Cranleys
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

CRANLEYS' CUNNING PLANS · No. 17 · GROWING

Property, Premises and Expansion Decisions Checklist

Tick it, print it, pin it up. Every box you cannot tick is a conversation worth having.



By Colin Davison FCA, Managing Partner, Cranleys Chartered Accountants. In practice since 1998. Reviewed 15 November 2026 against the 2026/27 rules.

THE QUICK ANSWER

Decide whether you need premises at all, then compare buying with leasing on cash, tax and risk. Check stamp duty, business rates, VAT and the lease terms. Fit-out may qualify for capital allowances, and where the property sits, in the company, personally or a pension, changes the tax.

THE KEY FIGURES

The key facts	What to know
Commercial SDLT	0% to £150,000, 2% to £250,000, 5% above
Business rates	based on rateable value
VAT on property	option to tax decision
Fit-out	capital allowances may apply

The checklist, box by box

	The check	What to do	Keep as evidence
☐	**Do you need premises?**	Compare with remote working or shared space.	Need and cost analysis
☐	**Buy or lease?**	Compare cash, running cost, flexibility and risk.	Comparison sheet
☐	**Is stamp duty modelled?**	Commercial SDLT bands apply.	SDLT calculation
☐	**Is the lease understood?**	Term, rent reviews, repair duties, break clauses, guarantees.	Lease review
☐	**Is VAT planned?**	Option to tax affects what you can recover and who can buy.	VAT advice
☐	**Where should the property sit?**	In the company, personally or in a pension each has different tax outcomes.	Ownership plan

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MY PRO TIP

read the lease like a contract, because it is one.

A worked example

A business buys a unit for £600,000. Commercial SDLT is nil to £150,000, 2% on the next £100,000, which is £2,000, and 5% on the remaining £350,000, which is £17,500. Total is £19,500, before VAT and fees.

The trap to avoid

Signing a lease with a personal guarantee and no break clause. You could be liable long after you stop needing the space.

The Rufus test

One question that tells you if you have the right adviser:

If I outgrow or shrink away from this space in two years, what am I committed to paying?

What has changed recently

- Residential bands differ. See the stamp duty checklist.
- Allowances on fit-out. See the capital allowances checklist.
- Funding the purchase. See the funding growth checklist.

Questions I get asked

Is it better to buy or rent business premises?

It depends on cash, flexibility and tax. Compare the full cost over time, not just monthly rent.

What is stamp duty on commercial property?

0% up to £150,000, 2% up to £250,000 and 5% above, in England and Northern Ireland.

What is the option to tax?

A choice to charge VAT on commercial property so you can recover VAT on costs.

Can my pension buy my business premises?

In some cases yes, through suitable pension schemes, with strict rules.

The 9 CAD Keys link: Alignment

Alignment means the premises fit the plan, the cash and the exit.

Colin's 9 CAD Keys. CORE: Clarity, Capability, Consistency. ADVANCED: Analysis & Positioning, Alignment, Acceleration. DYNAMIC: Differentiation, Dexterity, Development. Score each key 1 to 5 in the free Business Value Assessment Scorecard, total out of 45. *Freedom is built. One CAD Key at a time.*

Tick these next

Business checklist 14
Funding Growth: Loans, Investors and Grants Checklist

Business checklist 18
Risk, Insurance and Plan B Checklist for Business Owners

Tax checklist 14
Capital Allowances Checklist 2026/27

Tax checklist 16
Stamp Duty (SDLT) and Property Taxes Checklist 2026/27

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Go deeper: my books

For this topic, start with **Business Growth Secrets**, part of The Cranleys Business and Tax Secrets Series: Property Tax Secrets, Inheritance Tax Secrets, Business Tax Secrets, Starting Up Secrets, Business Growth Secrets and Business Exit Secrets. The books are launching soon. Join the launch list at cranleys.online/books and I will tell you the moment each one is released.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Ring me. Free draft plan, no hard sell.

I will build you a free draft tax plan or business plan on my 9 CAD Keys: a scorecard, a 12-month cashflow forecast, a 90-day action plan and a review with me. **1** Get in touch. **2** Short intro call. **3** Your free draft plan in plain English. You decide what happens next.

Measure twice, move once.

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Scan to read online, tick it on screen and take the Scorecard



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