

'Does the NHS know Tenterden exists?'

A town councillor is asking questions of the NHS in east Kent after Tenterden has been left out of 'listening events' to discuss the future of hospital services.

One of the options in the proposed shake-up could see a super hospital built in Canterbury and the axing of William Harvey hospital's A&E and maternity services - but Tenterden residents will have to travel to Ashford if they want to have their say.

Cllr Ferguson said: "I'm just horrified by the prospect of Ashford losing its A&E.

"It takes an hour to get from Tenterden to Canterbury and that means all those ambulances will be on the road for a very long time going travelling between the two places."

Cllr Ferguson said she was concerned the lives of seriously ill Tenterden residents would be at risk because of the travelling times and potential of treatment not being available in the golden hour, the first hour after major injury, when emergency treatment is most effective.

She added: "Ashford has a much better road network linked



The William Harvey could lose its A&E

to the M20 and is in a more central location. Canterbury has too much traffic and its road network is not up to the job.

"Do NHS management even know where Tenterden is?

"If they insist on this ridiculous scheme then Tenterden will have to move health authorities as Canterbury is 29 miles away and we are much nearer other hospitals like the Conquest Hospital in Hastings, which is 17 miles away, or Pembury, which is 21

miles from us."

Town clerk Phil Burgess said the potential loss of major services at William Harvey was very concerning.

He said: "We are also disappointed that NHS East Kent is holding eight 'listening events' in the area, but none of them are scheduled for Tenterden.

"We will be keeping a close watch on the progress of the proposals."

■ For more, see pages 7-9