

# Case Study



## Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council



### Client:

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, is a unitary local authority within the West Midlands conurbation. The council serves more than 330,000 residents and employs just over 6000 members of staff.



### Industry:

Local Government

### Product:

Aerial Photography  
& Height Data

*“Here at Dudley MBC, many officers utilise the aerial photography to help identify sites, features and confirm asset locations, etc.*

*A comprehensive historical archive has been built up for easy reference and availability of the most current imagery on offer through APGB is deemed fundamental to supporting many of our key services.*”

Robert Oldnall - GIS Team Manager

### Summary:

Dudley Council has transformed its geospatial capabilities with access to both Bluesky's high resolution aerial photography and derived datasets via the Government's Geospatial: Digital Services 'Aerial Photography for Great Britain' (APGB) programme. This has eliminated the need for the Council to commission their own aerial surveys, saving both time, money and resources.

Using Bluesky's data ensures Dudley Council has access to the most current aerial photography available, which in turn enables officers at the local authority to make more informed decisions in key areas such as planning, enforcement, asset management, and environmental projects. The imagery has also been applied within interactive maps for external audiences, boosting public engagement, enabling residents to have easy access to local information such as locations of schools, bus stops, refuse and recycling collection schedules, planning and building applications, etc.

## Challenge:

Dudley Council has a long established track record of leveraging Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to enhance key public services. Aerial photography has always been important to this approach, providing an intuitive and highly accurate means of mapping assets and supporting subsequent analysis. Derived datasets such as Digital Surface and Terrain Models (DSM / DTM) and Colour Infrared (CIR) have added to this ability.

Before the introduction of the APGB resource, the GIS Team at Dudley Council commissioned their own aerial surveys every few years, collaborating with neighbouring authorities to jointly fund flights and data acquisition. Unfortunately, this process was costly, time consuming and limited the frequency of updates, making it more difficult to maintain current and comprehensive data.

## Solution:

Through APGB, the Council's teams now have free access (at point of use) to Bluesky's current and historic aerial photography, and derived datasets. Today, Bluesky's data is fully integrated into Dudley's corporate geographic information system (GIS). The aerial photography's high resolution and currency enables officers to verify on-the-ground details, conduct checks, and improve confidence and accuracy in their data. The imagery underpins a wide range of key applications, from tree preservation order assessments using Bluesky's DSM for 3D modelling, to using aerial photography to assess highways maintenance and supporting contingency planning. The data offers a far clearer, real-world perspective than static mapping.

Beyond internal operations, the council provides interactive maps for the public, so residents can easily access local information. Crucially, this resource has freed-up both time and budget, allowing Dudley to invest in other projects, including a recent initiative that explores the application of Bluesky's aerial photography alongside advanced workflows to map and investigate Ash Dieback in collaboration with arborists - a project with the potential to save thousands of trees across the Borough

## Results:

Free-at-point-of-use access to Bluesky's data has delivered significant operational and financial benefits for Dudley Council releasing funds for other priorities. Usage spikes whenever new capture areas are uploaded to their internal and external systems, reflect strong demand, both internally and publicly for this valuable visual resource.

Access to Bluesky's DSM / DTM has also enabled the creation of 3D visuals, further improving communication between departments, particularly in complex cases such

as tree preservation orders and development planning. Public engagement has also increased, as residents can use online interactive maps to explore their local neighbourhoods, reducing the number of inbound queries.

Overall, APGB has become an indispensable resource, enhancing efficiency and accuracy in a wide range of Dudley's services.

	Aerial Photography	DSM	DTM
<b>Resolution</b>	<b>12.5cm</b>	<b>2m</b>	<b>5m</b>
<b>Coverage</b>	Great Britain		
<b>Accuracy XY</b>	± 30cm rmse	± 1m rmse	
<b>Accuracy Z</b>	-	± 1.5m rmse	
<b>Formats</b>	Include: JPG, TIFF, ECW	Include: ASCII Grid, ASCII XYZ, DXF Point, Geotiff	
<b>Standard Projection</b>	British National Grid		
<b>Tile Size</b>	1km x 1km (8,000 x 8,000 pixels)	1km x 1km (500 x 500 pixels)	1km x 1km (200 x 200 pixels)
<b>Metadata</b>	Gemini 2.3		

Get in touch today at [support@apgb.co.uk](mailto:support@apgb.co.uk)