

**National Park for Dorset 'could be seriously considered' if super council becomes reality**

A LARGE swathe of Dorset & East Devon should enjoy National Park designation if a Bournemouth super council becomes a reality, campaigners say.

Members of the Dorset and East Devon National Park Team, who submitted their proposal to Natural England in 2013, believe interest in the National Park idea is gathering pace.

Supporters want the National Park to encompass the entire Isle of Purbeck and the [Jurassic Coast](http://www.hampshirechronicle.co.uk/search/?search=Jurassic+Coast&topic_id=3567) from Exmouth to [Poole Harbour](http://www.hampshirechronicle.co.uk/search/?search=Poole+Harbour&topic_id=3614). This means it would include the Dorset and East Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

National Park Team member Sandra Brown said: "Our aim is to achieve the opportunities and advantages of a National Park for the communities, economy and environment of Dorset. There is growing support for the proposal.”

"Local government re-organisation offers Dorset a great chance to ask the government for a National Park as part of devolution. This is a great opportunity for Dorset. We hope local authorities and others will work together to achieve the benefits of a National Park for Dorset."

Campaigners believe that in the event Dorset councils are reorganised into two authorities - one principally for the conurbation and the other for the rest of the county - the National Park option could be seriously considered.

The Dorset and East Devon National Park team say Natural England has already undertaken a 'positive first assessment' of the proposal submitted to them in 2013.

As well as Purbeck and the World Heritage Jurassic Coast, National Park designation should also cover the heathland between Wareham and Dorchester, according to the plans.

The submitted proposal summary states: "The case for the National Park is strong under any local government structures. The prospect of local government reorganisation presents a particular opportunity to move forward on the designation of a National Park. A National Park Authority which would bring a coherent and consistent approach to development planning across the National Park area, as well as policies and additional resources to benefit the area's communities, economy, and environment."

Talks commenced last summer between the leaders of Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch and East Dorset councils about forming a single unitary authority for the south east of the county.

Visit <https://dorsetandeastdevonnationalpark.wordpress.com/> for details of National Park proposal.