

Annex 1 - Consultation report on proposed changes to opening hours at Surrey's Performing Arts Library

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1 Context

1.1 Proposals

The Library Service intends to stop opening the Performing Arts Library between 7pm and 8pm on Thursdays, due to low levels of use.

The Library Service has invited customers and the general public to say:

- Whether they support the proposals to open over 5 days instead of 4, in the pattern detailed and;
- Whether a weekly later Thursday opening post-5pm is required.

2 Methodology

2.1 Survey

The consultation took the form of two customer surveys; one online, and one paper survey in the branch.

Both surveys had four objectives:

- Obtain customer and general public opinion on the proposals put to consultation;
- Raise awareness of the Performing Arts Library as a countywide resource;
- Gather feedback from customers and non-customer over a range of questions, about their experience of using the library.

The two versions of the survey differed slightly in their questions, given that a) customers completing the survey in the branch would already be aware of, and using the library, so some of the questions in the online version would not be applicable and b) wanting to limit printing requirements for the paper by keeping the survey to within 4 sides of A4.

2.2 Distribution

Aiming to reach as many people as possible through the survey, both customers and non-customers alike, the survey was distributed widely and publicised online. It is therefore not possible to calculate a return rate.

The online survey was distributed in the early stages of the consultation period to the following¹:

Recipient	Total number of recipients if known
Emailed to Individuals and groups registered with PA who had provided an email address and consented to marketing	851 email addresses (4 recipients requested they be taken off the mailing list in future, 53 emails came back as undelivered)
Emailed to individuals and groups in the South East registered with Making Music, by Making Music, on our behalf.	Sent to representatives of around 900 member groups
Representatives of the Disability Alliance and Network (formerly 'Empowerment	Representative bodies, so total recipients unknown

¹ N.b. West Sussex County Council were asked to publicise to their library users via website, facebook or twitter but were unable to do so.

Boards) and External Equalities Advisory Group were invited to complete the survey	
Surrey Schools bulletin	Reaches 400 Headteachers
SCC Arts Staff Choir	1 choir
Surrey Wardrobe members and friends who have provided an email address and consented to marketing	
Chairman of the Friends of Surrey Performing Arts Library	For onwards dissemination
Councillors	All county and district councillors

The online survey was further publicised through the following means:

Surrey Libraries web pages
Surrey CC consultations page
PA twitter
Libraries twitter

The paper survey was offered to customers in the branch, with staff inviting visitors to complete the survey.

2.3 Survey dates

The online survey was available from Monday 20th January until Friday 28th February 2014.

The paper survey was offered in branch from Friday 24th January, until Friday 28th February 2014.

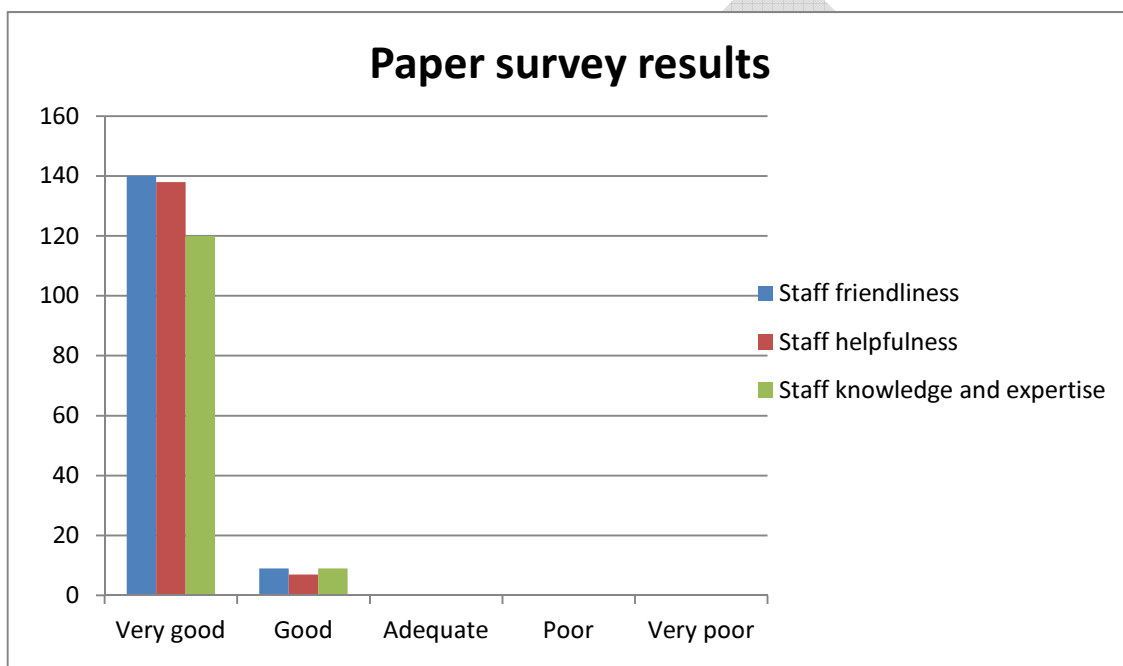
3 Key findings

3.1 General findings

Analysis of the surveys is ongoing. Officers are reviewing the full findings, in order to extract the key messages and ideas emerging, and will be looking at how best to address these.

For the purposes of this report, the main focus is on the proposals regarding opening hours.

However, it is worth noting that that the knowledge, friendliness and helpfulness of the staff is a key strength of the library. Staff deserve praise for their extremely high scores in the paper survey and for the wealth of positive comments offered in both the online and paper surveys². See below:



‘Always a very helpful library. Staff friendly too’

‘It is a wonderful resource. The staff are always helpful. A jewel in Surrey’s crown’.

‘This library is a fantastic resource that we are lucky to have. It has been invaluable to my work as performer/teacher of music’

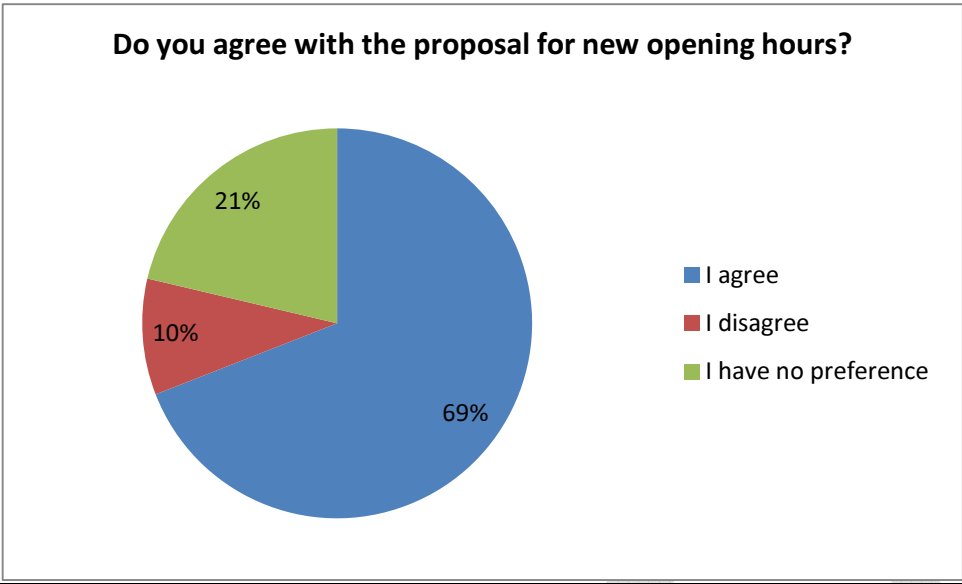
The majority of respondents were from a music background, or had music as their main area of interest. This is to be expected given that music represents the majority of the Performing Arts Library’s business, and also given the distribution by Making Music to their south east members.

3.2 Opening hours proposals

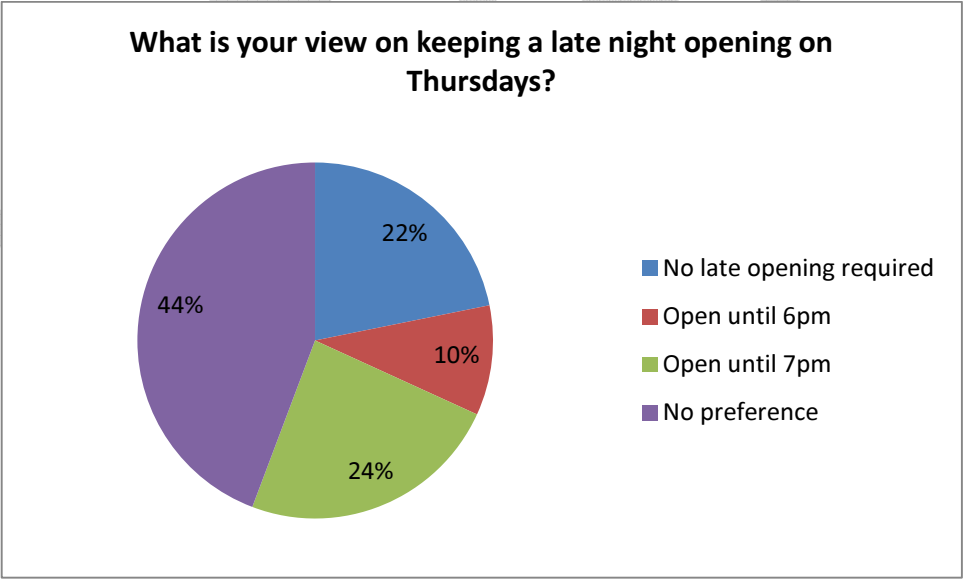
Overall findings – online and paper survey combined.

² The survey in the branch asked respondents to rate the three elements of the staff’s customer service. The same question was not specifically asked in the online survey given that it went to a wider range of people, many of whom may not have visited the library.

- 69% of respondents support the proposal to increase opening hours over 5 days per week.



- On whether or not to maintain a later opening on Thursday evenings, the most common response was 'no preference'. Of those who indicated a preference, the results were marginally in favour of a 7pm opening over no late opening being required. 10% of respondents favoured a later opening until 6pm, and this therefore gives a total of 34% of respondents who would like to see some form of later opening once a week.



- Equality analysis suggests that the narrow split between those respondents who require no late opening, compared to those who would like the library to stay open until 7pm, is largely related to different requirements within different age bands, and across genders. Older respondents were less likely to require an evening opening than younger adults aged 18-29 and then 30-49. See section below.

Equalities considerations

- Opening over 5 days per week instead of 4 will be of most benefit to older people who are retired / not in full time employment. People aged 50 and over were more likely to suggest no evening opening required, but also had a large proportion indicating 'no preference'.
- Maintaining a later opening is more important for males and younger adults aged up to 49, as well as those who have never married or formed a civil partnership.
- The Disability Network and Alliance, and the council's External Equalities Advisory Group were invited to respond to the survey but did not submit a formal response, though individual members may have responded anonymously.
- We do not have enough results from people of non-white ethnicity to draw conclusions about whether they support the proposals, and it suggests that the library's customer profile sees people of non-white ethnicity underrepresented.
- Young adults aged 18-29 were significantly underrepresented in the online survey results, but better represented in the branch's paper survey.

4 Analysis

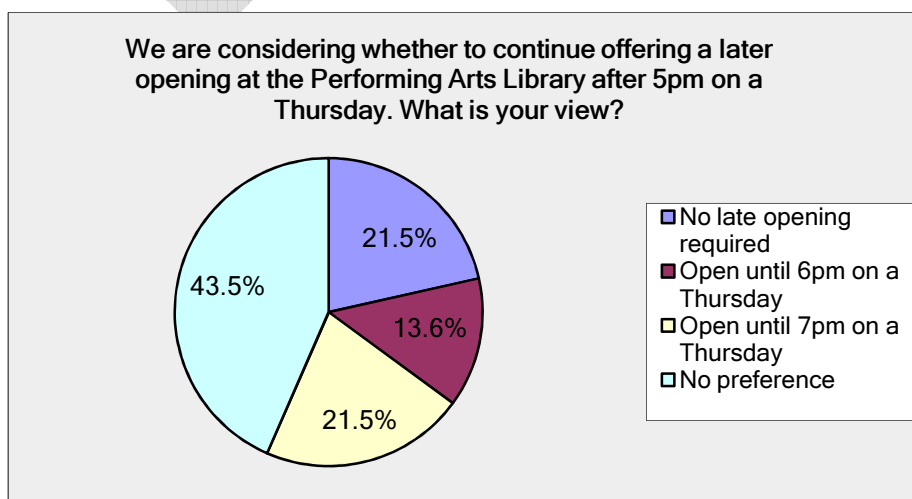
A. Online Survey

A total of 185 responses were received.

58% of respondents indicated that they find the current opening hours 'fairly convenient' with a further 15% who find them 'very convenient'. 11% of respondents find the opening hours 'fairly inconvenient'. 1% of respondents consider them to be 'very inconvenient'.

Results:

- 78% of respondents support the proposed new opening hours. Only 2% of respondents disagreed, and 20% had no preference.
- 44% of respondents had no preference as to whether the library continues to offer a later opening on a Thursday. Of those respondents who indicated a preference, the results were equally split between 'no evening opening required' and 'open until 7pm', where both responses received 22% of the votes. Opening until 6pm was the least preferred option, with 14% of votes – see below:



B. Paper survey in the branch

A total of 176 responses were received.

67% of respondents find the current opening hours fairly convenient, and a further 24% think they are 'very convenient'. 9% of respondents had no opinion or didn't know. No respondents indicated that the current opening hours were inconvenient.

Results:

- 59% of respondents support the proposed new opening hours, with 18% preferring the current opening hours. 23% of respondents gave no preference.
- 45% of respondents had no preference as to whether the library continues to offer a later opening on a Thursday evening. Of those respondents who did indicate a preference, a 7pm was preferred for 27% of respondents, although 22% suggested no evening opening was required. Only 6% of respondents wanted to see the library open until 6pm.

4.1 Equality & Diversity sections

A. Online survey

70% of respondents agreed to answer equality and diversity questions.

Gender: 122 people answered this question. 59% of respondents were female, 41% were male.

The majority of respondents, both female and male, support the proposals to extend opening hours.

As to whether the Performing Arts Library continues to offer a later evening opening, the most common response was 'no preference'. Of those who did indicate a preference, females preferred either 'no late opening', or 'until 6pm', whereas males preferred a later opening until 7pm. See below:

Gender	No late opening required	Open until 6pm	Open until 7pm	No preference
Males	20%	4%	30%	46%
Females	22%	21%	13%	44%

Age: 122 people answered this question. The majority of respondents were aged 50 and over, accounting for 78% of all respondents who consented to provide this information. Young people and young adults aged 18-29 were significantly under-represented in this survey, compared both against the county's demographic profile, and as the proportion of young adults registered with the Performing Arts Library.

Overall, respondents in all age bands (only analysed where there were more than 5 respondents), supported the proposals to extend the opening hours.

However, some variations in the results for a later night opening likely reflect differing needs/ lifestyles of the different age bands, with younger adults aged 30-49 five times more likely than respondents aged 65 and over to require some form of later opening.

In terms of what, if any, late night opening should be offered, the results were different depending upon the age band of the respondents:

Age band	No late opening required	Open until 6pm	Open until 7pm	No preference
30-49	9%	17%	35%	39%
50-64	17%	13%	25%	44%
65 and over	33%	14%	7%	47%
Average*	22%	14%	22%	44%

* Includes results for under 18s and 18-29s. Not included here as too small numbers to be statistically representative.

Ethnicity: 120 people answered this question. Respondents were mostly of White British ethnicity (88%), or other White ethnicity. Just under 5% of the respondents who answered this question gave their ethnicity as mixed or non-white, and this included Asian/Asian British Indian, Mixed Asian/British and Black or Black British Caribbean. 3 respondents gave their ethnicity as 'other'.

The small number of responses from non-White ethnicities does not allow for a meaningful comparison of responses to the proposals.

Disability: 121 people answered this question. Overall, only 4% of respondents said they have a disability or long-term condition that affects their day to day life. Those respondents with a disability showed high levels of support for the proposals, and were less likely to require a late evening opening. More women than men reported having a disability.

Religion / Faith: 120 people answered this question. 61% of respondents gave their religion/faith as Christian. 29% said they have no religion, 3% stated they had an 'other' religion/faith. 5% of respondents preferred not to say.

Both respondents who identified themselves as Christian, and those who identified themselves as having no faith/religion supported the proposals to extend opening hours. There was some variation in results for the late night opening, although in both cases the majority indicated 'no preference'.

Marriage / civil partnership 120 people answered this question. 70% of respondents gave their marriage /civil partnership status as 'married'. Other statuses mentioned less frequently include never married (7% of respondents), living with a partner (7%), divorced (5%), and separated, in a civil partnership and widowed (all less than 5% of respondents each).

The majority of respondents who have never married or formed a civil partnership indicated no preference on the question about late night opening, (56%) with lower levels of support for the proposed opening hours, at 44%.

Respondents who stated that they are either married or living with a partner indicated higher levels of support for the proposals to extend to 5 days from 4, than those who had never married and never formed a civil partnership.

The later opening was more important for those who have never married than for those who are married, with 44% of those who have never married/formed a civil partnership requesting a 7pm opening, compared to just 15% of married respondents and 25% of people living with a partner.

Other: Five requests were made in the free-text comment boxes specifically for longer opening hours on a Saturday, and seven comments requested that the library maintain a later opening on one day per week, because of the difficulty people working or studying full time would have in reaching the library otherwise.

B. Paper survey

Gender: 155 respondents answered this question. 56% of respondents were female, and 43% were male.

Both males and females supported the proposals, though females were particularly strongly in favour of the proposed opening hours.

On the question of whether to maintain a late night opening, the most common response was 'no preference'.

Gender	No late opening required	Open until 6pm	Open until 7pm	No preference
Males	22%	11%	29%	38%
Females	21%	2%	26%	51%

Age: 161 respondents answered this question. The majority of respondents were aged 50 and over, accounting for 79% of respondents. Younger adults aged 18-29 accounted for 8% of respondents, which is a higher proportion than responded to the online survey.

Levels of support for the proposed extended opening hours were highest among respondents aged 65 and over and 30-49, with at least 60% in favour for both age bands, and at least 20% indicating no preference. Respondents aged 50-64 had the highest proportion of respondents against the proposed opening hours, with 31% preferring the existing opening hours. 49% were in favour, and a further 20% expressed no preference.

On the question of whether to maintain a later opening, older respondents were more likely to indicate 'none required' or 'no preference'. Younger adults were more likely to be in favour of continuing a late opening.

Ethnicity: 163 respondents answered this question. 92% were of White British ethnicity, with 2% 'other', and 1% Chinese.

Disability: 159 respondents answered this question. 5% of those who answered this question had a disability. While the number of respondents was small, they indicated an equal split between those who preferred the current hours, and those who supported the proposed opening hours. There was a slight majority in favour of opening until 7pm, against no late opening being required.

Religion / Faith: 164 respondents answered this question. 59% gave their religion as Christian, and 30% had no religion/faith. While numbers are small, both groups indicated support for the proposals, with 'no preference' being the most common response on the question about maintaining a late opening.

Marriage / civil partnership: 165 respondents answered this question. 50% of respondents were married, 15% had never married, and 13% were widowed. Other statuses were recorded but in smaller numbers.

No significant variations in results were found in relation to marriage/ civil partnership status.

4.2 Councillors and Committees

Under Part 3 of the council's constitution, local committees agree changes to library opening hours that represent a change of 15% or more. However, the Performing Arts Library is a countywide resource, even though it is located in Dorking. Therefore, the Chairmen of the Local Committees approved that the final decision on whether or not to approve the change to opening hours be taken by the Portfolio Holder for Community Services; Cllr Helyn Clack. This has been approved by the Leader of Surrey County Council, Cllr David Hodge.

Online survey

The online survey was distributed to all councillors.

5 responses were received from elected members – 4 based in Mole Valley, and 1 from Middlesex. All agreed with the proposals, or expressed no preference. These elected members also largely indicated they had either no preference in terms of later opening, or thought the library should open until 7pm.

5 Next steps

If the proposal is approved, the new opening hours will be launched from May 2014.

Analysis of both surveys will continue within the service, to look at what the service can learn from this feedback.