



The junction with Ashford Road and Beacon Oak Road



Cllr Sue Ferguson next to the BT fibre optics box

# Gridlock fears over plans for traffic lights at busy junction

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A housing developer's bid to install traffic lights at a key junction will cause gridlock in Tenterden.

That is the claim of town councillor Sue Ferguson who is furious that Redrow Homes wants to add the lights at the Ashford Road/Beacon Oak Road T-junction instead of a roundabout, as part of the Tilden Gill scheme.

The controversial development was allowed in 2016 following an appeal to the planning inspectorate and will see 100 homes built on land south of Tilden Gill Road, close to an area of outstanding natural beauty.

As part of the plans, the developers were required to put in a roundabout at the junction before any of the new houses are occupied.

But Redrow has now applied to Ashford Borough Council (ABC) to install traffic lights instead, claiming it will cost £500,000 to remove a BT fibre optics box near the existing junction and that lights would be more "cost-effective" solution.

Cllr Sue Ferguson said: "This is madness, I'm really angry.

"The BT fibre box has not just appeared, it is in full view of anyone inspecting this junction and

has been there a long time. The builders should have looked at the junction first before buying the land and agreeing to the roundabout condition.

"A roundabout is by far the best option, I believe traffic lights at Beacon Oak Road/A28 junction will cause an unacceptable build-up of traffic.

"You've only got to look at what happens when there are roadworks around this area, the traffic jams back up a long way along the A28 in both directions. This will bring Tenterden to a gridlock."

She also claimed the firm had failed to notify affected residents, adding: "Also, there's been a real lack of consultation, only the residents near Tilden Gill have been notified - not the ones near Ashford Road and Beacon Oak Road.

"This is the urbanisation of Tenterden."

Nigel Wilson, who lives in Beacon Walk, said: "If traffic lights are installed, this could cause greater queues at peak traffic times and create additional congestion at the junction.

"The pollution from queuing traffic, both air and noise, would increase.

"Traffic lights are also likely to cause queues during non-peak hours, whereas traffic would flow better with a roundabout in place.

"The plus side of a roundabout is that it will help to calm and slow down traffic both on the Ashford Road and Beacon Oak Road.

"A roundabout makes complete sense."

Redrow says it "acquired the site after outline consent was granted so wouldn't have been involved with the plans for the roundabout".

Planning director David Banfield said: "As part of our plans for new homes in Tenterden, we have been working very closely with the county council to agree greater improvements to the junction which will benefit motorists and pedestrians alike.

"These include new pedestrian crossings to help children and parents attending Homewood School, as well as a simplified turn from Ashford Road to Beacon Oak Road to improve the safety of vehicles turning right."

A special planning meeting is being held about this application on Monday (July 23) at the Tenterden Town Hall at 7pm and members of the public are invited to attend.

■ To view the application visit ABC's planning portal at [www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/) and search for reference 18/00858/AS. The closing date for comments is today (Thursday).