

## Chief Executive of Accord announces retirement



Chief Executive of Accord Housing Association, Dr Chris Handy, has announced that he will be retiring at the end of March.

One of the longest serving Chief Executives in the sector, Chris Handy has led the Midlands based housing association for some 33 years.

Chris said: "Leading Accord has been a delight and I have worked with some wonderful people over the years who have helped build an organisation which has always been a force for good. I'm proud that we have supported and nourished co-operatives and community leadership, that we have led on and innovated in our care and support services, that we have pioneered methods of modern construction, have led on a range of child poverty and social initiatives, that we've supported social enterprise and that we have been so innovative on so many fronts with one Housing Minister describing us as a "ferment of creativity". Accord has been the biggest part of my career and I have loved working for this brilliant organisation. I can truly say there has never been a dull day during those 30 plus years as Chief Executive of Accord. I will miss this organisation and the people who make it so special."

Chris's retirement will coincide with the completion of the proposed merger between Accord and GreenSquare. He went on to say: "I made a decision some time ago that I would retire in 2021 and this has helped us in our discussions with GreenSquare, as it creates a natural transition into something new."

The merger between the two housing associations is expected to complete in spring 2021 and the Boards of Accord and GreenSquare have been overseeing the process of establishing the new leadership team.

Elisabeth Buggins, Chair of Accord's Board, will take on the role of Chair of the new Board and Ruth Cooke, Chief Executive of GreenSquare Group, will be the Chief Executive of the new merged organisation.

Elisabeth said: "Chris's influence and impact on social housing, care and support regionally and nationally has been

exceptional, and those of us who have had the privilege of working with him at Accord are in true admiration of his passion and commitment. On behalf of us all at Accord, I wish him all the very best in his retirement and thank him whole heartedly for the work he's done helping to improve the lives of so many vulnerable and disadvantaged people and communities.

“The new partnership we are creating between Accord and GreenSquare will create a larger, stronger organisation; we will be able to build more affordable homes and extend the breadth of our care and support services. Together we will be better placed to support even more people and communities.”

Ruth Cooke commented: “Chris and I have worked together on a number of projects over the years, and his contribution to the sector has been enormous. He leaves a huge legacy.

“Our plans to bring together Accord and GreenSquare into a single organisation will help us build on this legacy to offer more support to people who need it.”

Accord and GreenSquare will make further announcements about the structure of the new leadership team for the merged organisation in the coming weeks.

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