

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Out-of-centre retail trade body, Accessible Retail (AR), and major investors group, the Shopping Park Investors Forum (SPIN-f), have merged to form one organisation. The new body, which will continue to be called Accessible Retail, brings together the leading owners, investors, retailers and advisors into one industry body representing the sector.

AR Chairman, Andrew Appleyard, who will chair the new body, said

‘I am delighted to have the owners and investors on board. Together we will constitute a more authoritative voice representing the interests of both owners and occupiers of retail parks and warehouses and, ultimately, their investors and customers’.

Shopping Park Investors Forum founder, Martin Clews, will continue to provide investor services to the industry and will also organise conferences and events for the new body. He said ‘I am very pleased to continue to work with Accessible Retail and I look forward to being able to help the sector grow and prosper’.

AR Chief Executive, Will McKee, said

‘Having a stronger body representing all interests in the sector is a major step forward. It will give greater authority to our views and underpin the important new research projects we are undertaking. Both our owner and occupier members dispute the view implicit in PPG6 that out-of-centre retailing is a primary cause of town centre decline. They believe it fails to understand the dynamics of modern retailing, the causes of town centre prosperity and that town centre and out-of-centre retailing often complement each other. Consequently, we must establish a consensus on which factors determine whether a town centre is successful or declining before the next review of PPG6. Alongside this, we must secure greater recognition of the important role the out-of-centre retail sector plays in growing the economy, improving competitiveness and providing employment. To progress these two aims, we are about to start three major new pieces of research, the first of which is on the employment and regeneration opportunities provided by the sector and will be undertaken with Business in the Community’.