# Reform UK faces backlash after scrapping Lincolnshire’s flood scrutiny committee



On its inaugural day at the helm of Lincolnshire County Council, the Reform UK party controversially dismantled the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee, an entity deemed pivotal by many in a region repeatedly battered by extreme weather events. This decision has ignited a significant debate over flood management in a county susceptible to flooding due to its low-lying geography and extensive network of rivers and drains. The new leadership, led by Councillor Sean Matthews, contends that this move will streamline operations and reduce costs, but critics warn it undermines essential flood defence oversight.

Lincolnshire is particularly vulnerable to flooding, bearing the brunt of powerful storms that have wreaked havoc over recent years. For instance, the winter of 2023 saw Storm Babet and Storm Henk lead to the inundation of approximately 900 homes, with river defences critically compromised. The Met Office has reported that this region experienced its wettest winter to date, characterised by intense rainfall that overwhelmed local drainage systems. As one local councillor pointed out, any erosion of flood management capabilities is deeply concerning, especially as increasing rainfall events, linked to climate change, threaten to repeat these past tragedies.

Prior to its dissolution, the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee functioned as a coordinating body, liaising among various agencies, including the Environment Agency and local Internal Drainage Boards. These organisations play vital roles in safeguarding infrastructure and public safety through the management of pumping stations and flood barriers. The Committee, with its mixed membership of councillors and experts, frequently examined the operational efficiency of flood prevention measures and advocated for increased funding—a necessity given the estimated £45 million repair bill following the damage inflicted by past storms.

Despite the upheaval, Councillor Matthews has assured constituents that flood management will still be prioritised within the newly formed Environment Committee, which will encompass a broader discussion of waste and pollution issues. He asserts that structuring flood management within this committee will facilitate more frequent dialogue about flooding, a claim met with skepticism by opponents. Labour group leader Councillor Karen Lee slammed the decision as "reckless," highlighting that the reorganisation could dilute accountability at a time when communities are vulnerable and need robust support.

As the effects of climate change intensify, the frequency and severity of flooding events in Lincolnshire illustrate the urgency for a comprehensive and collaborative flood management strategy. Even with established protocols among emergency services, long-term resilience requires a coordinated effort to evaluate risk, allocate funds, and learn from past incidents. The implications of the council's restructuring are still unfolding, and whether this will benefit the vulnerable populations as claimed remains to be seen.

Compounding the situation, Environment Secretary Emma Hardy recently described the UK's national flood defences as being "in the worst state on record," indicating a pressing need for systemic improvements. Critics of Reform UK's approach urge for a re-evaluation of this simplification strategy, warning that the relationship among various stakeholders is crucial to crafting effective long-term flooding solutions in Lincolnshire.

In this backdrop of stakes high and strategies contentious, the community awaits to see if the council's new direction—focusing on "cutting waste" while fervently addressing flooding—will translate into real protection against the increasingly unpredictable climate and its attendant hazards. The stakes in Lincolnshire demand more than just reorganisation; they require an unwavering commitment to defending against the floods that threaten lives and livelihoods.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiWkFVX3lxTE05b2MyR0I5anZMRXAxeWtURVpsRjAzR0t5Ylg4dDdQOVhxQ29FWjBLRHhBMS1hRWRRT1dUdW44VDBiSE9NZXlXb3E4d01pMV9xY1VEN0RjUFlBZ9IBX0FVX3lxTFA5dGFGMmp2QnZSUDFtOWstTnhLUHlpdVlFWEhJWTVld09mS21SYW5PQUQ4UUhudWROeDREU0ZnWnlBaDVhM2pBWWRJVW1mclZzN3hjYndZaldUZHRsRm44?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en), [[2]](https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/news/article/2207/more-investment-is-needed-to-protect-lincolnshire-from-flooding)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiWkFVX3lxTE05b2MyR0I5anZMRXAxeWtURVpsRjAzR0t5Ylg4dDdQOVhxQ29FWjBLRHhBMS1hRWRRT1dUdW44VDBiSE9NZXlXb3E4d01pMV9xY1VEN0RjUFlBZ9IBX0FVX3lxTFA5dGFGMmp2QnZSUDFtOWstTnhLUHlpdVlFWEhJWTVld09mS21SYW5PQUQ4UUhudWROeDREU0ZnWnlBaDVhM2pBWWRJVW1mclZzN3hjYndZaldUZHRsRm44?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en), [[2]](https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/news/article/2207/more-investment-is-needed-to-protect-lincolnshire-from-flooding), [[3]](https://www.lincolnshireworld.com/news/environment/lincolnshire-seeks-to-build-resilience-over-constant-flood-threat-4473152), [[6]](https://www.itv.com/news/calendar/2024-01-03/storm-henk-leaves-dozens-of-lincolnshire-properties-flooded)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.lincolnshireworld.com/news/environment/lincolnshire-faces-ps45-million-repair-bill-after-devastating-weather-events-4700755), [[5]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c047dej4yd3o)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiWkFVX3lxTE05b2MyR0I5anZMRXAxeWtURVpsRjAzR0t5Ylg4dDdQOVhxQ29FWjBLRHhBMS1hRWRRT1dUdW44VDBiSE9NZXlXb3E4d01pMV9xY1VEN0RjUFlBZ9IBX0FVX3lxTFA5dGFGMmp2QnZSUDFtOWstTnhLUHlpdVlFWEhJWTVld09mS21SYW5PQUQ4UUhudWROeDREU0ZnWnlBaDVhM2pBWWRJVW1mclZzN3hjYndZaldUZHRsRm44?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en), [[7]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn007mre00mo)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiWkFVX3lxTE05b2MyR0I5anZMRXAxeWtURVpsRjAzR0t5Ylg4dDdQOVhxQ29FWjBLRHhBMS1hRWRRT1dUdW44VDBiSE9NZXlXb3E4d01pMV9xY1VEN0RjUFlBZ9IBX0FVX3lxTFA5dGFGMmp2QnZSUDFtOWstTnhLUHlpdVlFWEhJWTVld09mS21SYW5PQUQ4UUhudWROeDREU0ZnWnlBaDVhM2pBWWRJVW1mclZzN3hjYndZaldUZHRsRm44?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en), [[4]](https://www.lincolnshireworld.com/news/environment/lincolnshire-faces-ps45-million-repair-bill-after-devastating-weather-events-4700755)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiWkFVX3lxTE05b2MyR0I5anZMRXAxeWtURVpsRjAzR0t5Ylg4dDdQOVhxQ29FWjBLRHhBMS1hRWRRT1dUdW44VDBiSE9NZXlXb3E4d01pMV9xY1VEN0RjUFlBZ9IBX0FVX3lxTFA5dGFGMmp2QnZSUDFtOWstTnhLUHlpdVlFWEhJWTVld09mS21SYW5PQUQ4UUhudWROeDREU0ZnWnlBaDVhM2pBWWRJVW1mclZzN3hjYndZaldUZHRsRm44?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en), [[7]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn007mre00mo)

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2. <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/news/article/2207/more-investment-is-needed-to-protect-lincolnshire-from-flooding> - In January 2025, Lincolnshire County Council called for increased government funding to address the impacts of climate change, following over 103 properties being flooded earlier that week. The council highlighted the need for more investment to protect the county from future flooding events, emphasizing the urgency of the situation.
3. <https://www.lincolnshireworld.com/news/environment/lincolnshire-seeks-to-build-resilience-over-constant-flood-threat-4473152> - In January 2024, Lincolnshire councillors aimed to 'build resilience' against frequent flooding threats after Storms Babet and Henk. Despite existing storm defences, communities were severely affected, prompting calls for enhanced measures to protect residents from increasingly frequent flooding events.
4. <https://www.lincolnshireworld.com/news/environment/lincolnshire-faces-ps45-million-repair-bill-after-devastating-weather-events-4700755> - In July 2024, the Environment Agency estimated a £45 million repair bill for damage caused by extreme weather events in Lincolnshire over the past year. The storms, including Babet and Henk, led to widespread flooding, particularly affecting communities like Horncastle and Fiskerton.
5. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c047dej4yd3o> - In July 2024, the Environment Agency reported that repairs to damage caused by extreme weather in Lincolnshire over the past year would cost £45 million. Hundreds of homes were flooded during Storm Babet in October and Storm Henk in January, with Fiskerton among the worst affected areas.
6. <https://www.itv.com/news/calendar/2024-01-03/storm-henk-leaves-dozens-of-lincolnshire-properties-flooded> - In January 2024, Storm Henk caused flooding across Lincolnshire, with 54 homes reported to have flooded internally and another 78 affected externally. The south of the county, particularly around Bourne to Sleaford, experienced significant impacts, prompting authorities to monitor water levels and advise residents to remain vigilant.
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn007mre00mo> - In June 2024, a senior councillor urged the next government to invest more in flood prevention in Lincolnshire. Following Storms Babet and Henk, which flooded hundreds of homes and left thousands of acres of farmland under water, the councillor emphasized the need for greater investment to mitigate the devastating impact on residents.