

From Developing to Growing

The YorSpace & Lowfield Green journey



A 60-minute workshop on how creating a dual CLT/Co-op organisations, can help - and hinder - building the first community, and growing what comes next.

YorSpace

Lowfield Green Co-op

Phase 1 • 14 homes

Phase 2 • 6 apartments & community solar

Phase 3 • Common House

Using the power of partnership to creating community-led, low-cost, low-carbon housing & neighbourhoods in York.

Where are you on the journey?



Understanding what experience we have in the room



Opening question

Where are you on this journey — what is the biggest thing you are trying to figure out?

We'll use the YorSpace / Lowfield Green experience as the case study, but the discussion is about what others can take from it.

Our Inspiration....



Leeds Community Homes



1. Creating the CLT



The first development was the organisation.

What did we build on the way to trying to “do a LILAC”?

Vision & values

What are we trying to change?

CLT structure

How will land be held for community benefit?

Governance

Who decides — and how?

Membership

Who is the community?

Capacity

What do we know, and what do we need help with?

Credibility

How do we build trust with partners, landowners and funders?

KEY LESSON

The first development isn't the houses. It's the organisation.

2. Building the Lowfield Green model



Two organisations, different roles, one community-led ambition.

YorSpace

The overarching community land trust and development organisation.

- Holds the land for community benefit
- Enables and supports resident-led projects
- Develops relationships, finance and expertise
- Creates the framework for long-term affordability

PARTNERSHIP
↔

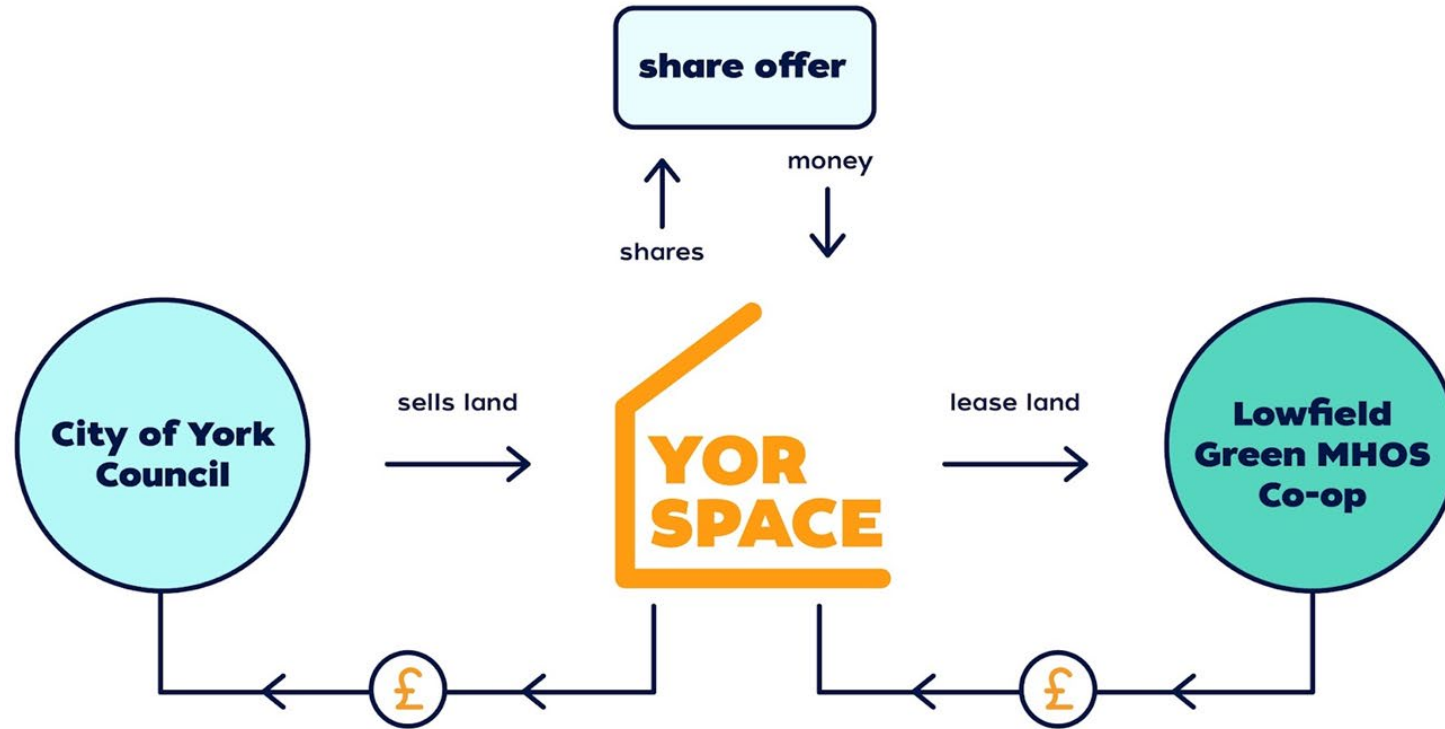
Lowfield Green Housing Co-op

The resident-led organisation and steward of the Lowfield Green community.

- Represents the resident community
- Participates in project decisions
- Takes on the homes and communal life
- Builds the capacity to steward the place

**The project works because organisational capacity and resident leadership develop together.
We can bring both wider community AND resident community together**

Securing the LandThe Community's “Bank of Mum & Dad”



3. From opportunity to project



Creating Lowfield Green meant turning an idea into something deliverable.



The process is not linear: design, planning, costs, finance and community decisions continually interact.

4. Creating the resident community



Lowfield Green Housing Co-op had to become capable of being a community, not just a list of future residents.

Membership

Who belongs?

How do people join?

How do new households become part of the community?

Governance

How are decisions made?

What does resident leadership look like?

What responsibilities sit with the co-op?

Stewardship

How do residents care for the homes, shared spaces and relationships that make the place work?

KEY LESSON

The people who live in the homes are part of creating and governing the community.

5. Phase 1—14 homes & shared facilities



The first phase had to deliver both physical homes and a functioning community.

14

homes

1

Develop

Design
Plan
Finance

2

Deliver

Build
Allocate
Hand over

3

Live

Govern
Steward
Belong

What did Phase 1 teach us?

Not just how to build homes — but how two organisations work together, make decisions, manage risk, build trust and create the systems needed for a resident-led community.

Prompt: What did we think would be easy that wasn't? What did we have to compromise on?





June 2026

SITE PLAN



Features of our Community

- Secure bike storage
- 12 parking spaces for car sharing
- Car-free, outside spaces for Members to enjoy
- Areas for growing food
- Sharing of resources and equipment (ie. we don't need 19 lawnmowers on site!)
- Regular community meals and activities
- No gas. All power on site is electric (solar panels to be added in Phase 2)
- Homes are heated by air source heat pumps & MVHR
- All homes are insulated to passivHaus standards







From project to community

After Phase 1, YorSpace and Lowfield Green have something they didn't have before:



The question changes:

“Can we do this?”



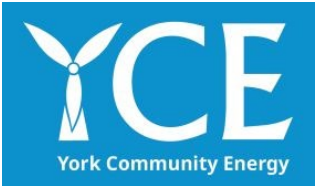
“Do we have to do this again?!?”



Lowfield Green Phase 2 - Apartment Block



Community owned solar



6. Phase 2–6 apartments & community owned solar



We didn't have to start the organisation from scratch but we had to reset the relationship between CLT & Coop

6

apartments

What you can carry forward

- Organisational structure
- Governance & decision-making
- Financial and project systems
- Relationships & professional knowledge
- Community engagement experience
- Lessons learned from Phase 1

What changes as you grow

- More complexity
- New residents / members
- More development risk
- Existing community to protect
- Greater organisational capacity
- Need to balance consistency with local needs

KEY QUESTION

How do you grow without losing the community character of the model?

Three lessons

The YorSpace / Lowfield Green journey



1. Build the organisation

YorSpace created the capacity to make Lowfield Green possible.

2. Build the community

The co-op develops alongside the homes — not after them.

3. Learn, then grow

Phase 1 creates the experience and systems that make Phase 2 and 3 possible.

Your first project proves you can deliver community housing.
Your second project proves you have built an organisation capable of doing it again.

Discussion & exploration

15 minutes — use the YorSpace journey to explore your own context.

STARTING OUT

If you were creating YorSpace again today, what would you do differently?

THE SITE

What makes an opportunity worth pursuing — and when should a group walk away?

THE ORGANISATION

How do you balance developing the organisation with developing the building?

GROWING

What should you standardise for project two — and what should never be standardised?

THE COMMUNITY

How do you bring new residents into an established community without losing its identity?

THE FUTURE

If your first project succeeds, what should your organisation be capable of doing five years later?

Facilitator: let the discussion follow the room — these are prompts, not a checklist.