







## UKAB Secretariat

The Chinook and WT9 pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard<sup>1</sup>. Aircraft shall not be flown in formation except by pre-arrangement among the pilots-in-command of the aircraft taking part in the flight<sup>2</sup>. In subsequent conversation with the WT9 pilot, it was established that he had a GPS track log of his route, which was forwarded to the UKAB. The relevant part of the GPS track is reproduced here:



## Occurrence Investigation Summary

From a Chinook perspective the crew did everything they could to prevent this situation becoming worse. The only additional action they could have taken prior to the event was to establish a NOTAM; although this was considered by the crew, the reasons they did not are detailed in the narrative. The decision not to establish a NOTAM, given the potential risk on the ground to third parties, was a sensible one. Certainly from the Chinook perspective, the risk of MAC was minimal as the Chinook remained visual with the other aircraft throughout this incident.

## Comments

### JHC

Whilst it is laudable that the Chinook crew considered the eventualities and their mitigations very carefully before deciding against submitting a NOTAM for the proven outcomes of highlighting their activity to spectators, a middle ground could have existed in that the NOTAM could have been released at the latest reasonable time prior to the display practice. This would have alerted other air users but given less time for aviation enthusiasts to plan and muster in sufficient numbers to exacerbate any potential accidents. That said, given that the Airprox occurred, JHC believes that the crew did all in their power to reduce the risk of collision between themselves and the WT9 pilot, and taking the pilot of the WT9 at his word wonders how he could miss a large helicopter in clear skies completing high energy manoeuvres to the degree that he stated.

## Summary

An Airprox was reported when a Chinook and a WT9 flew into proximity at about 1434 on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2017. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC, the Chinook pilot in receipt of a Basic Service from Goodwood and the WT9 pilot not in receipt of a Service.

<sup>1</sup> SERA.3205 Proximity.

<sup>2</sup> SERA.3135 Formation flights.



were aware that, of the 3 NOTAMs in the area relevant at the time, only one was ‘ahead’ of the WT9 pilot and that this one had been available before he took off. Members wondered if the WT9 pilot may have been distracted by information other than a NOTAM, but agreed that the reason for his distraction was academic, the fact remained that he had seen the Chinook at range but had then lost sight of it whilst attempting to contact Solent because of the reported NOTAM information; members agreed that this distraction was a contributory factor. The Board noted that the WT9 pilot reported entering a right-hand orbit and, having attempted to contact Solent without success, then saw the Chinook again in his right 1 o'clock at 500yd range. The WT9 pilot's choice of orbit location was questioned; some members wondered whether he could have manoeuvred away from the location where he last saw the Chinook, and all agreed that this would have been a better course of action. Members understood that he had been distracted by ‘in-cockpit’ activity, but agreed that a more robust lookout would probably have afforded him earlier visual contact with the Chinook and the ability then to afford it an appropriate degree of separation.

The Board agreed that they were concerned solely with the risk of collision and that, ultimately, whatever the intentions of the WT9 pilot had been, the cause of the Airprox was that the Chinook pilot had been concerned by the proximity of the WT9. Having maintained visual contact and taken action to increase separation, the Board were content that any risk of collision had been averted by the Chinook pilot.

Finally, members noted that whilst they could not comment on the WT9 pilot's alleged proximity to surface vessels, it was clear from his GPS track that he had not flown over houses at West Wittering, contrary to the Display Authoriser's perception of his track when viewed from Thorney Island. The Board agreed that, fundamentally, perception and mis-perception had played a major role in this Airprox; human perception was, by its nature, highly subjective and actual events could be very different from those perceived.

**PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE, RISK AND SAFETY BARRIERS**

Cause: The Chinook pilot was concerned by the proximity of the WT9.

Contributory Factor: The WT9 pilot was distracted by NOTAM information.

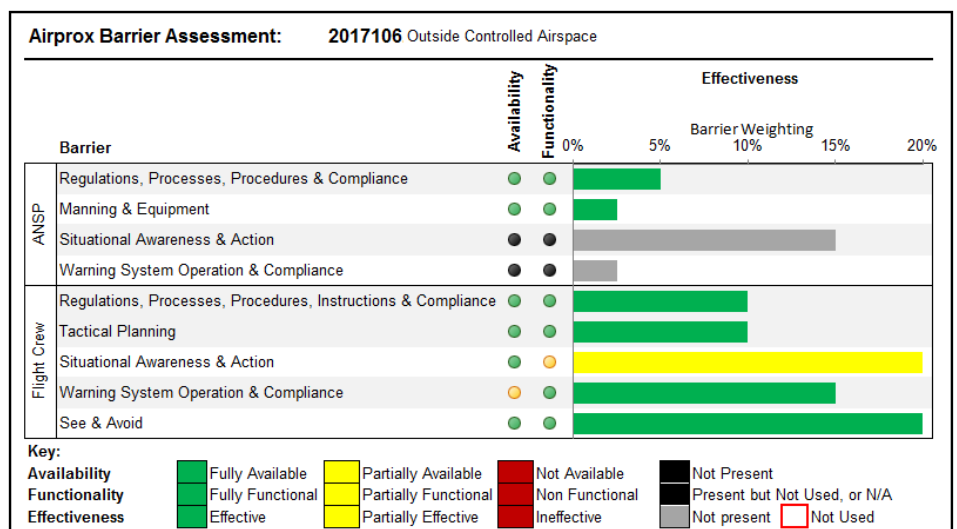
Degree of Risk: C.

Safety Barrier Assessment.<sup>3</sup>

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

**Flight Crew:**

**Situational Awareness and Action** were assessed as **partially effective** because the WT9 pilot did not elect to hold in an area clear of the Chinook, which he had previously seen.



<sup>3</sup> The UK Airprox Board scheme for assessing the Availability, Functionality and Effectiveness of safety barriers can be found on the [UKAB Website](http://www.ukab.co.uk).