

# 'We've got the World Cup lot'

Derby is bidding to be a host city if England wins the right to stage the football World Cup in 2018 or 2022.

**Caroline Jones** spoke to Derby entrepreneur and Secret Millionaire star Kavita Oberoi about why she is behind our campaign.

OBEROI Consulting may be based in Derby - but 90% of its business comes from outside the city.

First set up in 2001, the IT firm continues to provide services to thousands in the healthcare sector every year from its base at Pride Park.

And its founder Kavita Oberoi, one of the UK's most successful female entrepreneurs, is all too aware of the importance of publicity.

Since coming to Derby 16 years ago, she has established her business, starred on Channel Four show The Secret Mil-



lionaire, become a director of Martha's Oasis - which runs programmes for troubled teenage girls - and accrued a personal fortune of more than £10m.

Mrs Oberoi is not one to miss a great business opportunity, which is why she said she is very enthusiastic about Derby's bid to host the football World Cup.

The mum-of-two, who lives with husband Deven in Hazlewood, said she was backing the city's bid to stage matches during the four-week tournament in 2018 or 2022 because of the increased business activity and potential inward investment it would bring.

She said: "This is just what the city needs to put us on the worldwide map - and what an opportunity it would be for local businesses.

"Derby has a fantastic travel infrastructure with the M1, rail link and East Midlands Airport so close. Being in a central location in the UK is also a huge benefit for Oberoi as a national company.

"We are also working on global services and solutions and, as we are at Pride Park, it would be greatly beneficial to receive any national and global publicity to support our growth.

"There would be a huge knock-on effect with massive advertising opportunities for all business and tourist venues.

"Derby is a perfect place to hold the World Cup and it would encourage further future investment in the city."

Derby is one of 16 cities competing for the right to stage World Cup matches.

The Football Association, which is compiling England's bid to host the tournament, is only looking for 12 venues.

The decision on which cities will be included in England's campaign will be made in December, be-



**BEHIND US:** Kavita Oberoi thinks the World Cup bid will be a boost for Derby.

fore the FA presents the country's case to football's world governing body FIFA.

The FA has already paid two visits to Derby to assess its case. The first inspection took place in July and the second last month.

Mrs Oberoi said one of the city's biggest strengths could be the changes it had undergone in the past decade.

She said: "I have lived in Derby for 16 years now and there has been significant change and investment in the city from when I first came here.

"Pride Park did not exist and neither did Westfield and now all the rest of the regeneration

**There would be a huge knock-on effect and massive opportunities**

KAVITA OBEROI

investment is now coming to fruition.

"The exit from Pride Park to the railway station has vastly improved and there has been the regeneration of the Roundhouse.

"The city landscape has really changed and we now have the perfect infrastructure."

Derby's bid team is made up of representatives from Derby County, the city and county councils, Marketing Derby and the University of Derby, among others.

They have submitted a preliminary tournament bid to the FA in the form of a 230-page document. The final bid will be submitted in November.

A decision on which countries will host both

the 2018 and 2022 World Cup competitions will be made in December next year.

Mrs Oberoi said: "With limited stadium developments required at Pride Park, this bid is very positive in terms of reduced financial risk to host the event.

"If we also look at the returns other cities have had after hosting such events it follows there would be a substantial return on investment for Derby.

"Previous host cities have also demonstrated an ongoing benefit to tourism as well as a creating a positive international image.

"This is because this image is being shown to more than 24 billion people across 240 countries and that is why I am very enthusiastic about this bid."

Other cities staking a claim for World Cup matches are Birmingham, Bristol, Hull, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Newcastle and Gateshead, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Sheffield and Sunderland.

Derby is hoping the diversity of its population, which includes 182 nationalities, its football tradition, the quality of Pride Park and its transport links will all strengthen its bid.

If picked, the city could benefit from up to £200m in investment over the next 10 years.

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[www.thisisderbyshire.co.uk/bid](http://www.thisisderbyshire.co.uk/bid) and [www.therams.co.uk](http://www.therams.co.uk)

You can also pledge support on [www.derby2018bid.com](http://www.derby2018bid.com) and [www.england2018bid.com](http://www.england2018bid.com)

