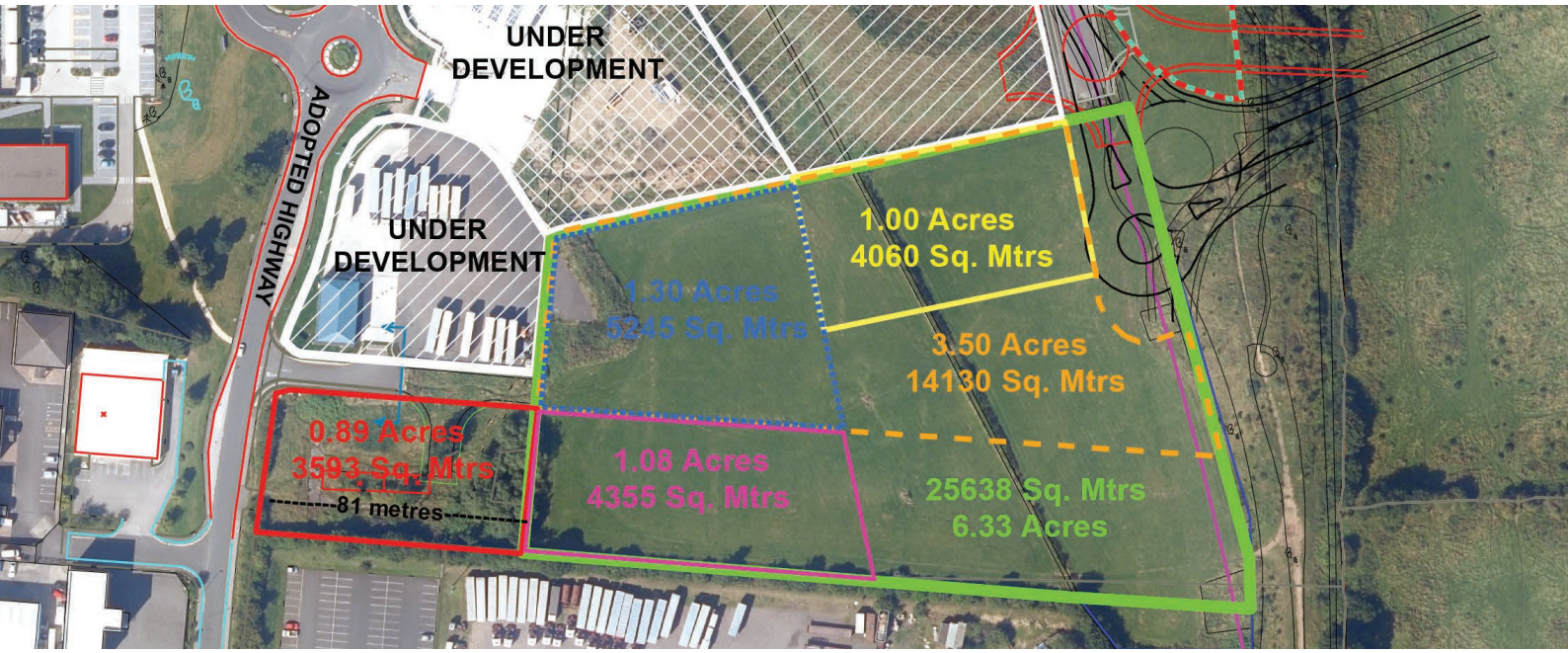
Case Study

Darlington Borough Council



Client:

Darlington Borough Council is a unitary authority in the North East of England located between County Durham and North Yorkshire. They own and manage over 3300 Acres of Land and Property and are responsible for delivering local government services to a population of over 110,500 with a catchment population of around 311,000.

DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Industry:

Local Government

Product:

Aerial Photography

> *"While our primary need is to showcase large scale developments and secure approvals, Bluesky's imagery has delivered far more, helping us uncover potential land grabs and identify hidden parcels that simply can't be seen from the ground. After years of using Bluesky, we continue to be impressed by the range of data available and look to use other available products like the National Tree Map for future work. Bluesky has saved us significant time and effort compared to on foot surveys and enabled us to deliver faster, more accurate land management responses."*
>
> Ross Harwood, Assistant Estates Technician

Summary:

Darlington Borough Council has significantly enhanced its development and land management processes through the application of Bluesky's high resolution aerial photography, accessed via the Government Digital Services Aerial Photography for Great Britain (APGB) resource.

Integrating this detailed photography into their geographic information system (GIS) and combining it with developers' CAD plans enables visualisation of proposed development schemes, early identification of potential issues, and accurate assessment of land parcels for acquisition or disposal.

Challenge:

Darlington Borough Council oversees a diverse programme of development schemes across its land portfolio, each requiring detailed assessment and approval before progressing. To make informed decisions, officers, managers, budget holders, and Cabinet Members need accurate, high quality visual information that clearly illustrates the scope and potential impact of proposed works.

Traditional on-foot inspections can be time consuming and are often limited, particularly when land parcels are difficult to access or impossible to fully view from ground level. These constraints increase the risk of incomplete or inaccurate assessments, causing project delays as well as hindering effective decision making.

Solution:

Bluesky's high resolution aerial photography provides an essential resource for enhancing project planning and communication.

By integrating Bluesky's photography directly into the Council's GIS and overlaying developers' CAD plans, officers can create highly precise visual representations of proposed schemes. This helps stakeholders see the proposal and understand potential impact on the surrounding area.

The detailed photography also enables officers to identify challenging land parcels at an early stage, supporting more accurate costing assessment, as land acquisition and disposal processes rely heavily on precise measurements.

Results:

Bluesky's photography has repeatedly played a key role in securing approvals for major developments, offering transparent visuals that support well-informed decisions across all levels of the Council. It has also enabled officers to detect potential land encroachments and previously unnoticed parcels that are difficult to identify from ground level inspections, significantly strengthening the Council's ability to manage adverse possession cases.

Overall, the integration of Bluesky data has saved substantial time and resources compared with historic on foot surveys, allowing quicker, more accurate responses to land management queries. The Council continues to benefit from Bluesky's extensive data products and is exploring additional datasets, available outside of APGB such as the National Tree Map™, to further enhance future land and development work.

	Imagery Specification	
Resolution	**5cm**	**12.5cm**
Coverage	Great Britain	Great Britain
Accuracy XY	± 10cm rmse	± 30cm rmse
Formats	Include: JPG, TIFF, ECW	Include: JPG, TIFF, ECW
Standard Projection	British National Grid	British National Grid
Tile Size	1km x 1km (20,000 x 20,000 pixels)	1km x 1km (8,000 x 8,000 pixels)
Metadata	Gemini 2.3	Gemini 2.3

Get in touch today at **support@apgb.co.uk**