

The Ten Step Handbook

A Guide To Finding And Leasing The Perfect Property For Your Business



Property Services









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This guide is written to help new and small businesses, find the ideal property for their business in North Lanarkshire. At North Lanarkshire Council, we work hard every day to help small businesses get started and grow. One of the ways we do this is by leasing lots of properties, around 700 or so, to small businesses, and from the responses to our tenant's surveys, they think were pretty good at it.

We thought if we wrote an easy to use, jargon free **How-To** guide, about finding and leasing business property, and crammed it with many of our experience and good ideas as we could, that might help you. To make this as easy as possible, we have broken it down into 10 straight forward steps to follow.

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Don't worry about the steps, we'll explain it all as we go along, and like any other **How-To** guide we have a set of icons to point out important stuff you should read. You can see the icons below with an explanation of what each one means. At the end of the guide is a whole load of other useful information, like who to speak to about setting up a new business, and lots of contact information that you might need. But if you read this guide and you're still a little unsure, don't worry, give us a call on **01236 616292** and we will talk it through with you.

P.S. Please read the **Warning** on the next page, it is really important you understand what leasing a property means, what you are taking on, and what you could lose, if it all goes badly wrong.



Top Tip:- Help that can make your business life easier.



Money Tip:- Tips that could save your business money.



Technical Support:- This is where your business should get outside help!



Ask The Question:- You need to ask this question before you commit your business!



Stop:- This might be a deal breaker.



Contact Information:- A link which takes you to contact information for each step.

WARNING

Leasing commercial property is a big responsibility similar to buying a house, and the burden you accept by becoming a tenant is far greater than leasing a flat or a house. When you lease a commercial property, you accept all costs relating to that property until the end of the lease, at which point the landlord has every right to expect the building back in exactly the same or possibly better condition, than they let it to you. This can mean that at the end of the lease or even during it, you could have to pay to rebuild walls or replace the roof if necessary. It also means if anything goes wrong with the building most commonly electricity, gas, heating or plumbing, you will have to pay to fix it, and not your landlord.

Once you have signed a lease, your responsibility does not stop until the end of that lease, and you cannot end it or walk away from it. If you don't keep paying the rent when you are supposed to, you will be taken to court to recover that money, and the same applies to any repairs or other costs. Even once the lease has ended, you will have to pay for any outstanding cost that occurred while you were the tenant.

This handbook is only intended as a brief guide to letting commercial property, to raise your awareness and help you identify potential problems. We would always recommend if you are considering leasing a property that you obtain the appropriate legal and other professional advice to guide you.



Step 1 - What Can I Afford?

A) If I'm a New Business

As a new business it is very hard to know what your turnover, costs and income are going to be. That is why it is essential to prepare a business plan which sets out as accurately as possible all your income and expenditure. The **Business Gateway** (tel **01236 702020**) or **www.bgateway.com** can offer a lot of help with this for free, which can mean the difference between getting up and running or not. It is also a good idea to speak directly to North Lanarkshire Council's own **Business Support Team** in our Regeneration Services, they can be contacted on **01698 302198** or by email at **sharpr@northlan.gov.uk**. **Town Centre Activities Ltd** (telephone **01236 638443** email **flooda@northlan.gov.uk**) is another good source of support, if you are considering locating in or around a town centre in North Lanarkshire.

When you are starting a new business, you need to get a lot of information together before you know if your idea has a reasonable chance of success. Here are some simple questions you should be asking.



Ask The Question:-

- Is there a market for my product/service?
- Who are my main competitors and what advantages do you have over them?
- What price can you realistically charge for my product/service?
- What is my gross profit of each item, at that price?
- How many of your products can you be reasonably sure of selling at that price?



Technical Support:- When you're trying to start your business, speak to as many people as you can who have experience in business and the industry you're considering. Friends and family members are a good place to start, and you can learn from their experiences. Speaking to people in the industry, trade associations, potential customers and suppliers, is essential, because the success of your business will be based on the contacts you build up. Through the Business Gateway you can access the Federation of Small Business, the Lanarkshire Chamber of Commerce, networking events and training seminars which can also be an excellent way of making new contacts.

If you can work out the answers to the questions above, from them you can work out a rough idea of your **Gross Profit**. The **Gross Profit** is the difference between what you think you can sell in a year and the cost of providing that stock for sale.

A simple example is a jeweller, Mr Di Monde who buys in stock for a year at £100,000 and sells it for £200,000, his **Gross Profit** is £100,000. Out of that £100,000 he then has to pay all his running costs, i.e.:-

- His salary	- Staff costs
- Advertising costs	- Tax and insurance
- Vehicle costs	- Rent and business rates
- Repair and maintenance	- Heating and lighting
- Overdraft	- Contingencies

The jeweller also has to find the money to fit out the shop, and at the end of the lease put the shop back in exactly the way it was let to him. This money also has to come out of the **Gross Profit**, possibly as repayment of a bank loan.



Technical Support:- As you can see, even in this simplified example, there are lots of potential pit falls and unexpected costs in running a business. The Business Gateway can give you access to people who can help you put together a realistic business plan, for your proposed business.

If you can work out a business plan, you will have at least a rough idea of your total sales (turnover) and gross profit so you can start to work out what resources you need and can afford to achieve those sales. This will then tell you what properties you can afford to lease.



Money Tip:- High Start up costs can have a big impact on the initial success of your business, remember to work out what you can afford and have a budget. You might be lucky and find a property that reduces those costs, but you don't want to try and find additional start up money once you are committed to a property.



Money Tip:- We think that an average business's property costs including the rent, business rates, insurance, heating and lighting, and repair should be no more than 15 to 20% of their Gross Turnover. If they are any more than that, you are putting a big strain on the business, particularly if things don't go according to plan. It is far better to start out with low property costs and move once you have established your business.



Top Tip:- The Property Service in North Lanarkshire Council has a wide range of small low cost industrial and office properties, ideally suited to a new business, and let on highly flexible terms. The idea is that as a new business you can start your business with a small fairly low cost property, trade for a while, see how your business develops and trade up to bigger or better property as and when you're ready to.



Technical Support:- The Council is not the only providers of property suitable for new businesses and you must always look at what is available across the whole market.

What rent can I afford?

Ok, you have done a business plan and worked out a figure for Gross Turnover which you think is fairly realistic, what does that leave for rent? We said 15 to 20% of Gross Turnover to cover all property costs, a ballpark figure depending on your business is about half of your total property costs will be rent, i.e. 7.5% to 10% of Gross Turnover. The other half, should cover all the other things like Non-domestic Rates, heating, lighting, repair and servicing etc. This is a ballpark figure, which in the absence of any other information you might use, however this will differ between different types of property, and therefore an accurate assessment would be far better.

Prospective tenants should be aware that between 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011 small businesses with Rateable Values up to £10,000, can apply for 100% relief from Non-domestic Rates, this represents about a quarter of your property costs. Rateable Values up to £12,000 can apply for 50% relief, and Rateable Values up to £18,000 can apply for 25% relief. In the present economic climate, there is no guarantee that this relief will continue, so we would suggest business plans should assume that this may not continue. For up to date information on small business rate relief contact **North Lanarkshire Councils, Nondomestic Rates Section** on telephone **01698 403903** or email revenue@northlan.gov.uk , or visit the **Scottish Government website** at www.scotland.gov.uk .

Having worked out your potential Gross Turnover, you now know that you can budget for 7.5% of that as rent, possibly stretching to 10% if really pressed. What rental range are you searching for properties in?

Rent per year:-

£0 to £2,500	£2,500 to £4,999	£5,000 to £7,499	£7,500 to £9,999	£10,000 to £14,999	£15,000 to £20,000

Tick as appropriate ✓



Link to Useful Contacts for Step 1



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Step 1 - What Can I Afford?

B) If I'm an Existing Business

As an existing business you will already have a fair idea of the answers to the questions set out in **Step 1A**, but there are other things you will need to consider. If you are moving your whole business from one location to a new one, the questions are different from taking on a new additional property. Let us consider moving your whole business first:-

Moving your business

Like everything else in business when you are considering a move you have to balance the cost against the benefit, and moving a business can be expensive. You need to know your new business home is going to work for you and to some extent is future proof, i.e. it has the facilities you need, and you can move your business again to bigger or smaller property if need be, at the minimum of cost. The costs and benefits can be summed up under the following broad headings:-

The costs

- **Moving costs;** the cost of changing letterhead, moving phones, and internet, and physically relocating your operation.
- **Lost custom;** the loss of customers who drop in, because they know where you are, or you lose because they can't contact you.
- **Giving up your old property;** ending an existing lease may take time and have associated costs not least any dilapidation you are responsible for in your current property
- **New property costs;** the cost of setting up your new lease, which can include lawyers, accountants and surveyors fees, and possibly a rent deposit.
- **Fitting out costs;** the cost of adapting a property to suit your needs.
- **New operating costs;** the additional cost of your new property, but also increased business running costs, for example diesel for delivery vans.

The benefits

- **Increase business income;** if this move is not going to increase your business income or at least reduce business costs, the other reasons need to be really good.
- **Operating costs;** a new location could reduce your operating costs or offer better value for your money.
- **Space;** the room to operate your business as you need, and possibly more efficient use of space.
- **Customer service;** the right location to deliver an improved customer service.
- **Improved facilities;** helping you run your business more efficiently and possibly helping to retain staff.



Technical Support:- In order to make an informed choice about moving, and weighing up the costs against the benefits, you should consider seeking professional advice from your accountant and support from the **Business Gateway** (Telephone **01236 702020**) or www.bgateway.com , at this stage. It is also a good idea to speak directly to North Lanarkshire Council's own **Business Development Team** in our Regeneration Services, as they may be aware of specific grant funding that could support your expansion. and they can be contacted on **01698 302198** or by email at sharpr@northlan.gov.uk. If you are considering locating in or around a North Lanarkshire town centre, **Town Centre Activities Ltd** (tel **01236 638443**, email flooda@northlan.gov.uk) may also be able to offer support.



Top Tip:- There is a range of advice on the internet about relocating businesses, but have a look at the **pages 45 to 49** of the **Scottish Executives guide** on relocating its own services (**The Relocation Guide published by the Scottish Executive, June 2005**), for a list of things to consider. This can be found online at www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/54357/0014176.pdf

Expanding your business

If you are considering a new additional property to expand your business, the questions you should be asking are pretty much the same as if you were setting up a new business at that location:-



Ask The Question:-

- Is there a market for your Product/Service in the new location?
- Who are your main competitors and what advantages do you have over them?
- What price can you realistically charge for your Product/Service?
- What is your gross profit of each item, at that price?
- How many of your products can you be reasonably sure of selling at that price from your new property?
- Is the new property going to take business away from my existing business?
- How are the operating costs of my new property going to compare with my current operation and can the new property achieve a reasonable profit margin, without being subsidising by the old property.

In short you have to work out:-

- A rough indication of annual Gross Turnover for the new property.
- A rough indication of annual Gross Profit for the new property.

- Your operating costs for the new property (see the Property Cost Comparison sheet in step 8).

And decide if there is a big enough net profit in the new location to justify the risk.



Technical Support:- Obviously if you're considering this type of expansion to your business, it is essential you make an informed choice with professional advice from your accountant or another suitably qualified person. **Business Gateway** (Telephone **01236 702020**) or www.bgateway.com may also be able to offer valuable support at this stage.

What rent can I afford?

Like the new start businesses you will have done a business plan and worked out a figure for Gross Turnover which you think is fairly realistic, what does that leave for rent? We said in Part A, 7.5% to 10% of Gross Turnover is a ballpark figure which could be used, but your current payments will be able to give you a far better idea of what is realistic for your business.

One pitfall you do need to be aware of is the impact that Small business Rates Relief can have on you. If you have currently been enjoying 100% relief and you move above the threshold of £10,000 on separate or combined Rateable Values, you are going to be paying at least some Nondomestic Rates. We would suggest contacting **North Lanarkshire Councils, Nondomestic Rates Section** for details of the impact it may have on your business on telephone **01698 403903** or by email revenue@northlan.gov.uk . Information can also be found on the **Scottish Government website** at www.scotland.gov.uk and the **Scottish Assessors website** www.saa.gov.uk.

Having now worked out your budget rental, what price range are you searching for properties in?

£0 to £2,500	£2,500 to £4,999	£5,000 to £7,499	£7,500 to £9,999	£10,000 to £14,999	£15,000 to £20,000

Tick as appropriate ✓



Link to Useful Contacts for Step 1



Step 2 - What Size Do I Need?

Whilst we can't tell you what size of accommodation you need for your business, we can give you some general guidance.



Top Tip:- Only rent the accommodation you need for your business, if you choose your location well, there will be other larger accommodation there that you can move to later.



Size Guide (How to work out what you need!):-If you are a first time tenant knowing the size of accommodation that you need is very difficult, so we have prepared a guide to accommodation sizes to help you decide on the size of property you may need.

Start-up units / sole trader-

125 square feet (10 square metres) – the size of a bedroom suitable for one or two desks or as a small lock up.

200 square feet (20 square metres) – the size of an average lounge suitable for four desks or a single desk and small work area.

Starter units:-

500 square feet (50 square metres) – this is usually the minimum size for an office or workshop and provides office accommodation for about 8 people or a starter workshop with office.

1,000 square feet (100 square metres) – this provides accommodation for a more established/expanding business with a staff of about 16 to 18, whether that is as an office or a workshop and would accommodate most small or satellite businesses.

Medium sized units:-

2,000 to 5,000 square feet (200 – 500 square metres) – this is normal accommodation for established businesses.

Large units:-

5,000 plus square feet (500 plus square metres) – this would only suit large established businesses.



Top Tip:- the size of commercial property is usually quoted in Square Feet this can be confusing, remember that the area can always be provided in Square Metres if you ask, and be careful that you know what is being quoted as you get 10.764 Square Feet to the Square Metre.



Money Tip:- Remember rent is only part of your business’s property costs and the more space you rent, the more these go up. Step 8 sets out what these costs are and how to budget for them.

What Size Do You Need?

Having now looked at our guidance, what size range do you think would be best for your business?

125ft ² /10m ² to 200ft ² /20m ²	200ft ² /20m ² to 500ft ² /50m ²	500ft ² /50m ² to 1,000ft ² /100m ²	1,000ft ² /100m ² to 2,000ft ² /200m ²	2,000ft ² /200m ² to 5,000ft ² /500m ²

Tick as appropriate ✓



Link to Useful Contacts for Step 2



Step 3 – How Long Does Letting Take?

OK, you have set up a new business, or you’re about to expand, and you need a property! You would like it today, but Monday next week at the latest would do! That is generally what we hear from new tenants, is it realistic or possible, unfortunately No!! It may also surprise you to hear that North Lanarkshire Council can let many of its properties far more quickly than most of our competitors.

Further on in the Handbook we will talk about issues such as; preparing the property for the tenant, credit checks, agreeing the lease, and handing the property over, but it is important to understand all of these things can take time. Like buying a house, leasing a property is a legal process which can be frustrating. The time it takes is measured in weeks and months not days, and you may encounter unforeseen difficulties, all of which can usually be resolved but still causes delays and stress.

Timescales

Below we have set out a chart, to show you how long we would expect the letting process to take, provided there are no unforeseen problems. Property Services uses **In-House** leases that significantly speed up our letting process, if a **Custom** lease is required then it must be agreed by lawyers, and the letting will take longer.

Property Type	Lease	Walk in Condition	Building Checks	Start to Finish
Business or Industrial Unit	In-House Lease	✓	✓	1 to 2 Months
Business or Industrial Unit	In-House Lease	X	X	2 to 3 Months
Business or Industrial Unit	Custom Lease	✓	✓	2 to 3 Months
Business or Industrial Unit	Custom Lease	X	X	3 to 6 Months
Shop	In-House Lease	✓	✓	3 to 6 Months
Shop	In-House Lease	X	X	6 to 12 Months
Shop	Custom Lease	X	X	6 to 12 Months
Shop	Assignment	N/A	N/A	6 to 12 Months

The majority of the accommodation we have to offer is business or industrial units, and usually you could be up and running in the property within 1 to 2 months. However the smaller units are so highly sought after, that often people view and reserve these before they are fully ready to be let, and these can easily take 2 to 3 months, especially if an unforeseen problem comes to light.

The property team at North Lanarkshire Council are very experienced and helpful, if you have a particular problem, then make us aware of it and we will see if we can help or offer an alternative. We are generally very good at helping our customers with problems, if it is drawn to our attention at an early stage.

It should be mentioned, that in the case of office and industrial property we operate on a strict first come served basis. If you are interested in a property and complete our paperwork, we will reserve that property for you for one month. This means you can reserve a property with us, with no obligation to lease, then take your time to make sure that the property is going to suit your needs. If however you do not fill out our form and another person who wants the property does, it is theirs to lease.

Shops properties are different and always take longer to lease, because our procedures require all shops to be put out to tender on the open market. Deciding the successful tender takes at least a week after the closing date, assuming no problems with the offers made, and much longer if there are issues. Only after that can the normal letting process begin.



Top Tip:- Be aware of the time scales involved and plan for them, or discuss which properties are quicker to lease.



Stop:- Any lease by the council for more than 5 years must be approved by our Councillors, this can add a 3 month delay to the letting process. A solution may be to agree a shorter lease, and then put forward your request for a longer lease to a hearing by the Councillors.

What Are Your Timescales?

Having looked at our timescale guidance how soon do you need in?

Timescale	1 Month	2 Months	3 Months	4 to 6 Months	7 to 9 Months
Office	*				
Workshop	*				
Shop	N/A	N/A	*		
Other	N/A	N/A	*		

*- Please Tell Us!

Tick as appropriate ✓



Link to Useful Contacts for Step 3



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Step 4 – What Type Of Property Do I Need?



Money Tip:- It may seem very obvious what type of property you need, but please take a moment to read this section because it could save your business a lot of money!

Ten years ago or so, it was far easier to know what type of property would suit your business, if you sold goods you needed to be in the busy part of the high street, if you offered services a quieter high street shop location was fine, and manufacturing was in industrial estates. Many of us still think in these terms, but unfortunately your competitors probably don't, and if they can be more flexible they could have a big cost advantage over you!



Stop:- Before you can consider individual properties you will need to know:-

- What properties will a landlord rent to you for your type of business. As a landlord the Council has quite strict rules on what types of business can trade where, so always ask.
- Can you get planning permission for your use at the property? It's a good idea to speak to the planning service (Tel **01236 616469** or visit www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk), before you start your property search so you know if you are restricted to particular property types. Remember that you can always ask for a change of planning use, but this will take time and cost money, with no guarantee of success.

Let's think about different property types, and how they may suit your business.

Shop Properties

If you are the type of business where customers may visit you, then you are probably considering a shop, but for reasons we will explain, shops are relatively expensive, and for your customers may actually put them off trading with you. The traffic around shopping parades can often make them hard to get to and if parking is also difficult, they may just go somewhere easier. Now obviously some types of businesses need shops, for example corner shops, and local hairdressers, but what we are suggesting is, **does your business really need a traditional shop?** If you sell specialist products maybe an industrial unit would work just as well, or if you sell a service maybe your customers would prefer pleasant accessible offices with parking.

On a like for like basis, the total cost of a high street shop will normally be a more expensive than a similarly sized office in a nearby location, and quite a bit more

expensive than an industrial unit. The reason for this is you are effectively paying a rent for two things:-

- 1) Floor space and
- 2) Advertising from the shop front.

Remember the more prominent the shop the more expensive the shop front advertising.



Ask The Question:-

- How much extra is my business paying for **shop front advertising**?
- Could I spend that money better in other ways?
- Do my customers care about a shop front?



Top Tip: - Be prepared to consider other alternatives, do your research, and depending on your business, know what extra a shop property is costing you.



Stop: - The council will always try and protect the business of existing tenants, if your business is the same as an existing tenant in a local shopping parade, the council will probably refuse to lease you that particular shop.



Stop: - If you want to run a takeaway or hot food shop, you will need special planning consent, which may not be granted (Tel **01236 616469** or visit www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk). Also landlords (including the council), may require special adaption at your cost to use the shop for hot food, these may include grease traps, and secure waste storage so remember to discuss this at an early stage, with our surveyors (tel **01236 616292**) and Environmental Services (tel **01698 403110** or visit www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk).

Despite the points made above, shops are always very popular, and because of this the council has special rules on renting them which are discussed in Step 3.

Offices

In the past offices were seen as the preserve of professionals like lawyers and accountants, and other businesses needed a physical shop window, but now because many businesses use an internet website as a shop window, a high street presence is not so important. Some businesses find that a good office, combined with accessibility and parking, may be more important for their clients, and creates the right impression of their

business. Alternatively you may also consider cheaper accommodation may be suitable if you do not need a place for your clients to visit.

We believe that both of these business ideas are effective depending on your business, and North Lanarkshire offers a unique advantage to either of these types of business. Our location, and the excellent motorway and rail connections mean almost anywhere in central Scotland can be reached in an hour, this means customers anywhere in central Scotland can reach you, or you can reach them, in under an hour, this is obviously a huge advantage for any business, over the traditional locations of central Glasgow and Edinburgh. Add to that the considerably lower accommodation costs in North Lanarkshire and we think North Lanarkshire has to be a good place to grow your business.

Because of this North Lanarkshire Council recognised a need for modern good quality office accommodation at an affordable price for small and start up businesses in the area, and responded by building the Airdrie Business Centre, and Dalziel Building in Motherwell. These two buildings offer small business office accommodation on a par with the best accommodation in Glasgow or Edinburgh, but tailored to small business needs, on highly cost effective and flexible terms. Both buildings have staffed receptions, 24 hour access, meeting and conference facilities, state of the art internet and telephone connections, and excellent accessibility.

We run both Airdrie Business Centre and Dalziel Building as business centres rather than office buildings, this means we are more relaxed about who can be a tenant in these buildings, than a traditional office landlord might be, there is a high level of day to day management and we work hard to create a business community in the business centres. Your clients cannot fail to be impressed by the high quality office and conference facilities available at either business centre. Other advantages of these buildings are:-

- Prestigious image
- Monthly leases allowing maximum flexibility
- Ability to grow your business but keep your address
- A service charge means all extra costs are charged up front
- Cost effective rents
- Part of a business community
- Support from the centre management

On the other hand, if you don't need the image and the bottom line is more important, we have business centres in industrial locations that offer basic but good accommodation at very affordable prices and a range of properties in-between.



Top Tip: - The advantage of our business centres is the ability to grow or shrink your business as you need without having to significantly change your address and keep your telephone number.



Top Tip: - Surprisingly the perfect accommodation for your business in the Dalziel Building or Airdrie Business Centre can work out cheaper than a shop in a poor location, when all the property costs are taken into consideration, it's always worth doing the sums.

Industrial

Attitudes to industrial locations have changed a lot in recent years. They have moved from only being places where things are made, to being home to a wide variety of businesses some of which are almost shop uses. Industrial buildings are generally basic, but the advantage is that the rents are comparatively cheap and with our agreement you can adapt the inside of the building to your needs.

Yards and Land

The Council does have some commercial land and yards which it lets out, this is our cheapest accommodation, and of course the most basic. Like shops there is a strong demand for yards, so the council's procedure is to advertise these for let and invite interested parties to tender the rent they are prepared to pay through our tender process. The council will then consider all the bids, and grant the lease to the bid they think is the most appropriate. This is exactly the same process we use for our shops as mentioned in Step 3.

Unusual Buildings

The council by its nature occupies a lot of rather unusual properties, occasionally a council service may decide that a particular property no longer meets its needs and it decides to vacate the property. The property may then become available for let. Usually these properties have inherent problems, as many are at the end of their usable life for the council. These properties can offer a good opportunity to the right business, provided they are able to deal with the problems of the property. Given the high running or adaptation costs associated with these properties, we do not recommend them for new businesses, but our staff are always happy to discuss these properties and if appropriate arrange a viewing.

What Type of Properties Will You Consider?

Shops & Hot Food	Office/ Business Centre	Workshops & Starter Units	Yards	Unusual Buildings

Tick as appropriate ✓



Link to Useful Contacts for Step 4



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Step 5 – Where Is The Best Location For My Business?

Before you start thinking about where you want your business to be located, it is often very useful to set out clearly what your business needs in terms of location. Here is a short list of issues you need to consider:-

- Property type
- Staff
- Customers
- Suppliers
- Local knowledge
- Access
- Cost

Property type: - It may appear your choices of location are limited by the type of property you need, but as we discussed in **Step 3**, if you can be flexible you may have a wider and cheaper range of choices available to you. However certain uses, in particular vehicle workshops are very difficult to find, so you may need to search out with your preferred area.

Staff: - The choice of location can be very important to finding and keeping good staff, especially if salaries are relatively low. Ideally you want a location with a good supply of suitable staff who can easily reach your property, but some excellent locations may be inaccessible without a car, or just inaccessible to existing staff. Also some otherwise good locations may be threatening to female staff.

Customers:- As we discussed in **Step 3**, if a significant number of your customers visit you, then you need to be easily accessible to them, and in the modern context this usually means short journey times and parking, with preferably good access to trains and busses. If your business model is based on you visiting them across the central belt, then quick motorway access is essential. Alternatively you may just need to be based in an area to service a local customer base. The important thing is to be clear about who your customers are before you commit to a property.

Suppliers: - It may be important for your business to be accessible to your suppliers to keep costs down or ensure you can deliver a consistent service, however for most businesses this is not a major consideration.

Local knowledge: - It may be that you or your partners have a particular local knowledge and range of contacts in a locality. Particularly for new start up businesses, this may be the advantage that your business needs, and should not be dismissed. It is also important not to be prejudiced against certain areas, always look at locations with an open mind and then you can make an informed choice. Remember you are not choosing

your own house but a business premises, that might get your new business up and running at a low cost.

Access: - As we mention above accessibility to staff and customers can be very important, be that motorway connections, parking, bus or train access. Every two years we survey our tenants for improvements they would like us to make to our properties. For the last two surveys despite generally good provision, parking has been a key area for them, which shows how important parking is to businesses.

Cost benefit: - Why are rents for the same type of property different in different location?

The most extreme example of this are shop properties, which as we explained in **Step 4**, the tenant of a shop is not just renting so many square meters/feet of accommodation, but is paying to some extent for the trading pitch. If you run a shop your turnover is determined by your location, for example a clothes shop next to Marks & Spencer in Sauchiehall Street Glasgow will have a far higher turnover than the same business and size of shop at the west end of Sauchiehall Street by the M8. The location determines the turnover and this to a greater or lesser extent determines the rent. So if you are a retailer who relies on location, it maybe to your advantage to pay a higher rent for a better location.

With offices and industrial properties, location determines the rent per square foot/meter but this is not necessarily to do with the turnover that property will make the tenant, it is more about other tenants desire to be in a particular location. So there is an opportunity to have as good accommodation for less if you are prepared to consider alternative locations.

The principle reason for paying a higher rent in North Lanarkshire is motorway access, in particular M8 and M74 access. Locations with this access command higher rentals than elsewhere, and if this is important to your business it may well be worth paying a higher rental, in the knowledge you can provide a better service to your customers and reduce your fuel costs.

Working Out Your Locations

Having now thought about what's important to your business, how can you quantify and use that information to start your search. The easiest way is just to set out a grid for each of the issues that are important to you, and a list of possible locations. Then give each of the issues a ranking out of ten for each location, with ten being best and one being worst. The locations with the highest total marks are the locations that you want to investigate first, but don't be afraid to change the scoring as you think fit; it's just a tool to help you decide which locations would be best for your business.

Property Services



Set out below, you will see a made up example, for a little distribution company Will Sendit & Co whose owner and staff are Cumbernauld residents. We have left **Property Type** out of the grid, because we don't know what's available until we have researched the market. But we do know from our experience that Cumbernauld rents are cheaper than Bellshill and Coatbridge and there is an overall cost advantage for us to be in Cumbernauld, so we have included **Rent** in the table.

Town	Bellshill	Coatbridge	Cumbernauld
Customers	1	1	1
Staff	1	4	8
Suppliers	1	1	1
Knowledge	5	6	8
Access	8	7	8
Rent	1	3	5
Total	17	22	31

You may quite rightly say the grid is stating the obvious, but its purpose is to make you think about the issues affecting your business and to allow you to make the best choices available, often those will be obvious choices.

We've put a couple of blank grids below for you to use, one with the issues we've looked at and one that is just a blank grid for you to put your own issues in if you think that's more appropriate.

Town			
Property Type			
Customers			
Staff			
Suppliers			
Knowledge			
Access			
Rent			
Total			

Town			
Total			

Where Do You Want To Be?

Has the guidance above helped you decide which areas in North Lanarkshire you would like to look at?

Airdrie	Bellshill	Coatbridge	Chryston	Cumbernauld	Kilsyth
Motherwell	New Stevenson	Shotts	Stepps	Wishaw	

Tick as appropriate ✓

Other information

There is a wide range of other information available that might help you decide on suitable locations for your business. Statistical information about the local economy is available from North Lanarkshire Council’s Regeneration Services (<http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=16011>)

Information about locating in Lanarkshire is available from www.lanarkshire.com. There is also the Visit Lanarkshire website aimed at tourism www.visitlanarkshire.com which may be useful.

Any business considering locating in and around our town centres should speak to **Town Centre Activities Ltd** (tel **01236 638443**, email flooda@northlan.gov.uk, web <http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk>). This is a North Lanarkshire Council owned company, who’s purpose is to support independent businesses in a variety of ways, including providing access to North Lanarkshire Council services and support, and through town centre forums, where businesses can share experiences and discuss issues of mutual concern.



Link to Useful Contacts for Step 5



Step 6 – Starting a Property Search

Starting a property search

If you have been working through the handbook, you should now have the following information:-

- What you can afford.
- The size of property you need.
- An idea of suitable property types.
- An idea of suitable locations.

On the next page is a ***Property Requirement Form***, this will be a huge help in your property search so take a few moments to fill in your name and address, contact information, and the information from **Steps 1 to 5**. Once you have done that you're now ready to start your property hunt.



Top Tip:- A ***Property Requirement*** is a very important tool, because it allows you to focus on the types of property you need, and not waste a lot of time and effort considering properties that are not suitable for your business. Once you have filled it in, print it out, and use it to help you with your property search, on our website.



Top Tip:- North Lanarkshire Council specialise in renting properties to small and start up businesses like yours, and are by far the largest provider of this type of accommodation across all of North Lanarkshire. Therefore once you have put together your ***Property Requirement*** and searched what we have available it's an excellent time to contact us and discuss any properties you are interested in. Our telephone number is **01236 616292** or email address is **property@northlan.gov.uk**



Top Tip:- If a suitable property doesn't come up on the search, don't worry give us a call anyway, because new properties become available all the time, and we are almost certain to be able to offer several suitable properties. When you call, have a copy of your ***Property Requirement*** to hand as it will help us to quickly identify and suggest the best properties for you.

Property Requirement Form

Name:	
Address:	
Email Address:	
Daytime Telephone Number:	
Mobile Phone Number:	

Property Type:-

Shops & Hot Food	Office/ Business Centre	Workshops & Starter Units	Yards	Unusual Buildings

Location:-

Airdrie	Bellshill	Coatbridge	Chryston	Cumbernauld	Kilsyth
Motherwell	New Stevenson	Shotts	Stepps	Wishaw	

Rental:-

£0 to £2,500	£2,500 to £4,999	£5,000 to £7,499	£7,500 to £9,999	£10,000 to £14,999	£15,000 to £20,000

Size:-

125ft ² /10m ² to 200ft ² /20m ²	200ft ² /20m ² to 500ft ² /50m ²	500ft ² /50m ² to 1,000ft ² /100m ²	1,000ft ² /100m ² to 2,000ft ² /200m ²	2,000ft ² /200m ² to 5,000ft ² /500m ²

Available to conclude lease within:-

Timescale	1 Month	2 Months	3 Months	4 to 6 Months	7 to 9 Months

The Commercial Property Team is used to helping new business. So we understand that you may not be familiar or entirely comfortable with leasing commercial property, but you will find our staff friendly and helpful, and they will also be able to guide you through the next steps, right through to finding and leasing the right property for your business.

When you phone, we will always try and pass you to the surveying staff who deal with the properties in the area that you are interested in. They may not always be immediately available as they are working surveyors, who also carry out all viewings, estate management, maintenance, rent reviews and lease renewals in that area, but they will always call you back as soon as possible. The great advantage to our tenants is the person who leased you the unit is also your contact during the lease, and someone you will often see in your estate or business centre. We believe this personal relationship means North Lanarkshire is not some large faceless organisation to our tenants, and this level of personal contact and continuity is the best way to support you. We also believe this level of personal contact far exceeds anything our competitors can offer.

If you don't want to speak to us by telephone initially we are happy to provide information in the other following way:-

- By email; [**property@northlan.gov.uk**](mailto:property@northlan.gov.uk)
On line at; [**www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/commercialproperty**](http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/commercialproperty)
- In writing by contacting; **North Lanarkshire Council,**
Property Services,
5th Floor Fleming House,
2 Tryst Road,
Cumbernauld,
G67 1JW
- By telephone; **01236 616292**
- By fax; **01236 616303**
- Or in person (please phone ahead if possible)

We can also provide any of our correspondence in a large type format for people with visual impairment on request.

In addition to our own property service, other commercial property in North Lanarkshire can be found easily through a web site run by CoStar UK Limited called the **Scottish Property Network**, which they state is “the most comprehensive online source of information on available commercial and business accommodation throughout the whole of Scotland”. You will find that the vast majority of vacant commercial property, including North Lanarkshire Councils is listed on their website, and can be accessed by typing into your Web browser – SPN or Scottish Property the web address is [**http://www.scottishproperty.co.uk**](http://www.scottishproperty.co.uk).



Link to Useful Contacts for Step 6



Step 7 – Viewing Properties

General advice

Most of us have looked at houses and flats to buy or rent, and it's very similar when you are looking for a property for your business. But remember the way you look at business property is slightly different, this is all about balancing cost, location and accommodation rather than finding your dream property!

Before viewing

It is always useful even if you know an area well to get a map of the area you are interested in, and if for example you are looking for industrial properties, mark on the industrial estates and the available properties and drive to each location to compare the general benefits and disadvantages of each location. This is useful for any property type, and helps you identify locations that could work for you. When you are at the locations you might want to consider the following:-

- How good is access to main roads and motorways?
- Does the area seem attractive to other businesses and generally busy?
- What is the condition of nearby properties?
- What is the public transport like in the area, where are the nearest train stations and bus stops?
- Are there local facilities like sandwich shops and restaurants for staff?
- Are there attractions that will draw customers?
- Are there crèches or nurseries nearby?
- Are there any known plans for development in the area?
- What is the crime level like in the area?



Top Tip:- Get a map. Property Services currently subscribe to a map advertising our services which shows all the major towns in North Lanarkshire, we usually have some in stock and would be happy to give you one to help you in your search.

When viewing

Here are some useful general tips on viewing:-

- Always take a camera, notebook, and tape measure with you, so you can take pictures to compare different properties, note important points, and check sizes.
- Take someone else with you if you can, who can spot things that you miss.
- Make sure you view the property during the day when you will be able to see better and spot problems.
- If you really like a property, try to arrange to view it again at a different time of the day to give you a different perspective.

- Always try to look at a property with an open mind, or you may miss an excellent opportunity.
- Try not to view too many properties in one day
- Take your time looking round the property.
- Don't be afraid to ask direct and blunt questions about the property.
- You can reserve a property with the Council without making a financial commitment, so don't feel pressurised.



Top Tip:- Always take photos of the different properties, because after a little while, it's very hard to remember which is which. Modern mobile phones make this so easy, you don't even need to remember the camera.



Top Tip:- Take a pal, having a second opinion is really useful, even just to chat about issues at the time.



Ask The Question:-

- What is included in the lease - land, parking, etc?
- How energy efficient is the building?
- Is there gas heating and how old is the system?
- Is the Council happy to allow my proposed use of the property?
- Will my use of the building comply with its current planning use?
- What does the council own at this location? The council's ability to deal with neighbour disputes, is far greater if we own the neighbouring properties.
- Can you tell me about the industrial estate, shopping parade, or business centre?
- Roughly how old is the building, and are there any maintenance issues?
- How does security work on site?
- If I want to change the layout, will the council allow it?
- If I want to upgrade the electrical supply, heating or energy efficiency, will the council allow it?

Things to think about when viewing:-

- Is the property well maintained?
- Is the size and layout suitable for your needs?
- Are the running costs for your business going to be expensive or cheap?
- Does the security on site meet your needs?
- Do the communications on site meet your needs, i.e. telephone and broadband.
- Are any of the neighbouring businesses likely to disrupt your business?
- Is there adequate parking for you and your customers?

- How would you manage goods deliveries at this property?
- Does the current electrical installation meet your needs, or will you have additional costs.
- Does the property feel like it could be a home for your business?
- At this location does the council have other properties that we can move to later on if the business does well?

What to do after a viewing?

After you have seen a couple of properties they all start to look the same, and it can be confusing to remember what was said about each property. So after you have had a viewing its worth making a note about the property and your impressions. A comparison list can also be helpful, so you can note whether different properties meet your needs. For example:-

Property Address	23 Kelvin Rd	75 Kelvin Rd	48 Telford Road
Location	Good	Good	Fair
Condition	Poor	Fair	Excellent
Size/Layout	Small	Ok	Ok
Fitting out Costs	Low	High	None
Security/ Neighbours	Good	Good	Good
Parking/Access	Tight	Tight	Good
Services	No Heating	Heating in Office	Gas Heating
Lease Flexibility	Yes	Yes	Yes
Running Cost	Low	Low	Slightly Higher
Rent	£2,500	£3,500	£4,000
Overall Impression	Too Small	Good	Fair

There are some blank comparison lists on the next page, which you can print out, if you want to use them to help in your search.



Link to Useful Contacts for Step 7

Property Address			
Location			
Condition			
Size/Layout			
Fitting out Costs			
Security/ Neighbours			
Parking/Access			
Services			
Lease Flexibility			
Running Cost			
Rent			
Overall Impression			

Property Address			
Location			
Condition			
Size/Layout			
Fitting out Costs			
Security/ Neighbours			
Parking/Access			
Services			
Lease Flexibility			
Running Cost			
Rent			
Overall Impression			

Property Address			
Location			
Condition			
Size/Layout			
Fitting out Costs			
Security/ Neighbours			
Parking/Access			
Services			
Lease Flexibility			
Running Cost			
Rent			
Overall Impression			



Step 8 – Make a Short List

Once you have seen all the available properties you need to start short listing them, in some cases that will be easy with a clear favourite, in other cases it may not. But before you make a decision there are two things that we recommend you do, compare the full costs of the different properties and speak to other people or tenants at the different locations.

Comparing costs (the bottom line)

Before you make a decision about which property to rent, you need to know what it's going to cost your business. In **Step 5** we explained that there can be a lot of hidden costs to your business that you may not have considered and explained what those are, and how to get that information. Before you choose a property you need to compare the costs, because otherwise you are probably not comparing like for like.

On the next page we have set out what we call a **Property Price Comparison List**, which allows you to compare the total running costs of different buildings, it also helps you identify and budget for all your property costs. In **Step 2** we recommended your total property costs should be about 15% to 20% of your gross turnover (preferably as low as possible). Not knowing these costs could be a disaster to your business, so we hope you will use our comparison list and find it helpful.



Ask The Question: - You need to ask any prospective landlord (including the Council) what the costs of the rent, building insurance and service charge will be. They will probably not be able to advise on other costs, so you are going to have to do your own research and in some cases estimate a budget figure.



Stop: - Unlike renting a council house, when you rent a commercial property there are lots of other costs that you as a tenant become legally required to pay when you sign a lease. So you need to know what these are, before you take responsibility for them. Remember the **Warning** on **Page 5**.

Property Price Comparison List

Address:
Costs:	£	£	£	£
Rent Amount:				
VAT Amount (if applicable):				
Legal Costs				
Deposit				
Insurance – Buildings: Contents:				
Service Charges:				
Maintenance & Repair Costs:				
Non-Domestic Rates:				
Water & Sewage Charges:				
Electricity - Supply: 5yrl Test:				
Gas - Supply: Annual Service:				
Refuse Collection:				
Telephone/Internet:				
Post Office/ Redirection Service:				
Total Costs:	=====	=====	=====	=====

The rent

As we have pointed out above there are a lot of hidden costs that are not normally included in the commercial rent and it's important to work out what these are. Most properties are let on a Full, Repairing and Insuring basis (FRI), this means that over and above paying the rent the tenant pays for cost of all repairs, maintenance and insurance and anything else required at the property usually including landscaping. All Council properties are leased on a FRI basis so you as the tenant must budget for these additional costs.

Legal costs

Most landlords will recharge tenants for their legal costs of providing a lease. Because of the way North Lanarkshire Council operates we do not charge any legal fees for standard leases, and it is only if a lease is requested from our legal team that a charge will be made, and our charges are very modest, relative to normal commercial rates.

Deposits

Many landlords will require a significant deposit from a tenant, three months in advance is common so you must be aware of this. North Lanarkshire Council does not as a matter of course require a deposit, unless the prospective tenant is considered a payment risk by their bank when references are taken up.

VAT on rent

Because of the way the Council is set up VAT is not charged against all of the Council properties, this may be helpful to you if you are a small business that can not claim VAT back. Whilst we will not guarantee that VAT will never be charged, in the short term this is obviously a useful benefit.

Insurance

Normally the landlord will insure the building and charge you an annual premium for this, however you are responsible for obtaining your own contents insurance, public liability insurance and any other insurance your business requires. However, to work out your building costs it is only the building and content insurance that you require. To get an idea of the cost of contents insurance we suggest you contact an insurance broker.

Service charge

Most Landlords charge some form of service charges for maintaining the landscaping around their estate, i.e. grass cutting, pruning, and path clearing. The cost of this can vary significantly between landlords, so you should always find out.

In managed offices and business centres, landlords usually charge a service charge for the running of the building, this will be a significant sum, but what you get for that money can vary greatly. In the Dalziel and Airdrie business centres the service charge pays:-

- Heating
- Lighting
- Electricity
- Repair and maintenance
- Cleaning
- Landscape maintenance

- Janitorial and reception staff, but not our surveying staff, invoicing, or much of the other support provided to council tenants.

Maintenance & repair costs

With some properties the annual cost of maintenance is included in the service charge, however you must always check this because maintenance and repair costs can be a big unexpected cost to your business. It should be remembered that an old property will be more expensive to maintain than a new property, and this is why the rents are usually cheaper. Unless this is covered by the service charge, Landlords will generally be unable to give you an indication of this cost, and you must make some kind of estimate.

The things to remember are:-

- Annual repair and maintenance.
- Cleaning out gutters and rhone's each winter
- Repainting as set out in lease
- Blocked drains
- Frost damage to water pipes

Non domestic rates

We would advise any small business before taking on a property to contact **North Lanarkshire Councils, Non domestic Rates Section** (telephone **01698 403903**, email revenue@northlan.gov.uk) or use the rates calculator at www.saa.gov.uk to find out what the rates charge is for property they are interested in, and if they would be eligible for any Nondomestic Rates relief. Prospective tenants must also be aware that if they improve or adapt any property this may increase their rateable value and effect any relief they are entitled to.

Water and sewage charges

Most commercial properties now have metered water supplies, but it is worth contacting **Business Stream (telephone 0800 7310840)** to try and find out what you are likely to have to pay.

Electricity supply

At some business centres this may be included in your service charge, if it is not you will need to make an estimate even if this is only an educated guess. Use the Energy Performance Certificate to do this, the poorer the rating the more expensive to run. You must also remember every five years, you need to budget for electrical system testing.

Gas supply

At some business centres gas heating may be included in your service charge, if it is not you will need to make an estimate even if this is only an educated guess. Again use the

Energy Performance Certificate to help, the poorer the rating the more expensive to run. You must also remember that every year, you need to budget for servicing and testing of any gas equipment.

Refuse collection

You can contact **North Lanarkshire Council** on **01698 403110** or any other private refuse collection company to find out what your monthly refuse collection charge would be. Remember you may also be responsible for a shared cost for any littering or fly tipping in your estate, so find out and build in a cost.

Telephone/internet connection

At some business centres the Council may supply your telephone and internet connection and can therefore give you some idea of cost. Elsewhere you will need to contact telecoms providers.

Post Office/ Redirection Service

This information can be obtained directly from Royal Mail, however the period you maintain the service for may depend where you relocate to.

Speak To Other Tenants

Once you have set out all the costs for the different properties, you're going to know which property you want to go with, but just before you make that leap into the unknown, take a parachute and ask some of your new neighbours about:-

- The location, what's good what's bad
- The landlord, or their agents
- Security, noise, and litter issues, (remember you may have to pay for it)
- Is the location value for money?
- Neighbourhood issues

Only once you have checked out your rent costs and spoken to your neighbours should you be ready to sign your lease, safe in the knowledge you have got the best property for your business.



Link to Useful Contacts for Step 8



Step 9 – Agreeing to Lease a Property

You have decided on a property that you want to lease, what do you need to do now?

Tell Us!

The first person to complete a property application form, is the person that we will lease that property to. If you don't tell us and fill out a property application form, then someone else might get your ideal property.

Get Legal Advice!

As you will see below we will not change the terms of our In-House leases, but we would suggest that any business should be fully aware of what they are taking on.



Technical Support: - Because of the responsibility a tenant is taking on when they sign a lease, we always suggest that tenants seek suitably qualified legal advice.

Discuss the Rent:-

We always post what we consider to be a fair asking rental on our properties, these are set by our Chartered Surveyors and agreed with the Section Manager, and we are happy to explain why we have set rental at its level.



Ask The Question: - If you believe that there are issues relating to the property, we are always prepared to discuss these with you.

Tendered Rentals only applies to shops, yards or other tendered properties, where interested parties make sealed bids. The winning tenders are decided on a combination of rental, suitability of use and security of income, the decision is only made on the basis of the information provided.

Carry out Credit Checks and References:-

Before the Council will grant you a lease, we will carry out credit and identity checks and ask you to give us a bank reference. To help speed this up, here is a list of the information we will need from you:-

Home address: - You will be asked to produce proof of your home address by producing utility bills.

Proof of identity: - We will need to take a copy of your **Passport**, or **Birth Certificate** and a **photographic proof of identity**, e.g. Drivers Licence.

Nationality: - If you are not a European citizen, you will be asked to provide proof that you are able to conduct a business in the UK for the period of the lease.

Financial check: - we will require you to provide a bank reference, your bank will usually provide this for a small fee. If your bank gives you a poor reference, we will need to discuss this with you. The one thing which causes the most delay for us in granting a lease is waiting on bank references, so apply early.



Top Tip: - Getting a bank reference can be one of the biggest delays in granting a lease, contact your bank early with all the necessary information, and make sure they have the right Council address and contact details.

Lease Period:-

Month to month leases

As a new or small business, you need to be flexible, you need to be able to grow or shrink as circumstances change, and you may need to be able to walk away from an unsuccessful business if you have to. That is why most of our business and industrial properties are available on very flexible lease terms.

A month to month lease has a lot of advantages for a small business:-

- You can try leasing a property and see how you get on.
- If your business does well you can easily move to a larger unit, or second unit.
- If your business struggles you can down size.
- Your rent is paid monthly so no big surprises.
- You have excellent security of tenure with the council.
- If you decide you don't like the location you can move on.



Money Tip:- If you are starting a new business, remember 50% of new businesses fail in the first year. A month to month lease allows you to walk away from a lease at relatively little cost.

Year to year leases

Some businesses prefer to have year to year leases to make sure that they can guarantee a whole year's lease. The problem is that if you decide at the beginning of the year that you want out of the lease you still have a whole years rent to pay.

Longer leases

Most commercial property is let on longer leases, where the tenant is tied into paying the agreed rent for 10 to 20 years. This can make a lot of sense if for example you fit out a shop, and then need to recover the benefit of that cost. Most banks will also make it a requirement of a loan for that type of improvement that a long lease is taken. In North Lanarkshire Council we can only grant a lease for more than five years if our Councillors have agreed to it, and this adds a considerable time delay.

Lease Terms:-

As explained in step 3 the council uses two main types of leases, **In-House Leases** and **Custom Leases**.

In-House Leases:- This is a lease provided by the Council's lawyers which the Commercial Property Team can use to grant you a lease over one of its properties. We can not change the terms or wording of this lease and any variation would have to be referred back to the Council's lawyers. Many of our properties are only available on an In-House Lease.

Custom leases:- Are produced following lengthy negotiations between the Council's lawyers and a prospective tenant's lawyers, they may take a standard Council lease as a starting point and this can speed up the process.

It is only when we are granting a long lease to a tenant that we would expect to use a **Custom lease**. The majority of our leases are **In House Leases**, because they are quick and cost effective.

Signing the lease

Once you have been through the necessary credit and identity checks, but before we give you entry to your property, we will ask you to sign the lease, and we will give you a copy to take away, you will be able to sign the lease, either in your own or your company's name as agreed previously.



Stop:-

- Always remember to read the lease and check that all the details are correct before signing.
- Know what you are signing up to!



Link to Useful Contacts for Step 9



Step 10 – Moving In

You have got through the maze of finding and leasing a business property, and you are about to take the keys, but what do you need to do, or have ready, for the day you take over?

Before You Move In

Telephone/internet connection: - A land line telephone and broadband connection is still essential for most businesses, but getting that set up can take a lot of time. Whilst just about all of our properties have land lines in place, we understand it can take new tenants 4 to 5 weeks to get a connection and telephone number. If you want to move an existing telephone number this will take even longer, around 8 to 10 weeks so it is very important to contact your telephone provider as soon as possible.

The exception is our two business centres, Dalziel Building and Airdrie Business Centre, where we can, through our suppliers, arrange full access in under a week. We still have the same delay in moving existing telephone numbers, but we can provide tenants with a temporary telephone number until their old one is moved.

Post redirection: - This can take a bit of time to set up, and given the importance of business post, we suggest contacting Royal Mail at the earliest possible opportunity to start putting the arrangements in place.

Insurance: - The council provides building insurance, the cost of which we charge back to you at the end of the year, however we do not insure your possessions, or business equipment, stock, or other aspects of your business, including public liability. Therefore before you move in you must arrange for all of these with your insurance broker, and you should leave at least a couple of weeks to organise this.

Security: - If you want to put an alarm system or other security measures into a property, remember you need our agreement in writing, and a contractor to do the work. So again you need at least a couple of weeks to organise this and get it in place.

Electricity and gas: - Remember unless the property is in one of our business centres, you are going to need electricity and possibly a gas supplier for your property. In most of our properties we will already have a contract with a supplier, so there will be electricity and gas when you move in. It will then be your responsibility, to organise your own utility suppliers as quickly as possible.

It is important that you take a note of the gas and electric meter reading at entry, to check against your first bill.

Non domestic Rates:- When a property is let, we write to the council's **Non domestic Rates Section (telephone 01698 403903 email revenue@northlan.gov.uk)**, to give them the name of the new tenant and the date that they leased the property from. As a new tenant you should also contact them to make sure the details are right, and to apply for any small business rates relief you may be eligible for.

Water charges:- At your home, water charges are included in your Council Tax, but business properties pay water and waste water charges separately to Business Stream (**telephone 0800 7310840**). The water supply is measured by a water meter and the waste water is usually based on the Nondomestic Rates Rateable Value. We contact Business Stream, and tell them there is a new tenant, but you must also contact them and put a water contract in place for your business.

Refuse collection:- At home your wheelie bin and rubbish collection is paid for by your Council Tax, but businesses must pay for it separately. The Council provides refuse collection services and you must contact them on **01698 403110** to set up a contract. Whilst this can be done fairly quickly, you may need to buy a refuse bin, and it's going to take a couple of weeks to set it up. If you choose to use a private service, the same will be true.

As You Move In

Remember that once you sign the lease and take possession of the property, legally it's your responsibility, so you have to make sure everything is alright, on the day you move in, or it will be much harder to sort out later on.

What We Need From You

Rent:- The Council requires the first rent payment before we hand over our property, either through prepayment or by a banker's draft on the day. So you need to have made these arrangements or you will not get the keys.

Standing Order/Direct Debit Form:- You will be required to complete either a Standing Order or Direct Debit form to pay your rent before you can have the property.

What You Need From Us

Keys:- We usually provide 2 sets of keys, but we do not keep any and can not access your property. If you lose your keys you will need a locksmith to get back in.

Electrical and gas test certificates:- We will give you test certificates for the electrical systems in your property, but not appliances, and if there is gas we will also give you a test certificate for the system and any heating. As a tenant you have to maintain the systems and retest the gas system every year and the electrical system every 5 years.

Asbestos survey:- We will give you an asbestos survey of your property, telling if there is any asbestos in your property. If there is any you must make sure it is not disturbed. All occupiers must by law maintain an asbestos register; full information can be obtained from the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/.

Energy Performance Certificate:- When you looked at the property with one of our surveyors, you should have been given a copy of the Energy Performance Certificate. Now you are the tenant you must prominently display the certificate in the property, so we will give you a new copy for that reason.

Tenant's Handbook:- This is a booklet we give to all our tenants to help them understand their lease, and provide useful information.

Copy of lease:- Remember this is a binding contract and the lease sets out your responsibilities to the council, please keep this safe, as at some time you will probably need it.

Schedule of condition:- When you hand the property back, it must be the same or better condition than shown in the pictures in the Schedule of Condition. So it's very important when you move in, that you check that you agree with the schedule, and if there are any problems discuss this with us straight away. You will also see in the schedule that we have taken a note of the meter reading, so again check these.

What to do at Handover

- Check the Schedule of Condition
- Check heating and hot water system works (if applicable)
- Check electricity, and the sockets
- Check water (run the taps and flush the toilets)
- Check keys in the lock
- Find the meters and water cut off
- Go through Tenant's Handbook

On the last six pages you will find a list of addresses, telephone numbers and web sites, which may be helpful.



Link to Useful Contacts for Step 10

Useful contacts



Step 1 – What can I afford?



Back to Step 1

Business Gateway

The Atrium Business Centre
North Caldeen Road
Coatbridge
ML5 4EF

Tel: 01236 702020

advice@sbglanarkshire.co.uk

www.bgateway.com

North Lanarkshire Council

Regeneration Services

Civic Square
Windmillhill Street
Motherwell
ML1 1AB

Tel 01698 302198

sharpr@northlan.gov.uk

www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk

North Lanarkshire Council

Non Domestic Rates Section

Dalziel House (2nd floor)
Scott Street
Motherwell
ML1 1SX

Tel 01698 403960

revenue@northlan.gov.uk

www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk

Town Centre Activities Limited

Town Centre Manager
Chief Executive's Office
P.O. Box 8921
Coatbridge
ML5 9AG

Tel 01236 638443

flooda@northlan.gov.uk

www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=12279



Step 2 – What size do I need?



Back to Step 2

Business Gateway
The Atruim Business Centre
North Caldeen Road
Coatbridge
ML5 4EF
Tel: 01236 702020
www.bgateway.com
advice@sbglanarkshire.co.uk



Step 3 – How long does a letting take?



Back to Step 3

Law Society of Scotland
26 Drumsheugh Gardens
Edinburgh
EH3 7YR
Tel: 0131 226 7411
lawscot@lawscot.org.uk
www.lawsociety.org.uk

Royal Institute for Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Scotland
9 Manor Place
Edinburgh
EH3 7DN
Tel: 0131 225 7078
scotland@rics.org
www.rics.org



Step 4 – What type of property do I need?



Back to Step 4

North Lanarkshire Council
Environmental Services – Planning Department
Fleming House
2 Tryst Road
Cumbernauld
G67 1JW

Building Standards/Planning

North: 01236 616200
Central 01236 812222
Southern 01698 302100

www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk

Food Standards Agency
www.food.gov.uk/scotland

North Lanarkshire Council
Environmental Services – Environmental Health 01698 403110



Step 5 – What is the best location for my business?



Back to step 5

www.lanarkshire.com

www.visitlanarkshire.com

Town Centre Activities Limited 01236 638443
flooda@northlan.gov.uk
www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=12279

These are some websites which details the economic performance of North Lanarkshire compared to the Scottish average.

<http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1303>

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Labour-Market/ProfileNorthLanarkshire>



Step 6 – Starting a property search

**North Lanarkshire Council – Property Services
Commercial Section**

Fleming House
2 Tryst Road
Cumbernauld
G67 1JW

Tel: 01236 616292

www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/commercialproperty



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Scottish Property Network

Empire House
131 West Nile Street
Glasgow
G1 2RX

Tel: 0845 230 1932

www.scottishproperty.co.uk



Step 7 – Viewing properties

www.maps.google.co.uk

www.bing.com/maps



Back to Step 7



Step 8– Make a short list



Back to Step 8

BT Business – phone line and broadband

www.business.bt.com

Virgin Media Business – phone line and broadband

www.virginmediabusiness.co.uk

0800 953 0180

British Gas Business

www.britishgas.co.uk/business

0845 850 0056

E-On

www.eonenergy.com/in-business

0800 068 5523

Scottish Power

www.scottishpower.com

0845 27 00 700

Scottish and Southern Energy

www.hydro.co.uk

01738 456 000

Business Stream (Water)

www.business-stream.co.uk

0800 731 0840

EDF Energy

www.edfenergy.com

0800 096 2270

Lanarkshire Joint Valuation Board

www.lanarkshire-vjb.gov.uk

01698 476 000

Royal Mail – Redirecting mail

www.royalmail.com

0845 7740 740



Step 9 – Agreeing to lease a property



Back to Step 9

Law Society of Scotland
26 Drumsheugh Gardens
Edinburgh, EH3 7YR
Tel: 0131 226 7411
lawscot@lawscot.org.uk
www.lawsociety.org.uk



Step 10 – Moving in



Back to Step 10

BT Business – phone line and broadband
www.business.bt.com

Virgin Media Business – phone line and broadband
www.virginmediabusiness.co.uk **0800 953 0180**

British Gas Business **0845 850 0056**
www.britishgas.co.uk/business

E-On **0800 068 5523**
www.eonenergy.com/in-business

Scottish Power **0845 27 00 700**
www.scottishpower.com

Scottish and Southern Energy **01738 456 000**
www.hydro.co.uk

Business Stream (Water) **0800 731 0840**
www.business-stream.co.uk

EDF Energy **0800 096 2270**
www.edfenergy.com

Lanarkshire Joint Valuation Board **01698 476 000**
www.lanarkshire-vjb.gov.uk

Royal Mail – Redirecting mail **0845 7740 740**
www.royalmail.com

Other useful numbers

Strathclyde Police

Motherwell Divisional HQ	01698 483113
Airdrie	01236 505150 /505161
Bellshill	01698 202680 /202696
Coatbridge	01236 502121 /502112
Cumbernauld	01236 503939 /503995
Kilsyth	01236 503993
Newarthill	01698 483248
Shotts	01698 202662
Wishaw	01698 483168 /202640

www.strathclyde.police.uk/your_community/North_Lanarkshire

Northline

If you require any more information from North Lanarkshire Council staff, please contact Northline at the following contact centre numbers

Environmental:	01698 403110
Telephone payments:	01698 403130
General enquiries:	01698 403200
Antisocial behaviour:	01698 403222

NorthLine is open longer than normal office hours. The opening hours are:

- 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday
- 9am to 12 noon on Saturdays
- 10am to 3pm on public holidays (not Christmas and New Year)

At other times, you can leave a message on our telephone system and our staff will deal with your request on the next working day.



Property Services

Dear Prospective Tenant

From all of us at North Lanarkshire Council's Property Services, we hope you have found this guide helpful to set up or expand your business. We look forward to hearing from you, and hope you will grow your business with us. If you have any tips for new and small businesses that you think might be useful, please let us know and we will try to include them in the next edition of the guide.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ian Nisbet".

Ian Nisbet
Head of Property Services

Designed and printed by Property Services
North Lanarkshire Council
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2 Tryst Road
Cumbernauld
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01236 616292

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