

Vodafone says that Tenterden is too large for technology

Phone firm leaves town out of rural expansion scheme

by Tricia Jamieson

tjamieson@thekmgroupp.co.uk

@triciajamieson1

Tenterden has been left out of a Vodafone scheme to bring 3G to areas – because it is too big.

Town councillor Sue Ferguson submitted an application for Tenterden to be included in the mobile phone giant's Rural Open Sure Signal programme.

But it has been turned down by Vodafone.

In an email to Cllr Ferguson, Vodafone network communications executive Sophie Ree said: "Rural Open Sure Signal is aimed towards small, rural communities which are unlikely to get traditional mobile coverage.

"The technology wouldn't be suitable for larger communities, like Tenterden, as the large population would mean that the high number of customers using Open Sure Signal will result in your local network slowing and therefore becoming less reliable.

"This would be a poor customer experience."

She said that Vodafone was



investing more than £1 billion in its network and services this year to provide 2G, 3G or 4G coverage to 98% of the UK population.

She added: "We've investigated our network development for the next year and can confirm that we'll be improving the mobile coverage to Tenterden in the next 12 to 24 months.

"However, our network improvements do rely upon support from landlords and successful planning applications so that we're able to install or upgrade equipment on our mast sites."

Cllr Ferguson said she was disappointed by Vodafone's decision.

"In some respects I do see their point – we are too big for



'Disappointed': Cllr Sue Ferguson

Picture: Lewis Brockway

the scheme even though it was Vodafone who told me to apply in the first place," she said.

"We have too many tourists and they would just overload the system.

"The only positive thing I can say is that Vodafone, over the past few months, seem to have done something to the 3G signal strength in Tenterden.

"Sometimes you can get 3G in the High Street but there are

'I want some of the £1bn for Tenterden that Vodafone are investing in the UK'

obviously only minimal connections available, so the 3G service can only be described as weak or intermittent."

Vodafone customers have complained of poor signal over the past two years.

Cllr Ferguson added: "I want to see Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council fully committed to helping Tenterden get a decent level of 3G.

"Any planning applications from Vodafone need to be fast-tracked by ABC.

"I want some of the £1 billion for Tenterden that Vodafone are investing in the UK."

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