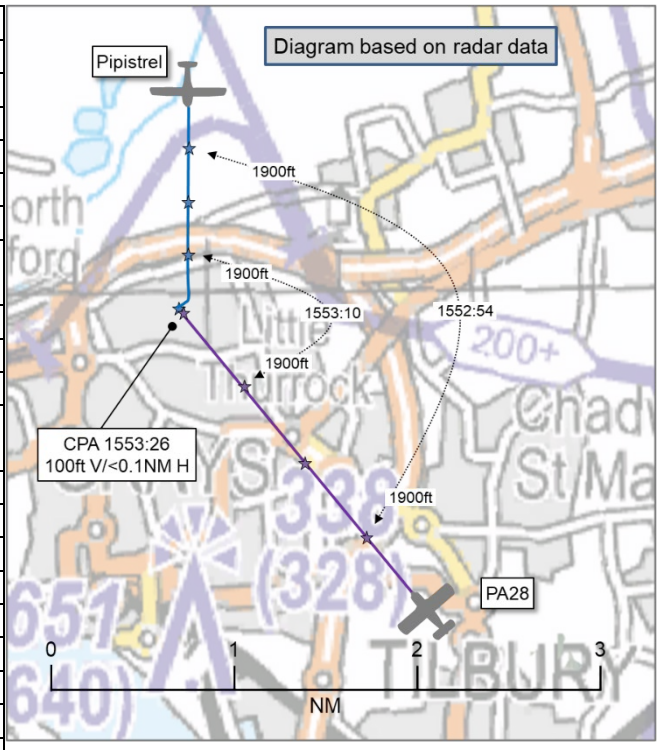
AIRPROX REPORT No 2025198

Date: 06 Sep 2025 Time: 1553Z Position: 5129N 00020E Location: Grays

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Pipistrel Alpha	PA28
Operator	Civ FW	Civ FW
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	AGCS	Basic
Provider	Hornchurch Radio[1]	Farnborough
Altitude/FL	1855ft	1955ft
Transponder	A, C, S+	A, C, S
Reported		
Colours	White	White with yellow/ green flashes
Lighting	Nav, strobe, ldg	Nav
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	>10km
Altitude/FL	2000ft	2000ft
Altimeter	QNH (1020hPa)	QNH
Heading	'*southerly*'	330°
Speed	90kt	90kt
ACAS/TAS	PilotAware	SkyEcho
Alert	None	Information
Separation at CPA		
Reported	20ft V/30m H	200ft V/2NM H
Recorded	100ft V/<0.1NM H	



THE PIPISTREL PILOT reports [that they had been on an] instructional flight holding height, heading, speed and spotted [from the] opposite direction an aircraft at the same altitude. [There had been] a startle factor [followed by] a sharp right turn by [the Pipistrel pilot]. They had seen no evasive action from the opposing traffic.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE PA28 PILOT reports that they recall that this had happened northwest of Rochester ATZ. They had been the pilot of [the PA28] on a return trip from [France] to [destination aerodrome]. They were working Farnborough ATC [on a] Basic Service at 2000ft with squawk. [It had been a] VFR clear day with excellent visibility. Opposite traffic [at a] range of 2NM, same level, head on, crossed right-to-left in front of them to avoid. [The PA28 pilot] reports that they had been disappointed with Farnborough for not notifying them of traffic [they recalled], even though they had only requested a Basic Service.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'Low'.

THE DAMYNS HALL AIR/GROUND OPERATOR reports that Damyns Hall is not often manned, and on the date in question they unfortunately did not have any radio operators on duty.

THE FARNBOROUGH LARS CONTROLLER reports that the unit had received a report of an Airprox in the Thurrock area. They have no recollection of the incident.

[1] Hornchurch Radio is the C/S for Damyns Hall AGCS

Factual Background

The weather at London City airport was recorded as follows:

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METAR EGLC 061550Z AUTO 13015KT 100V160 9999 NCD 23/10 Q1015=
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Analysis and Investigation

NATS Safety Investigation

NATS was advised by the UK Airprox Board of a reported Airprox between a Pipistrel Alpha to and from and to […], and PA28 from […] to […]. The PA28 pilot had previously been in communication with Farnborough LARS but left the frequency to speak to another agency. The pilot re-called the Farnborough LARS frequency at 1550:19 and was advised by the LARS controller it had still been "*a Basic Service*," which was acknowledged by the pilot. The pilot of the PA28 noted within their report they had, '*only requested a Basic Service as the weather was excellent*.'

The LARS controller had been passing Traffic Information to an unrelated aircraft regarding a potential confliction. Immediately following that interaction, at 1552:52, the controller transmitted to the PA28 pilot, "*opposite direction traffic, one mile, indicates same altitude*." The PA28 pilot responded, "*traffic not sighted, looking*." The LARS controller continued providing Traffic Information and at 1553:08 noted, "*roger, just off your twelve o'clock now, opposite direction, half a mile, same altitude*." The PA28 pilot responded, "*traffic not, err err, traffic sighted*," with the report of traffic sighted being made at 1553:19.

The closest point of approach between the PA28 and the Pipistrel occurred at 1553:21, measured on the NODE Multi Track Radar as 0.1NM and 0ft.

In this event, Farnborough had notified the PA28 pilot of the traffic and received a response. CAP774 UK Flight Information Services, Chapter 2 states:

2.5	Given that the provider of a Basic Service is not required to monitor the flight, pilots should not expect any form of traffic information from a controller/FISO. A pilot who considers that they require a regular flow of specific traffic information shall request a Traffic Service.

2.9	Whether traffic information has been provided or not, the pilot remains responsible for collision avoidance without assistance from the controller.

CAA ATSI

ATSI has reviewed all the reports. The PA28 pilot reported receiving no Traffic Information from Farnborough but, according to the Farnborough investigation, they [appear to] have misremembered, with good Traffic Information having been passed even though the pilot had only requested a Basic Service. ATSI has nothing to add to the Farnborough investigation.

UKAB Secretariat

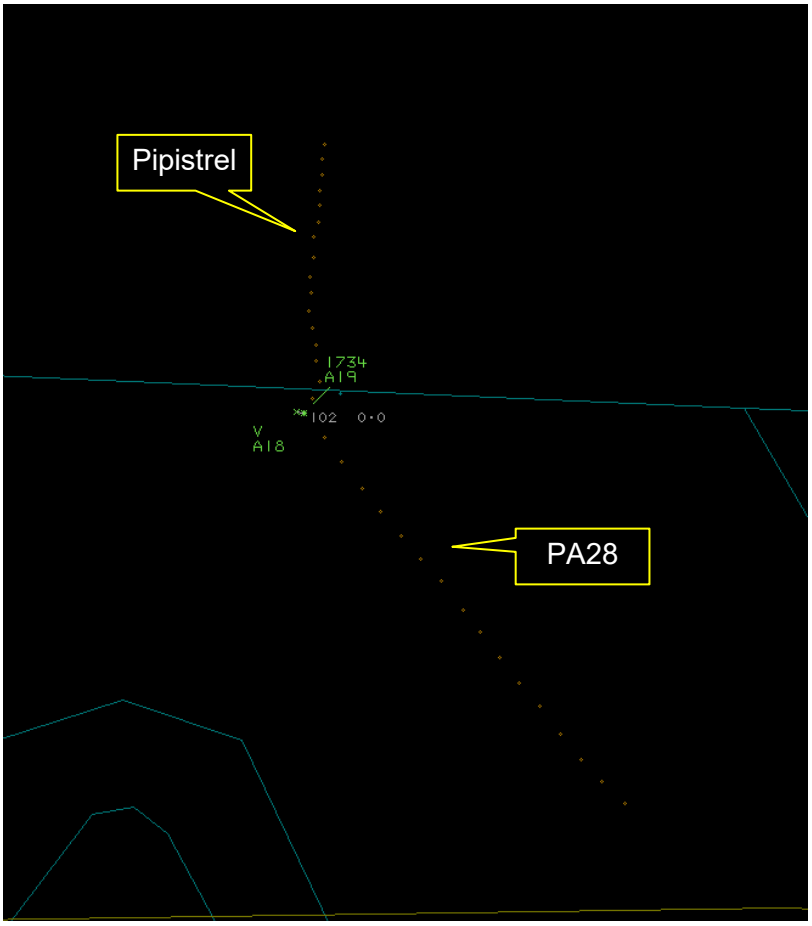


Figure 1: At CPA (1553:26) 100ft V/<0.1NM H

Both aircraft were tracked via radar and identified through Mode S data. Both aircraft were shown via ADS-B on the CAA's Airspace Analyser Tool.

The Pipistrel and PA28 pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard.[2] If the incident geometry is considered as head-on or nearly so then both pilots were required to turn to the right.[3]

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a Pipistrel and a PA28 flew into proximity at Grays at 1553Z on Saturday 6th September 2025. The Pipistrel pilot was operating under VFR in VMC in receipt of an Air/Ground Communication Service from Hornchurch Radio, and the PA28 pilot was operating under VFR in VMC in receipt of a Basic Service from Farnborough Radar.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots, radar photographs/video recordings, a report from the air traffic controller involved and reports from the appropriate operating authorities. Relevant contributory factors mentioned during the Board's discussions are highlighted within the text in bold, with the numbers referring to the Contributory Factors table displayed in Part C.

Members firstly discussed the actions of the Pipistrel pilot, noting that they had been on an instructional training flight and had maintained a listening watch on the nearby Damyn's Hall frequency whilst they had operated in that area. As this is a known busy area, the Board felt that, wherever possible and

[2] (UK) SERA.3205 Proximity.
[3] (UK) SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c)(1) Approaching head-on.

when an active air traffic service is available, pilots should aim to make best use of such services to enable higher levels of situational awareness and, in this case, the pilot could have sought support from either Farnborough or Southend (**CF1**). Additionally, members noted that the Pipistrel pilot had operated with a common electronic conspicuity (EC) unit and it had been unfortunate that, although able to receive electronic emissions from the PA28, it had not done so (**CF4**) which, in combination with the lack of an air traffic service, had left the Pipistrel pilot with no situational awareness of the presence of the PA28 (**CF2**). The Board felt that it had been fortunate that the Pipistrel pilot had visually acquired the PA28, albeit late (**CF5**), and enabled avoidance action to have been taken.

Turning to the actions of the PA28 pilot, the Board noted that they had been homebound from an overseas flight and had agreed a Basic Service with Farnborough. As previously discussed, members felt that a higher level of service could have been requested (**CF1**), even though in this case the Farnborough controller had, under a Basic Service, passed Traffic Information on two occasions regarding the Pipistrel, thereby enabling the PA28 pilot to achieve, again albeit late, situational awareness of the presence of the Pipistrel (**CF2**). The Board agreed that the PA28 pilot had then visually acquired the Pipistrel (**CF5**) as its pilot had taken avoiding action. The Board noted that the CPA had measured at less than 0.1NM lateral separation and members felt that, having visually acquired the Pipistrel, the PA28 pilot may have been better served by manoeuvring to further increase the distance (**CF3**) between the two aircraft as they had passed. The Board noted that the PA28 pilot had carried a common EC unit which which had been capable of receiving electronic emissions from the Pipistrel and which the pilot describes having given an Information indication at a range of 2NM, which the Board felt had not correlated with the PA28 pilot's description of events and had led them to conclude that the information signal had probably referred to a different aircraft (**CF4**).

In considering the contribution by the Farnborough LARS controller, members noted that they had recognised the increasing risk between the two closing aircraft and had passed Traffic Information on two occasions which ultimately had led to the PA28 pilot visually acquiring the Pipistrel. The Board discussed the pilot-reported lack of Traffic Information from the controller and wished to remind all pilots that a higher level of service will provide greater assurance. In this case, a Traffic Service might have been a better option as it may have led to an earlier passage of Traffic Information. However, members felt that the controller had followed the requirements of a Basic Service and, having identified the risk, had enabled the PA28 pilot to visually acquire the Pipistrel.

Concluding their discussion, members turned their attention to the determination of the risk of collision. They noted that the Pipistrel pilot had no situational awareness of the presence of the PA28 and the PA28 pilot had, on receipt of Traffic Information, achieved a late sighting of the Pipistrel at the point at which the Pipistrel pilot had initiated avoiding action, thereby reducing the risk of collision. However, members agreed that safety margins had been reduced much below the norm and were in agreement that the actions of the Pipistrel pilot had not entirely removed any risk of collision (**CF6**), assigning a Risk Category B to this event.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK

Contributory Factors:

	2025198			
CF	**Factor**	**Description**	**ECCAIRS Amplification**	**UKAB Amplification**
	Flight Elements			
	• Tactical Planning and Execution			
1	Human Factors	• Communications by Flight Crew with ANS	An event related to the communications between the flight crew and the air navigation service.	Pilot did not request appropriate ATS service or communicate with appropriate provider
	• Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action			
2	Contextual	• Situational Awareness and Sensory Events	Events involving a flight crew's awareness and perception of situations	Pilot had no, late, inaccurate or only generic, Situational Awareness

3	Human Factors	• Understanding/ Comprehension	Events involving flight crew that did not understand or comprehend a situation or instruction	Pilot did not assimilate conflict information
	• Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance			
4	Human Factors	• Response to Warning System	An event involving the incorrect response of flight crew following the operation of an aircraft warning system	CWS misinterpreted, not optimally actioned or CWS alert expected but none reported
	• See and Avoid			
5	Human Factors	• Identification/ Recognition	Events involving flight crew not fully identifying or recognising the reality of a situation	Late sighting by one or both pilots
	• Outcome Events			
6	Contextual	• Near Airborne Collision with Aircraft	An event involving a near collision by an aircraft with an aircraft, balloon, dirigible or other piloted air vehicles	

Degree of Risk: B.

Safety Barrier Assessment[4]

In assessing the effectiveness of the safety barriers associated with this incident, the Board concluded that the key factors had been that:

Flight Elements:

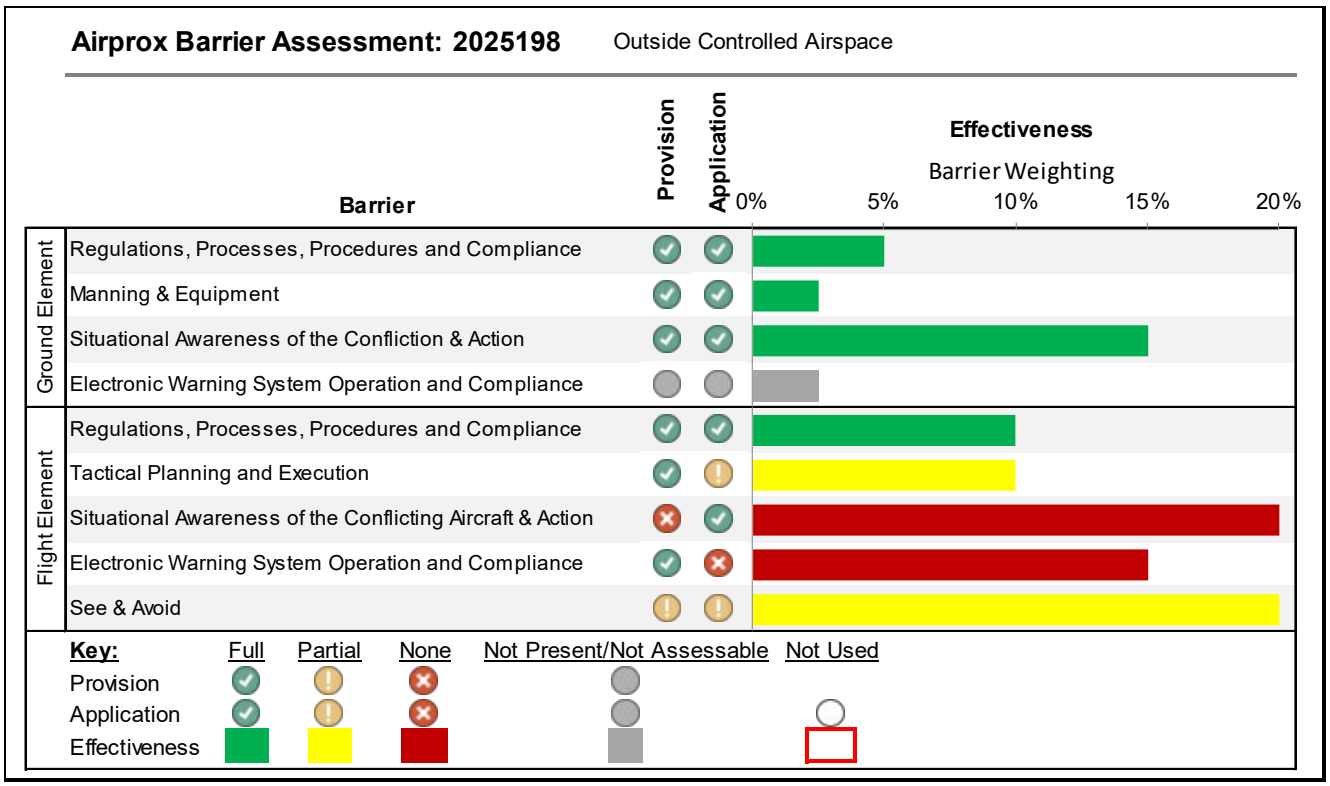
Tactical Planning and Execution were assessed as **partially effective** because both pilots could have sought higher levels of an Air Traffic Service.

Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action were assessed as **ineffective** because the Pipistrel pilot had no situational awareness of the presence of the PA28 and the PA28 pilot had received Traffic Information shortly before CPA.

Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance were assessed as **ineffective** because, although compatible electronic conspicuity equipment was carried by both aircraft, neither received electronic emissions from the other.

See and Avoid were assessed as **partially effective** because both the Pipistrel and PA28 pilots achieved only late sightings of the other aircraft.

[4] The UK Airprox Board scheme for assessing the Availability, Functionality and Effectiveness of safety barriers can be found on the UKAB Website.


Airprox Barrier Assessment: 2025198
Outside Controlled Airspace
Barrier
Provision
Application
Effectiveness
Barrier Weighting
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
Ground Element
Regulations, Processes, Procedures and Compliance
Manning & Equipment
Situational Awareness of the Confliction & Action
Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance
Flight Element
Regulations, Processes, Procedures and Compliance
Tactical Planning and Execution
Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft & Action
Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance
See & Avoid
Key:
Full
Partial
None
Not Present/Not Assessable
Not Used
Provision
Application
Effectiveness