



The Formentera Council chair and deputy chair, Jaume Ferrer and Bartomeu Escandell, met for a noon press conference today to discuss the criminal suit brought by businessman Leo Stöber against the two officials, Pep Mayans, Sílvia Tur, Sònia Cardona and other Gent per Formentera councillors in the cabinet from 2007 to 2011 for blocking an expansion of housing in Punta Prima. Also on hand was the pair's defence attorney, Fernando Mateas.

Mateas, pointing out that the Balearic high court and the Spanish supreme court alike vetted the island's "Land Strategy" (*Pla Territorial*), concluded "the Council conducted itself exactly as it should have. That's not an opinion; it's a fact". Mateas indicated that Stöber filed his criminal suit as soon as he learned the judge had ruled against him in the contentious litigation with the Council.

The public prosecutor had previously issued the opinion that no crime had been committed, clarifying that "the only one bringing charges here is Stöber himself; the prosecutor's office has not brought any charges". Mateas framed the action as nuisance litigation and said his clients were already feeling the character-sullying squeeze of the attending media storm. But he made it clear that there was no need for drama. "Court appearances are sometimes a fact of life", said Mateas, "and certainly nothing to be afraid of when you're in the right".

Jaume Ferrer admitted he was "surprised" by the start the suit had gotten off to—particularly after all the court rulings in Council's favour and the DA had indicated his intention not to prosecute. "Leo Stöber sees these court cases as a way to generate pressure so things go his way", Ferrer said. "But ses Salines nature reserve's *Pla d'Ordenació de Recursos Naturals* ['Natural Resource Strategy'] prohibits the granting of tourism permits in this area of the island. "Stöber is accusing us of a crime we haven't committed in an bid to compel us to commit one in his favour", observed Ferrer. "To grant building permits on land where construction is illegal would be a crime", he reasoned, "and we've always put islanders' interests first. We'll continue to do just that".

For his part, Bartomeu Escandell insisted "we're here today to preserve this site and limit building to lawful initiatives only". "It's crucial we remember that the decision to apply current environmental regulations in Punta Prima has already received the approval of the Balearic high

court and the Spanish supreme court”.

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Àrea de Comunicació
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