# Skegness faces homelessness crisis amid £5 million regeneration doubts



Skegness, a seaside town in Lincolnshire, has long been associated with holiday nostalgia, typified by bustling theme parks and traditional seaside attractions. However, beneath this veneer of tourism lies a stark reality, as locals voice their concerns over rising homelessness and the decline of the town centre. As the summer season transforms the population from approximately 20,700 to over 250,000, many residents question the tangible benefits of a £5 million loan taken by Lincolnshire County Council aimed at revitalising the area.

Historically, Skegness thrived during the 19th century, becoming a popular destination with the advent of railway travel. However, recent assessments, including the 2023 Which? Magazine poll, reveal a troubling trend, with Skegness rated the least favourable seaside resort in Britain. Tony Singh Talwar, the owner of the Massive Clearance Shop, highlighted the concerning rise in homelessness, attributing it in part to a burgeoning drug issue within the community. "It’s very sad to see, and it comes down to drugs," he stated to the Daily Mail. “The only people benefitting from that are the dealers.”

Residents like 65-year-old Paul Canning have also noted an increase in visible homelessness, with many sleeping in shop doorways. Canning remarked, "You see quite a few people sleeping in the doorways of the many closed and boarded-up shops." This sentiment is echoed by longtime visitor Paula Carter, who said she has observed more homeless individuals during her recent trips.

To address the growing situation, East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) invested £70,000 in four emergency sleeping pods in January, following reports of a shocking rise in rough sleepers—152 recorded in just the first nine months of the 2024/25 period. Yet the council’s efforts faced scrutiny, particularly after a heartbreaking incident where a homeless man was discovered dead on the street. Council representatives clarified that accommodation offers had been made multiple times, though they reported many individuals declining assistance.

Local business owners are expressing frustration over the town's deteriorating state, with storefronts remaining closed and boarded up, contributing to an uninviting atmosphere. Talwar noted, "The centre is 100% run-down and outdated, so it does need these investments," while questioning the efficacy and transparency of the council's spending.

This sentiment of decline contrasts sharply with the enduring popularity of local attractions like Butlins and Fantasy Island, which collectively draw hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. Butlins' CEO, Jon Hendry-Pickup, asserted that despite the town's challenges, their attraction remains successful largely due to recent upgrades. He reflected on the necessity of keeping the resort relevant and inviting, stating, "Investment into the area to bring more people in is definitely going to be a good thing."

Moreover, the imminent £26 million investment from East Midland Rail is hoped to alleviate transportation issues that plague visitors during peak seasons. Kay Farmer, an Uber driver, voiced her frustrations about overcrowded trains, indicating that the lack of frequency and carriage capacity often leaves families stranded without seating.

While optimism exists for improved transport links, residents remain sceptical about the direction of Skegness' future. The recent political landscape has shifted drastically, as Reform UK gained significant ground in Lincolnshire’s county council elections, resulting in a change of leadership after nearly three decades of Conservative control. Richard Tice of Reform UK described the election results as a "seismic change" and local residents are looking to this new administration for answers regarding local redevelopment and community issues.

As these various threads unfold, locals seek accountability for public spending and tangible improvements in their community. While they appreciate the tourist influx and associated business, many wonder when the promised investments will translate into visible progress in a town that has become a shadow of its former self.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cqld2nqqkneo> - This article discusses the installation of four emergency accommodation pods in Skegness to address rising homelessness, providing details about the council's £70,000 investment and the design of the pods.
2. <https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/article/27925/East-Lindsey-District-Council-approves-report-for-new-accommodation-pods-in-Skegness> - This official council report confirms the approval of four new accommodation pods in Skegness, highlighting the council's commitment to improving housing options for the community.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cxwjrl2384mo> - This article reports on the £5 million government funding awarded to redevelop Skegness Pier and the Embassy Theatre, aiming to transform these attractions into new visitor destinations.
4. <https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/article/23729/East-Lindsey-District-Council-and-partners-awarded-5million-funding-to-support-redevelopment-of-Skegness-Pier-and-Embassy-Theatre> - This council announcement details the £5 million funding from Arts Council England's Cultural Development Fund to support the redevelopment of Skegness Pier and Embassy Theatre.
5. <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/news/salvation-army-lifehouse-supports-3000-vulnerable-people> - This article highlights the Salvation Army's Lifehouse in Skegness, which has supported over 3,000 homeless individuals since its opening in 2001, providing services like accommodation and rehabilitation.
6. <https://www.itv.com/news/calendar/2025-01-27/pods-to-be-installed-for-rough-sleepers-in-seaside-town> - This news piece covers the council's approval to install four 'emergency accommodation pods' in Skegness, designed for individuals with complex needs who cannot access traditional shelters.
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