

## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT – HOWGILL FAMILY CENTRE, KELLS, WHITEHAVEN

This application is made for change of use from disused public library to a day nursery, and associated works and signage.

Howgill Family Centre is a charity with a mission of supporting local families to access childcare, support and access to services, and to address issues of child poverty in the area. Howgill enjoys a good reputation for delivering these services for at least 40 years in Whitehaven.

Howgill currently owns a centre in Catherine Street in Whitehaven, operates a family centre in Birks Road at Cleator Moor and operates a nursery from The Kabin in the grounds of St Mary's Catholic Primary School on Keels. This application addresses the issues of the operation on Kells. All settings are rated 'Good' by Ofsted.

The current provision on Kells is delivered from a temporary portacabin which is nearing the end of its usefulness and is requiring expensive maintenance simply to continue to operate. Howgill received the ownership of the redundant Kells Library 2 years ago with the intention of converting it to replace the current provision at Kells. Howgill is currently applying for funding to support this venture but, due to continuing deterioration of the portacabin, needs to move to the Kells library by September 2023 to continue safe operation of its nursery.

The current classification is F1 and the intended use will move to category E. Apart from maintenance of the building it is intended to complete the following alterations:

1. Replace the windows to the front elevation with uPVC windows with the exception of a single central window, which will be returned to its previous state – a door.
2. Internal alterations to provide toilets and change area for children and babies.
3. Installation of gas.
4. Minor alterations internally to provide a food service area.
5. The extension of a sandstone wall to the front boundary of the site to enclose 3 car parking spaces to provide a play area, as required by Ofsted. This will leave 2 parking spaces and access will remain the same.
6. Signage on the front elevation of the building to state the name of the facility.

In the meantime the external drains have suffered a collapse requiring immediate repair which is underway.

The headteachers of both Kells Infants School and St Mary's Primary School, together with the Diocese of Lancaster (who own the land on which the portacabin rests) are fully supportive of the proposal.

Currently, there is no other childcare facility on Kells or South Whitehaven which is accessible to all families and the provision is vital to continue to offer the support for these families.