Appendix C – Summary Profile of the Private Rented Sector In Stevenage

A stock condition report, the *Stevenage Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey 2024,* was produced by Opinion Research Services on behalf of the Council and published in June 2024.

Key findings from the report include the following:

- Within Stevenage, the private rented sector accounts for 15% of the housing stock, equating to around 5,500 households.

- Of those households, an estimated 5.3% live within properties with category 1 hazards. The private rented stock in Stevenage is modelled to have the highest rate of Category 1 hazards compared to owner-occupied and social rented sector properties.

- An estimated 16.4% of privately rented properties in Stevenage would fail the Decent Homes Standard (as it currently applies to the social rented sector), compared with 8.6% in owner-occupied properties and 3.6% in social housing.

- Privately rented homes are more likely than other tenure types to be poorly insulated.

- Around 11% of dwellings in the private rented sector have heating systems which are considered to be fairly poor or very poor, in terms of energy efficiency and running costs.

- Over 9% of privately rented properties in Stevenage are estimated to be overcrowded.

- 10.5% of households within the private rented sector in Stevenage include at least one person with a limiting long-term illness.

- Rent levels in the private rented sector in Stevenage are high compared to regional and national rent levels. Local Housing Allowance will typically leave a £300 per month shortfall after Housing Benefit and Universal Credit is paid, based on median rents.

- Additionally, Housing Benefit and Universal Credit rates are below private sector rent levels in the lowest quartile, meaning that families dependent on benefits will generally be unable to afford the lowest private rents in the borough.

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- Between 2019 and 2023, the number of Stevenage households in temporary accommodation doubled to 148. The second most common reason for the Council accepting a homelessness application was a private rented tenancy coming to an end.

- The long-term growth in the private rented sector in Stevenage is consistent with national trends. Growth in the sector seems likely to continue, driven by a combination of demand and supply factors including increasing demand from more households and recent reductions in average household income (in real terms).

- On this basis, in terms of the national picture the number of households renting privately could double again over the next twenty years. A similar increase is possible in Stevenage given that in recent years growth in the sector has been similar to levels seen in the country as a whole.