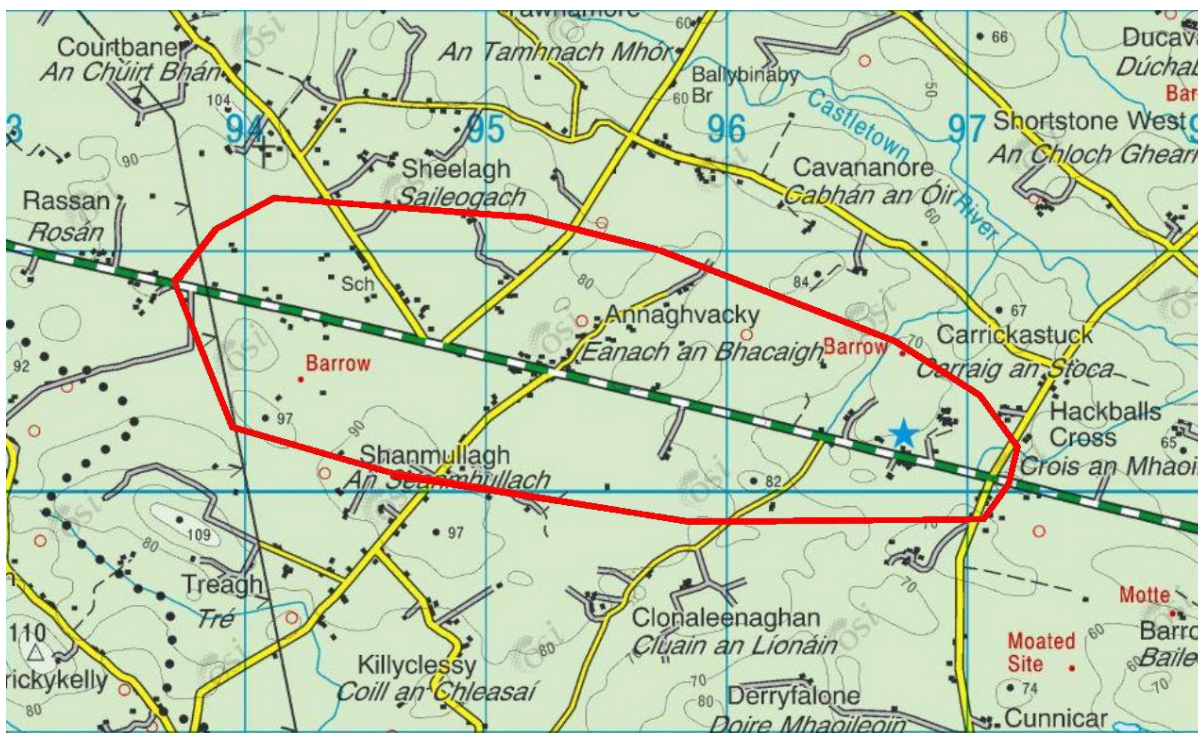


## Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

### (a) Applicant's screening report

Atkins Ireland have been commissioned to carry out a Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) for the proposed realignment of the N53 national roadway between Hackballscross and Rassan on behalf of Louth County Council.

In the summary of findings Atkins has considered that the construction or operation of the N53 road scheme will not result in negative impacts on any of the features of interest for which the SAC and SPA have been designated. In the absence of any potential impacts as a result of the road scheme there is no pathway for other projects to act in-combination with the N53 road scheme to give rise to cumulative effects on any Natura 2000 sites.



### (b) European Sites within 15km

There are 4 no. European sites within the potential zone of influence of the proposed project; 3 no. SACs and 1 no. SPA as follows: Dundalk Bay SAC, Dundalk Bay SPA, Slieve Gullion SAC and Carlingford Mountain SAC.

The only European sites with connectivity to the proposed scheme are Dundalk Bay SAC (site code: 000455) and Dundalk Bay SPA (site code: 004064) which are located ca. 8.6km and ca. 7.2km east via land of the proposed scheme, respectively.

European Site	Site Code	Distance to site	Qualifying Interests

Dundalk Bay SAC/pNHA	000455	8.6km	<p>Estuaries [1130]</p> <p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</p> <p>Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</p> <p>Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]</p> <p>Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330]</p> <p>Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]</p>
Dundalk Bay SPA/pNHA	004026	7.2km	<p>Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005]</p> <p>Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043]</p> <p>Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]</p> <p>Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048]</p> <p>Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052]</p> <p>Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053]</p> <p>Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054]</p> <p>Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065]</p> <p>Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069]</p> <p>Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130]</p> <p>Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137]</p> <p>Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</p> <p>Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]</p> <p>Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]</p> <p>Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143]</p> <p>Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]</p>

			<p>Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]</p> <p>Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]</p> <p>Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160]</p> <p>Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]</p> <p>Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]</p> <p>Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182]</p> <p>Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184]</p> <p>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>
Carlingford Mountain SAC/pNHA	000453	12.6km	<p>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</p> <p>European dry heaths [4030]</p> <p>Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</p> <p>Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230]</p> <p>Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]</p> <p>Alkaline fens [7230]</p> <p>Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) [8110]</p> <p>Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210]</p> <p>Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]</p>
Slieve Gullion SAC (Site Code: UK 0030277)	European dry heaths [4030]	10 km	<p>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</p> <p>European dry heaths [4030]</p> <p>Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</p> <p>Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230]</p>

			Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140] Alkaline fens [7230] Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels ( <i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladanii</i> ) [8110] Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210] Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]
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**(c) Assessment**

The proposed road design will include road drainage based on Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) including attenuation for a 100-year flood event and 20% climate change and hydrocarbon interceptors prior to eventually discharging into the Carrickastuck Stream, Drumboat Stream and Inishkeen Stream. This function of SUDS design is to retain sediments and pollutants arising from road surfaces and regulate flows following rainfall events.

The proposed project is located ca. 8.6km via land and ca. >12km downstream from the Dundalk Bay SAC. There is indirect connectivity from the proposed scheme to Dundalk Bay SAC as the surface water drainage from the proposed scheme will outfall to Carrickastuck Stream, Drumboat Stream and Inishkeen Stream which connect to the Castletown and Fane Rivers which outfall to Dundalk Bay.

The proposed project is located ca. 7.2km via land and ca. >10km downstream from the Dundalk Bay SPA. There is indirect connectivity from the proposed scheme to Dundalk Bay SPA as the surface water drainage from the proposed scheme will outfall to Carrickastuck Stream, Drumboat Stream and Inishkeen Stream which connect to the Castletown and Fane Rivers which outfall to Dundalk Bay.

There is no direct overlap between the proposed scheme and Slieve Gullion SAC, nor do any of these habitats occur within or close to the proposed scheme. There is no indirect connectivity through hydrological pathways from the scheme to this SAC. The proposed road scheme lies within a separate groundwater body to that of the SAC and therefore connectivity through groundwater pathways is precluded.

There is no direct overlap between the proposed scheme and the Carlingford Mountain SAC. There is no connectivity in the form of hedgerows, treelines or watercourses between the proposed scheme and this SAC.

**(c) Determination**

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and the nature of the receiving environment, no appropriate assessment issues arise and it is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site (Special Area of Conservation or Special Protected Area) and as such an Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2 AA) is not required.

Signed: Emer O'Callaghan  
Emer O'Callaghan  
Senior Executive Planner  
315/2021