At the Formentera Council's October plenary session, convened earlier today, the entire house backed a deal between the Balearic port authority (APB) and the Council on la Mola's trademark lighthouse, “el far de la Mola”. The plan, besides doting the monument with public facilities, envisions adding cultural space to the lighthouse's list of uses.

As culture and patrimony councillor Susana Labrador explained, the site will contain an interpretative centre for Formentera lighthouses, a museographic exhibition and a hall for culturally-themed, small-scale functions, which the administration speculates may spill over onto an outdoor patio. Currently the Council is drafting plans to remodel the building in its entirety. The project has a tentative pricetag of €600,000 and could be undertaken as soon as autumn 2017. The partnership, initially framed for 15 years, can be renewed to last another five. APB will retain control over parts of the lighthouse like the utilities room and its upper chambers to ensure continued functioning.

Morgue

Unanimous consent was also received by the proposed rezoning for a municipal morgue, planned for the lot adjacent the Sant Francesc cemetery. Land councillor Alejandra Ferrer pointed out that the site's rezoning will make it possible to move ahead with a call for bids on the project. The councillor, who referred to a forthcoming pick of a winning bidder, assured that “the start of construction and the much-needed building itself“ are not far off. All parties in the plenary backed the measure and agreed on its importance for the island.

Ferry landing

Another proposal backed by the entire house dealt with the agreement to transfer the docking point for Eivissa-bound boats from Formentera. Council president Jaume Ferrer described the proposal as “making official our council's deal with the other administrations in relocating the Formentera boat landing at the Eivissa port, basing it on the terms of the September 28 board meeting with APB”.

Ferrer took the opportunity to salute the other branches of the public administration — Eivissa Council, Govern Balear, APB — as well as civil society organisations like On Sempre for defending the wishes of the people of Formentera.

Plenary members pledged to continue working from a position of unity “to make sure that the new harbour station furnishes all of the necessary services” for Formentera's residents and visitors.

Housing

Also adopted was a joint proposal put forth by Gent x Formentera and PSOE to overhaul a law on urban property rentals. The goal, explained Alejandra Ferrer, is to set limits and establish the definition of seasonal tourist rentals as “any dwelling that a property owner cedes, either directly or indirectly and on a repeated basis, to a third-party, in exchange for financial returns and for a period of 30 days or less”. If the criteria are met at least twice in one year, the property shall be subject to the regulations on tourist-use rentals. Properly documented temporary rentals for labourers are excluded from the measure.

Land and tourism

Appearing before plenary members, land and tourism councillor Ferrer detailed her departments' areas of action, invoking “a smart use of our natural resources and surroundings” and aspirations of “breaking with the pack in terms of quality”. She stressed the need to educate visitors about Formentera and push them on social and environmental responsibility.

Ferrer also reviewed the recent launch of the Council's new inspection unit. On urbanism she pointed to a continued push to apply and enforce the island's code of “subsidiary regulations”. Speaking on housing, the land councillor highlighted multiparty support —between Formentera, the office of housing in Balearics and the Govern in Palma— for a report documentingÂ local needs aimed at recalibrating help money and reimagining moves forward.

Local commerce and artisan crafts also featured heavily among the councillor's plans, and Ferrer described a brand of tourism “that centres on product and market diversification”. She underscored, lastly, the importance of “improving the pre- and post-summer season”.