Office Accommodation: Proposed Move to Office 208, Incuhive Andover

Committee	Policy and Resources Committee
Date of meeting	2 December 2026
Agenda item	8
Report author	Tor Warburton CiLCA, Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Purpose	For decision: to recommend to Full Council

1 Purpose of report

1.1 To ask the Committee to recommend to Full Council that the Town Council office moves from Office 107 to Office 208, Incuhive Andover, Chantry House, at a negotiated rent of £2,200 a month plus VAT. The move resolves the only issue raised in the staff wellbeing questionnaire, gives room to grow ahead of local government reorganisation (LGR), and brings meeting space and storage in-house.

2 Recommendations

That the Policy and Resources Committee recommends to Full Council that it:

2.1 approves the relocation of the Town Council office from Office 107 to Office 208, Incuhive Andover, at a rent of £2,200 a month plus VAT (£26,400 a year plus VAT);

2.2 delegates authority to the Town Clerk/RFO to agree and sign the licence with Incuhive, subject to:

(a) a break clause of no more than one month's notice;

(b) the reported damp being investigated and remedied by the landlord if required before occupation;

(c) a dated photographic schedule of condition being agreed at the start of the licence; and

(d) confirmation, before the licence is signed, which of the wired ethernet connections are live;

2.3 approves the additional cost for the remainder of 2026/27 from the General Reserve, with the full annual cost included in the 2027/28 budget (agenda item 9);

2.4 authorises the Town Clerk/RFO to give notice on Office 107 once the Office 208 licence is signed;

2.5 notes that holding Committee meetings in Office 208 is subject to the accessibility and public access checks in section 6; and

2.6 notes that the licence is exempt from the Procurement Act 2023 and from the requirement for three quotes (Financial Regulation 5.8, under exemption 5.12(iv)), and that this report is the written report required by Financial Regulation 16.4, for the reasons in section 7.

3 Background

3.1 The Council has outgrown Office 107: there is no room for another post, for records and equipment, or for visitors. On 18 November 2026 Members agreed that more space was needed and set a £35,000 placeholder for office rent in the 2027/28 budget (PR 052/11/26 and PR 053/11/26).

3.2 Incuhive advised against joining Office 107 to the adjoining Office 108, because opening up the wall could uncover services or other work that would add cost and delay. Instead it offered Office 208, a 1,500 sq ft office on the 5th Floor of the same building. Officers and some councillors viewed it in November and agreed it is a good space; any councillor may ask to view it.

3.3 Office 208 is advertised at £3,120 a month plus VAT. Following negotiation, Incuhive offered it on 24 November 2026 at £2,200 a month plus VAT: £920 a month (29.5%) below the advertised rent, a saving of £11,040 a year.

4 What the move achieves

Need	Office 107 now	Office 208
Staff wellbeing	The confined office is the only issue staff raised in the annual anonymous wellbeing questionnaire	Resolves it, and supports the Council's duty to provide enough working space (Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974; Workplace Regulations 1992)
Capacity and LGR	At capacity: no room for even one more post	1,500 sq ft, about twice Offices 107 and 108 combined: room for the extra staff LGR is likely to need, without a further move
Internet	Not enough internet points; staff rely on less reliable wireless	Wired ethernet points in place; which are live to be confirmed before signing
Meetings	Committee meetings held in hired rooms at The Lights	Space for Committee and working group meetings, subject to the checks in section 6
Storage	Not enough space for records, equipment and event materials; separate storage hired	Enough storage on site
Continuity	-	Same building: address, building access and internet phones unchanged; no building works

5 Options and costs

Option	Space	Annual rent (ex VAT)	Assessment
Stay in Office 107	Current	£10,962	Does not meet the need
Join Offices 107 and 108 (indicative)	About half of Office 208	Not shown; about £27.80 per sq ft	Landlord advised against; building risk
Take a second serviced office (indicative)	Two separate rooms	About £11,520 extra	Splits the team; no meeting space
Office 208 at advertised rent	1,500 sq ft	£37,440 (£24.96 per sq ft)	Good space, higher cost
Office 208 at negotiated rent (recommended)	1,500 sq ft	£26,400 (£17.60 per sq ft)	Best value per square foot

Financial effect	Amount	Note
Increase in rent on Office 107	£15,438 a year	£1,286.50 a month; VAT is recoverable, so all figures are net
Savings: meeting room hire and storage	About £2,280 a year	£1,800 room hire and £480 storage (PR 052/11/26)
Net additional cost	About £13,158 a year	Total rent of £26,400 is within the £35,000 placeholder agreed on 18 November
2026/27: rent from the move date to 31 March	£3,859.50 for a 1 January move	From the General Reserve (recommendation 2.3)
Furniture (one-off)	About £6,000	In the 2027/28 second draft; falls in 2026/27 if bought before 1 April, could come from Corporate Management reserves if approved by Full Council.
2027/28 budget	£26,400 rent; £6,000 furniture	Agenda item 9, replacing the £35,000 placeholder

5.1 The 2026/27 sums are not yet reflected in the General Reserve estimate in the budget report (£138,611 at 1 April 2027, before Option B), which would reduce by the same amount.

6 Risks

Issue	Position	Mitigation
Damp	Possible damp noted at the viewing; the landlord is investigating	Landlord to investigate and, if required, remedy before occupation; recorded in a schedule of condition so the Council is not liable at the end of the licence
No kitchen on the 5th Floor	Other tenants use the 4th Floor kitchen	A tea point with fridge, microwave and kettle; councillors who viewed agreed this is acceptable
Ethernet	Points in place, but the landlord has not confirmed which are live	Check before signing so that, if possible, every member of staff has a wired connection
Public meetings	Meetings must be open to the public (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960); the building uses passcard entry	Before any meeting: confirm step-free access, lift, evacuation, reasonable adjustments (Equality Act 2010) and public admission, including in the evening
Commitment	A higher fixed cost while LGR is uncertain	Break clause of no more than one month, as now

7 Legal, procurement and Financial Regulations

Requirement	Position	How it is met
Power	Section 111, Local Government Act 1972, and the general power of competence (Localism Act 2011, s.1)	Full Council decides; signing delegated to the Town Clerk/RFO under s.101, subject to the conditions in 2.2
Procurement Act 2023	A contract concerning a right over a building is an exempted contract (Schedule 2, paragraph 8)	The Act, and the publication requirement in Financial Regulation 5.7, do not apply
Three quotes (FR 5.8)	Exempt where goods or services are only available from one supplier (FR 5.12(iv)); avoiding competition is not a valid reason (FR 5.13)	Office 208 is the only office of the size needed in Chantry House; staying avoids moving costs and keeps the address, phones and one-month flexibility; the alternatives in section 5 were assessed and rejected
Land (FR 16.4)	Full Council authority and a written report on valuation, condition and business case	This report, in proportion to a licence with a one-month break: valuation in section 5; condition through the viewings, damp check and schedule of condition; business case in sections 4 to 6. No formal survey is proposed as there is no long-term commitment
Furniture (FR 5.8 and 16.5)	Not covered by the exemption	Three fixed-price quotes; a business case for any single item over £500

8 Conclusion

8.1 Office 208 meets the Council's needs now and through reorganisation, resolves the staff wellbeing issue, and is the best value per square foot available, at £920 a month below the advertised rent. A one-month break clause keeps the Council's flexibility. The Committee is asked to recommend the proposals to Full Council.

Background papers

Policy and Resources Committee minutes, 18 November 2026 (PR 052/11/26 and PR 053/11/26); Budget 2027/28: Second Draft Recommendations and General Reserve (agenda item 9); Test Valley Borough Council and Hampshire County Council information on local government reorganisation.