Save **SOBO** Beach

POLICY / GOVERNANCE COMPARISON

From principles to practice

Southbourne Promenade, BCP Council and Liberal Democrat commitments

DOCUMENT	DATE	PREPARED FOR
Evidence review	10 November 2026	Public and councillor scrutiny

Executive summary

The concerns raised by Save SOBO Beach engage commitments already expressed in the Liberal Democrats' constitutional principles, national manifesto and conference policies, and in BCP Council's adopted governance framework. This paper compares those commitments with the documented Southbourne Promenade concession decision: how public-interest requirements were set, whose needs informed them, how social value and financial resilience were assessed, and what protections the proposed 20-year arrangement provides. The central question is how the Council implemented its own standards before the tender began. [01–09, 14–16, 21–24]

The Save SOBO Beach campaign has attracted more than 10,800 petition signatures and over 6,000 supporter messages, reflecting significant public concern over the future of Southbourne Promenade. The campaign has sought answers to 15 published accountability questions, supplemented by further financial, procurement and governance enquiries. The central concerns remain unresolved in the publicly available evidence. [34]

Immediate recommendation: independent scrutiny before binding commitment

The central recommendation of this paper is that BCP Council should ensure that the independent scrutiny agreed on 13 October 2026 can be meaningfully undertaken, its findings considered and any necessary lawful decisions made **before entering into a binding long-term agreement for Southbourne Promenade** To achieve this, the following actions are requested:

1. Extend the procurement standstill immediately. The contracting authority should exercise its discretion under section 51 of the Procurement Act 2023 to extend the standstill to at least 30 November 2026. That date permits consideration at the 26 November A&G meeting but does not itself protect Full Council consideration on 8 December or completion of the independent review, so the extension, or another lawful safeguard, should cover the whole scrutiny and decision-making process. It should be properly authorised, reflected in an updated contract award notice and communicated to affected suppliers. [39–40, 44]

2. Use the confirmed 26 November Audit & Governance meeting. The Committee should consider the governance and procurement issues, establish the necessary review process and formally consider a recommendation under BCP Constitution Part 4D, Rule 15.2.1, that Full Council revisit the relevant provisions of its 13 October decision. [41, 43]

3. Enable timely Full Council consideration. Subject to a formal committee recommendation, the Council should arrange for an appropriate motion to be considered at the scheduled Full Council meeting on 8 December 2026, or at an earlier extraordinary meeting if lawfully convened (councillors have already progressed a request). Agenda and procedural arrangements should be coordinated with Democratic Services in advance. [41, 43]

4. Preserve the effectiveness of independent scrutiny. No binding long-term commitment should be entered into before the agreed review process and any necessary reconsideration have been completed, with the extent of the protection and the legally authorised decision-makers confirmed in writing.

5. Provide public accountability. BCP should confirm the contractual status, operative standstill, A&G review arrangements, PPRS referral status and the process by which any findings will inform the final contractual decision.

These requests do not prejudge the procurement outcome or assert that the preferred bidder should be displaced. They seek to preserve the Council's ability to give practical effect to its own scrutiny commitments.

KEY FIGURES AND DATES

2%
dedicated community-benefit criterion in the overall score; income and capital investment carry 50%
[15–16; 20]

10%
minimum score for economic, social and environmental considerations, where relevant and proportionate
[09–11]

20 yrs
proposed incoming lease, from 1 October 2027
[14–16]

11 Nov
latest published standstill date identified by the campaign
[14, 30, 33–34, 44]

Findings supported by primary sources

- Liberal Democrat principles support participation in decisions affecting communities, councillor accountability, stronger social value in procurement and greater protection for valued local assets. The 2025 party policy review renewed the commitment to community control. Policies from 2025–26 also address coastal access, thriving local places and financially sustainable councils. [01–03, 21–24]
- The local Liberal Democrat priorities leaflet calls for Community Conversations, an accountable council, sustainable local businesses and cooperation with existing trader groups. [04]
- BCP's July 2024 Seafront Strategy Cabinet risk assessment stated that individual projects would receive further public engagement as they came forward; the September 2024 Procurement Strategy expressly addresses involving community stakeholders when consulting on what service is needed. [05, 07]
- BCP Council's Financial Regulations, effective 1 April 2026, provide under Part G, Regulation 21(b), that, where relevant and proportionate, at least 10% of the score is allocated to economic, social and environmental considerations. [09–12, 20]
- On 13 October, Full Council approved a compromise that offered an 11-month fixed-term lease to the incumbent and approved the proposed incoming 20-year lease from 1 October 2027, and referred the procurement to the Audit & Governance Committee. An additional A&G meeting is scheduled for 26 November 2026. The scope and outcome of that scrutiny, and the formal acceptance and status of the separately noted PPRS referral, remain matters requiring clarification. [14–16, 43; meeting transcript]

Additional findings from the 13 October decision process and subsequent scrutiny status

The 13 October Full Council resolution authorised the proposed long-term lease and referred procurement scrutiny to Audit & Governance while noting the Leader's purported PPRS referral. It did not expressly make either review a condition of entering into binding long-term obligations. [14, 30, 31]

The formal PPRS position has not been evidenced to the campaign by an acceptance, reference, scope or written status. Cabinet Office guidance describes PPRS principally as a supplier-complaint mechanism; a Council resolution noting a referral does not establish that an active PPRS review has been accepted. [31, 33]

Material procedural questions arise from the 13 October debate. Councillors referred to late or differing amendment wording; reports indicate an amendment was circulated after the meeting had commenced. The record reviewed does not establish that two separate documents were circulated. The actual text moved, distributed, debated and voted upon must be reconciled with circulation records and the published minutes. [14, 31–32]

The adequacy of contemporaneous advice about lawful alternatives—including postponement, non-award, interim occupation and the consequences of approving a lease while reviews remained outstanding—also requires examination. This is a question of informed decision-making, not a demonstrated finding that councillors were unlawfully misled. [14, 31–32, 35]

READING GUIDE

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1 Liberal Democrat principles and national policy

TABLE 1

Policy foundation	Published party position	Relevance to Southbourne
Constitution and community politics	Federal constitutional principles emphasise liberty, equality, community, open government and participation in decisions affecting people's lives. [21]	Participation and local accountability when defining long-term use of a public coastal asset.
Local democracy and procurement (2018)	Power for People and Communities supports deliberative consultation, stronger councillor oversight and requiring commissioners to take social value into account. [01]	Pre-tender engagement, councillor input into priorities and demonstrable consideration of social value.
Protecting community assets (2024)	The 2024 manifesto proposes stronger local-authority powers to protect pubs, community and other vital community infrastructure. [22]	Recognition and protection of existing community infrastructure, distinct from an incumbent's entitlement.
Community power (2025)	Leading the Way, endorsed at conference, prioritises further work to give residents and community groups substantially greater control over local decisions. [23]	Participation in shaping the requirements before a concession is competitively awarded.
Coasts and access (2025)	This Land is Your Land recognises equitable access to coastlines and public space for health, recreation and local economies. [03]	Inclusive public access and continued recreational/community value throughout the lease.
Local places and enterprise (2026)	Revitalising Town Centres and High Streets promotes independent enterprise, accessible community hubs, cultural activity and locally shaped places. [02]	Economic resilience alongside public participation, distinctive places and community activity.
Local finances (2026)	Local Government Finance Emergency recognises serious council pressures and argues for sustainable funding and democratic local control;[24]	Financial sustainability assessed alongside community outcomes, not treated as their substitute.
BCP Liberal Democrat priorities	Local commitments include Community Conversations, transparent governance, sustainable local businesses and cooperation with community and trader groups. [04]	Local policy-to-practice comparison for the Southbourne decision.

2 BCP's own policy framework: closer to the decision

2.1 Site-specific engagement

The July 2024 Cabinet report for the revised Seafront Strategy identified stakeholder support as a high-level risk and included "Individual projects will be subject to further public engagement exercises as they come forward" among the mitigations. The July 2024 Overview and Scrutiny discussion acknowledged earlier shortcomings in engaging residents and beach users about developments on the beach and referred to SOBO's popularity. [05–06]

The public record does not establish what site-specific engagement, if any, informed the 2026 tender before its requirements were set.

2.2 Commissioning and procurement design

BCP's 2024–2028 Procurement Strategy defines commissioning as determining local needs and designing services with internal and external partners and users where appropriate. Under its "Local Communities: Engagement" theme it states that the Council will involve community stakeholders, voluntary and community organisations and other interested parties when consulting on what service is needed and how to deliver it. It also commits to auditable pre-procurement decisions and member scrutiny of performance. [07]

BCP's own strategy provides a more specific basis for scrutiny than national party statements. Do commissioning and asset-planning records show who approved the service need, site objectives and evaluation criteria, and what engagement or evidence informed those decisions?

2.3 Consultation and independent scrutiny

The Research and Consultation Framework emphasises proportionate research, understanding the effects of change and informing decisions before they are taken. A February 2026 scrutiny working-group report also recommended earlier notification to ward members, clearer explanations of consultation methods and meaningful questions that inform decisions. These show that consultation quality is a recognised concern within BCP. [08, 13]

2.4 The 2026 Social Value Statement

BCP adopted its Social Value Statement on 27 May 2026. It distinguishes additional value achieved through contract delivery from core obligations, and identifies local jobs, skills, community wellbeing and environmental improvement as public benefits. BCP's 2024 Procurement Strategy and April 2026 Financial Regulations already applied. [07, 09, 12]

3 Southbourne: the documented decision and disputed issues

TABLE 2

Issue	What the available record establishes	What is still to be shown
Tender design	Campaign analysis of tender materials describes 30% income, 20% capital investment, 50% remaining quality/presentation; 2% is the dedicated social/community benefit criterion. [15–16; transcript]	Final issued scoring matrix and a criterion-by-criterion mapping of the economic, social and environmental elements.
Community voice	The 2024 strategy committed to further project engagement; ward councillors and residents described insufficient opportunity before tender issue. [05– 07; transcript]	Pre-tender engagement/commissioning files, consultation log, engagement rationale and authorisations.
Commercial sustainability	Financial Regulation 25 requires risk-based appraisal of suppliers' solvency/competency; the campaign seeks seasonal trading, funding and delivery assurance. [09, 15]	What Regulation 25 checks were completed and what additional viability/delivery stress tests were considered?
October decision	Council approved the long-term lease commencing 1 October 2027 and resolved to offer an 11-month incumbent lease, alongside review referrals. The campaign had requested a prior pause. [14–16]	Status of any executed lease, the standstill, review acceptance/scope and what can lawfully change after findings.

4 The social-value calculation

Under BCP Council's Financial Regulations effective 1 April 2026, Part G, Regulation 21(b), where relevant and proportionate, tenders are to be assessed with a minimum of 10% of the score allocated to economic, social and environmental (social value) considerations. Regulation 21 also requires that evaluation criteria, weightings and price elements be clear and transparent to bidders. [09–11]

The dedicated community-benefit criterion accounts for 2% of the overall score, but the Council has said that economic, environmental and social considerations appear elsewhere. [07, 09, 12, 20]

TEST REQUIRED

Provide the contemporaneous, criterion-by-criterion records demonstrating how the tender was assessed against Financial Regulation 21(b): the qualifying economic, social and environmental considerations, their overall weightings, the Council's interpretation and proportionality rationale, how they were scored, and how the resulting commitments will be monitored and enforced. Distinguish, where relevant, wider public benefits from ordinary commercial performance without presenting that distinction as a freestanding retrospective statutory test. [09, 12, 20]

5 Financial and operational stewardship

Financial Regulation 25 requires a risk assessment determining the appropriate supplier appraisal, appraisal of the preferred supplier before notification of the outcome, and escalation of identified material risks. It does not mandate a specific 20-year cash-flow stress test; nevertheless, an evidence-led assessment of funding, seasonality, affordability and delivery risk is relevant to a long term concession. [09]

5.1 Publicly reported company-level accounts (2025)

The campaign has compared the most recent publicly filed annual accounts available for Macemade Limited (existing operator; year ended 31 May 2025) and Seventa Events Limited (preferred operator; year ended 31 March 2025). The figures below are company-level balance-sheet snapshots, not SOBO-site results, turnover, profitability, bid funding or guarantees.

TABLE 3

2025 reported metric	Macemade Limited	Seventa Events Limited
Total assets	**£3,097,264**	**£188,030**
Net assets / shareholders' funds	**£1,261,590**	**£22,744**
Cash at bank	**£604,007**	**£41,474**
Working capital (calculated)	**+£877,835**	**−£14,449**

Values are cross-checked against public summaries of the filings. [25–27]

On these reported figures, Macemade's total assets are approximately 16.5 times, its net assets approximately 55.5 times and its cash balance approximately 14.6 times those of Seventa. The differences are relevant to comparing the businesses' reported scale and balance-sheet strength. Total assets are not equivalent to available cash or funding, and the figures do not establish the financial support available for either tender proposal; they show why the underlying financial appraisal, verification of funding and contractual safeguards warrant examination, not that the comparison proves financial unsuitability or an incorrect decision. [25–27]

The contrast warrants explanation given the Cabinet's assessment of strong covenant strength. A fair review should reconcile these public figures with the Council's actual appraisal of both bids, including any independently verified guarantees. [25–28]

BCP's 30 September Cabinet report cited strong covenant strength and the highest guaranteed and projected rental income. The relevant assurance is the underlying financial assessment, verified funding and investment support, and enforceable contractual protections; sensitive details may properly be reviewed confidentially. [14, 28]

5.2 Historical corporate insolvency and financial assurance

Companies House records confirm that 19TEN Limited (07577672) entered creditors' voluntary liquidation on 19 April 2021. The company historically operated using the Seventa Events trading name. [36]

19TEN Limited is legally distinct from Seventa Events Limited (10863014), the current preferred bidder. However, Companies House records establish a direct historical corporate connection through 19TEN Holdings Limited (12611669), which was registered as a person with significant control of 19TEN Limited from 19 May 2020 and of Seventa Events Limited from 21 January 2021. [36]

This common corporate control is established by official company records. It does not, by itself, establish wrongdoing, financial unsuitability or responsibility by the present bidder for the predecessor company's liabilities.

Liquidators' reporting records unsecured creditor claims received of approximately £511,876.77 by 2026, and the original creditor records identify a historic creditor claim of £4,081.20 involving BCP Council. No ordinary unsecured-creditor distribution is recorded in the liquidation reporting reviewed, subject to the precise reporting period. [37–38]

The figures above were extracted from liquidation documents recovered and reviewed during the campaign's earlier investigation. They represent different stages and classifications of the insolvency process and must not be added together or treated as a single final loss figure. The £511,876.77 is claims received, not an adjudicated final debt balance, and neither amount is a liability of the current preferred bidder. The BCP Council creditor entry is historical; its ultimate recovery status requires separate confirmation.

The predecessor company's liquidation does not establish that Seventa Events Limited is insolvent, financially unsuitable or automatically subject to exclusion from the procurement. It does, however, create a material due-diligence question under Financial Regulation 25, particularly given the Council's published assessment of strong covenant strength. [09, 28]

The relevant issue is whether BCP identified and appropriately considered material historical corporate information, distinguished the present bidder's financial position from any predecessor business, and independently verified the funding, financial backing and contractual safeguards supporting its proposed twenty-year commitments.

6 Community spaces, access and continuity

National Liberal Democrat policy and BCP's adopted strategies recognise that public coastal spaces support wellbeing, recreation, local enterprise and community life, as well as generating income. SOBO has built community groups, activities and relationships over time. These do not automatically survive a change of operator. BCP should show how it understood existing community value and protected it through enforceable requirements for the future concession. [03, 05, 07]

The 13 October resolution authorised an offer of an 11-month lease until 30 September 2027; it does not establish that an agreement was signed. Temporary trading does not protect community value for the long term, and a successor's lease start date does not guarantee readiness to operate. The Council should show how community activities, access, equality impacts, public facilities, performance standards and transition risks are safeguarded over the proposed 20-year term. [14–16; transcript]

6A The 13 October Full Council decision: procedural and democratic assurance

Council members were asked to decide a substantial property authorisation while a late compromise amendment was being negotiated and communicated. The adopted package approved the long-term lease, an 11-month continuity offer and independent review referrals. Whether members had adequate time and accurate, final wording to understand and assess the alternatives is a distinct governance question from whether the final vote was quorate or properly recorded. [14, 31–32]

During the 13 October Full Council debate, councillors raised concerns about the timing and clarity of the compromise amendment being considered. These concerns warrant examination of whether members received the authoritative wording in sufficient time to understand its implications, consider lawful alternatives and exercise informed judgement. [14, 31]

A focused audit should obtain: (a) each amendment version and transmission timestamp; (b) recipient/distribution lists; (c) the authoritative text formally moved and put to the vote; (d) any adjournment request or guidance under the Meeting Procedure Rules; and (e) a reconciliation with the published minutes and named divisions. [14, 31–32]

The available public record raises questions requiring examination; it does not, by itself, establish that the meeting was unlawful or that councillors voted on incorrect wording. [14, 31]

The Council should also identify the exact advice given on whether rejection, deferral, procurement discontinuation or temporary continuation were lawfully available, what practical and litigation consequences were presented, and whether the advisory limits and timing of the promised reviews were adequately explained. The tender reserves certain non-award/cancellation options, but their exercise is not necessarily risk-free; the actual advice and legally available choices require a contemporaneous record. [20, 32, 35]

6B PPRS referral: acceptance and effect

The 13 October resolution notes that the Leader had referred the concession procurement to the Public Procurement Review Service (PPRS). At A&G on 15 October, officers described PPRS as advisory and unable to veto an award. A noted referral is not proof that the service has accepted a case or begun an investigation. [14, 30–31, 33]

Cabinet Office guidance distinguishes PPRS (specific supplier or supplier-representative complaints) from the Procurement Compliance Service (broader referrals). The Council should disclose, so far as lawfully possible, the date and route of contact, who initiated it and in what capacity, whether a formal case was accepted, any reference and agreed scope, and any response declining or redirecting the request. No rejection should be asserted without the underlying confirmation. [33]

An advisory PPRS outcome, even if obtained, does not automatically determine procurement lawfulness or prevent signing. The independently authorised Audit & Governance review and any binding decision or court remedy must therefore be distinguished from the claimed PPRS process. [30, 33]

Legal mechanisms for protecting the review

TABLE 4

Date	Event
11 November 2026	Currently reported end of the standstill period in the revised contract award notice published on 2 November. The notice gives 15 November as the earliest contract signing date; standstill expiry is not evidence that a contract has been executed. [44]
26 November 2026	Additional Audit & Governance Committee meeting, 6pm. [43]
30 November 2026	Minimum requested initial standstill extension.
8 December 2026	Scheduled Full Council meeting, 7pm. [43]
10 December 2026	Separately scheduled Audit & Governance Committee meeting, 6pm. [43]

Procurement standstill. Section 51 of the Procurement Act 2023 sets a mandatory standstill period of eight working days from publication of the contract award notice and allows a longer period to be specified in that notice. Cabinet Office guidance confirms that a longer period may be adopted after a standstill has started by updating the contract award notice, and that affected suppliers should be notified directly. This is a decision for the contracting authority through its properly authorised decision-makers. The requested contractual protection must continue as necessary until the relevant review findings and lawful Council decisions have been considered. [39–40, 44]

Committee recommendation. BCP Constitution Part 4D, Rule 15.2.1 permits a motion seeking to rescind a recent Full Council resolution where recommended by Cabinet or a committee, enabling Full Council to revisit its earlier resolution without the alternative 19-signature threshold. The Audit & Governance Committee can therefore consider and, if agreed, formally recommend reconsideration of the relevant 13 October resolution. The Committee cannot itself rescind the resolution, exercise executive procurement powers or direct the contracting authority to extend its standstill. [41]

Full Council. The scheduled Full Council meeting on 8 December provides a potential opportunity to consider a properly submitted committee recommendation. Under Part 4D, Rule 9.2, the relevant committee chair may move a committee recommendation when the matter is before Full Council. The agenda, notice, substantive authority and any necessary legal requirements must be satisfied. [41, 43]

Councillor-led Extraordinary Full Council Meeting. Councillors John Beesley and Bobbie Dove have already progressed a formal request for an Extraordinary Full Council Meeting concerning Southbourne Promenade, supported by at least five councillors and with substantial cross-party engagement and support for further scrutiny. Following the Chair's refusal of the original requisition, the councillors have invoked Schedule 12, paragraph 3(2), of the Local Government Act 1972 and BCP Constitution Part 4D, Rule 1.3, seeking to exercise the statutory procedure for calling the meeting. [41–42]

Qualifying motion. Separately, Rule 15.2.2 permits reconsideration of the 13 October resolution through a qualifying motion supported by at least one quarter of councillors (19 of 76), subject to Rule 10's notice requirements. The meeting request has been formally pursued, but a meeting date and the completion of the 19-signature process have not yet been confirmed. Convening an extraordinary meeting does not itself suspend contractual execution, and these routes should not be conflated. [41]

Preservation of the interim arrangement. Any proposed reconsideration should be carefully drafted to address the long-term property authorisation and associated delegations without unnecessarily disturbing the separately authorised eleven-month continuity arrangement for the existing operator.

Limitations. Any reconsideration must respect the division between executive procurement functions and Full Council's property powers, applicable procurement law, contractual rights and any binding obligations already entered into. Neither the 26 November meeting, the Rule 15.2.1 route nor any extraordinary meeting automatically suspends execution.

7 Summary

TABLE 5

Issue	Question a review can actually answer
Procurement fairness	Were the criteria adopted lawfully, transparently, with the requisite authority and justified public-interest priorities?
Consultation	What exact engagement took place and how does that satisfy the 2024 project-level mitigation and commissioning strategy?
Social value	Can the entire score be transparently reconciled to 2026 Regulation 21(b)?
Financial return and resilience	What documented financial appraisal demonstrates the preferred bidder's financial resilience, verifies its funding and investment capacity, considers relevant historical corporate risks and establishes adequate safeguards if long-term performance falls short?

The Council should also demonstrate that relevant conflicts of interest were proactively identified, recorded, assessed and managed throughout requirements design, evaluation and award. [09, 29]

8 Document requests and answerable questions

The following fifteen headings correspond to the fifteen questions published on Save SOBO Beach's Take Action page. They identify existing records and assurance to test each question; they do not assert that a missing public answer proves a record or assessment never existed. [34]

STAGE 1 — BEFORE THE TENDER

01 Where was the community consultation?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

Southbourne-specific consultation plans, dates, responses, stakeholder lists, recorded feedback and specification changes.

02 Why was further engagement not undertaken?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

Contemporaneous decision/rationale for proceeding without site-specific engagement; linkage to the 2024 Seafront Strategy project-level engagement mitigation.

03 Who decided the priorities for the site?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

Approved decision trail for site objectives, operating model, 20-year term, scoring criteria and 50% financial versus 2% dedicated community-benefits allocation.

STAGE 2 — TENDER AND EVALUATION

04 How was SOBO's existing community value recognised?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

Requirements and moderation notes recognising year-round access, community programming and comparable obligations for all bidders.

05 Did the tender comply with BCP's 10% social-value requirement?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

Authenticated operative Regulation 21(b), amendment/version history, qualifying criteria and contemporaneous compliance or proportionality rationale. The difference between 10% of quality and 10% of total score must be resolved.

06 How did the competing bids actually score?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

Final comparison of weighted financial, written quality, environmental and social/community criteria; meaningful non-confidential summary and confidential reviewer access.

07 Was the published evaluation methodology correctly applied?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

Applied scoring workbook, cell references and formulas, bidder clarifications, moderation, independent checking and sign-off; reconcile the ITT's 15%/30% income-scoring wording.

STAGE 3 — FINANCIAL ASSURANCE AND CONTRACT

08

What financial due diligence was completed?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

Completed Regulation 25 supplier-risk appraisal, including relevant corporate-history and insolvency checks, documented financial-risk assessments, material-risk escalation decisions and final approval records.

09

How was the preferred bidder's financial capacity verified?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

Evidence of independently verified funding, financing commitments, guarantees, parent-company or third-party support, financial security and capacity to deliver the proposed capital investment and long-term commercial obligations.

10

How were financial projections assessed against proven trading performance?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

Recorded testing of projections, seasonality, historical performance and business-plan assumptions.

11

Was long-term financial resilience stress-tested?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

Documented downside scenarios for winter trading, adverse weather, operating costs, rent affordability, liquidity and capital delivery.

12

How will the promised benefits be enforced?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

Final proposed contractual schedules covering turnover share, base rent, investment milestones, community and environmental commitments, monitoring, default and remedies.

STAGE 4 — DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY

13

Why were councillors not involved in shaping the tender?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

Ward-member briefings, commissioning decisions, rationale for member engagement and records of oversight before the tender.

14

Were councillors given accurate and complete advice about their options?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

Contemporaneous advice/decision record on deferral, non-award, cancellation, interim occupation and the limits of later scrutiny, with privilege respected.

15

Did councillors have sufficient information and time to make an informed decision?

EVIDENCE REQUESTED:

All amendment versions and send times, the authoritative motion text, agenda/summons changes, adjournment or procedural guidance, and reconciliation of what was debated and voted on.

SUPPLEMENTARY GOVERNANCE QUESTIONS — ADDITIONAL TO THE PUBLISHED FIFTEEN

S1

PPRS referral and review status

Was a formal supplier-eligible PPRS referral accepted? Provide referral date, referring capacity, reference, scope, status, and any refusal/redirection correspondence; distinguish it from PCS and A&G.

S2

Statutory conflicts safeguards

Provide the procurement-specific conflicts assessment required under section 83 of the Procurement Act 2023, including relevant declarations, review records, mitigation measures and approval or sign-off records, with appropriate personal-data redactions.

The assessment should establish whether relevant professional relationships, connected-company interests, current or former Council personnel and external advisers capable of influencing procurement decisions were appropriately considered.

A documented professional or corporate relationship does not, by itself, establish an actual conflict of interest or improper influence.

S3

Contract and scrutiny safeguards

Confirm the legal status of any agreement, award letter or other binding instrument, the operative standstill date, authorised signatories and whether execution will be deferred pending the reviews and lawful reconsideration.

S4

Response and disclosure status

List outstanding formal information requests, dates and statutory bases for any deadline extensions; distinguish acknowledged requests, partial responses and evidence still withheld or pending.

9 Next actions

The available records raise questions about how BCP applied its own policies. Public company accounts raise reasonable questions about financial assurance. If records show the Council's duties and policy commitments were demonstrably met, it should explain how. Any material deficiencies would need specialist assessment taking account of bidder rights, delegated powers and the status of signed instruments.

NEXT STEPS

First: Protect the opportunity for scrutiny. BCP should extend the standstill immediately and confirm an effective, lawful safeguard against entering into a binding long-term agreement before meaningful independent examination and any necessary formal reconsideration. The protection should continue as necessary until the review findings and any lawful Council decisions have been considered, not only until the committee meeting.

Second: Act at Audit & Governance on 26 November. The Committee should consider the Southbourne Promenade procurement and governance concerns, establish the scope and timetable of further examination where required, and consider a formal recommendation under Rule 15.2.1.

Third: Provide a route to Full Council. If A&G adopts a recommendation, it should be transmitted promptly for consideration at the scheduled 8 December Full Council meeting, subject to the required agenda and procedural arrangements, or at an earlier lawfully convened extraordinary meeting, a request for which councillors have already progressed.

Fourth: Complete the necessary independent scrutiny. The relevant evidence should be examined, including consultation, social-value compliance, evaluation methodology, financial due diligence, conflicts safeguards and the circumstances of the 13 October decision. The PPRS referral status should be independently established.

Fifth: Take a reasoned, accountable decision before contractual execution. The appropriate Council decision-makers should consider the findings, applicable legal advice, financial and public-interest implications, bidder rights and any available lawful alternatives before the long-term agreement becomes binding. The Council should publish a proportionate explanation of the outcome, subject to legitimate confidentiality restrictions.

The essential objective is not to determine the outcome of the procurement in advance. It is to ensure that independent scrutiny can influence the final decision, rather than becoming a retrospective exercise after a twenty-year commitment has been made.

Source register

Primary sources and company filings were prioritised. “Adopted policy”, “Council statement”, “company-filed figures”, “campaign analysis” and “verified legal conclusion” are not interchangeable categories. Links identify the original filing or public source where accessible; the financial figures should be read alongside the limitations in section 5.

[01]	Liberal Democrats, F8: Power for People and Communities (motion), 2018 ↗
[02]	Liberal Democrats, F8: Revitalising Town Centres and High Streets (motion as passed), March 2026 ↗
[03]	Liberal Democrats, F30: This Land is Your Land (motion as passed), September 2025 ↗
[04]	Bournemouth and Poole Liberal Democrats, Lib Dem Priorities for BCP (leaflet; undated) ↗
[05]	BCP Council, Revised BCP Seafront Strategy Cabinet report, July 2024 (risk assessment) ↗
[06]	BCP Council, Overview and Scrutiny Board, Revised Seafront Strategy, 16 July 2024 (minutes) ↗
[07]	BCP Council, Procurement & Contract Management Strategy 2024–2028, pp. 4–11 ↗
[08]	BCP Council, Research and Consultation Framework (public-facing framework) ↗
[09]	BCP Council, Financial Regulations EVO26 v1.1 (1 April 2026), Part G, regs 9, 21 and 25 ↗
[10]	BCP Council, Appendix A - Financial Regulations EVO26.v1, approved by Full Council on 24 March 2026 ↗
[11]	BCP Council, Full Council 24 March 2026, adoption of 2026/27 Financial Regulations ↗
[12]	BCP Council, Cabinet 27 May 2026, Social Value Statement decision and minutes ↗
[13]	BCP Council, Overview and Scrutiny Board, Consultation Framework Working Group, 23 February 2026 ↗
[14]	BCP Council, Full Council agenda Item 15, Southbourne Promenade lease, 13 October 2026 ↗
[15]	Save SOBO Beach, campaign statement and five demands, dated 13 October 2026 ↗
[16]	Save SOBO Beach, campaign update and current requests, 15 October 2026 ↗
[17]	Cabinet Office, National Procurement Policy Statement and section 13 applicability, February 2025 ↗
[18]	Cabinet Office, Social Value Model PPN 002: scope restricted to central government organisations ↗
[19]	Liberal Democrats, Ed Davey speech at Local Government Association conference, 6 July 2023 ↗
[20]	BCP Council, Southbourne tender Part D Quality Evaluation (May 2026), D8–D10; ITT Stage 4 scoring criteria (supplied documents)
[21]	Liberal Democrats, Constitution and official statement of values (current public version) ↗
[22]	Liberal Democrats, For a Fair Deal: Manifesto 2024, Communities and Local Government (p. 76) ↗
[23]	Liberal Democrats, Policy Paper 161, Leading the Way (Sept 2025), community empowerment ↗
[24]	Liberal Democrats, F19, Local Government Finance Emergency (Spring Conference 2026 motion) ↗
[25]	Companies House, MACEMADE LIMITED (03479536), accounts to 31 May 2025, filed 27 February 2026: Macemade — Companies House filing ↗

[26] Companies House, SEVENTA EVENTS LIMITED (10863014), accounts to 31 March 2025, filed 19 December 2025: Seventa — Companies House filing ↗

[27] Public financial-data summaries of the filings: Macemade, 192.com (Macemade financial summary ↗); Seventa, Okredo (Seventa financial summary ↗). See Companies House filings for primary figures.

[28] BCP Cabinet, 30 September 2026, Item 59, Southbourne Promenade lease, report and minutes: BCP Cabinet report and minutes ↗

[29] Procurement Act 2023, sections 81–83 (conflicts of interest): Procurement Act conflicts provisions ↗

[30] BCP Audit and Governance Committee, 15 October 2026, referral and forward-plan discussion: A&G meeting papers ↗

[31] BCP Council, Full Council 13 October 2026 Item 15, published minutes and adopted resolution: Full Council minutes ↗

[32] Campaign meeting evidence review: 13 October automated transcript and councillor statements on amendment circulation. A working evidence source, not a certified procedural determination.

[33] Cabinet Office, Procurement Compliance & Oversight (PPRS and PCS guidance): Cabinet Office PPRS / PCS guidance ↗

[34] Save SOBO Beach, published fifteen questions, in four stages: Published campaign questions ↗

[35] DN799698 Invitation to Tender, clauses 3.15.6, 3.16.1.1, 3.19.1.7–8, 5.5.3.2–5.5.3.4 (supplied pack; final version to be checked).

[36] Companies House, 19TEN LIMITED (07577672): company record ↗; persons with significant control: 19TEN ↗, Seventa ↗

[37] Companies House filing history, 19TEN: statement of affairs (LIQ02), filed 1 May 2021: 19TEN — filing history ↗

[38] Companies House filing history, 19TEN: receipts-and-payments reports (LIQ03), incl. 29 June 2026: 19TEN — filing history ↗

[39] Procurement Act 2023, section 51 (standstill periods): legislation.gov.uk ↗

[40] Cabinet Office, Contract Award Notices and Standstill, paras 41–43: guidance ↗

[41] BCP Constitution, Part 4D, Rules 1.3, 7, 9, 10, 15: procedure rules ↗

[42] Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, paragraph 3: legislation.gov.uk ↗

[43] BCP meetings: A&G Committee 26 November and 10 December 2026 ↗ (6pm); Full Council 8 December 2026 (7pm).

[44] BCP Council, Revised Contract Award Notice, 2 November 2026 (Notice 103934-2026): Find a Tender ↗

Additional meeting evidence: BCP Full Council 13 October 2026, Item 15, including the published decision and recorded votes (amendment 35–16–9; final resolution 32–17–11). Earlier campaign transcripts were automated and should not be treated as certified records.

CONTACT

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