# Skegness fights to overcome homelessness and economic decline amid new investments



Skegness, once a thriving seaside resort for working-class families in the 19th century, is grappling with significant socio-economic challenges, as highlighted by its recent ranking as the bottom seaside destination in Which? Magazine's annual poll. With a resident population of 20,700, the town's visitor numbers can swell to over 250,000 during the summer months, indicating a heavy reliance on tourism. However, local residents and businesses are voicing concerns over the town’s deteriorating condition and its implications for community well-being.

Local business owner Tony Singh Talwar, who runs the Massive Clearance Shop on the high street, described a growing homelessness problem exacerbated by drug use in the vicinity. He remarked, "It's very sad to see and it comes down to drugs... I have helped them get off the streets." Talwar noted that many of these individuals, despite initially receiving benefits, often succumbed to addiction, leading to their homelessness. Another resident, Paul Canning, expressed that he has observed an increase in people sleeping in doorways, a sight that further contributes to the town’s "run-down" appearance.

The issue has prompted municipal responses; in January, East Lindsey District Council allocated £70,000 to introduce four emergency sleeping pods to address the growing number of rough sleepers. This initiative follows a report that revealed a steep rise in rough sleeping, with Skegness accounting for three-quarters of the area's incidents. The council has faced criticism, particularly regarding a homeless man's death in December 2024, with officials asserting they had offered him accommodation multiple times.

Crime appears to be less of a concern during daylight hours; however, local business owners have reported rising anxiety at night due to anti-social behaviour linked to drug use. Talwar expressed fear of night-time occurrences, describing a transformation in the behaviour of individuals under the influence of drugs.

Meanwhile, the economic landscape of Skegness is shifting. Once a vibrant hub with shops and traditional eateries, residents report a growing number of closed and boarded establishments, which is contributing significantly to the town's desolate image. Paula Carter, a longtime visitor, noted a dominance of fast-food outlets over traditional eateries, opining that such changes "tarnish the image of the town."

Despite these challenges, optimism exists regarding upcoming investments aimed at revitalising Skegness. A £5 million loan from Lincolnshire County Council is intended to fund improvements in the area, although many residents have expressed concerns over the perceived lack of progress. Talwar articulated a common sentiment, stating, "The centre is 100% run-down and outdated... where is this money and our taxes going?"

Furthermore, recent investment announcements from East Midland Rail for £26 million to enhance rail services aim to facilitate easier access to the seaside town, which many locals hope will reverse the decline in visitor numbers. Kay Farmer, an Uber driver in the area, remarked on the struggles of overcrowded trains, asserting that improved rail services could enhance the overall visitor experience, contributing positively to local tourism.

Local businesses, particularly those within the Butlins complex, are also responding proactively. The Butlins branch in Skegness has successfully attracted around 550,000 visitors annually, bolstered by a £20 million investment for new attractions and facilities. CEO Jon Hendry-Pickup acknowledged the importance of maintaining the town's appeal, stating, "You want to try and make sure you keep current and relevant."

As the community anticipates potential improvements, how effectively the town adapts to these changes remains to be seen. With local elections resulting in a shift in council leadership, namely the recent election of Reform UK over the Conservatives, the future strategies regarding Skegness’ financial and social rehabilitation may evolve, raising questions about governance and community engagement moving forward.

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

## Bibliography

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2. <https://www.lincolnshireworld.com/news/people/sleeping-pods-to-be-installed-for-homeless-in-skegness-4959609> - This source details East Lindsey District Council's initiative to install four emergency accommodation pods in Skegness to address the growing number of rough sleepers.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cqld2nqqkneo> - This article discusses the installation of sleeping pods in Skegness, providing temporary housing solutions for rough sleepers with complex needs.
4. <https://www.lincolnshireworld.com/news/people/boston-and-skegness-residents-least-satisfied-says-survey-3236552> - This survey indicates that residents in Boston and Skegness are among the least satisfied in Britain with local facilities, reflecting the town's socio-economic challenges.
5. <https://www.lincolnshireworld.com/news/people/sleeping-pods-to-be-installed-for-homeless-in-skegness-4959609> - This article provides details on the installation of sleeping pods in Skegness, addressing the growing number of rough sleepers in the area.
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