

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 28 NOVEMBER 2002**

#### **SCOTTISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION UNIT**

##### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to (a) advise the Committee of the outcome of the review of the Scottish Local Government Information Unit; and (b) request the Committee to consider paying the further part payment to the Scottish Local Government Information Unit (SLGIU) in respect of the affiliation fee for 2002/2003.

##### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** At the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 18 April 2002, the Committee agreed to a six month part payment of the affiliation fee to the Scottish Local Government Information Unit pending the outcome of an ongoing review regarding the Unit.
- 2.2** The Unit recently consulted its members on their views on the various options arising from the proposal that the Unit be integrated within CoSLA and specifically, members were asked for their views on five options, namely:-
- (i) merger as proposed by CoSLA;
  - (ii) SLGIU continuing as a stand alone Joint Committee with a reduced membership;
  - (iii) SLGIU operating as a semi-independent arm of CoSLA;
  - (iv) SLGIU remaining as a Joint Committee but developing a close link with another organisation; and
  - (v) "Merger Plus".
- 2.3** The "Merger Plus" option proposes that if the merger goes ahead some form of semi-independent forum should be preserved. This would be to ensure that the SLGIU's aims and objectives continue to be pursued by CoSLA and that three key positive features should be maintained:-
- The provision of information directly to all Elected Members;
  - Positive links with Trade Unions; and
  - The independent nature of SLGIU's work.
- 2.4** An essential part of the focus of the new Unit within CoSLA would be the provision of information and services to Councillors and partner organisations.

### **3. OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE**

- 3.1** The consultation exercise showed that there was overwhelming support from SLGIU Member Authorities for the proposed integration along the lines of the “Merger Plus” option and CoSLA has also indicated its willingness to accept this option.
- 3.2** The SLGIU Joint Committee meeting held on 23 October 2002 considered a report on the outcome of the consultation and agreed, that given the view of the majority of its members, the Unit should “enter into immediate negotiations with CoSLA on implementing the “Merger Plus” proposal..... with a view to ensuring that, as far as possible, a seamless integration of the SLGIU within CoSLA is achieved”.
- 3.3** Following on from the decision to support the “Merger Plus” option, the Joint Committee considered a report outlining the legal and logistical issues that need to be resolved in order to bring about the objective of a seamless integration of SLGIU within CoSLA and the Committee has agreed to seek further legal advice on a number of issues, i.e. (i) the implications of SLGIU’s Joint Committee status; (ii) the implications of deciding to cease to carry out and fund the current tasks undertaken by the Unit; and (iii) what the Joint Committee can do with its assets and liabilities.
- 3.4** There will be a period of discussion and negotiation between SLGIU and CoSLA on the detail of the “Merger Plus” proposal and between SLGIU, its Lead Authority and CoSLA on how to resolve outstanding issues such as the transfer of SLGIU staff.
- 3.5** The next meeting of the SLGIU Joint Committee will consider a detailed report on progress with these and other matters.

### **4. AFFILIATION FEE FOR 2002/2003**

- 4.1** The SLGIU is now approaching Councils who made a part payment, with the request that they consider full payment for the current year following the review.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** The cost of the affiliation fee for 2002/2003 is £2,610.00 for which a six monthly payment has already been paid. There remains, therefore, £1,305.00 outstanding. This fee can be accommodated from within the existing budget.

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** Payment of any affiliation is made under Section 89 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

### **7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS - NIL**

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**8.1** The Committee is asked to:-

- (i) note the outcome of the review; and
- (ii) agree the further part payment of the affiliation fee for 2002/2003 to the Scottish Local Government Information Unit at a cost of £1,305.

Fiona Lees  
Depute Chief Executive/  
Director of Corporate Resources

13 November 2002  
JA/LR

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Letter dated 30 October 2002 from the Scottish Local Government Information Unit.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers relative to this report should contact Julie Armstrong, Principal Administrative Officer, on (01563) 576047. Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager, on (01563) 576135.

**Implementation Officer: Julie Armstrong, Principal Administrative Officer**