

Members of local government gathered today for the second day of discussion around the state of island affairs, a meeting that brought cross-party support for all twelve of the cabinet's proposed measures. Unanimous backing also came for nine of the proposals that were tabled by the opposition, while the remaining three stalled — one after the assembly rejected it outright and another when it was retracted by its proponents. All told, 21 of 23 proposals on the docket met with unanimous support.

**Cabinet proposals: Gent x Formentera and PSIB-PSOE**

*Protecting Formentera*
Councillors came together to support the proposed creation of new projects and new models of local environmental protections. Top ranking official and tourism chief Alejandra Ferrer said the initiative would "lay the groundwork for dialogue between the Consell and islanders, by way of Formentera's league of community organisations, on emerging threats to the local ecosystems on land and at sea", and described it as "a necessary precursor to discussion around new projects and protections". "This is about engaging all of Formentera in reflection on the unprecedented challenges we face, and building consensus around what the response will look like", she stated.

*Housing*
Councillors voted in unison to press regional government to develop a Formentera-specific approach to guaranteeing access to housing as it has been done elsewhere in the archipelago. Decision-makers agreed the Govern balear should consider local needs and work with Formentera's leaders on appropriate partnership agreements that would enable a bureau to focus squarely on helping Formentera residents access housing. Deputy chair and housing chief Ana Juan highlighted regional legislation in place requiring legal and administrative support and other services, and said work was needed to adapt such a service to Formentera.

*Solar energy*
Councillors struck unity again on three proposals to foment solar energy. First, on property tax rebates for people and businesses that install photovoltaic panels. Finance and tax office chief Bartomeu Escandell said the initiative prioritised tax rebates as a way to "promote self-supply

installations and increase production of energy here on the island”. “If we can promote installation of solar panels, we can make Formentera more sustainable”, he insisted.

Land chief Rafael González described an ultimately successful change in local planning regulations that will make solar panel production systems mandatory in all new buildings as “making Formentera a more sustainable island in terms of energy self-sufficiency”. The new requirement will further support local production by impacting refurbished and expanded buildings too.

Finally, decision-makers highlighted the need for work at the national, regional and local to fit government buildings with solar panels. “This is about reducing our carbon footprint, building a future where in which we can successfully tackle climate change and turning Formentera into an island that can meet its own energy needs”, said environment chief Antonio J Sanz. “For Formentera to continue being Formentera, change isn’t just important, it’s imperative”, he continued. “Climate change is here, but there’s still time to stop it, and that can happen with the help of measures like this one”, Sanz asserted.

*Entrepreneurship*

The plenary also gave unanimous backing to the planned creation of a centre for entrepreneurship, expertise, training and business to promote socioeconomic growth, create jobs and support business owners. Besides “a place of support and orientation for people starting a business, a business incubator and co-working space all rolled into one”, the chief of the entrepreneurship department cast the centre as “a way to support other types of business, and, why not, a draw for tourists planning on working here during their stay”.

*Education*

Also winning cross-party support was a proposal on scholarships to offset the insularity typical of life on an island. According to education and culture chief Susana Labrador, “This is a way to urge the national and regional authorities to ensure these scholarships reflect our triple insularity, recognising how crucial it is that youth leave the island to study and expand their educational horizons. It’s fundamental to guaranteeing equal opportunities and accounting for associated costs.” Labrador said that student financial aid and pandemic-related expansions delivered by the island’s government weren’t enough, and insisted that “the agencies responsible need to do more to help if they are serious about equal opportunities and making sure families aren’t the ones picking up the extra slack”.

*Social services*

Another moment of unity came when councillors greenlighted a proposal to draft a guide for resources, support and services available to Formentera families, with department chief Rafael Ramírez imagining "an exhaustive source of information for families that's straightforward and to the point".

*Normalising use of Catalan*

On linguistic normalisation, plenary members agreed to press the Consell to review, amend and update its charter on language use. Department chief Raquel Guasch pointed out that "islanders, the island and our government have changed since the document was created in 2001", and called the revision "key to keeping the charter in step with reality. The sooner we do it, the better".

*El Mollet des Caló*

A proposal was adopted with cross-party support to urge the Balearic Islands coastal authority to refurbish el Mollet des Caló, preserving the structure to ensure the integrity of the dock and the identity of es Caló. Infrastructures and rural affairs chief Josep Marí said es Caló residents had long pushed for the repairs, and Formentera's government led the charge on a similar effort in 2017, but it failed to get off the ground. "That's why we're asking the coastal authority to take the lead on this much-needed work once and for all".

*Protecting ses Salines reserve*

In another motion that won unanimous approval, assembly members urged the Spanish government to ramp up police patrols at the ses Salines reserve. They also pressed the Balearic government to hire more staff and, in so doing, ensure the effectiveness of environmental protections in land and sea areas of ses Salines and keep them in step with local needs. Councillors also highlighted the importance of policing and penalising activities that are not permitted in protected sites. After praising the efforts of police and security forces, Councillor Sanz affirmed, "We often aren't able to control all of our protected areas", and, "The ultimate aim is to protect our environment and our island".

*Aid for agriculture*

The first proposal of the GxF-PSOE cabinet involved extending support for professionals in the primary sector and was adopted unanimously. In it, local decision-makers "urge the Consell de Formentera to extend assistance to agricultural workers to help diversify the economy and encourage quality local produce". Rural affairs chief Josep Marí explained it thus: "It's about creating new lines of subsidies to increase the support we give to the sector. The recovery of the countryside is visible thanks to the local farmers' co-operative, which has become the

driving force in agriculture and has encouraged new entry into the field. To continue with this momentum, we’ll be pursuing assorted avenues, including subsidies for biodegradable materials and ways to protect heirloom species and the agricultural landscape”.

**Grup Sa Unió de Formentera PP-Compromís**
*Of the 12 proposals presented by the opposition, one was withdrawn, two was rejected and the following nine adopted with unanimous support:*

- To press local government to urgently address the second phase of the improvements on the road to es Cap de Barbaria.
- To press local government to draft and tender improvements on the road to Cala Saona.
- A cabinet-brokered measure to press the EU, the government of Spain, the Balearic government, the Consell Insular de Formentera and every government agency that deals with immigration to implement appropriate collaborative measures within their sphere of competence to provide urgent, effective and permanent responses to the current migratory challenge.
- A cabinet- and opposition-backed motion to press local government to continue promoting the primary sector to finalise and implement a project encompassing, showcasing and regulating locally sourced produce.
- To press regional government to urgently adopt a downward revision of water prices per measures adopted by the Formentera plenary.
- To press local government to finalise its registry of municipal positions and to implement a position that was adopted in plenary in 2019 and which secured funding as part of the Consell’s 2021 spending plan.
- A cabinet-brokered motion to press local government to engage in public consultation on groundwork for regulation of s’Estany des Peix, ensuring the participation of users on one hand and Consell d’Entitats member groups as well.
- To press local government to urgently tender Formentera’s public transport contract.
- To press local government to award the contract for waste management as soon as possible and per the established timeline.

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**Communications Department**
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