

Western Morning News

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I see that Plymouth is trying to win a place in the FA 2018 World Cup bid. If you were in their shoes, how would you promote Plymouth as the perfect location for such an event?

R Hardwick, North Devon

I would approach the task like any other large corporate pitch - strategically. And there are three important questions I would seek to answer before even attempting to promote Plymouth as the perfect location for such an event.

One, what are FIFA's goals as an organisation, what is their mission and what do they hope to achieve from putting on a World Cup event? After all, they are the people making the final decision.

Two, how have previous Bids been successful, including those from South Africa who are the hosts for the 2010 World Cup, and Brazil 2014.

And three, how can Plymouth, as the host city, help ensure England's success in winning the Bid against the international competition?

In response to your question, I am going to focus on point one, FIFA's mission because, strategically, I think it is very important. And I write without detailed knowledge of the Bid requirements or Plymouth's response.

I have taken a look at FIFA's website, and surely it's that they see themselves as much more than merely World Cup organisers. They clearly extend their responsibility to "developing the game around the world and bringing hope to those less privileged". And it is this mission that gives meaning to every activity that FIFA is involved in.

Sepp Blatter, President of FIFA states "We see it as our duty to take on the social responsibility that comes hand in hand with our position at the helm of the world's most loved sport."

This is a very important point and one that I would look to address and prioritise in my promotion of Plymouth. Why? It is what would set us apart from the competition.

Visit the england2018bid.com site and take a look at the Host Cities Overviews. They are all very similar proposals, including details for location, stadiums, training venues, base camps, Fan Parks, accommodation, transport, hospitality, economic impact etc. That's the easy part, the housekeeping, and I am delighted that Plymouth competes very well at this level.

However, if Plymouth, and indeed England, is to be successful, I strongly believe that we need to put more emphasis on how hosting the World Cup in Plymouth will help FIFA achieve their strategic goals. How will it help bridge gaps between culture and class? How it will help our youth? How it will support health, education and more? After all, it will involve considerable upfront investment from both the public and private sectors.

My promotion for Plymouth would focus on developing a legacy for our children, for future generations and those less privileged. And this amounts to far more than the yearly regional and international residential football tournaments that are currently promoted in Plymouth's online Bid synopsis.

That said, I am passionate about Plymouth, it would be great to see the World Cup in Plymouth and I wish the Bid team every success.