



Minutes of the VIVID Impact meeting held at 6pm on Microsoft Teams on 1 April 2025

Present: Lee Sexton (LS), Vice Chair
Richard Holder (RH)
Natalie Weaving (NW)
Shannah Eagles (SE)
Rosemary Pyke (RP)
Mo Afzal (MA)

In attendance: Adrian Southwick (AS), Head of Repairs and Maintenance (*for items VI 021/25 and VI 022/25*)
Lauren Cannon (LC), Governance Manager
Sarah Smith (SS), Place Shaping Manager
Natalie Brown (NB), Company Secretarial Assistant (minutes)

Apologies: David Conquest (DC)
Alan Chatfield (AC), Chair

The meeting started at 6:04pm

FULL MINUTES OF THE MEETING:

VI 021/25 Welcome and apologies

LS welcomed everyone to the meeting, and noted he'd act as Chair in AC's absence. Apologies were received from AC and DC. There were no new declarations of interest.

Introductions were made by VIVID Impact members and AS.

A minute silence was observed in memory of Maralynne Pyle.

SS suggested that VIVID could either make a donation or send flowers on behalf of VIVID Impact. NB, RP and SS will collaborate to determine the preference of MP's family. **ACTION NB**

VI 022/25 Voids position statement

AS shared a presentation which highlighted the current position with empty homes.

AS shared with members, that VIVID experiences around 1,640 empty homes per year. The spend per year excluding rent loss is just over £7.1m, with the average cost per empty home being £4,300. This cost has increased significantly from around £1,200 a decade ago due to higher sector-wide costs.

Improvements in re-let times were noted, with the current end-to-end time for standard re-lets being around 28 days. This is a significant improvement from historical figures. To manage the workload, VIVID has been using more contractor resources, especially during the WIP reduction plan. This has allowed the internal team to focus on repairs while contractors handle voids.

SE asked what the £4,300 covers. AS explained that this is the base cost for the repair of the property and the repair works that would be needed, reiterating that this is the average spend per property.

AS explained the challenges in managing empty homes, including high costs of house clearance, the need for tighter pre-void inspections, and the use of contractors to backfill resources.

LS asked if the £7.1m spent per annum included the cost of contractors. AS confirmed that this was included.

AS outlined the planned and ongoing service changes, noting that while performance is generally good, they are areas for improvement. Planned initiatives include pre-void inspections, the implementation of P25 and a comprehensive review of the empty homes process to effectively address rent loss and repairs costs.

AS suggested that VIVID Impact review feedback on the quality of our homes, identify key areas that matter to our customers and consider potential service adjustments. AS noted, that to ensure value for money, we may need to consider discontinuing certain activities in favour of implementing new initiatives.

SE shared her experience of moving into a new flat, highlighting the discrepancies between the promised and actual condition of the property, and the importance of appearance for new tenants. AS explained that feedback from customers is what is needed to be able to develop a lettable standard that is transparent for incoming customers.

RH asked if the extensive work is because of abuse of the property by tenants or wear and tear. AS explained that it was a mixture of both.

LS asked for a copy of the presentation and the standards **ACTION NB**

SS asked AS to provide a process map detailing the steps that occur from the moment a notice is received, to clarify the workflow and ensure procedural understanding. **ACTION NB**

MA enquired whether VIVID recovers costs from tenants in cases of property abuse. AS explained the challenges in recovering costs from outgoing tenants, noting a low recovery rate of less than 10% and emphasising the need for early intervention to manage outgoing and incoming processes.

LS asked for the data on the amount VIVID has managed to recover. AS clarified that this information is typically included in the recharge cost and suggested it might not be a focal point.

SE shared her experience of being charged by VIVID for flooring removal in her previous home, highlighting discrepancies between the moving in and moving out standards. AS emphasised the importance of consistent communication with both outgoing and incoming customers to manage expectations and reduce unnecessary costs. The repairs team begun updating all communications to align with the desired outcomes, providing clear guidance for both outgoing and incoming tenants.

SS highlighted that compliance and safety checks incur costs regardless of the property's condition. These checks are essential to ensure that properties meet legal standards and are safe for occupancy.

SS queried if AS was aware of any other organisations that VIVID Impact members could compare best practices with. AS agreed to investigate further. **ACTION AS**

RH proposed that allowing fixtures and fittings, such as carpets and blinds, to remain for incoming tenants could reduce costs and provide benefits. AS noted, that careful management would be necessary to prevent issues like infestations.

LS enquired whether utility bill costs are inherited during the 28-day turnaround period. AS clarified that utilities are switched over as soon as possible to clear any debts and meters, ensuring they are ready for new tenants. As a result, the costs are inherited.

MA observed that properties in his area remained empty for extended periods, sometimes up to three months, despite being in good condition. He noted this as a waste of resources and time. Additionally, MA pointed out that unnecessary work, such as replacing carpets and redecorating, was being done on properties, even when they were in good condition, which added to the void period and increased costs. SS asked MA to send over the addresses so this could be explored further. **ACTION MA**

MA enquired whether deposits are required for all tenancies. AS clarified deposits are only necessary for market rent tenancies, not for social rent. SS then detailed the process for social tenants. MA also asked about property waiting list times. SS explained that local authorities manage the waiting lists, and waiting times can vary significantly by area. In some cases, people may wait several years. SS mentioned she'd find out the average waiting times. **ACTION SS**

VIVID Impact members thanked AS for attending the meeting and would keep in touch with initial thoughts for the scrutiny review.

AS left the meeting at 6:56pm

VI 023/25

Next steps for scrutiny success

SS outlined the next steps, asking VIVID Impact members to consider what information they may need and whether inspecting a property would help them to understand the process better. VIVID Impact members agreed that inspecting a property at both ends of the journey would be beneficial. LC suggested that colleagues gather and share videos of properties during the voids process. **ACTION LC**

MA offered to visit an empty property in his area. He expressed concerns about the quality and oversight of the work needed in the empty properties, suggesting that a clerk of works should sign off on work to ensure it's done properly. SS emphasised the importance of transparency and ensuring that the process is being followed correctly, noting that it would be useful to review the process from start to finish.

RH questioned whether a clerk of works or surveyors are currently involved in the process. SS proposed accessing roles and responsibilities of everyone involved as part of the review to identify any gaps and clarify decision making.

VIVID Impact members will receive data from TH by the end of the week. **ACTION TH**

SS outlined the next steps for creating an action plan associated with the scrutiny review process, which should include defining the scope and assigning roles. Once completed, the necessary support and information can be provided. SS also requested input from VI members around the content and format required within the bootcamp, specifically regarding the information that VI members would like from other VIVID colleagues and which colleagues they would like to be invited, along with a reminder of the possibility to, and need for, wider engagement by other customers including those with recent lived experience of the voids process, either moving in or out of a VIVID home – **ACTION ALL**

SS asked for VIVID Impact members to consider relevant questions to ask customers who have just moved in. **ACTION ALL**

RH expressed interest in attending an inspection. SS indicated that this can be arranged once the action plan is finalised, ensuring everything is organised and the appropriate colleagues are involved to facilitate.

LS summarised the key points discussed, which included:

- Videos from voids of properties
- Step-by-step journey guide
- Involvement of a clerk of works
- Key performance indicators (KPI's) or assurance works

- Questions for customers.

NW added that she was happy to review the questions.

SS encouraged VIVID Impact members to focus on broader experiences and best practices rather than personal circumstances, as this approach can help identify effective improvements.

The following actions were highlighted:

- Moving in and moving out standards to be sent **ACTION AS**
- Date and venue to be arranged for the bootcamp **ACTION NB**
- Send over information requested from last meeting. **ACTION NB**

VI 024/25

Any other business

There was no other business.

Meeting finished at 7:25pm

Date of next meeting – 22 May 2025

Signed: Chair

Date: