

To Whom It May Concern

20 July 2022

I am delighted to be writing a letter of support for Middlesbrough's Council's application to join the WHO's Global Network of Age-friendly Communities. With 17,000 people between 55 and 64 years and 23,000 over 65 years, the older population in Middlesbrough is growing and becoming more diverse and that's why we are committed to addressing the issues that affect older people in our town, such as Housing, Transport and Health.

Middlesbrough has a lower-than-average disability free life expectancy of 56 years old when compared to the national average of 62 years old. We recognise that we need radical approaches to integration, joint working and place-based solutions as our local population ages and the prevalence of long-term health conditions like dementia, COPD and diabetes increases year on year.

Committing to age friendly practices will ensure that there are more opportunities for older people. We want people to continue to live and thrive here, and we must make sure we can accommodate all their needs.

A baseline assessment of age-friendly Middlesbrough was developed based on the findings from a community consultation. The survey aimed to gather as many views of older people as possible to help build a picture of what is happening within the local community and find out what residents think can be done to make Middlesbrough a better place to live and age. This has helped to establish the top 10 needs of what older people said was needed for them to live happy, healthy and active lives and this will directly feed into an action plan and the indicators that will monitor progress to date.

The action plan will focus on specific goals that we are committed to achieving within the next three years. There has already been a breadth of age-friendly work that is happening in our town and the dedication, passion and engagement from the community, businesses and stakeholders has been instrumental in creating a vibrant and diverse town that we are already proud of.

Middlesbrough is growing and expanding in many ways, our economy is improving, and technology is advancing. This presents us with limitless opportunities for our future and we have a responsibility to ensure these opportunities reach everyone in our town, across all ages and abilities.

We will keep this goal in mind with all of our planning efforts, whether it's how we ensure affordable housing, how we make our streets safer and more accessible, how we make the arts available to everyone, or how we help enhance the quality of life for our older residents.

Older people are important to the future of our town. They represent the fastest growing sector of the population and I am proud to support both this application and the work being delivered to improve outcomes for all of our residents.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Preston', written over a light grey grid background.

Andy Preston
Elected Mayor of Middlesbrough