

Surrey Performing Arts Library – NewSPAL taking over– analysis of consultation

Introduction.

The consultation ran from 19 December 2018 to 3 February 2019. The consultation was available via Surrey Says and hard copies printed on request. Details of the consultation were emailed to all registered library users with an email address and who had given permission to contact them; social media was used and an article placed in the January edition of Surrey Matters. The Trustees of NewSPAL were also informed and asked to use social media and mailing lists to promote the consultation. Before the email was sent to registered library users, we had received 132 replies.

The consultation asked people to identify themselves as belonging to one of the following categories:

- I am responsible for borrowing and returning music sets on behalf of my group
- I belong to a music group which borrows materials from SPAL
- I am responsible for borrowing and returning play sets on behalf of my group
- I belong to a drama/play reading group which borrows materials from SPAL
- I am an individual member of SPAL
- I am none of the above

The data in the report presents the overall results in the first two columns which can then be compared with the results from each of music, drama, individual and “none of the above” categories.

The consultation also contained two free text questions which gave an opportunity for respondents to give their views and suggestions. These have been analysed and reported on at the end of the more detailed quantitative section.

Overview of results.

The total number of responses received was 678. Full demographic information is to be found at the end of this report.

In summary, respondents indicate:

- a high level of support for NewSPAL taking on the service
- that change of ownership, location, prices, opening hours or collections/delivery services would have little impact upon their usage
- that potential increase in flexibility of online services attracts a lot of support

The profile of the user based on demographic information received is female, retired, 65 years of age and above, white British, Christian. The response to question 22 tells us they are also generally healthy, with an average of nearly 80% stating they live with no limitation of daily activities because of a health problem or disability. In question 23, we asked about caring responsibilities and overall 71% told us that they had no caring responsibilities for family members, friends, neighbours or others who lived with health and/or age related problems. The tables are at the end of this report.

More detailed results of the report.

Who responded to the consultation?

The largest response came from those involved in the music side of the performing arts: a total of 403 people (59.6% of the total) with music group members being the largest single sector of respondents. There was a low level of response from people involved in drama, which at a total of 11.5% (78 responses) was less than individual library members or those who categorised themselves as “none of the above.” Of the comments recorded, none were made about specific forms of the performing arts other than music or drama.

Option	Total	Percent of All	
I am responsible for borrowing and returning music sets on behalf of my group	98	14.5%	59.4% total music interest
I belong to a music group which borrows materials from SPAL	305	45.0%	
I am responsible for borrowing and returning play sets on behalf of my group	26	3.8%	11.5% total drama interest
I belong to a drama/play reading group which borrows materials from SPAL	52	7.7%	
I am an individual member of SPAL	102	15.0%	
I am none of the above	95	14.0%	
Not Answered	0	0.0%	
Total	678		

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Those individual library members (102) who responded, tended to pursue their performing arts interests in Surrey (87 people; with 12 outside Surrey and 3 people choosing not to answer).

This was also true of the 481 group respondents as can be seen below.

Question 14: For group borrowers only. Where is your group based?

	total submissions		Music		Drama	
Option	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
In Surrey	390	81.1%	321	79.7%	69	88.5%
Outside Surrey	91	18.9%	82	20.4%	9	11.5%
Not Answered	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	481		403		78	

Question 13 invited people to comment upon their use of the library and for non-users to give an insight into their interest. Interest in completing the consultation was varied. Some were committee members, librarians, Chairs, or ex-Chairs of music and drama groups; others were not involved in the arts or using the collection at all, but had friends, relatives or partners who use the service, so wished to complete the consultation in order to show their support. Other respondents were teachers who used the collection to support their pupils or had used the service via their school. There were some people who no longer use the collection, but did so previously. A handful of people said that they work in the arts or the music industry and others said that they were simply part of the Surrey community or members of the audience at performing arts events. Finally, there were responses from other library authorities who use the collection for their own local residents.

Level of support for NewSPAL delivered service.

There is a high level of support for NewSPAL running the performing arts service with a total of 84% of total submissions replying they strongly agreed/agreed. The strength of agreement across the categories varies with music people showing the highest level of strong agreement, but

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the level of (agreeing/strongly agreeing) doesn't dip below 68.4%. The most ambivalent are the drama groups with 20.5% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Question 1: Do you agree or disagree with SPAL being run independently by NewSPAL?

Option	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
Strongly agree	393	58.0%	280	69.5%	28	35.9%	53	52.0%	32	33.7%
Agree	177	26.1%	90	22.3%	28	35.9%	26	25.5%	33	34.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	67	9.9%	22	5.5%	16	20.5%	13	12.8%	16	16.8%
Disagree	10	1.5%	1	0.2%	2	2.6%	3	2.9%	4	4.2%
Strongly disagree	13	1.9%	2	0.5%	2	2.6%	6	5.9%	3	3.2%
Not sure/I have no opinion	16	2.4%	6	1.5%	2	2.6%	1	1.0%	7	7.4%
Not Answered	2	0.3%	2	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
total	678		403		78		102		95	

NewSPAL aims to ensure that all who wish to use the service can do so. If someone is affected by a health problem or disability which means they cannot access the service in the usual way, NewSPAL would aim to meet their needs. This could include home delivery by volunteers, special rates, concessionary arrangements and appropriate equipment such mobile hearing loops. NewSPAL also plans to offer special rates for those in education or out of work. The consultation asked how important this was to respondents.

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Question 11: How important is it to you that a number of these arrangements are available?

Option	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
Very important	370	54.6%	221	54.8%	40	51.3%	63	61.8%	46	48.4%
Neither important or unimportant	246	36.3%	151	37.5%	32	41.0%	29	28.4%	34	35.8%
Not important	58	8.6%	29	7.2%	6	7.7%	10	9.8%	13	13.7%
Not Answered	4	0.6%	2	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
Total	678		403		78		102		95	

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Should NewSPAL run the service then there was general support for whichever final location was chosen. Woking was strongly supported by the music users (80%) with the individuals the least supportive but with a majority (58%)

Question 2: Do you agree or disagree with NewSPAL's proposal to move to premises in Woking and with this specification?

Option	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
Strongly agree	236	34.8%	161	40.0%	26	33.3%	27	26.5%	22	23.2%
Agree	244	36.0%	162	40.2%	22	28.2%	33	32.4%	27	28.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	98	14.5%	49	12.2%	16	20.5%	9	8.8%	24	25.3%
Disagree	46	6.8%	14	3.5%	7	9.0%	16	15.7%	9	9.5%
Strongly disagree	41	6.0%	10	2.5%	6	7.7%	16	15.7%	9	9.5%
Not sure/I have no opinion	13	1.9%	7	1.7%	1	1.3%	1	1.0%	4	4.2%
Not Answered	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	678		403		78		102		95	

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Having expressed support, the majority of categories would continue to use it as often with the exceptions being the drama groups and individual members who indicated that they would use it less often (23% and 32% respectively) and 18.6% of individuals stating that they would not use the service. This would have an impact upon income for NewSPAL.

Question 3: What impact would the change of location have on you?

Option	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
I would use it more often than I do now	80	11.8%	39	9.7%	18	23.1%	9	8.8%	14	14.7%
I would use it as often as I do now	427	63.0%	316	78.4%	38	48.7%	41	40.2%	32	33.7%
I would use it less often	103	15.2%	36	8.9%	18	23.1%	33	32.4%	16	16.8%
I would not use the service	62	9.1%	10	2.5%	4	5.1%	19	18.6%	29	30.5%
Not Answered	6	0.9%	2	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	4.2%
total	678		403		78		102		95	

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This can be compared with views expressed if a location other than Woking were to be chosen as can be seen from below.

Question 4: What would be the impact on you if NewSPAL moved to a location other than the proposed venue in Woking?

Option	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
I would use it more often than I do now	36	5.3%	16	4.0%	6	7.7%	6	5.9%	8	8.4%
I would use it as often as I do now	482	71.1%	320	79.4%	48	61.5%	71	69.6%	43	45.3%
I would use it less often	96	14.2%	44	10.9%	18	23.1%	15	14.7%	19	20.0%
I would not use the service	36	5.3%	7	1.7%	5	6.4%	6	5.9%	18	19.0%
Not Answered	28	4.1%	16	4.0%	1	1.3%	4	3.9%	7	7.4%
Total	678		403		78		102		95	

Prices and loan arrangements and their impact.

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As NewSPAL would be running the service independent of any council funds, there is potential for their charges to increase and for different loan arrangements to be put in place. The majority of respondents felt this was acceptable to support NewSPAL and for them to develop the service and that it would have little impact upon their use of the service with the music groups being the most strongly in favour and the least likely to stop using the service at 0.7%. The percentage of drama groups who expressed the view that they would cease to use the service at 21.8% would again have implications for income.

Question 5: Do you agree or disagree that potentially increased pricing and different loan arrangements are acceptable to support and develop the NewSPAL service?

	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Percent of All		Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
Strongly agree	190	28.0%	137	34.0%	14	18.0%	25	24.5%	14	14.7%
Agree	315	46.5%	196	48.6%	36	46.2%	43	42.2%	40	42.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	86	12.7%	41	10.2%	13	16.7%	13	12.8%	19	20.0%
Disagree	53	7.8%	18	4.5%	10	12.8%	12	11.8%	13	13.7%
Strongly disagree	17	2.5%	3	0.7%	3	3.8%	7	6.9%	4	4.2%
Not sure/I have no opinion	16	2.4%	7	1.7%	2	2.6%	2	2.0%	5	5.3%
Not Answered	1	0.1%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
total	678		403		78		102		95	

Question 6: What impact would potentially increased and/or restructured prices have on your use of the service?

Option	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Total	Percent of All	Percent of All		Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
I would use it more often than I do now	9	1.3%	4	1.0%	3	3.8%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
I would use it as often as I do now	525	77.4%	350	86.9%	53	68.0%	74	72.6%	48	50.5%
I would use it less often	100	14.8%	38	9.4%	17	21.8%	21	20.6%	24	25.3%
I would not use the service	29	4.3%	3	0.7%	4	5.1%	5	4.9%	17	17.9%
Not Answered	15	2.2%	8	2.0%	1	1.3%	2	2.0%	4	4.2%
Total	678		403		78		102		95	

Opening hours and online services.

Respondents felt that fewer opening hours would have little impact on their usage. “I would use it as often as I do now” was the response from the majority (89.1% and 79.5% for music and drama groups respectively). The main categories to be impacted by the opening hours were the individual members (at 22.6%).

Question 7: To what extent do you think the NewSPAL opening hours will impact on your use of the service?

Option	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
I would use it more often than I do now	24	3.5%	9	2.2%	6	7.7%	3	2.9%	6	6.3%
I would use it as often as I do now	539	79.5%	359	89.1%	62	79.5%	71	69.6%	47	49.5%
I would use it less often	83	12.2%	27	6.7%	8	10.3%	23	22.6%	25	26.3%
I would not use the service	22	3.2%	3	0.7%	2	2.6%	5	4.9%	12	12.6%
Not Answered	10	1.5%	5	1.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	5.3%
Total	678		403		78		102		95	

The potential for increased online facilities and flexibility was received very warmly and was anticipated to produce significant (minimum 32%) increase in usage.

Question 8: What impact would this increased online self-service access have on you?

Option	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
I would use it more often than I do now	296	43.7%	184	45.7%	25	32.1%	46	45.1%	41	43.2%
I would use it as often as I do now	338	49.9%	207	51.4%	51	65.4%	46	45.1%	34	35.8%
I would use it less often	14	2.1%	5	1.2%	1	1.3%	3	2.9%	5	5.3%
I would not use the service	20	3.0%	2	0.5%	1	1.3%	7	6.9%	10	10.5%
Not Answered	10	1.5%	5	1.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	5.3%
Total	678		403		78		102		95	

Delivery and collection services

The group representatives tend to be the people who collect and return the sets. The 124 representatives who responded told us which library they use to collect and return sets and, although Ewell Library is popular, other Surrey Libraries also play a role for the group representatives.

Surrey Libraries also has a long standing arrangement with West Sussex library authority which means sets can be collected and returned to any West Sussex Library. Comments show that this is still valued as is the facility to collect and return to any Surrey Library.

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Option	total submissions from group representatives		Music		Drama	
	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
Ewell library	41	33.1%	29	29.6%	12	46.2%
Another Surrey Library – please specify below	46	37.1%	36	36.7%	10	38.5%
A West Sussex library – please specify below	16	12.9%	12	12.2%	4	15.4%
Not Answered	21	16.9%	21	21.4%	0	0.0%
Total	124		98		26	

There is some level of uncertainty around the parcel/courier/drop-box service. This represents a significant change as this service would be offered on a cost recovery basis. Although the majority agree or strongly agree, significant levels of respondents are neutral (neither agree nor disagree) with the drama groups being the highest at 29.5%. Again the question around the impact of this significant change in service indicates a commitment to using the service as often as they do currently however, as this is part of the income of the service the percentage of drama groups which indicate a decrease or cessation of use (24.4%) may be a concern.

Question 9: Do you agree or disagree that a parcel or courier and drop-box based service would meet your needs?

Option	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
Strongly agree	134	19.8%	96	23.8%	9	11.5%	15	14.7%	14	14.7%
Agree	308	45.4%	200	49.6%	30	38.5%	45	44.1%	33	34.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	121	17.9%	61	15.1%	23	29.5%	16	15.7%	21	22.1%
Disagree	40	5.9%	14	3.5%	8	10.3%	10	9.8%	8	8.4%
Strongly disagree	28	4.1%	9	2.2%	7	9.0%	7	6.9%	5	5.3%
Not sure/I have no opinion	42	6.2%	20	5.0%	1	1.3%	9	8.8%	12	12.6%
Not Answered	5	0.7%	3	0.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
Total	678		403		78		102		95	

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Question 10: What impact would this have on you?

	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
Option	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
I would use it more often than I do now	106	15.6%	57	14.1%	11	14.1%	20	19.6%	18	19.0%
I would use it as often as I do now	462	68.1%	315	78.2%	48	61.5%	54	52.9%	45	47.4%
I would use it less often	60	8.9%	16	4.0%	13	16.7%	19	18.6%	12	12.6%
I would not use the service	36	5.3%	8	2.0%	6	7.7%	7	6.9%	15	15.8%
Not Answered	14	2.1%	7	1.7%	0	0.0%	2	2.0%	5	5.3%
Total	678		403		78		102		95	

Demographic information.

The tables below show the breakdown of age, gender, disability/longstanding condition which affects how they live their lives, employment status and ethnicity.

Question 18. gender	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
Male	248	36.6%	149	37.0%	31	39.7%	34	33.3%	34	35.8%
Female	371	54.7%	225	55.8%	41	52.6%	58	56.9%	47	49.5%
Prefer not to say	51	7.5%	24	6.0%	5	6.4%	8	7.8%	14	14.7%
Not Answered	8	1.2%	5	1.2%	1	1.3%	2	2.0%	0	0.0%
	678		403		78		102		95	

Question 19 Age	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
Under 18	2	0.3%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	0	0.0%
18-24	7	1.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.3%	3	2.9%	3	3.2%
25-44	36	5.3%	18	4.5%	2	2.6%	7	6.9%	9	9.5%
45-64	203	29.9%	115	28.5%	19	24.4%	37	36.3%	32	33.7%
65-74	259	38.2%	170	42.2%	34	43.6%	27	26.5%	28	29.5%
Over75	106	15.6%	61	15.1%	15	19.2%	17	16.7%	13	13.7%
Prefer not to say	59	8.7%	35	8.7%	6	7.7%	8	7.8%	10	10.5%
Not Answered	6	0.9%	3	0.7%	1	1.3%	2	2.0%	0	0.0%
	678		403		78		102		95	

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Question 20: Which of the following categories do you feel best describes your employment status?

Option	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
Full-time employment (30 hours or more per week)	93	13.7%	52	12.9%	11	14.1%	9	8.8%	21	22.1%
Part-time employment (less than 30 hours per week)	59	8.7%	29	7.2%	8	10.3%	11	10.8%	11	11.6%
Self-employed (full-time or part-time)	87	12.8%	46	11.4%	7	9.0%	19	18.6%	15	15.8%
Voluntary employment	29	4.3%	22	5.5%	1	1.3%	3	2.9%	3	3.2%
Not employed	4	0.6%	1	0.2%	1	1.3%	1	1.0%	1	1.1%
In full-time education (school, college or university)	6	0.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	3.9%	2	2.1%
In part-time education (school, college or university)	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	0	0.0%
Homemaker	8	1.2%	7	1.7%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	0	0.0%
Not required to work due to a disability or illness	3	0.4%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	1	1.1%
Retired	334	49.3%	210	52.1%	46	59.0%	45	44.1%	33	34.7%
Prefer not to say	48	7.1%	32	7.9%	3	3.8%	5	4.9%	8	8.4%
Not Answered	6	0.9%	3	0.7%	1	1.3%	2	2.0%	0	0.0%
	678		403		78		102		95	

Question 21: Which of the following categories best describes your ethnicity?

Option	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
White British	556	82.0%	343	85.1%	64	82.1%	82	80.4%	67	70.5%
White any other background	17	2.5%	2	0.5%	4	5.1%	3	2.9%	8	8.4%
Black or Black British	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Asian or Asian British	4	0.6%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	2	2.0%	1	1.1%
Mixed race	3	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	2.0%	1	1.1%
Gypsy, Roma, Traveller	1	0.1%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	81	12.0%	50	12.4%	5	6.4%	9	8.8%	17	17.9%
Other backgrounds	7	1.0%	4	1.0%	1	1.3%	1	1.0%	1	1.1%
Not Answered	8	1.2%	2	0.5%	3	3.8%	3	2.9%	0	0.0%
	678		403		78		102		95	

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Question 22: Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months?

	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
Option	Total	Percent of All	Percent of All		Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
Yes- limited a lot	12	1.8%	4	1.0%	0	0.0%	2	2.0%	6	6.3%
Yes- limited a little	50	7.4%	27	6.7%	5	6.4%	9	8.8%	9	9.5%
No	555	81.9%	341	84.6%	65	83.3%	85	83.3%	64	67.4%
Prefer not to say	48	7.1%	27	6.7%	5	6.4%	3	2.9%	13	13.7%
Not Answered	13	1.9%	4	1.0%	3	3.8%	3	2.9%	3	3.2%
	678		403		78		102		95	

Q23 Do you look after, or give help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either: long-term physical or mental ill-health/disability and/or problems related to old age? Are you a carer?

	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
Option	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
No	483	71.2%	293	72.7%	60	76.9%	71	69.6%	59	62.1%
Yes, 1-19 hours a week	94	13.9%	57	14.1%	8	10.3%	16	15.7%	13	13.7%
Yes, 20-49 hours a week	3	0.4%	2	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Yes, 50 or more hours a week	13	1.9%	6	1.5%	0	0.0%	3	2.9%	4	4.2%
Prefer not to say	73	10.8%	41	10.2%	7	9.0%	9	8.8%	16	16.8%
Not Answered	12	1.8%	4	1.0%	3	3.8%	3	2.9%	2	2.1%
	678		403		78		102		95	

Question 24: What is your religion?

Option	total submissions		Music		Drama		Individual		None of above	
	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All	Total	Percent of All
Christian (including all Christian denominations)	368	54.3%	227	56.3%	48	61.5%	48	47.1%	45	47.4%
Sikh	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Buddhist	3	0.4%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	2	2.0%	0	0.0%
Hindu	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Jewish	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Muslim	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	191	28.2%	117	29.0%	17	21.8%	28	27.5%	29	30.5%
Any other	81	12.0%	40	9.9%	5	6.4%	18	17.7%	18	19.0%
Not Answered	34	5.0%	18	4.5%	8	10.3%	6	5.9%	2	2.1%
	678	100.0%	403		78		102		95	

Qualitative analysis

Respondents were asked for their specific comments as to why they use the library and for any comments or suggestions on the service offer being made by NewSPAL. From the 678 forms which were completed, there were 530 comments received, across 2 free-text boxes in questions 13 and 17.

All comments were tagged in relation their theme, to allow ideas and opinions to be analysed in a consistent way. Many respondents have covered a range of themes in their commentary (i.e. individual comments have not just been about one thing). The main themes are listed below:

- **The collection** – comments about the collection itself
- **The Transfer to NewSPAL** – comments, both positive and negative, about NewSPAL's taking over the collection and service
- **Staffing** – comments on staff, volunteers and how the service is supported
- **Development of the collection** – comments on future plans for how the collection will be maintained and developed, e.g. buying new stock
- **Online** – comments on the online catalogue and using the service remotely
- **Opening hours** – comments on the proposed opening hours
- **Location of the collection** – comments on either the current location at Ewell Library or the proposed location in Woking
- **Inter-library loans** – comments about lending and borrowing stock between authorities other than Surrey or West Sussex
- **Internal delivery** – comments on using the internal library van service to collect and return materials at local libraries
- **Costs** – comments about what impact NewSPAL costs will have on the user and what impact changes to the service will have / have had on the council and library service.
- **Surrey County Council** – comments which talk about SCC or the political situation
- **The Consultation** – comments on the questions and the consultation process itself

The Collection

There were 125 comments about the collection itself. Overwhelmingly, people were hugely positive about the Performing Arts collection and its importance to the local Surrey community as well as nationally. They tended to use words such as 'vital', 'important', 'invaluable', 'wonderful resource' and were very forthright in the need for the collection to continue, whether this was through NewSPAL or through Surrey Libraries. They talked about the difference that the arts have made to people's lives in Surrey. They used very emotive language to describe the possible loss of the collection, using phrases such as 'absolute tragedy', 'essential service', 'amazing and valuable resource' and 'absolutely vital'. People were very appreciative of the range, scale and value of the collection and are insistent that the collection remains intact and available to Surrey residents and those further afield.

Sample of comments made

'SPAL is VITAL to music making in this country, never mind the south of England. But it is especially vital to music making in Surrey.'

'This collection, built up over years, is an invaluable and rare resource.'

There were very few negative comments about the collection. Only 3 people were not appreciative of it, thinking that it was aimed at a very small number of Surrey residents and the money could be better spent elsewhere.

Sample of comments made

'Ideally I would like this service removed entirely, stop wasting staff time on such a pointless service that only benefits a small overly privileged section of our communities.'

The Transfer to NewSPAL

There were 251 comments regarding the transfer of the collection to NewSPAL. 223 commented positively on NewSPAL's taking on the collection. They saw it as a very positive step for the collection's future to be managed and developed by NewSPAL rather than Surrey County Council. NewSPAL was seen as an asset to the cultural life of Surrey, and the expertise of its staff and volunteers would be beneficial to the users. Respondents felt that NewSPAL would be able to invest more care and attention to the collection than Surrey County Council could and would also be able to develop the collection for future use, which includes stock maintenance and purchasing new and replacement material.

Other comments talked about the business plan and the proposals and how these seemed well thought through and were a sensible way forward. Respondents felt that transferring the collection to NewSPAL would accord it a sense of future security and remove it from future financial threats within Surrey County Council. There was a real strength of feeling of the importance of continuing to make the collection available and that NewSPAL would be able to achieve this.

Sample of comments made

'As users, NEWSPAL will be strongly motivated to ensure the maintenance and continuation of the collection. The community benefits, which NEWSPAL will provide, are enormous, though largely unidentifiable in solely monetary terms.'

'The NewSPAL offer could provide future-proofing for the service, taking it out of the demands on SCC's budget in times of austerity. As a CIO it can work outside the constraints of local govt legislation; seek funding from other sources; long-term, it could seek to develop into one of a

handful of centres of excellence for the country, thus increasing its user base, and therefore its support, stability, resilience.'

There was also a small number of negative responses to NewSPAL's taking on the collection. 28 comments were not in favour of the transfer. There were differing reasons for this: some felt that a charity taking on the collection was not reliable long term, due to the level of volunteer involvement. Others felt that they may not have the necessary funding and expertise. Some were against the costs, location and methods of delivery (further details below). Other responses were concerned over the impact on individual users and their accessing and borrowing material.

Sample of comments made

'I fear that it all only being in Woking by worked by an independent entity and not able co-operate with Surrey libraries day to day will affect usage greatly. Very concerned.'

Staffing

There were 45 comments which talked about staffing. These fell into distinct areas. The majority of people talked about the necessity to have the collection managed by staff with experience and knowledge of the performing arts. It was seen as a positive step that NewSPAL propose to do this. Conversely, a minority of people commented on the fact that the present situation with the collection at Ewell showed that the lack of dedicated professional music and drama staff was now being felt, to the detriment of the service. There were several comments which referred back to when SPAL was in Denbies as a separate unit, with staffing committed to it full time, who had been very much appreciated for their professional input. Volunteers were also mentioned, mainly positively, where it was assumed or hoped that these volunteers would bring musical or other knowledge to the service.

Sample of comments made

'It is important that library staff includes a professional experienced in performing arts materials.'

'I am looking forward to having this very specialised library run by experienced and knowledgeable staff along with enthusiastic and again, experienced volunteers.'

'The staff try so hard but they just don't have the specialist knowledge. NewSPAL will have staff with the necessary expertise.'

Development of the Collection

60 comments referred to the continued development of the collection and the need for this to happen. People felt that the ongoing maintenance of the collection, including replacing stock and buying new stock, was only likely to happen under NewSPAL's control, rather than Surrey's. Other comments suggest that the collection has already diminished since it left Denbies, or would diminish in the future due to lack of investment by Surrey. Along with the continuation of multiple copy loans, it is the maintenance of the collection and how it will expand which people see as a point in NewSPAL's favour.

Sample of comments made

'The Newspaper proposals will not only ensure the continuity and development of this excellent service, but will carry it forward and evolve it for current and future users.'

'Surrey libraries obviously do not have the funds to update, enhance or add to the collection in the future whereas Newspaper will exist entirely to do that.'

Online

26 comments talked about online services. People were generally positive regarding the Online aspect to accessing NewSPAL's services. There was a certain level of lack of awareness of current online features, such as being able to locate and request stock using an online catalogue, with people reading this as a future positive development with NewSPAL and not as something which Surrey already offer. A bespoke system was looked on positively, as being more suited to the needs of NewSPAL's users.

Others saw online features as an enhancement, but not one that could replace the physical perusal of the stock, when selecting music or drama to perform. Online facilities were generally seen to be of benefit, but particularly in conjunction with physical services and not necessarily to replace them.

Sample of comments made

'It provides a good opportunity to improve the existing service with an IT system specifically designed for performing arts collections.'

'An online service and catalogue should be seen as a bonus facility, rather than a standard way of borrowing. Many of us need to physically scan the pages of a script before making choices, this means visiting the library in person. My job depends on "eyes-on" access.'

Opening Hours

19 responses commented on the opening hours. Most of the respondents commented that the proposed new hours were restrictive, or should be increased. But several respondents felt that the reduction in opening hours would be offset by the use of couriers, Amazon lockers, knowledgeable staff and online access.

Sample of comments made

'I think the opening times of new facilities need to be as generous as possible to allow a decent window for people who are travelling to get there in case of delays.'

'Shorter opening hours need not be a problem in view of the proposed arrangements for couriers and for on line arrangements with other providers in the country.'

Location of the collection

102 comments talked about the location of the collection, whether this was at Ewell Library, Woking or a different location altogether:

- 11 were positive to Ewell as a location
- 11 were negative to Ewell as a location
- 17 were positive to Woking as a location
- 44 were negative to Woking as a location
- 19 mentioned the location for other reasons

Given that Surrey is such a large county, responses about the location of the collection were, as would be expected, mostly subjective and based on where in Surrey the respondent lived.

Some people liked the fact that the collection was now housed in Ewell Library.

Sample of comments made:

'When it was in Dorking it was too hard to access. In Ewell it is much easier to access.'

'Please do NOT move the service after you just recently had it moved to Ewell.'

Others felt that the move to Ewell Library had been detrimental to the services there, as well as the inaccessibility of the library itself.

Sample of comments made:

'I really think that Ewell Library is terribly difficult to get to for people in a very large swathe of Surrey.'

'It has had a big impact on all users in terms of space, availability of books and tables for those doing research, homework etc. Parking is an issue also. Bourne Hall car park can easily be full and alternative parking is too far for people to carry heavy books.'

A Woking location also produced conflicting comments, with both positive and negative viewpoints, mainly due to the first floor location and the parking arrangements.

Samples of comments made:

I think Woking would be a good place for the library as it is reasonably central in Surrey and has good public transport, particularly by train.

The Woking location and chargeable car park sound fine and are similar to Ewell

'I would not like to have to go to Woking, or arrange a pickup at some cost, for something which I believe should be available to the general library user.'

'As someone who borrows music sets on behalf of a choral society I would find the new location and collection/drop-off proposals a serious challenge. It would be impossible to transfer 80-100 plus vocal scores to my vehicle from a first floor location in Woking.'

'As some music sets can be heavy and bulky, not having parking at the premises is detrimental. Woking's car parks are not cheap.'

Some respondents also suggested that the location be based somewhere completely different

Sample of comments made

'Why can the service not be sited in Guildford where the school of performing arts resides.'

'How about an industrial unit in between Guildford and Dorking? Seems about middle/middle.'

'If Woking destination is sensible then clearly the right decision. Was, for example, The University of Surrey approached?'

Finally, a few respondents felt that it was impossible to answer the question about a different location being preferable without knowing what that location was

Sample of comments made

'Asking if I would use the service it was located in different area ridiculous as it would obviously depend on where it was located.'

Inter Library Loans (ILL)

38 comments mentioned Inter Library Loans. The majority were supportive of inter-lending between library authorities as a means of supplementing the stock available to SPAL users, and hoped this service would continue under NewSPAL. Many also mentioned ILL as a possible way for NewSPAL to increase their income. Several responses were from users outside Surrey, who mentioned how valuable it was to them to be able to borrow for their users.

Sample of comments made

'As a borrower of music sets for ** Choral Society in Surrey, an important requirement is continued access to a wide collection of scores across several libraries (via inter-library mechanisms). Typically, due to the numbers of copies required (80-120) or the choice of piece, most of our bookings have included some inter-library loan.'***

'It is essential that in order to make NewSPAL cost effective, performing arts groups across the country will be enabled to access this collection more easily and will increase the financial viability of NewSPAL with realistic cost structures and charging.'

The few negative comments were regarding the point that if a lot of stock was on loan to other borrowers and authorities outside Surrey, there would be less stock available for users to choose from.

Sample of comments made

'I am not keen on the service being extended nationally as this may mean that surely organisations have less choice than previously'

'If NewSPAL is open to all comers, regardless of geographical location, this vastly increases the likelihood of items being unavailable, particularly the more popular works. Are there plans to increase the stock to cover this?'

Internal delivery

28 comments talked about continuing to use the internal van system for collection and return of their loans. The respondents were unanimous in wanting the use of the internal library van delivery system to continue, even if the collection were transferred to NewSPAL, as the facility of collecting their items from an extensive network of library locations was seen as highly desirable.

Sample of comments made

'Our choir tries to support SPAL, but if we lose the facility of (up to 140) scores being delivered to convenient libraries via the library van, and we have to pay courier charges, there may not be any advantage in using NewSPAL over a commercial enterprise.'

'The free delivery to my local library cuts out transport costs which is a major factor to stay with SPAL.'

Costs

106 comments referred to the question of costs. This included costs to the individual as well as costs to the council. The most common topic raised was that future costs should be competitive/reasonable/good value. Some respondents accepted that changes would be needed to make the service financially viable.

Sample of comments made

'It is essential that in order to make NewSPAL cost effective, performing arts groups across the country will be enabled to access this collection more easily and will increase the financial viability of NewSPAL with realistic cost structures and charging.'

'Think it vital that this valuable community resource continues to be available, even if charges have to rise somewhat. Of course if they rise too much that would affect the answers but that will probably be market-driven and users would vote with their wallets.'

However, other comments showed more concern about the increase in charges, particularly in light of the fact that there had already been increases in charges in the past year or so. People were also concerned about the cost of using a courier service to have their items delivered to them.

Sample of comments made

'The charges to Surrey members for group borrowing are already higher than other libraries' charges to out-of-area groups and are, in my opinion, prohibitive. As a small Surrey-based community choir we cannot afford to borrow from our own County Library. The £45 annual fee was the last straw, especially as services were not even available when we needed them in the

run up to Christmas. The move to Woking renders the library inaccessible to us - but we are now going elsewhere because we can no longer afford to borrow from Surrey.'

'Interest in having service maintained with maximum availability and minimal cost to users. NewsPAL appears to be similar to BSI and with ability to set its own pricing model is likely to become practically available only to commercial organisations and not individual members of the public.'

'The extra cost of a courier/postal service would be unwelcome'

Several respondents also mentioned that the tight budgets of students, the retired, disabled, small groups etc. should be borne in mind:

Sample of comments made

'So many playreading groups will have to close and yet this is an excellent activity for the elderly. But the cost of borrowing the scripts and having to go to Woking to select them will make too difficult to maintain. Concessions for over 65 would help.'

'I am strongly against any increased charges as Music should be accessible to all and often as musicians we are on limited income.'

Some respondents felt that details of the proposed charging structure were not clear enough, so they were unsure exactly how this would work with NewsPAL in the future:

Sample of comments made

'The cost information is non-existent except for vague references to use charges and local parking fees. There should be a proposed budget available to people taking the survey as part of the advance information provided.'

'Some of the questions depend on the actual values (e.g. if costs are increased by 10% it would make little difference to borrowing, but if 50% it would have more of an impact). It would then make a difference to choir subscriptions.'

Several respondents mentioned that SCC was facing financial challenge restrictions, which were impacting on the service and Surrey's ability to continue with the collection. They saw this as a very good reason for NewsPAL to take over the collection as they could give it the financial stability that the library service would not be able to provide, including sourcing alternative funding not available to Surrey County Council.

Sample of comments made

'However, continuing pressures on local government finances put the present collection's long-term future in doubt. The NewSPAL offer could provide future-proofing for the service, taking it out of the demands on SCC's budget in times of austerity.'

'NewSPAL will be able to access other finance streams which are currently unavailable with SCC'

Finally, some comments reflected that the collection itself and the time that had been spent of it for a limited number of people, was not worth the cost at all.

Sample of comments made

'All of this is a complete waste of tax payers' money and the Performing Arts Library should have been closed years ago. Why should tax payers in general pay for the provision of music sets, when SCC does not have enough money to pay for elderly social care? People are dying in beds at home and we're worried about choirs having access to music sets. It's complete madness.'

'The whole concept of any taxpayers money going towards this pointless service does nothing but annoy me. I would gamble that most of its users are reasonably privileged in life and could afford to pay for this nonsense service themselves.'

Surrey County Council

There were 34 comments relating to Surrey County Council itself and comments of a political nature. On the whole, these related to finance, whereby people commented on the fact that Surrey can no longer afford to run a performing arts service, so it makes sense for it to be handed over to NewSPAL. Some others felt that Surrey should not be spending any more time and money on such a specialised service. Surrey County Council was also criticised for its perceived attitude towards the arts in Surrey and its lack of support of the collection.

Sample of comments made

'Come on councillors bite the bullet and close the service and provide services for the many not the few.'

'I think it is a great disgrace that Surrey Council is not willing to continue with the Performing Arts Library and indicative of a completely blinkered and philistine approach to the arts in Surrey.'

The consultation

There were 14 comments on the consultation process itself, including the concept of it and the questions themselves. Some of them were positive, as people appreciated being given the opportunity to give their opinion.

Sample of comments made

'I appreciate the value of this type of consultation.'

'It is vital that SCC pays careful attention to the responses to this survey and other representations from SPAL users. I believe that if SCC gets this right, NewSPAL could be a real asset to Surrey.'

However, the majority of the questions in this theme were negative, about the consultation itself and the questions that were asked.

Sample of comments made

'This questionnaire, which has been rushed out with little thought, is very poorly designed and many of the questions are difficult to reply to meaningfully without qualification. In itself it is an indicator of why SCC's custodianship of the SPAL collection cannot be relied on.'

'As usual, I think the aim of this 'consultation' is for SCC to say that its had a consultation. It seems to make little difference what the people it serves want.'