

Rossendale

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Comment text:

Related subject: Southern and western

I would like to place on record my concerns about the new wards proposed for Southern and Western Rossendale. I live in Eden and I have canvassed and leafletted Helmshore, Greenfield, Worsley and Eden for many years and know the area and its electors well.

Proposed new wards: Option 1 - see Map 1
Haslingden North

You note in the report that you would welcome views as to whether there is a clear divide within the town of Haslingden and if so where the boundary could be drawn. I consider that there is, but it is not the current one which cuts across the very centre of Haslingden. My proposal is for a ward which would keep the community of Haslingden within a single ward. It has the by-pass as its boundary, which is a natural divide, and takes in the current HG2, HG3, HW2 and the eastern portion of HW3. The northern boundary of the ward would be slightly adjusted from the current divide between HW1 and HW3 running along Blackburn/Roundhill Road and Clough End Road. This would separate Haslingden from the communities of Acre, Rising Bridge and Stonefold which do not feel part of Haslingden. Indeed a few years ago a vigorous local campaign was mounted to have road signs put up to identify the boundary between Haslingden and Acre.

Helmshore ward

I agree that the boundary should be adjusted to run along the by-pass rather than Jubilee Road, but otherwise Helmshore remains relatively unchanged. When sweeping changes are proposed elsewhere there is no case made that the current boundaries should be preserved. There is no community of Helmshore as such, there is no centre or main shopping area and residents themselves refer to “old” or “top” Helmshore which is

the original village centred on Holcombe Road, and “new” or “bottom” Helmshore which is the predominantly newer infill between Helmshore village and Haslingden. My proposals involve significant changes to Helmshore and flesh out the concept of a single western ward for the rural fringes mentioned by one respondent to the original consultation. Under my proposal the by-pass would form the majority of the boundary between Helmshore and Haslingden with the exception of the northern section comprising Acre, and Stonefold which is on the Haslingden side but would form part of the enlarged Helmshore ward.

At the other end of the ward a portion would join with Eden and BG1 to form an enlarged Eden ward as outlined in the next section.

Haslingden South and Edenfield

The existing Eden ward is challenging in terms of effective and convenient local government as it is geographically large, made up of a number of separate communities, and part of it is inaccessible by road without a detour through Bury MBC. People in Eden do not look to Haslingden for local services as Ramsbottom and Rawtenstall are more convenient. Given that Eden ward will have to increase in size it is appropriate to include current HG1 ward which is the Ewood Bridge area up to the major roundabout on the A56 Haslingden by-pass where it meets the A680. However, no rationale has been presented for the inclusion of the portion of Greenfield on the western side of the A680 up to Beaconsfield Street. I consider this area to be a better fit with a ward centred on Haslingden as outlined above. The ward which is proposed is geographically very large, it is nearly 7 miles as the crow flies from top to bottom and 11 miles by road, does not reflect any community identity, and is at the very top of the range for electors per councillor making effective and convenient local government more difficult. Also when looking at the projected numbers of electors I have a concern.

The increase in population in Eden ward between 2022 and 2028 is largely, if not wholly, down to proposed new housing included in the local plan. The spreadsheet has a notation “new build 1.57” which I assume means that the projected number of additional electors is the number of new builds in the period multiplied by 1.57. I think this is too low. Most if not all the new properties are family homes where there may be 2 or possibly 3 potential electors if children over 18 are included. I accept that the 1.57 figure may be based in some part on an assumption about properties where there is no-one on the electoral roll, but figures provided by Rossendale Borough Council show that while the average across the borough is 12% in Eden it is only 8%. So, I consider the 1.57 figure is too low for Eden and the likely number of electors in 2028 could easily be above the 9% variance, which is already the highest variance with the exception of Whitworth where there are special factors not relevant to this ward.

Elsewhere in the recommendations the significance of the A56 by-pass as a natural boundary is recognised, but the proposed Haslingden South and Edenfield ward crosses it in a wholly arbitrary way and creates an artificial boundary across the centre of Haslingden. A more natural extension of the existing Eden ward would be westwards into Helmshore ward retaining the ward entirely on the same side of the by-pass. How far the new ward took in parts of Helmshore is difficult to work out with the limited information available to members of the public, but one possible boundary is Helmshore Road with the western side remaining in Helmshore and the eastern side moving into the enlarged Eden ward. The boundary could continue up Free Lane and along Holcombe Road. I believe this would create a ward of approximately 5600 electors.

Option 2 – see map 2

If such a wholesale change can't be contemplated, I suggest that a more natural boundary for Haslingden North and the enlarged Eden ward is

the current County Council ward boundary. The labour Group submission refers to the boundary along Hillside Road as “arbitrary”, but it is no more arbitrary than other boundaries and less arbitrary than many in that it follows the County boundary. While I accept that the County boundaries are not determinant it does make for more efficient local government as otherwise there will be two boundaries close together with the potential for confusion for local residents. It also has the advantage of removing the boundary in the centre of Haslingden.

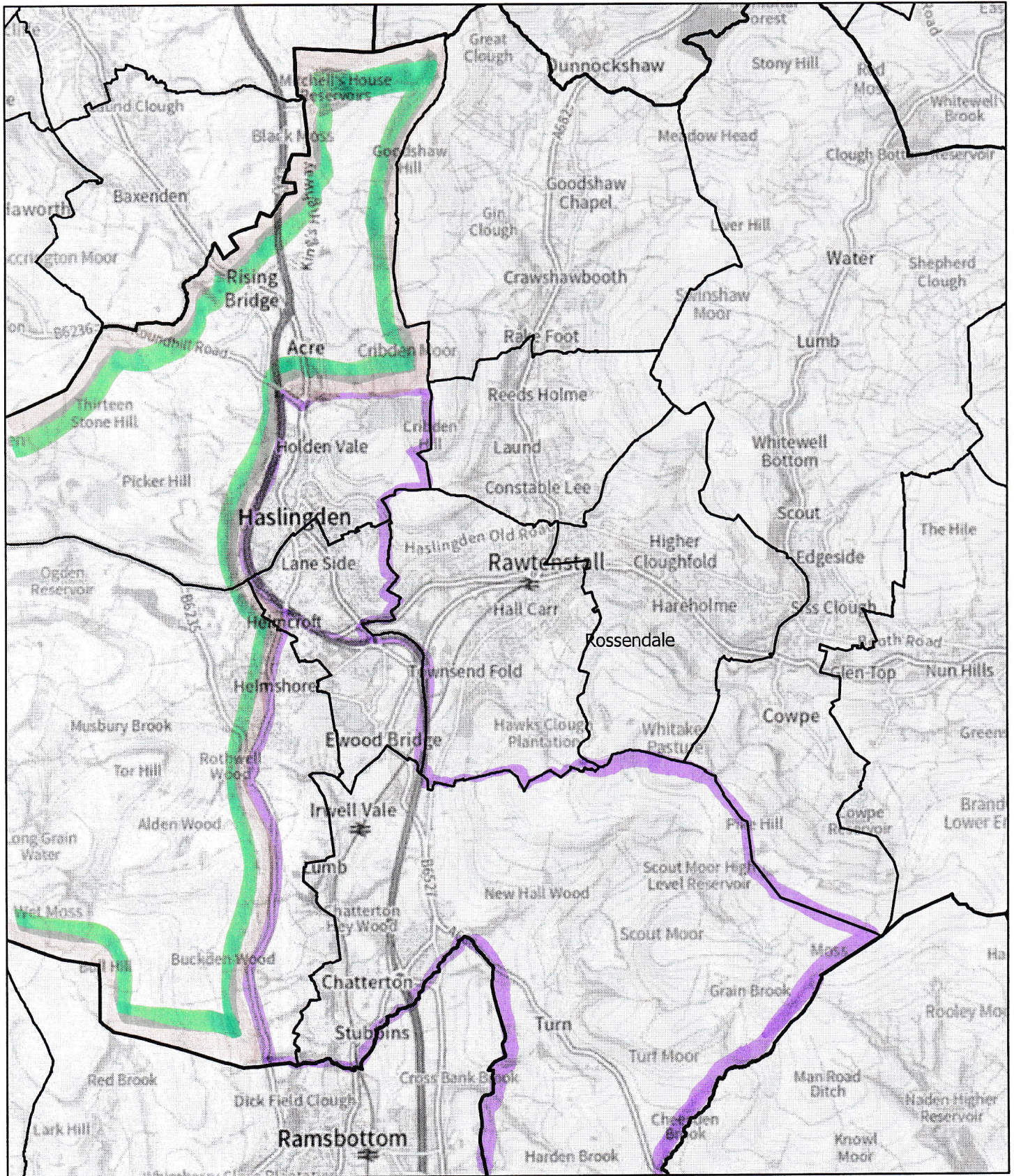
Names

If changes are made the proposed names may no longer be appropriate. However, if no changes are made I object to the name Haslingden South and Edenfield. The current ward is called Eden to reflect the fact that much of the ward is not in what is normally regarded as Edenfield. Eden is made up of Edenfield, Stubbins, Chatterton, Strongstry, Irwell Vale, Turn and Cheesden and to reflect those communities the name Eden should be retained along with Haslingden South.



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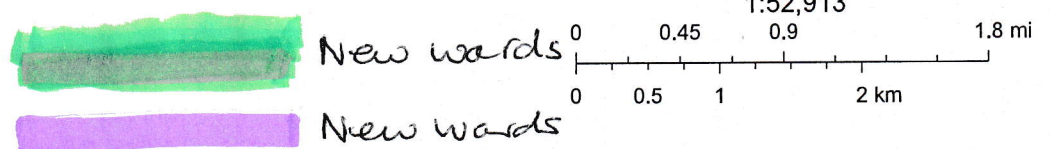
- Map 1.pdf
- Map 2.pdf

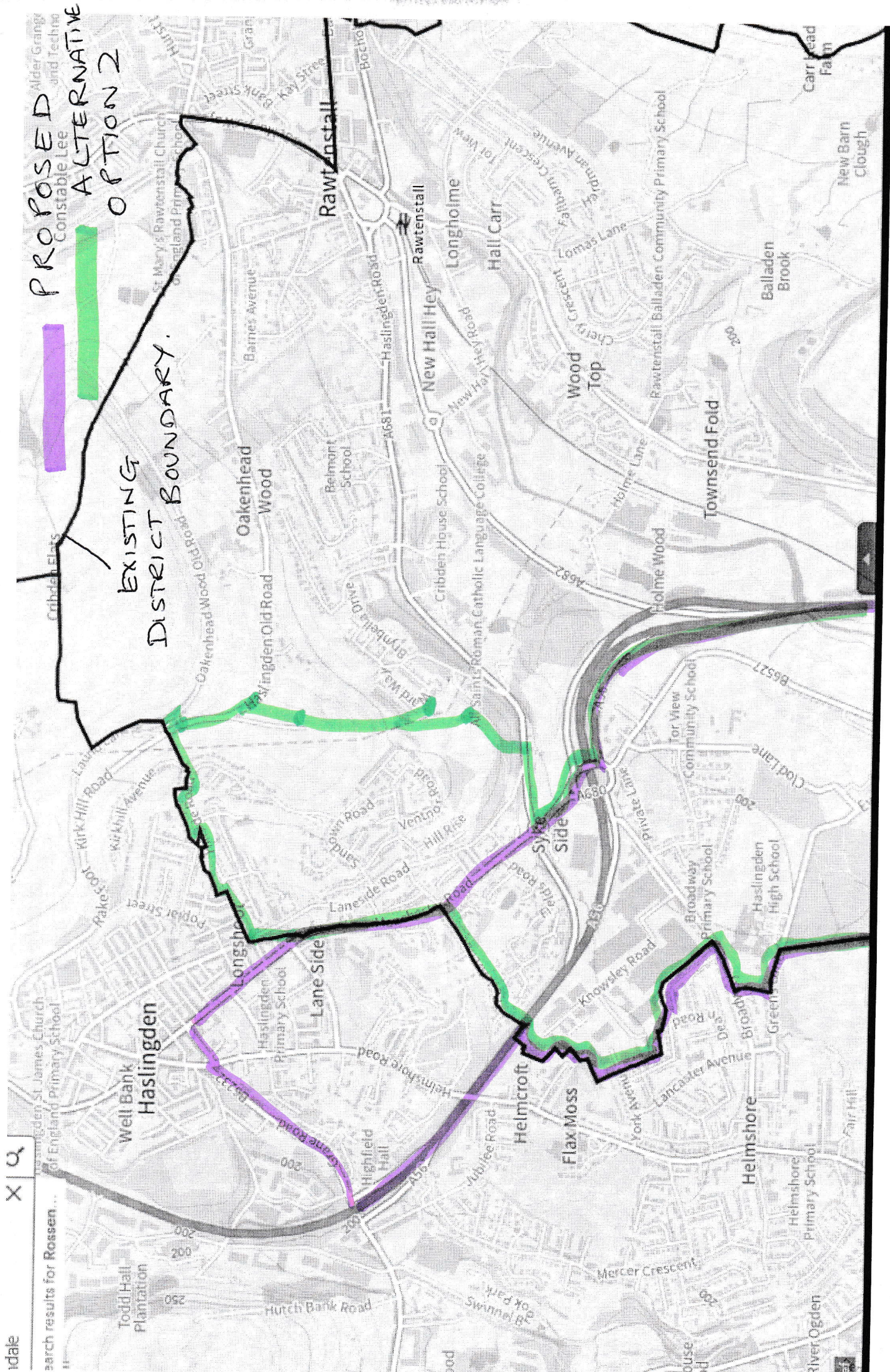
Lancashire County Council Map MAP 1



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-  Borough Councils
-  Ward Boundaries





PROPOSED
ALTERNATIVE
OPTION 2

EXISTING
DISTRICT BOUNDARY.