

## Rossendale Borough Council

### Personal Details:

Name:

E-mail:

Postcode:

Organisation Name:

### Comment text:

The way Whitworth is represented reflects historical and geographical realities. Whitworth was once an Urban District Council in its own right, a pioneering and successful one. In the last major reorganisation it became part of Rossendale, with a measure of reluctance on both sides. It "feels" separate from the rest of Rossendale, even now. Between Whitworth and Bacup, the land rises to 1000' above sea level at Britannia, which is sometimes an impassable barrier in winter. Its residents tend to commute south on the A671 to Rochdale and beyond. Note that the A671 is the only road through Whitworth, from Britannia to where Rochdale begins at Healey Corner: the road is hopelessly busy at peak times (a fact never acknowledged in Rossendale planning decisions) and roadworks or an accident at any one of three points along its Whitworth length creates linear gridlock/mayhem/anger and frustration: these feelings are one of the things that unite people in Whitworth from Shawforth to Healey. Buses link Whitworth to the rest of Rossendale, true enough, but journey times are such that no-one ventures to Rawtenstall by bus without a pressing reason. Whitworth's 5 schools serve Whitworth and Shawforth, with a few incomers from Bacup and Rochdale. There is no post-16 educational provision in Whitworth, but if Whitworth were an integrated part of Rossendale you would expect a majority of those "staying on" to head for the grammar school at Waterfoot or the sixth form at Haslingden or the FE college at Accrington (and Rossendale notionally): they don't - the most popular destinations are Rochdale sixth-form college and Hopwood Hall FE college (also Rochdale) with some travelling to Bury, Oldham and Burnley. The point I am making, and could make also in respect of health and libraries, is that Whitworth in its entirety, from Britannia to Healey Corner, may be administratively part of Rossendale, but in reality is itself. Having two Whitworth-only wards matches the reality. Shovelling off Shawforth, or the whole of Shawforth and Facit, into a hybrid ward with an equally arbitrary chunk of Bacup does not. Rossendale is not a homogeneous whole, with near-enough identical priorities, and therefore susceptible to the perfectly reasonable thought that wards should be more or less equal in size: it is made up of a series of distinct (and distinctive) townships, and I'd contend that the electoral map should prioritise that reality, even if it's not arithmetically "neat". The greater integration of services across Rossendale is a perfectly legitimate notion/aim, but a redrawing of the local ward map will not assist with that. Outlying bits of the Rossendale "empire" in particular need to have councillors are prepared to speak firmly in favour of their own districts: it's too easy for the (relative) centres of population - in this case Rawtenstall and Haslingden - to make assumptions based on that predominance of population and, frankly, ignore those of us on the periphery. Whitworth may need some positive discrimination in order to thrive.

### Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded