



## **MEDIA BRIEFING**

Ref: 086b-aj Wharf Road car park facts

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### **THE WHOLE POINT OF THE HOLE Wharf Road car park, Stamford: clean-up well under way**

- Wharf Road car park in Stamford is set to be reopened by September 2007. It has been closed since 10 April 2007 for legally required decontamination work. For over 100 years the area had been home to giant gas storage holders.
- South Kesteven District Council (SKDC), which owns the land, pulled off a remarkable coup, getting the largest grant yet paid to any local authority by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to clean up the site. Contaminants such as phenols, benzene and cyanide must be removed to prevent them from leaching into the watercourse and polluting the nearby River Welland.
- Winning the £500,000 grant means local council tax payers do not have to pick up the tab.
- At the same time, SKDC won a Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) award of £235,000 to trial a world-first research project. In partnership with the British Geological Survey, site regeneration specialists VHE Group and engineering consultants Interkonsult Ltd, this cutting-edge project means inserting hi-tech "radar" probes into the subsoil – electronic images of the entire site (and not just areas around small test holes) will be monitored by engineers.
- Decontamination work could not start until it was warm enough for pollutant-digesting bacteria to survive. The "radar" probe data will show the progress of the microbes as they munch their way through muck. Previously, the entire site would have been dug out and the spoil dumped into landfill – which, to modern understanding, is unsustainable and environmentally damaging.
- During the closure, SKDC has provided additional car parking spaces at the Cattle Market.
- Aerial photos of the site (circa 1960s) showing gas holders available from SKDC press office, although publishers will need to seek copyright permission for image reproduction.
- Weekly updates on progress of the remediation work can be seen on the SKDC website.

**END**

**Note:** world first – more information available from Pete Rogers (SKDC) on Thursday.

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