

At today's July plenary assembly of local government, participants unanimously granted initial approval to proposed regulations of use at the Formentera skate park. Youth department chief Vanessa Parellada indicated admission at the park would be free and that park users would be subject to certain rules, such as, for children under 12, that an adult accompany them while at the skate park. The only equipment approved for use at the skate park are skateboards, scooters, roller-skates, rollerblades and BMX bikes, and park users must wear approved helmets, elbow- and knee-pads and other protective gear. Park users are also required to come in appropriate footwear, and can't play ball games like football, bring food or bottles made of glass or containing beverages other than water or sports drinks, smoke, litter or sit on the rim of the bowl structure, on benches around the park's circumference or inside it.

Councillor Parellada said that next week a large poster would feature an easy to follow summary and graphic illustration of the main rules. Rules displayed on posters since the park opened were shaped with outside input, she said, highlighting conversations with the future park's users about what their particular needs and wishes were. "The next poster will be bigger and more visual", she concluded.

Patchy coverage

Gent per Formentera and PSOE cabinet members united with opposition councillors to pass a proposal regarding recurring failures in mobile phone coverage on the island. Local legislators urged the responsible government agencies to take necessary steps within their respective powers to urgently address inadequate network signal on Formentera.

Councillor Parellada, who also heads the island's department of new technologies, held that residents of Formentera face a "twice-compounded isolation in their personal, family and professional lives" and that islanders remain "on unequal footing in terms of opportunities and competitiveness" compared to people in other Spanish territories. The pandemic has thrown that disadvantage into relief, said Parellada, stressing that "Formentera residents are in the unique position of requiring communications and new technologies for services which people in other territories can access without such technology". The councillor insisted that, with plenary support, her department would be in a "much better position to demand quality service for all of Formentera".

Reusing sludge from waste water treatment plant

Assembly members once again came together to push the Balearic environment ministry to work with Formentera's government on a plan for how to use sludge from the waste water treatment plant in a way that respects municipal regulations on non-hazardous waste.

Environment chief Antonio J. Sanz highlighted La Mola residents' repeated complaints about flies and a foul smell emanating from WWTP sludge which was applied in the area. She insisted no notice was given of plans to use the sludge on the island.

"Sludge is a fine example of something that can be repurposed to support agriculture and the circular economy", said Sanz, "but it mustn't be a nuisance or generate problems for neighbours and public health".

Other proposals

Plenary participants again struck unity on three proposals tabled by representatives of Sa Unió:

First, to improve and condition the surface of Sa Senieta car park; review horizontal and vertical road signage, and optimise surveillance in response to capacity issues.

Second, to ask the Balearic Civil Law Advisory Council (CLAC), and by extension the CLAC of Eivissa-Formentera, to study the impact on Balearic civil law, specifically provisions applicable to Eivissa and Formentera, of legislation adopted on 9 July to prevent and combat tax fraud. The Spanish law, a transposition of Council Directive (EU) 2016/1164, lays down a series of rules, including one to prevent and combat tax avoidance practices which directly affect the functioning of the internal market, another concerning amendments to tax rules and a third on gambling. The report will be used to determine whether or not such legislation is constitutional and, if so, press the Balearic government or parliament to take steps to denounce it as such. Assembly members also agreed such communication with the Balearic authorities should include condemnation of the legislation on the grounds it impinges on the independence of local government.

And finally, at the behest of the opposition, assembly members called for changes to enhance the effectiveness of the current ordinance on illegal street-side vending by increasing fines and making other financial modifications.

Report from Ana Juan

Ana Juan took the assembly floor today to detail efforts within the housing, seniors, commerce and entrepreneurship departments: “Recent months have seen renewed focus on responding to the public health emergency at hand and reducing the economic toll of the pandemic on the most vulnerable, including self-employed people and business owners”.

Meanwhile, work within the entrepreneurship office has centred on employment and training for the jobless, and the housing office has orchestrated the first-ever rollout of renters’ assistance (a second round of handouts has already secured plenary backing). On trade, the councillor highlighted collaborative campaigns this year with businesses, as well as tax breaks. On efforts within the seniors department, Juan pointed to improvement and maintenance work carried out during closures, and to new defibrillators to make seniors’ clubs heart-safe.

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