

**REPORT TO: TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD – 23 NOVEMBER 2015**

**REPORT ON: OFFICE ACCOMMODATION – RAVENSWOOD, NEW ROAD,  
FORFAR – RENT REVIEW**

**REPORT BY: ASSESSOR**

**REPORT NO: TVJB 24-2015**

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To advise the Board of the current position concerning the office at Ravenswood, New Road, Forfar.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Board is asked to note the position concerning improvements to the property that are required to meet disability standards and to approve the continuation of the existing lease for a further year at the existing rental of £18,000 per annum while alternative options are researched.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The rental cost of £18,000 per annum is currently provided for within the existing Revenue Budget.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues other than disability access issues which are reported below.

## **5 BACKGROUND**

5.1 Tayside Valuation Joint Board currently lease the office property at Ravenswood, New Road, Forfar, from Angus Council who are the landlord of the premises. The present lease was agreed for a period of 10 years from 1 April 2006 with provision for a rent review at each third year. The lease is due to terminate on 31 March 2016.

5.2 The previously agreed rent with effect from 1 April 2012 was £18,000. The rent review which was due to come into effect from 1 April 2015 has been outstanding since that date.

5.3 In the light of concerns regarding disability access to the building, Angus Council Technical and Property Division has surveyed the property and provided a report on these issues. In summary the report identifies that Ravenswood House is a Category C listed building which was built in the 1820's as a dwelling for the Provost. It is spread over three floors and was not designed for commercial use. Access to the building is a major hurdle with the ground floor being half a level up from the access road and the basement half a level down. Access through the basement floor is restrictive although movement within the ground and first floors is less so. Movement between levels is also restrictive however the installation of a lift is considered impractical.

- 5.4 Angus Council Technical and Property Division estimate that the cost of non-structural work to ameliorate some disability access issues (including provision of a new stair lift and intercom system at road level, together with replacement doors, improvements to lighting, handrails and toilet facilities, etc) would cost approximately £40,000 (excluding building warrant and planning fees). However, it is considered that while the building may be functional for current requirements with adequate management procedures in place, it is unlikely that it will ever be suitably accessible for staff with disabilities to 2015 standards.
- 5.5 In the light of the above, Angus Council has agreed to consider whether any alternative accommodation which would be more suitable to the Board's use may be released as part of their ongoing property review. Other options with regard to alternative accommodation will also be considered.
- 5.6 In recognition of the above issues, and in order to allow sufficient time to fully review all possible options, Angus Council has proposed that the existing lease should be extended for the period of one year by tacit relocation, and that the rent should be retained at £18,000 per annum as was previously agreed with effect from 1 April 2012.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Clerk and Treasurer to the Board have been consulted on this report.

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None

**ALASTAIR KIRKWOOD**  
Assessor

**November 2015**