

Council members gathered today for the administration's November plenary assembly, a session whose highlights included approval for the island's 2018 general budget. Vice-president and tax office secretary Bartomeu Escandell reported that a projected 12.78% spending increase would bring the total budget for the coming year to €26.9 million.

Escandell cited a more robust endowment from the region, including funding from sources like the so-called “Sustainable Tourism Tax” and the central government in Madrid. The secretary held up the administration's current zero debt load as a sign of its economic sure-footedness and proof “the Council doesn't need external funding”. “Yes” votes were cast by senior councillors and PSOE officials. Members of Compromís abstained and Popular Party officials voted “no”.

Core spending

The Formentera Council will make €4.5 million in direct investments on the island. One priority project to administer and create protections for local lake Estany des Peix will receive €400,000. Environmental safeguards aside, the budget is noteworthy for its focus on heritage site restoration. Escandell held up plans to commit €500,000 for the transformation of la Mola's lighthouse into a cultural gathering point. Money will also be set aside to get work started at Can Ramon, restore Sa Senieta and purchase heritage sites like Es Campament. Escandell pointed out that €1.1 million has been earmarked to build a nautical sports centre, “another of our administration's top priorities next year,” he said.

La Mola lighthouse

With “yes” votes from the cabinet secretaries and PSOE officials and the abstention of Compromís and PP, the assembly passed a measure to task Tragsa with the project's €765,550 execution. Crews will start in December and have nine months to complete the project, which involves rebuilding the lighthouse's ground floor and outer façade. Labrador said the changes would “rebrand the lighthouse as a cultural hub,” and promised “continued measures to protect this invaluable heritage site”.

In addition to an interpretative centre for la Mola's and other lighthouses on Formentera, the revamped ground floor will house a museographic collection on the local maritime patrimony

and a multipurpose space for cultural events like exhibitions, concerts, conferences, recitals and stage productions. Besides a welcome area, toilets and storage spaces, the lighthouse will feature, at its entrance, a patio for open-air events both cultural and educational in nature. The remodel is possible thanks to an easement agreement between the administration and the Balearic port authority.

Unanimity

The session brought unanimous support for a measure urging regional heads of the Guardia Civil as well as the law enforcement agency's Govern delegates for Eivissa and Formentera and the Balearic department of public administration to reclassify Formentera's Guardia Civil station as “principal”.

Unqualified support was also given to a Compromís proposition to equip toilets in Council buildings with baby changing stations and put the important change at the centre of an outreach campaign directed at the private sector. The measure also urges the adoption of a similar overhaul across the Balearic government's offices on the island.

Plenary attendees were also united in approving another Compromís motion, this time to allow paperwork and formalities normally carried out in person at the Eivissa harbour master's office to be completed directly at the agency's Formentera branch. The Council, it was agreed, will urge the harbour master to dispatch an office representative to Formentera several days each month to tend to the requests of residents.

Full approval came for another Compromís measure, this one brokered by Gent per Formentera, to urge the Govern balear to equip their associated buildings with defribillators and require their presence in public places. The measure aims to assure such devices are in working order and that staff are trained in their operation. The Council will study adopting similar changes as well.