 7 and I expect him to continue at Canon Slade into Sixth Form which will mean he is there until 2029.</p> <p>With reference to the school bus provided by Blackburn and Darwen Council at a cost of £1.75 per journey, per child. We used the bus quite a bit in my eldest's first year and as it was only him requiring the service, we found it just about affordable with the 10% saving by purchasing a yearly pass. It became unaffordable once my 2nd child started at Canon and even more so with my 3rd Child. To send my 3 children on the bus for. A whole week in both directions it would cost £52.50. (not including 10% discount). There's no sibling discount. I think you can see from this figure why we have chosen to use our own vehicles for at least 7 trips a week. I have very mixed feelings about this as I pass the "clean air zone" signs every week (now under consideration of course). How can it be right for us to be contributing to the pollution- this thought is compounded by the fact I'm often following the school bus (925) down the very same road.</p> <p>It is a ridiculous situation; however we do need the school bus and will increasingly need the bus as am in the near future taking on more work and won't be able to make the trips anymore. I have found the situation a constant frustration and have often been slapped in the face by Blackburn and Darwen council workers reminding me that I "didn't choose the nearest school" so it's my problem. Our choice for Canon Slade was based on our faith but also our children's lives are all in Bolton- football/ basketball/cricket. All Darwen secondary schools are further from us than Canon Slade.</p> <p>I would like to mention we do pay our council tax; my husband works in Blackburn and so we are contributing to the council funds in various ways. Whilst I appreciate the council is finding this service costly it is significantly costing me as well. Beyond a normal school bus cost - it really is expensive. There is no other public bus that makes a drop anywhere near Canon Slade. If the service is removed, it will leave us with a serious problem that isn't easy to solve.</p> <p>I think it is good that the council is reviewing these routes but maybe a broader approach would serve more people- if there were more routes to other parts of Bolton other than just 1 bus to Bolton Interchange it's possible that the school bus would not be necessary. And perhaps the cost to the customer wouldn't be as high too and would save on pollution from using private vehicles.</p>
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4: 14 th March 2023	Ms Y	<p>From September 2022 Blackburn with Darwen Council ceased to operate the 981 bus from Darwen to Canon Slade school. There was no consultation period and this left lots of families with very limited/unsafe options for our children to get to school last September.</p> <p>I was very apprehensive about sending my 11 year old son on a train and then him walking a distance in a place he doesn't know to get to school. I feel there are safeguarding issues around this. The bus should go straight into the gates as it does with many other schools.</p> <p>This is obviously a funding issue and as Darwen Town Council I believe some Council tax is paid by residents and you are in receipt of a percentage of this and was hoping maybe some funding could be offered through this. This should run as a statutory bus service as the children can't walk to school within 3 miles and when parents made a choice of Canon Slade for their children there was a fully operating bus. This should enable our children to be transported safely to school from our rural location.</p>
5: 15 th March 2023	Ms B	<p>I have been in contact with Jake Berry MP who has suggested I make contact with you regarding the cancellation of the 981 School Bus from Darwen – Canon Slade Bolton.</p> <p>This service was cancelled from September 2022 due to, I believe, lack of funding from Blackburn Council. I understand that this is now under review and am hoping this ruling will be overturned. The School bus was a life saver for myself and the other parents who do not live on general bus routes.</p> <p>This has caused huge logistical problems for us and is having a detrimental knock on effect to my daughter.</p> <p>Myself and my partner have both had to juggle work to ensure my child can get to school and return home safely, meaning we are working longer and unsociable hours.</p> <p>We live 2 miles away from the nearest train station and our experience of the trains has not been a positive one. Several children including my daughter have been followed off the train to school.</p> <p>Currently, the school has informed us of a “flasher” hanging around the train station and the walking route to school.</p> <p>I would be very grateful if you could reconsider the cancellation of the 981 bus service. I am sure that there are parents who are hoping to send their children to Canon Slade who are not now able to apply due to the lack of public transport.</p>

6: 16 th March 2023	Mrs U	<p>I raised my concerns last year when the Darwen to Canon Slade bus got stopped. It has meant that my daughter is no longer independent in getting herself to and from school as she was before. It has also affected my working hours so that I can get her to and from the train station impacting all the family.</p> <p>I've lost count this year how many times the trains have been on strike or there's a signal fault. They are very unreliable.</p> <p>Using the train also means a 10 minute walk to school which I had safety concerns over.</p> <p>When choosing a school for my daughter we picked Canon Slade as we are a Christian family and wanted her to attend a C of E school. Compared to other schools it was outstanding and offered subjects other schools didn't and my daughter is a keen swimmer and the swimming facilities were another big bonus. It's been a fantastic school and with limited choice of schools in Darwen all of which are poor performing, I feel we have made the right choice. We have just been let down with the transport links.</p> <p>There are a lot of children that attend Canon Slade from Darwen, Huddlesden and Edgworth that this had impacted.</p> <p>I really hope the transport links can be addressed so children can get to school reliably independently and safely!</p> <p>Perhaps if Darwen had outstanding or even good secondary schools then sending children out of town wouldn't have to be considered. I have a younger daughter currently at primary school and I already have concerns where to send her for secondary now these transport links have been taken from us.</p>
7: 18 th March 2023	Ms T	<p>Hello, I've just seen the message that Julie Slater has put on Facebook regarding bus services. I would be very grateful if this bus service to Canon Slade would be considered as I have 1 son already there and hopefully my other 2 children will be attending in the near future.</p> <p>We live on Roman Road, Darwen.</p>
8: 23d March 2023	Ms C	<p>Hello</p> <p>I wish to clarify the situation regarding the above school bus service from Darwen to Canon Slade school in Bolton.</p> <p>My son is currently year 10 and hopes to continue into Sixth Form and relies on the bus as it comes through Tockholes where we live to get to school and back every day.</p> <p>I'm most alarmed at rumours that the service is under threat as there is no other way of getting him there every day.</p>

<p>9: 23rd March 2023</p>	<p>Ms S</p>	<p>Having read that the council are reviewing the provision of bus services to Bolton Schools I am writing to express my concerns and frustrations on the whole situation.</p> <p>My child attends Year 7 at Canon Slade School and we were caught up in the whole debacle last summer of cancellation of the bus service via Pole Lane weeks before they were due to start. Whilst not wanting to go over how worrying and stressful for all of us that situation was, we have had to sort out alternative arrangements. Not ideal but a bus service that provides a level of safety for our still young children.</p> <p>Yes I chose to send my child to this school, mostly based on the fact that no school in this borough provides the results and facilities it does, and also at that time that there was safe transportation available.</p> <p>My son's safety is my main priority and the train, in my opinion does not provide this and is also not reliable. Therefore for safeguarding reasons it is necessary to have a bus service that services this school from Darwen. Whilst the 925 service from Darwen Vale is currently our only option, servicing also Turton School, I'm baffled on why the same principle could not be applied to the 480 service? Drop at Canon Slade after Turton?</p> <p>I trust that the council reviews the provision of these buses based firstly on the safety of the boroughs children, and would ask that timely decisions are made to allow for parents to organise and plan the care of their children.</p>
<p>10: 25th March 2023</p>	<p>Ms S</p>	<p>I am sure you are aware that the Canon Slade School Transport was cancelled in July 2022 and nothing has been put in place to get the children from Edgworth to school and back home again. This has caused serious problems for parents and children. Parents have had to make their own arrangements for getting the children to and from school. Employers so far have been sympathetic and have been willing to overlook poor timekeeping but this cannot be guaranteed to continue.</p> <p>The children have already suffered in their education because of lockdowns and now strike action by teachers.</p> <p>There is no way for the children to get to school as there is no public bus service in Edgworth so it is vitally important that some kind of school transport is provided for them.</p> <p>Currently representations are being made to the council for a daily public service bus particularly at peak times. This would enable the children at school at Canon Slade and Turton High School to travel to school as was possible before the bus service was removed some years ago.</p>

		I would ask for your support in solving the Transport for the students as it is having a detrimental effect on their education.
11: 9 th April 2023	Ms M	I would like this email to be formally recognised as a response to the consultation. I am utterly disgusted at the inference that Blackburn with Darwen Council are considering removing the bus services to Bolton schools which will completely cut off transport for children in a remote village whose parents and carers pay some of the highest tax in the area. I feel the consultation itself is disgraceful as it gives the public no idea of the options the Council is considering. The consultation is not transparent nor open with the public and it can only be assumed that the Council have already made its decision and are using the consultation as a tick box exercise.
12: 24 th April 2023	Mr Q	My wife and I would like to support the request to re introduce a school bus from Edgworth to Cannon Slade, mornings and return trip after school. Also support the introduction of a new bus route supporting Edgworth into Bolton.
13: 5 th May 2023	Turton & Edgworth Primary School	I shared this with my families in March and reminded them of the deadline again today. My comments would be very specific to Edgworth and to Edgworth Primary School (a BwD school). I will keep this very concise as there is only one real point but please understand it's importance. Our unique locality (Bolton/BwD) is awkward. There is really no other word for it. However, what the Executive Board needs to consider very carefully, is where a decision to remove further bus services leaves Edgworth School – a BwD school. We have falling numbers which have been impacted by the removal of service to Canon Slade already. The facts are potentially uncomfortable, but facts nonetheless. The community at Edgworth does not see Darwen as a feasible option for secondary schools. The route into Darwen is difficult and long. There are also no services so things like extra-curricular clubs become ever more difficult to manage. Therefore, it is a fact that they look to, predominantly, Canon Slade and Turton High School in Bolton. This is a very long-standing, even historic, situation. The removal of bus services (both public transport and school bus services) only serves to isolate the community further. The net result is that is less families are choosing Edgworth Primary school or – perhaps more pertinent – choosing to remove their children 'early' to attend private schools such as Bolton School or Bury Grammar. This means our numbers on roll are falling and puts our BwD school at significant financial hardship. Please don't think I am naïve or unreasonable. I understand the financial challenges that the LA face. I understand costs must be cut. It's an awful time. However, it feels very much like as Edgworth is

		<p>somewhat distant, an outlier, and that all I ever hear is how affluent the community is, they become the first to suffer cuts. It is an affluent area – undoubtedly. It can't be denied IN GENERAL; however, you might be surprised that it is not everyone that has lots of money here! There are plenty of families struggling to make ends meet and they still deserve to belong and to have access to services. It feels incredibly unfair that my children have access to far less resources and a lower number of adults simply because they are less deprived. It's not their fault! They have great opportunities at home and they're very lucky; however, they really should not have LESS opportunities at school simply because of their parents' financial situation.</p> <p>Anyway, rant over! I know that the dire financial predicament of schools is not your job and that removing the bus services is not the only reason for all the above but it is very likely to contribute to further falling numbers at our school and therefore likely further reductions in the offer to our children. We have already had to have a significant staff change management process.</p> <p>I just ask that this point is raised and clearly understood by the executive board upon their meeting as they need to be fully aware of the very likely, very negative impact on a BwD school.</p> <p>I'm happy to speak with anyone, meet with anyone or share any more thoughts is needed; even if just informally.</p>
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14: 17 th May 2023	Ms P	<p>We have two daughters attending Canon Slade School, just across the boundary from where we live in Chapeltown. Since September of last year we have been ferrying them back and forth twice a day to complete a school run that we believed would be possible via a bus service. The fact that we live so close to a boundary should not be a factor in being able to select between our closest local schools. Turton and Canon Slade are both embedded into our community and diverting to Darwen for High School is not nearly as close or efficient.</p> <p>As residents, we should be able to expect our children and families to be just as important as others across the borough. If we had public transport linking our villages to Bolton or Darwen, this would all be a little easier to understand. If this were the case, then removing or failing to provide school services would not be leaving us in the awful situation we find ourselves in at present. Our youngest daughter can no longer walk to her primary school because of the pressure of two school runs a day. We are both self employed and this has cost us money and is both exhausting and unfathomable.</p> <p>Public transport through our villages is a vital service which we are currently missing out on. These are not small villages either - we are disconnected from the borough as a result of the lack of public transport. To remove our bus services for school children wishing to access their closest local schools is appalling.</p> <p>The situation is unique in the fact that we have no other public transport alternatives for our children and the council has a discretionary funding amount which should be precisely for situations and purposes like our own. We are residents who contribute to the borough fairly and as such, we should be considered fairly. We do not believe this to be the case at present.</p> <p>Please consider our thoughts and the negative impact of the situation the council's policy and refusal to see the bigger picture is having on our lives as a family and for our community at large. Please give us your response and we look forward to hearing from you,</p>
15: 17 th May 2023	Canon Slade High School	Letter from School follows

<p>16: 19th May 2023 17:28</p>	<p>North Turton Parish Council</p>	<p>I am writing to express my real concerns about the proposed withdrawal of school transport.</p> <p>Surely this should be about providing the best education for BWDBC residents not a cost cutting exercise which it clearly is.</p> <p>North Turton, comprising the villages of Belmont, Chapelton and Edgworth a rural area, is already geographically isolated from Blackburn with no public transport links or nearby secondary schools. Whereas Turton High School was built specifically to serve the educational needs of the area hence where many students logically choose to go.</p> <p>To now cut off school transport links as well would completely ignore the educational and social impact on students, the financial burden on their parents and also seriously affect the North Turton economy when, because of schooling problems, parents no longer choose to live in the area.</p> <p>The existing arrangements work and therefore benefit the local community if these are changed, just to save money, then BWDBC should be ashamed of the way it is treating North Turton and needs to accept responsibility for this part of the Borough as much as any other area and treat it equally and fairly.</p>
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CANON SLADE SCHOOL

HEAD TEACHER: MRS K SUDWORTH BED NPQH



17 May 2023

Dear Mr Threlfall,

Thank you for the opportunity to be involved in the consultation for home to school transport from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council areas.

As a Church of England school we have served families for many years from surrounding areas and provided a Christian education for young people from five different local authorities, including Blackburn with Darwen. We are not an academically selective school and our admissions criteria does not discriminate against families beyond the Bolton boundary.

We currently have 18 school buses that drop off and pick up at school, either as a result of public transport or a subsidised bus via the 5 Local Authority areas we serve to support parental choice in the selection of a secondary school. All the buses are well used and wherever possible are shared with other schools in the locality.

As a state funded school we do not provide any school transport for children getting to and from school (with the exception of children with SEND or who are looked after). We have no funding for general transport and are currently under financial pressure like all other schools.

Currently over **100 students** attend our school from Blackburn with Darwen Borough areas including villages and towns such as; Edgworth, Belmont, Chapletown, Hoddlesden and Darwen. Any changes to the current bus services through the proposal will have devastating effects on families and restrict parental choice to attend a faith school that is very often the nearest one to their home, even if it is out of their borough.

Evidence of this has been all too clear and painful for many of our families when Blackburn with Darwen Council stopped subsidising the 981, hence the privately owned bus company could no longer profitably run the service from September 2022. Given that the villages the bus served have no longer any public transport, families have been left to find alternative solutions which has had a significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of a number of our students. It is inconceivable to see a local rural community with no public transport services to support families given the drive for improved public transport both locally and at a national level.

As a school and as part of the Bishop Fraser Trust we would categorically support the continuation of the designated school bus routes to Canon Slade School to ensure that families living in Blackburn with Darwen Borough continue to be given the opportunity to attend the school of their choice by supporting them with a transport policy that will allow this.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Karen Sudworth
Headteacher



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Bolton Schools Consultation

