

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

19 JANUARY 2024

QUESTION No. 2 in accordance with Standing Order No 36

Tom Lake to ask the Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board:

Marmot Town

Recent publicity regarding Coventry's advances in health equality have pointed to the possibility of becoming a "Marmot Town" through collaboration with the Institute of Health Inequality led by Sir Michael Marmot at University College London. Will the board consider this approach to tackling health inequality?

REPLY by the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board (Councillor McEwan):

The Institute of Health Equity at University College London facilitates the Marmot Places scheme. This builds upon earlier formats and strategic public health initiatives such as Healthy Cities. There are now over 40 local authorities in England and Wales who have become a network of The Marmot Places. These include Coventry, Greater Manchester and others where programmes of work have begun that seek to implement the 6 policy objectives recommended first by the Marmot Review in 2010 and in milestone reports since then. These have become 'marmot principles', evidence-based action that will reduce the social gradient in health:

1. Give every child the best start in life
2. Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
3. Create fair employment and good work for all
4. Ensure a healthy standard of living for all
5. Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
6. Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention

They recognise that the social economic determinants of health are beyond the health service and these are the prevention measures which will lead to the best and healthiest outcomes for everyone. The overarching approach to delivery recommended across all these policy areas is proportionate universalism, the idea that services should be provided universally but with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage.

The prospect of becoming a Marmot Borough has been discussed amongst Officers and at Lead Councillor Briefings. In Reading we recognise that health is created outside of the healthcare system. We support these principles and know that there is much good practice in Reading Borough Council and amongst our system partners in the integrated care system and the local voluntary community sector that already aligns with these principles.

The way forward for us here in Reading is to receive the completion of the current Director of Public Health Annual Report which is expected in March 2024. This statutory document will be the first since 2021. It will be supported by evidence drawn from our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

and will provide strategic guidance about our local priorities for protecting and improving health in Reading.

This strategic guidance will enable us to take an informed view as to whether we will be recommending to the Board the aspiration to become a Marmot Borough and the benefits to Reading's residents.