

## 9 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for a road scheme is the process of compiling, evaluating and presenting all likely significant environmental effects. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) combines all the findings of the assessments produced as part of the EIA process.

The scheme area contains a range of natural and man-made environmental constraints, which may be subject to adverse impacts if not avoided or mitigated as part of the design development process.

### Air Quality

There is one existing Air Quality Management Area within the study area. Whilst the preferred route is likely to have a beneficial effect by removing a proportion of traffic (particularly HGV traffic from Warrenpoint Port) from Newry City, a local and regional air quality assessment shall be undertaken of construction, operation & maintenance impacts upon affected sensitive receptors.

### Cultural Heritage

The preferred route would impact upon a number of cultural heritage assets, including the Newry Ship Canal (a Scheduled Monument and Industrial Heritage Site). A study shall be undertaken to determine all known features of cultural heritage interest (Archaeological Remains, Historic Buildings and Historic Landscapes) that may be affected.

### Ecology & Nature Conservation

There are several designated sites of international, national and local ecological importance within or close to the study area. A range of ecological surveys shall be undertaken (some of which are ongoing) along the entire route, including Phase 1 habitat, fisheries, invasive species, bat, badger and bird surveys. These shall inform the assessment of ecological impacts during construction, operation & maintenance.

### Landscape & Visual

The preferred route would fall within the Ring of Gullion Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Viewpoint locations have been identified and assessments shall be undertaken to determine impact upon landscape character and views from sensitive visual receptors.

### Land Use & Community

Loss of property and private land would inevitably be experienced with the preferred route. An assessment shall be undertaken in relation to demolition of private property, loss of land used by the community, effects on development land, effects on agricultural land and effects on waterways and associated restoration projects.

### Noise & Vibration

Baseline noise monitoring shall be undertaken to characterise the existing noise climate in the surrounding area. A noise impact assessment of conditions during construction and operation will be undertaken at the nearest noise sensitive receptors. The assessment shall provide a qualitative and quantitative description of the noise climate in the area likely to be affected by the preferred route.

### Soils Geology & Contaminated Land

An assessment shall be completed in relation to geology, soils and potential areas of contaminated land in the study area and how these may be impacted.

### Water Quality

An assessment shall be undertaken to identify the impacts that the preferred route may have on the water environment. This shall include possible impacts on the quality of water bodies and on the existing hydrology of the Newry River Catchment through which the road shall pass. An assessment shall also be undertaken to determine the impact of the scheme upon areas susceptible to flooding.

