

**APPENDIX B**

To Councillor Richard Blunt  
Cabinet Member for Communities &  
Wellbeing  
Leicestershire County Council  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicester LE3 8RA

**Braunstone Town Library**

The Braunstone Town Save Our Library Action Group (SOLAG) consists of active volunteers who are members of our Heritage Archive Group and Community Newspaper. Our main aim is to contribute to the social and cultural well-being of our community.

We are conscious of the County Council budget pressures and genuinely concerned to assist the County Council and Braunstone Town Council to find a way to keep our Community Library open.

We are aware that the County Council Cabinet will be meeting on April 19th to consider a Business Plan Proposal submitted by Fabula.

SOLAG was first introduced to Fabula members, Macha Barnden and Sally White, on January 18th at our Civic Centre. They both spent an hour outlining their alternative plans for basing a specialist children's reading service in our Library. This was an informal meeting and no minutes were kept. They followed this up with a private meeting with the Town Council's Executive Officer, Darren Tilley.

On 14th March, John Dodd, Chairman of SOLAG, received an e-mail from Macha Barnden forwarding a draft of the Fabula Business Plan Proposal for Braunstone Town Library, for consultation and feedback purposes.

Fabula then sent a publicity press release to the SOLAG Chairman and the Editor of the Braunstone Life Community Newspaper, setting out their ideas for the future of Braunstone Town Library.

SOLAG has examined and discussed the Fabula plans in depth and has major concerns regarding the proposed scaled down provision for adult readers, the lack of financial statements / plans and no policy statements in particular an Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA). This is a requirement agreed by LCC Cabinet Meeting in November 2014 as part of its "Strategy for the Delivery of Library Services" (Agenda pages 125-154 refer to Braunstone Town Library)

Fabula plans specify (quote) a "reduced general provision for adults" adding that the Library would "reopen as a functioning children's library with limited provision for adults".

They suggest taking over the entire Library building for this purpose and restricting adult provision to paperback fiction & poetry; quick reads; paperback biography; and a limited large print collection. They suggest relocating the adult stock inside the Civic Centre with Braunstone Town Council taking on some of the costs, "It may be possible to use some of the existing BTC infrastructure to reduce outgoings on key expenditure..." and Braunstone Town Council "would be better co-ordinating volunteers" The effect of this policy would have a counter-productive and catastrophic impact on adult reading and further consequences on the scale of children's reading, bearing in mind that most children visiting the library are accompanied by adults.

The Fabula proposal is too one-dimensional and looks to be in stark contrast to the County Council's successful 'flagship' libraries in Barrow and Rothley which provide a 'balanced' book stock to meet the needs of the whole community. These meet the necessary criteria and serve as the 'model' for the community hub library that SOLAG would prefer to see in Braunstone Town. In fact the LCC Cabinet chose to ignore part of the recommendations of the "Red Quadrant" commissioned survey which showed Braunstone Town Library as one of the 12 community hubs.

SOLAG has studied the Department of Culture, Media and Sport paper on "Community libraries: good practice toolkit" published on 23 March 2016. This stresses importance of taking into account 'local needs' in consultation and provides guidance in relation to Community managed libraries and the statutory service. These include a legal requirement to provide a service to both adults and children.

The Fabula's submission fails to do this and SOLAG would request that the reservations expressed in this letter are brought to the attention of Cabinet so that they can be better informed to take account of local views before they make their decision

---

John Dodd  
Chairman SOLAG.  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2016

Copied to Leader of Braunstone Town Council and to Braunstone Town's Chief Executive Officer.