

'Timely action for a shattered community'

An evaluation of the Swaledale & Wensleydale Flood Recovery Fund 2019-2021

July 2021

Commissioned by:



Authorship and acknowledgements

Chris Mills and Ben Cairns have written this report based on desk research, interviews and surveys carried out by the authors.

Thanks to the trustees, staff, volunteers, partners and grant recipients of the Two Ridings Community Foundation for giving up their time to take part in this evaluation and for sharing their experiences and ideas so freely and openly.

How to cite this report

Mills, C. and Cairns, B. (2021). 'Timely action for a shattered community': An evaluation of the Swaledale & Wensleydale Flood Recovery Fund 2019-2021. London: Institute for Voluntary Action Research.

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Introduction

On Tuesday 30th July 2019, heavy rainfall in the North Yorkshire Dales resulted in widespread flooding across Swaledale, Wensleydale and Arkengarthdale. The flooding caused extensive property damage and adversely affected the lives of people across the local area.

In response to the disaster, the Two Ridings Community Foundation (Two Ridings) established a Flood Recovery Fund, which provided grants to community members affected by the flooding. Working with a Grants Panel made up of local people, Two Ridings awarded grants totalling £490,620. These grants were spread across three phases, each with a distinct objective:

- i. To support people to cope in the immediate aftermath of the flooding.
- ii. To help people and communities to recover from the damage caused.
- iii. To build resilience against future flooding events.

As the second anniversary of the flooding approaches, it is an appropriate time to reflect on what happened and how the Fund helped the community.

Evaluation purpose

Two Ridings commissioned the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the Swaledale & Wensleydale Flood Recovery Fund ('the Fund').

Two Ridings asked for the evaluation to '*assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Fund*'. It also requested that the evaluation '*consider key areas around: governance and decision-making structures; communication; Fund management and the grant-making process; and, working with other organisations*'.

Executive summary

Our overall assessment is that the Swaledale & Wensleydale Flood Recovery Fund ('the Fund') effectively addressed individual and community needs arising from the flooding. The Fund achieved impressive reach and coverage, delivering support to 182 (76%) of the 238 properties affected by the flooding.

Two Ridings was effective at distributing grants at speed. As one grant recipient noted, the Fund provided '*timely action for a shattered community*' and supported those in the greatest need to recover from the damage caused by the flooding. In our assessment, Two Ridings effectively allocated these resources, balancing the requirement to gather evidence to identify those most in need, yet minimise bureaucracy for grant applicants. Finally, the Fund contributed to the local community's long-term resilience against future flooding by supporting a range of household and community measures.

We identified seven mechanisms that contributed towards effective grant-making in response to the disaster:

- Fund governance that involves local people
- Preparedness
- Active outreach with an on-the-ground presence
- Grant-making with speed in the immediate aftermath
- Making the best use of limited resources
- Adaptability
- Resourcing grant administration

We also identified three limiting factors that constrained the effectiveness of the Fund:

- Initial detachment from disaster response governance
- Delays to government matched funding
- Limited strategic development of resilience grant-making

We expect that this report's findings will generate learning for Two Ridings but they should also have broader applicability. At the end, we therefore make recommendations which are designed to enhance the ability of all community foundations to respond effectively to local disasters.

In particular, we suggest the following policies and practices:

- Community foundation membership of Local Resilience Forums (LRFs).
- The establishment of a nationally held central fund to underwrite grant-making to communities in the aftermath of a local disaster.
- Clear guidelines from central government about what funding it will provide to communities in the aftermath of a local disaster.
- Provision by central funds to adequately resource community foundations' grant administration function, which is vital for effective outreach and grant assessment work.

Research approach and data

IVAR adopted a mixed-methods approach in analysing the effectiveness of the Fund, comprising document analysis, observation, qualitative interviews and an online survey. Specifically:

1. We reviewed various documents relating to the flooding and the Fund, including: media coverage and various public sector reports about the flooding, minutes of meetings of the Grants Panel and the Fund's grants policies and procedures.
2. We attended and observed a meeting of the Grants Panel in May 2021.
3. We analysed anonymised data in order to understand the types, values and timing of grants made through the Fund.
4. We also spoke to seven individuals involved in the Fund and the disaster response, including:
 - The Chief Executive and Grants Programme Officer at Two Ridings.
 - Three members of the Grants Panel. These interviews gave us the perspectives of a Two Ridings trustee, members of the affected community and an individual directly affected by the flooding.
 - Two representatives from the Resilience & Emergencies Team at North Yorkshire County Council.
5. We collected feedback from grant recipients via an online survey (42 respondents). The survey had a mix of closed and open-ended questions, thereby allowing us to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.

Throughout this report, the views of study participants are presented anonymously, using unattributed quotations (indicated in italics).

This report also draws on IVAR's knowledge and evaluation of other disaster funds over the past five years, including responses to: the Grenfell Tower fire, the London Bridge and Borough Market attacks, the Manchester Arena bombing, and the Covid-19 crisis.

What happened

The flooding

On Tuesday 30th July 2019, a storm formed over the central Pennines and tracked north-westerly over North Yorkshire. It delivered an intense burst of rainfall which resulted in widespread flooding across Swaledale, Wensleydale and Arkengarthdale in the Upper Dales. The localised nature of the storm, the fast onset of flooding, and the unpredictability of the event meant that only limited mitigating actions were possible.

'It rained heavily. Then it got heavier and heavier. We've never seen rain like it.'

The flooding destroyed bridges, swept away roads and caused landslips on railway lines. There was extensive damage to the agriculture sector, including damage to land, stone walls, fences, access tracks, livestock, feed, equipment and farmhouses. Homes and businesses were also affected, many being inundated with flood waters. The North Yorkshire County Council Flood Investigation Report¹ estimates that 238 individual properties were affected by the flooding.

'There was so much damage in a short space of time.'

The damage wreaked by the flooding is best understood by watching video footage: two news bulletins from ITN and footage from an Arkengarthdale farm capture the devastation:

- ITN news coverage on 30th July 2019
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCID8Nc96YA>
- ITN news coverage on 31st July 2019
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDhQo16dclw>
- A video from Bluestone Images of Holme Farm, Arkengarthdale
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cds8Mtrm3mo>

'We're absolutely devastated. Our home, our business.'

In February 2020, several properties were flooded again following Storm Ciara, affecting repairs already carried out and adding to the trauma of those involved.

The fundraising

Two Ridings launched the Swaledale & Wensleydale Recovery appeal on 1st August 2019, just two days after the flooding. Since Two Ridings is a charity, the appeal was for funds to help with charitable purposes in connection with the relief of hardship caused directly or indirectly by storm damage and flooding.

Two Ridings received donations from members of the public, fundraising events, local businesses, philanthropists, charitable trusts and other funders.

¹ Business and Environmental Services, North Yorkshire County Council (2020). *Flood Investigation Report: Richmondshire July 2019*.

In May 2020, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government also agreed matched funding up to a maximum of £250,000. In total, £0.5m was raised for the Fund.

The Fund was just one component of an array of funding to support the community response to the flooding, including:

- £3m from the Department of Transport for transport infrastructure repairs.
- £2m from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for farms' uninsurable losses.
- £50,000 for businesses from the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

The grant-making

Grant-making strategy

Although the £0.5m raised for the Fund was substantial, the resources were still modest compared to the destruction caused by the flooding. To target resources towards those most in need, Two Ridings therefore adopted an effective three-phase grant-making strategy. By taking this approach, Two Ridings was able to respond to changing needs and adjust grant-making policies and procedures for each phase. These comprised:

- **Phase 1 - Response:** Immediate grants to provide instant financial support to people affected by the flooding to help with urgent costs. During this phase, the emphasis was on the rapid delivery of support at a time of crisis. Typically, these grants were £300 for individuals and £1,000 for farmers.
- **Phase 2 – Recovery:** Grants to help individuals and organisations cover the costs of making homes, buildings and land useable again. Typically, grants covered items such as white goods, floor coverings, essential furniture and building repair work. Grants were awarded where applicants met certain criteria.
- **Phase 3 – Resilience:** Grants to individuals and organisations to help protect homes and communities from the risk of future flooding. Typically, grants were used to fund flood barriers or doors, drainage improvements or other flood prevention measures. Grants were awarded where applicants met certain criteria.

With other agencies funding transport infrastructure, farms and businesses, Two Ridings initially concentrated their efforts on grant-making to households. However, as discussed later (see page 15), Two Ridings retained sufficient flexibility to adjust to emerging needs and later included grants to farmers and small business owners.

Financial summary

Two Ridings distributed 292 grants from the Fund with a combined value of £490,620. The table below analyses the value of grants made across the three phases of grant-making.

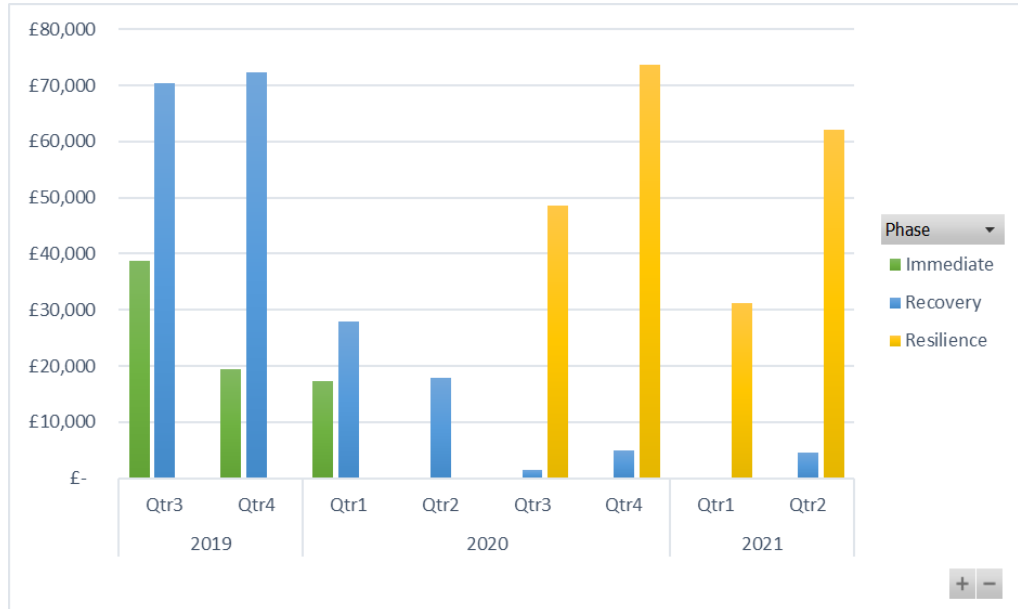
Figure 1: Value of grants

	Number of grants	Total grant amounts (£)	Mean average grant value (£)
Immediate response grants			
Individuals	149	44,500	299
Businesses	3	900	300
Farmers	30	30,000	1,000
Sub-total	182	75,400	
Recovery grants			
Individuals	43	75,818	1,763
Businesses	7	21,200	3,029
Farmers	6	29,000	4,833
Community organisations	6	37,422	6,237
Parish councils	6	36,240	6,040
Sub-total	68	199,680	
Resilience grants			
Individuals	31	57,234	1,846
Community organisations	6	62,500	10,417
Parish councils	5	95,806	19,161
Sub-total	42	215,540	
Grand total	292	490,620	N/A

Timescales

The three phases of grant-making were spread out over almost two years. The graph below shows how grants were sequenced across the three phases.

Figure 2: Timescales



The long tail of immediate grants resulted from grants made to farmers in the winter of 2019/20 (see page 15) and a small number made in response to the Storm Ciara flooding in February 2020.

The mechanisms for effective grant-making in response to a local disaster

In this section, we identify and discuss the mechanisms that contributed to the effectiveness of the Fund.

Fund governance that involves local people

A key strength of the Fund came from the Two Ridings trustees delegating grant-making responsibilities to a dedicated Grants Panel. This delegation of authority was vital because it located decision-making closer to the community affected by the flooding:

‘Since the Foundation covers a large area and has its head office in York, we didn’t entirely know our Swaledale from our Arkengarthdale. We needed to get local people on board who really understood their patch.’

Two Ridings appointed local residents and community leaders from Swaledale, Wensleydale and Arkengarthdale to the Grants Panel. The Panel played several key roles, including:

- Establishing the Fund’s grant-making policies and guidelines (i.e. agreeing what it would and wouldn’t fund).
- Advising on large, unusual or contentious grant applications.

The Panel enabled Two Ridings to harness local knowledge in their grant-making, including an understanding of local geography, the properties affected and local organisations with whom to collaborate. The community-based composition of the Panel also ensured that local people were involved in decision-making, which fostered better accountability to the local community.

Swift decision-making is essential in emergencies and the Fund’s governance arrangements enabled this. The Panel set clear policies and guidelines, enabling most grant applications to be dealt with by Two Ridings staff. The removal of decision-making bureaucracies speeded up the payment of grants to individuals in a time of crisis.

The Panel members commented on the high degree of professionalism displayed by Two Ridings staff and the quality of the information provided to the Panel. Members also commented on how the Panel discussed issues thoroughly, which helped them to determine fair policies and make judicious decisions:

‘I sit on lots of committees and the Panel has been one of the better committees I’ve been on. It has been very professional’

Overall, the internal governance structures of the Fund, especially the local composition of the Grants Panel, contributed towards a rigorous and effective decision-making process.

Preparedness

Immediately available funds

Two Ridings was able to respond quickly to the flooding because it had immediate access to funds. A Flood Recovery Fund was established in 2015 after the devastating Boxing Day flooding of York and North Yorkshire. A small balance of funds remained by the time of the flooding in the Upper Dales in July 2019, which meant that Two Ridings was not wholly dependent on raising new monies before it could start making grants. As a result, Two Ridings could quickly commit to offering immediate response grants without worrying about a shortfall in funding.

In many ways, Two Ridings was fortunate in having access to disaster funding. While it would seem prudent for all community foundations to have monies immediately available to respond to disasters, we are aware that this is often not possible.

Existing fundraising infrastructure

Two Ridings had access to funds and could commit to an immediate response but additional fundraising was required to deliver the recovery and resilience phases. Two Ridings' existing fundraising infrastructure (e.g. online donation systems) meant that it was well placed to start a fundraising campaign quickly after the flooding occurred. The first donations were collected on 1st August 2019, just two days after the flooding. A rapid response like this is crucial because it makes the most of the media coverage of the disaster, which tends to be short-lived:

'Lots of press coverage means that although we never really asked for money, it just came in.'

Existing grant-making infrastructure

Good preparedness also means having grant-making systems and processes ready. Prior experience of running the 2015 disaster fund mentioned above, led Two Ridings to develop a series of procedures, checklists and template documents and forms. This meant, in 2019, Two Ridings was well prepared to respond quickly, making use of its existing grant-making infrastructure, including a grant-making database, ensuring that it could administer grants efficiently.

Overall, Two Ridings demonstrated how community foundations are well-positioned to respond to local disasters and emergencies, especially when prepared for such scenarios. That said, given the importance of speed in the immediate response, it should be a concern to wider policy makers that Two Ridings was reliant on fortuitously available funds. Without these, it would not have been possible to commit to an immediate response.

Active outreach with an on-the-ground presence

Two Ridings was effective at promoting the availability of grants to those affected by the flooding, issuing their first press release on 1st August 2019. Along with key partners, Two Ridings also attended local community meetings and help centres, where it distributed leaflets about the grants; it also spread the word by communicating directly with local community leaders.

However, there were challenges in promotion, especially in dispersed rural communities where *'people often don't want to claim'*. This placed a premium on establishing trust in order to signpost people towards the Fund and maximise access to grants. Two Ridings was effective in overcoming such obstacles by working in partnership with local organisations (including the local Citizens Advice Bureau, Council for Voluntary Service, Farmers Community Network (FCN) and National Farmers' Union (NFU) branch) with on-the-ground presence, and by including local people on the Grants Panel.

'At a time of need, it was comforting to know there were those willing to assist.'

These partnerships were also important in establishing a personal feel to the grant-making. Representatives from these organisations often visited affected properties, which gave them the ability to observe and advise grant applicants, creating a person-centred approach: *'People were dealing with real people'*.

Overall, the active outreach strategy adopted by Two Ridings was successful in understanding the community, promoting knowledge of the fund and securing grant applications:

- 89% of surveyed grant recipients agreed that Two Ridings showed a good understanding of needs.
- 68% of surveyed grant recipients agreed that the availability of grants was well-promoted.
- A total of 182 immediate grants were made, which represents 76% of the 238 individual properties affected by the flooding event. Such reach and coverage are impressive.

Grant-making with speed in the immediate aftermath

Two Ridings was effective at distributing money quickly at a time of urgent need. The deployment of an effective grant administration process was instrumental in achieving this. Application forms for immediate response grants were short, simple and easy to complete, and only asked necessary questions. Due diligence checks were kept to a minimum, with a focus on confirming the identity of the applicant and that their property had indeed been flooded. Funds were then paid out quickly by bank transfer. The swift dispersal of grants at the immediate response stage was also facilitated by good governance structures, clear grant policies and the appropriate delegation of decision-making to Two Ridings staff, allowing Two Ridings' Chief Executive and Grants Programme Officer to approve grants quickly.

Analysis of the immediate response grants data showed the following:

- The first grants were paid out 5th August 2019, less than a week after the flooding occurred.
- 75% of immediate response grants were paid out within five days of application.
- 121 (80%) of the 152 immediate response grants (excluding farmers) were paid out by the end of August 2019.

The value of immediate response grants

Grant recipients told us that their grants were important for various reasons:

'It was brilliant to be able to get some financial help after the flood, particularly at such a stressful time.'

'It gave me peace of mind that any urgent costs arising as a result of the flood would be covered by the grant.'

'You don't know what you've lost until you need it. I used my grant to buy new shoes and wellies because I hadn't taken them upstairs before the floods.'

'The grant helped towards replacing our white goods which were all lost in the flood.'

'My home was insured and I received a great deal of help via the insurance company, but the grant made me feel that someone cared.'

Overall, the effectiveness of the immediate response grants is validated by the online survey of grant recipients in which 96% agreed that their grant was helpful.

Making the best use of limited resources

Following on from grant-making in the immediate aftermath of the flooding, Two Ridings turned to support recovery and resilience measures. Two Ridings did this knowing that the funds at their disposal represented a fraction of the total cost of repairing the damage caused by the flooding. In this context, Two Ridings implemented systems and processes to allocate finite resources to those most in need.

Building on the grant policies approved by the Grants Panel, Two Ridings implemented application and assessment processes which sought to strike a fair balance between the need for information to assess applications and light touch due diligence. Our survey of grant recipients found some frustration around the provision of supporting paperwork but most applicants agreed that the process was proportionate to the value of monies available and that the criteria for awarding grants were fair:

'I found the application process very straightforward and not too long. When I worked, part of my job included applying for grants and they often took hours to fill in and often put people off applying. The Two Ridings Fund seems to be designed so that most ordinary people could manage to complete the application form.'

Decisions on grant awards in the recovery and resilience stages usually took longer because of the need for assessment and approval. On occasions, unusual or contentious grant applications were referred to the Grants Panel, which extended the application period. Nevertheless, 74% of grants were paid out within a month of the application being made.

The value of recovery and resilience grants

Grant recipients told us how grants helped them to repair their properties and feel more confident about their ability to survive future flooding events:

'I have now been flooded seriously twice. The first time in 2012, there was nothing available for support. I was at the mercy of an insurance company and a builder who promised the earth and delivered nothing. Sadly, I flooded again in 2019 only to discover that the work that I had done before was not suitable. I was in a situation where I couldn't make a claim on the insurance because my property is still mortgaged. I could potentially make my property uninsurable. I had no savings after emptying my rainy-day pot in 2012. Thank goodness for Two Ridings who gave me a grant to get the repairs actioned.'

'As well as the flood barriers, we now have double flood gates on our driveway, a small flood gate to the side of the house where water always came through and a small wall at the front of our house to deflect water away from us, and barriers on our garage. It should protect us if we get another event similar to July 2019.'

Adaptability

The ability to react to the situation and emergent needs is an essential feature of a disaster response grant fund:

'Every emergency incident evolves and so the response must be flexible and tailored to the incident and the community that is affected. Inevitably, there will be lots of obstacles to work around and it is accepted that we have to do that.'

Two Ridings showed adaptability in several different ways. For example, the Grants Panel adapted grants policies as new information emerged (as the excellent example given below in supporting farmers demonstrates) and was willing to make occasional exceptions for unusual but worthy grant applications.

Adapting grant policy to support farmers in need

On 8th August, 2019, the Chancellor announced that DEFRA would be given £2m to allocate to farms in North Yorkshire to cover uninsurable losses arising from the flooding. On this basis, Two Ridings did not initially include farms in their grants policy.

However, as details of the DEFRA fund emerged, it became clear that grants would not be paid out until March 2021, which left many farmers with short-term cash flow issues. Furthermore, DEFRA set a maximum limit of £25,000 for these grants. This covered most farms' uninsured losses but several surpassed the cap.

The local branch of the National Farmers Union (NFU) and the Farmers Community Network (FCN) asked Two Ridings if the Fund could provide support for farmers. Recognising the needs of farmers, the Grants Panel agreed to give an immediate grant of £1,000 to each affected farm, and up to £5,000 for those farms where uninsured repair costs exceeded £25,000.

Two Ridings then worked closely with the NFU and FCN to promote the grants, manage casework and assess applications. By working in this way, Two Ridings could draw on NFU and FCN knowledge and their established relationships with the farming community to distribute money quickly. This resulted in the provision of immediate response grants to 30 farmers and recovery grants to six farmers.

Farmers that received support appreciated the flexibility of Two Ridings:

'Often there's a lot of talk about providing help but then funding agencies create endless hoops for farmers to jump through. It was great that the Community Foundation was able to agree to support farmers and then get it done quickly and easily.'

Resourcing grant administration

Effective disaster responses require good grant-making. As illustrated above, this involves active outreach, robust policies and procedures, and the careful allocation of limited resources. Since good grant-making like this needs resourcing, the costs associated with working in this way must be covered.

Early in August 2020, the Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund agreed to fund some of the Fund's grant management costs. This helped Two Ridings to commit staff to the project and contract local organisations to provide grant assessors to work on the ground in the recovery phase.

Once more, Two Ridings was fortunate in having early access to financial resources. By receiving support from another organisation willing to fund the cost of grant-making, Two Ridings could commit to resourcing the grant-management function fully. Without this, it is doubtful whether Two Ridings would have been as effective.

Limiting factors

In this section, we explore three key factors that limited the effectiveness of the Fund.

Initial detachment from disaster response governance

In emergencies, agencies must implement a rapid and integrated response. Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) are, therefore, tasked with planning and preparing for localised incidents and catastrophic emergencies. They work to identify potential risks and produce emergency plans to either prevent or mitigate the impact of any incident on their local communities. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, engaging early, sharing information, and coordinating action is essential. LRFs are, therefore, multi-agency partnerships with representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and other relevant organisations. For Swaledale and Wensleydale in the Upper Dales, the relevant LRF is the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (NYLRF).

The Police took charge of the immediate disaster response to the flooding. From 1st August 2019, Richmondshire District Council led the recovery response. As per the LRF plans, it established a Recovery Group and Sub-Groups to coordinate action. Two Ridings was invited to become a member of the Economic Recovery Sub-Group on 3rd August and joined the main Recovery Strategy Group on 8th August.

In the days immediately following the flooding, Two Ridings felt a little distant. It had established itself as a valuable partner in distributing grants to households and communities during the 2015 floods but its role had not been formalised through membership of the NYLRF or in NYLRF disaster response plans. As a result, Two Ridings was a little detached from local government and agencies' initial post-flooding discussions. Although Richmondshire District Council subsequently involved Two Ridings, the slight delay meant that Two Ridings was scrambling for information in the first few days following the flooding.

Delays to government matched funding

Two Ridings' ability to support communities to recover and build resilience after the flooding was constrained by delays to the provision of government matched funding.

On 8th August 2019, the Chancellor announced funding for DEFRA and the Department of Transport. However, central government did not initially pledge funding for flood-hit homes. Although the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government subsequently agreed, in May 2020, to provide matched funding of £248,856, the delay was not conducive to Two Ridings maximising the impact of its recovery and resilience grant-making. Without the matched funding, the resilience phase would not have been possible, so it was only in May 2020 that the third phase of grant-making could go ahead in a substantial form.

The way that central government provides money for local disasters is not altogether clear. In particular, it is unclear what parameters and thresholds must be met before funding is awarded to support flood-hit homes; and the scale and timing of funding commitments appear to be at the discretion of government ministers. The uncertainty created by not knowing what funding would be available meant that Two Ridings' planning decisions were impaired.

The matched funding received by Two Ridings from central government was also time limited. Funds had to be spent by March 2021, which only gave an eight-month window for Two Ridings to plan for and award resilience grants. Although the expenditure deadline was subsequently extended to May 2021, that decision came too late to benefit the strategic planning process.

Limited strategic development of resilience grant-making

Two Ridings' principal aim for the resilience phase of grant-making was to help protect homes and communities from the risk of future flooding. It awarded 42 resilience grants totalling £215,540.

Given the scale of infrastructure improvements needed to comprehensively address flood risks, some realism is required about the impact that £215,540 can achieve. The North Yorkshire County Council's Flood Investigation Report noted that it is: *'Not realistic at this time to expect drainage infrastructure to be upgraded to a capacity sufficient to cope with this level of event'*. The report states that communities and landowners have roles to play in natural flood risk management by implementing measures to reduce surface water runoff and by completing inspection and maintenance tasks on drainage systems. The report also noted that there were opportunities for improving the resilience of individual properties.

In this context, a highly strategic approach to grant-making at the resilience phase would have been ideal. However, various issues conspired to limit Two Ridings' strategic development of a grants programme. Significant impediments were the delay in agreeing matched funding from central government and the uncertainty over whether Two Ridings would have monies available for a resilience phase. The onset of Covid-19 restrictions in March 2020 also hampered the scope for community engagement activities and partnership working with bodies such as the National Flood Forum, a charity that supports people at risk of flooding. Furthermore, the report from engineering consultancy firm WSP (commissioned by North Yorkshire County Council) recommending flood alleviation measures was published in early 2021, not long before the deadline for spending the matched funding. This meant that there was limited scope to build a cohesive strategy.

Under the resilience phase, individual households, parish councils and community groups have all been awarded grants that, on their own, will improve household and community resilience. Indeed, all recipients of resilience grants that participated in our evaluation said that their grant was helpful. That said, the opportunity to achieve a benefit greater than the sum of the parts may have been missed.

If climate change predictions are accurate, more intense summer storms are likely to occur. An opportunity to connect global climate concerns to local action may have been missed, as it was not possible for Two Ridings to use the initial resilience funding as a platform for community consultation and strategic development to develop a community-wide approach for sustained action.

Enhancing community foundations' responses to local disasters

From our evaluation of the Fund and IVAR's other research work into disaster recovery funds, we have observed the vital role played by community foundations and other community anchors. In particular, community foundations bring several strategic strengths to supporting communities following a disaster, including local knowledge, local relationships and established fundraising and grant-making infrastructure.

At the same time, our evaluation has highlighted several constraints that limited (or threatened to limit) Two Ridings' capacity to be effective. Community foundations' responses to local disasters could be further enhanced through a series of improved policies and practices. The recommendations listed below should be of interest to the wider network of community foundations and to policy makers within central and local government:

- **Community foundations being members of Local Resilience Forums** may help integrate them into the wider governance of emergency responses. Greater involvement with emergency response planning should enhance community foundations' capacity to offer support to local people and communities after a disaster.
- **The establishment of a nationally held central fund** to underwrite grant-making in response to a local disaster would ensure that no community foundation is prevented from responding to an emergency because they cannot immediately access financial resources. These funds could be repayable to the central fund, assuming that subsequent fundraising efforts are successful.
- **Clear guidelines from central government about what funding it will provide** for communities in the aftermath of a local disaster would help community foundations respond effectively. A commitment to agreeing to such funding quickly in the immediate aftermath of a disaster would help ensure immediate support to those in need. Furthermore, the early agreement of funding would allow more time for community foundations to engage with communities and develop strategic grant programmes to build resilience.
- With central sources of funding, it is vital that **community foundations' grant administration costs are adequately covered**. This is important because it allows community foundations to adequately resource the grant-making function and contract other local organisations to perform vital outreach and grant assessment work.