

ON THE EDGE: Major tourist route in Kerry under threat of collapse

ANNE LUCEY

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Warning of road danger due to coastal erosion

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Kerry County Council's senior engineer has warned that a road along the coast near Inch beach, a major tourist route, is in danger of collapse. The recent spell of high winds and waves has accelerated erosion problems eating away the earthen cliff beneath the road, according to county engineer Tom Curran.

In the 1990s a nearby corner section collapsed entirely and the council was forced to borrow to rebuild the road. It is still paying back more than €158,000 a year for that work.

A 400 metre section near the world-famous viewing point across Dingle Bay was now "seriously undermined", Mr Curran said yesterday. Appealing for funds from the Government, he said €4 million was needed for immediate works to prevent its collapse.

"We have applied every year to the Department of the Marine primarily. I am also looking for support from the Department of the Environment as realigning the existing roadway will be part of the repair works."

Despite not being given the necessary funding by the depart-



The road along Inch strand on the Castlemaine-Annascaul road in Co Kerry, which is under threat from coastal erosion. Photograph: Don MacMonagle

ments, he said the council would have no choice but to press ahead with works this year and he had notified both departments of his intention to begin works. If necessary the council would have to borrow the money, which could jeopardise other programmes.

"This is a major tourist route.

We can't wait. Our big fear is if it slips the whole road would go."

The work would have to be carried out in the low tides in early spring, as the base had to be rebuilt from the sea up, he added.

Labour TD Breedha Moynihan-Cronin has also called on Minister of State for the Marine John

Browne to provide immediate funding.

"I raised this matter in the Dáil recently with the Minister of State John Browne but was advised that there was no funding available under the Coastal Protection Programme for this project in 2005 and 2006."

Councillor Michael Cahill (FF) said there had been a huge increase in coastal erosion in Kerry in recent months. The Glenbeigh-based councillor said he had never witnessed so much damage right around the coast. Minor roads near Rossbeigh beach had been completely under-

mined.

"The whole issue of coastal erosion has been ignored for too many years," Mr Cahill said.

Councillor John Brassil (FF) said the annual county council budget for Kerry, a coastal county, should include specific funding for coastal protection.