

Future of busy junction considered by council

Traffic lights plan set for new review

by Kristina Curtis

kcurtis@thekmggroup.co.uk

The town council is set to conduct an independent review into the future of a busy T-junction.

Redrow Homes wants to add traffic lights at the Ashford Road/Beacon Oak Road junction instead of a roundabout, as part of the 100-home Tilden Gill scheme.

But the lights idea has sparked anger in the town and a special planning meeting was held on Monday to discuss the proposal.

The town council's planning committee unanimously rejected plans to install the signals - and is now set to conduct its own independent review.

Redrow has applied to Ashford Borough Council (ABC) to fit traffic lights as it claims it would cost £500,000 to build a roundabout due to the relocation of a BT fibre optics box.

But Cllr John Crawford, chairman of the planning committee, said: "The planning appeal permission for Tilden Gill in 2015 explicitly stipulated a compact roundabout.

"With the revised traffic light proposal, the council is very concerned about the adverse impact on traffic at this junction.

"Minimal assessment has been made with the impact of oversized movement of farm vehicles, access to the immediate homes



The Ashford Road junction

and side roads, increase of air pollution, lack of safety report and the unnecessary queuing of traffic.

KCC Highways should have been asked for its independent objective assessment of benefits between the compact roundabout and the proposed traffic lights - this in our view is a serious omission."

Almost 80 residents attended Monday's meeting, which was held at the Town Hall, with eight members of the public speaking and all opposing the plans, which were reported on in last week's Kentish Express.

Cllr Crawford added: "We appreciated the informed input which members of the public contributed to the debate, and support their view.

"The council will be seeking an



Cllr Sue Ferguson

independent review of this junction, so we can provide informed comments to Ashford planning."

Cllr Sue Ferguson has been outspoken in her opposition of the plans.

She said: "The meeting went really well. People have certainly done their homework and some exceptionally good points were made.

"The meeting was very well attended but there was a lot of unhappy people.

"Anyone who knows that junction disagrees that there should be traffic lights there; we've got enough already and it will bring the town to a standstill."

In last week's Kentish, Redrow said it "acquired the site after outline consent was granted so wouldn't have been involved with the plans for the roundabout".