

Today the Consell de Formentera held the second of two debates intended to serve as an open question on the state of local affairs. But for one opposition vote, all 12 cabinet-sponsored measures at the full-house won cross-party backing. Of the opposition’s 11 proposals meanwhile, nine passed with unanimous support and two met rejection. All told, 20 of the day’s 23 proposals passed with united backing.

Gent per Formentera and PSC-PSOE Formentera proposals:

Tourism

Concerning tourism and looking ahead to the 2021 season, assembly members agreed unanimously to support ongoing efforts by Consell and Govern to urgently shape national and international partnerships and protocol to reflect the unique characteristics of Formentera and create safe visitor corridors—something Consell president and tourism chief Alejandra Ferrer described as “key to offering visitors and residents a safe island”.

Ferry connections and Port de la Savina

Plenary members also voted together to urge the Balearic government to make 6.00am Eivissa-bound and 10.30pm homeward bound ferries part of guaranteed year-round service. And they went further, calling on the Govern to append legislation on maritime transport with a fixed timetable and minimum/maximum frequencies for the regular Formentera-Eivissa line as well as, true to article 28.3 of the legislation, limits on organised boat trips to Formentera.

Mobility chief Rafael González remarked on the 6.00am journey’s disappearance from the daily timetable several weeks ago and expectations that the evening trip would soon follow suit, adding, “These are essential connections for Formentera residents. That’s why we’re pushing the Govern to require this minimum service by decree. Ferries are the only way on to and off the island, and this change will establish those connections among the guaranteed fundamental rights of islanders”.

Among several proposed changes in La Savina, González won cross-party backing to press the

Balearic Port Authority to update use guidelines in place at Port de la Savina, a modification that would mean moving the moorage points of organised excursions to the passenger wharf and creating different zones for "social dockings" and rental dockings. Assembly members voted to enshrine the changes in the harbour's use guidelines and special strategic plan.

New cycling and pedestrian loop

Passing despite Sa Unió abstention was a Gent per Formentera/PSC-PSOE-proposed measure calling on the Balearic coastal authority, Govern and Consell to create a trail for cyclists and pedestrians around the perimeter of Estany Pudent that incorporates Camí de sa Guia, Camí des Brolls and an as-yet hypothetical arterial linking Es Pujols and Ses Illetes. Assembly members also asked for changes to the system of controlled access at Ses Salines reserve to incentivise more sustainable modes of transport and safeguard the natural surroundings and islanders and tourists' enjoyment of the reserve.

According to Conseller González, "This is about enciting residents and tourists to walk and cycle, enchancing the mobility experience and protecting the natural surroundings". He said a ban on motor vehicles would be critical to restricting access to area residents, and highlighted partnerships with other administrations as key to cutting a new path between the Sa Roqueta area of Ses Illetes and Es Pujols in order to complete the loop".

Crisis response

Cross-party support additionally materialised around a call on the Consell to continue shaping a response to economic fallout from Covid-19 and to engage with distinct political parties and economic and social actors to come up with an economic recovery plan. Finance and tax office chief Bartomeu Escandell promised that help for at-risk groups and economic assistance would remain the administration's top priority, calling a multilaterally-agreed roadmap "essential given these unusual circumstances".

Enhancing Formentera Local Police

The GxF/PSC-PSOE Formentera cabinet and opposition struck unity around a measure championed by interior chief Josep Marí which, based on Balearic legislation on inter-department coordination, supports the Consell's ongoing recrutement of new officers for the local police force. The measure also calls for cementing a stable and large enough local force and for securing key legislative changes to favour long-term placement in candidates' chosen location during competitive exams.

Renewable energy
In a step towards green energy self-sufficiency, assembly members gave unanimous support to a reorganisation and promotion by the Consell of renewable energy on the island. Environment chief Antonio J. Sanz, in addition to highlighting last year's plenary vote to declare a climate emergency, pointed up work on a renewable energy plan as well as legwork currently under way to equip the municipal football pitch with solar panels in 2021. As Conseller Sanz pointed out, not only would the solar panel project benefit from 43.65% funding assistance from the Govern, 84% of the energy generated would be used by the pitch itself.

On the environment, assembly members reached cross-party agreement on urging the Consell and Govern to create a system to regulate moorage along the Formentera coastline. Sanz highlighted the evolution of the joint project between the island and the Govern balear and concerning a new management plan for Natura 2000.

Plan for Culture
Another measure saw assembly members voting on whether to press the Consell to put participation from islanders and local political parties at the centre of the creation and implementation of a plan for culture. Culture chief Susana Labrador called the plan "groundwork for current and future policy on culture and for new cultural facilities" and said it must "make room for the intersectional nature of culture, intangible heritage, the Catalan language, education, gender mainstreaming" and be accompanied by participatory process.

Housing
Assembly members were united in pushing the Consell and Govern to create and fund the Formentera Housing Agency, asserting that to date, "this critical issue —a concern for untold islanders— has been subject to a patch-work of responses at every level of government".

Cross-party support was achieved by other cabinet proposals as well, including the creation and enaction of a plan to reinvigorate local business and a comprehensive plan of action in support of islanders with functional diversity. Social welfare chief Rafael Ramírez said the enterprise would be developed "in association with associations across the island and with one guiding objective: delivering a better quality of life and making sure no islander is left behind".

Opposition proposals
Apart from two opposition measures that assembly members rejected, cross-party backing greeted proposals from representatives of Sa Unió:

-To support ongoing cooperation between the Consell de Formentera and the Tourism Planning and Marketing Committee (COPT) on a Special Annual Plan to Promote Tourism looking ahead to next summer.

-To support the Consell de Formentera’s drafting of a Road Safety Plan to multilaterally develop directives and measures included in Formentera’s Sustainable Mobility Plan.

-To support the Consell de Formentera’s multilateral drafting and development of Sectorial Management Plan for Roads according to current legislation and reflecting the island’s Plan for Mobility.

-To support an urgent buildout —given associated funding has already been allocated by the administration— of IES Marc Ferrer (Marc Ferrer Secondary School) by the Govern balear.

-To support ongoing efforts by the Consell de Formentera to pass and develop planning schemes, development projects, sanitation, improvements and beautification pushes in Ses Bardetes, Es Ca Marí and Sa Roqueta, seeking the engagement and participation of area residents and according to related disposals and agreements with neighbours and groups with plenary representation.

-To support the agricultural sector and promote local produce by developing agreements with the tourism sector, fomenting Formentera agriculture’s visibility and reach on and off the island.

-To support the central government’s creation of a lower court and property register for the island of Formentera.

-To ensure ongoing in-person service at the Formentera branch of the SEPE (National Employment Office) by supporting SEPE adoption of measures vital to maintaining administrative staff active on the island.

Lastly, one Sa Unió proposal was broked by the cabinet and received cross-party support:

-To support a one-off funding increase in the Govern’s 2021 budget to cover rising costs borne by the Formentera Department of Minors.

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Department of Communications
Consell de Formentera