

## HAs confirm appointments as merger progresses



Accord and GreenSquare have confirmed executive and board designate appointments as they progress plans to merge the two organisations.

The current chair of the Accord board, Elisabeth Buggins, has been appointed as the board chair designate for the merged organisation and the current GreenSquare chief executive, Ruth Cooke, has been appointed as the chief executive designate. Accord chief executive Dr Chris Handy recently announced that he will be retiring at the end of March, after 33 years in the role.

The initial announcement that Accord and GreenSquare were exploring partnership options was made in February 2020. The subsequent decision to move ahead with merger plans was made following months of detailed due diligence work and consultation with customers of both organisations.

Ruth Cooke said: "Our boards have agreed that the merger will mean that we can improve services for existing customers, invest more in local communities, extend our care and support services, and build more affordable homes.

"For both organisations, this isn't about merging with just any housing association. All the discussions we've had have made it absolutely clear that we share the same values and ambitions for expanding and enhancing locally-focused services to customers."

Elisabeth Buggins said: "Both organisations are confident that this merger of equals will create a strong and more resilient organisation which is better equipped to provide great services for people and to innovate as we respond to a changing world."

"In pooling our resources we will be able to build more homes and invest in communities across our geography, including in places where our current operating areas meet. We will work with people whether staff, tenants,

customers or delivery partners to identify opportunities for continuing improvement and to find ways to realise those improvements wherever possible.

Alongside Ruth Cooke, the other executive team designate appointments are: Accord's Stuart Fisher as chief finance officer and deputy chief executive; Iain Bacon as executive director of corporate services; Rachel Crownshaw as managing director (south); Maxine Espley as executive director of care and support; Dawn Hendon as company secretary and director of governance; Helen Moss as executive director of people; and Sara Woodall as managing director (north). Executive directors for the development and assets portfolios are still to be recruited.

Alongside Elisabeth Buggins, the other board designate appointments are: GreenSquare's Robin Bailey as deputy chair; Pablo Andres; Mandy Clarke; Simon Eastwood; David Greenhalgh; Susan Goldsmith; Ninder Johal; Sean Pearce; Salma Reehana; Ruth Cooke; and Stuart Fisher.

The current expectation is that, subject to shareholder approval, GreenSquare will merge with Accord in Spring 2021 through a transfer of engagements, creating a larger and stronger organisation with a new name yet to be announced.

---