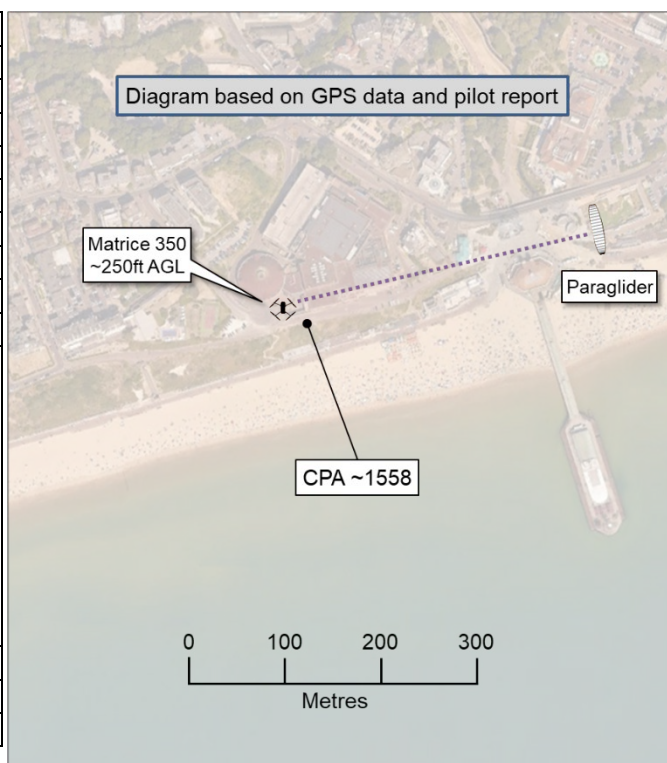


**AIRPROX REPORT No 2025058**

Date: 17 Apr 2025 Time: ~1558Z Position: 5043N 00153W Location: Bournemouth

**PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB**

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Matrice 350	Paraglider
Operator	Civ UAS	Civ Hang
Airspace	Bournemouth CTR	Bournemouth CTR
Class	D	D
Rules	VLOS (Spec. Cat.)	VFR
Service	None	None
Altitude/FL	251ft AGL	NK
Transponder	Not fitted	Not fitted
Reported		
Colours	Black	NK
Lighting	Nav	
Conditions	VMC	
Visibility	5-10km	
Altitude/FL	30m	
Altimeter	AGL	
Heading	NK	
Speed	NK	
ACAS/TAS	Not fitted	
Separation at CPA		
Reported	130ft V/30m H	NK
Recorded	NK	



**THE MATRICE 350 PILOT** reports that their drone was positioned over the sea, with the Takeoff And Landing Area (TOLA) located near the Bournemouth International Centre (BIC). Two paraglider pilots<sup>1</sup> came across the TOLA from east-to-west at a height just higher than the top of the BIC, approximately 30m. During that time, their drone was over the water near to Bournemouth pier.

At the conclusion of the flight, as the drone was coming back to the TOLA and when almost directly above it, a third paraglider pilot passed over the TOLA from the same direction as the previous two, passing almost directly beneath the drone as it was about to begin descending to land. The pilot of the Matrice 350 took evasive action by halting the descent and the paraglider passed by without incident.

The paraglider was unsighted to the Matrice 350 pilot and their observer until late due to the BIC [obscuring their view].

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

**THE PARAGLIDER PILOT** could not be traced.

**Factual Background**

The weather at Bournemouth was recorded as follows:

METAR EGHM 171550Z 19007KT 9999 FEW048 13/06 Q1012

<sup>1</sup> The pilot of the Matrice 350 initially reported having sighted 'hang-gliders'.

## Analysis and Investigation

### UAV Operator Investigation

#### Findings and observations:

On 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025, the Drone Team had been tasked to deploy to Bournemouth. The pre-planned TOLA was at West Cliff Gardens, a cliff-top park with a car park. Unfortunately, on arrival, works had been started there and the car park and garden were fenced off. The team moved the TOLA to beside the Bournemouth International Centre (BIC). That location provided a relatively secure TOLA with buildings, bollards and fencing to keep people out. It was set back from the cliff-top as the cliff-top there has a footpath that could not be closed. The area of operation was out to sea. Conditions were good, sunny, clear and with only a light wind. During the drone's second flight, two paragliders passed the TOLA travelling east-to-west following the line of the cliff. At that point, the drone was out to sea. At the end of the flight, the drone was brought back above the TOLA. The pilot was aware of another recreational drone being flown over the beach, lower and to the west of them and, for that reason, the drone was brought back at a height of 75m above the TOLA. Once over the TOLA, the pilot was just starting to descend the drone when the observer saw a paraglider over the BIC going east-to-west, and passed over the TOLA. The paraglider was just over the roof level but no higher than 30m above the TOLA. The observer had alerted the pilot, who halted any descent or further movement as the paraglider passed underneath the drone with an estimated separation distance of 45m vertically. Once the paraglider had flown on, further visual checks were completed before the drone was landed safely. There were no NOTAMs posted for the paraglider flights and they did not appear on flight-tracking apps. Therefore, there had been no way for the team to be aware of the paragliders pre-deployment, and only aware during the flights by visual observations.

The Drone Team had to change their pre-planned TOLA due to unforeseen circumstances. The new TOLA had provided good safety and security in terms of keeping the TOLA to be a sterile working area and had provided good visibility for the area of operation for the flight. The observer had been doing their job, keeping an eye on the visible airspace. However, the new TOLA had not provided full 360° visibility and, by being closer to the building (the BIC), this limited their visibility behind them and to the east to some degree. This prevented them from seeing the approach of the paraglider until it was almost on top of them.

#### Recommendation:

Based on the safety reporting history, this is not a common problem with the pilots/observers. Therefore, this is an opportunity to put out a message to all pilots and observers to remind them of the need to select a TOLA with the maximum all-round visibility possible in the circumstances, particularly when other air activities are taking place.

### UKAB Secretariat

An analysis of the NATS radar replay was undertaken and neither aircraft was observed. The pilot of the Matrice 350 kindly supplied GPS track data for their flight. At the reported time of CPA, the Matrice 350 had been at 322ft AMSL, overhead terrain which has an elevation of 71ft. Therefore, the height of the Matrice 350 had been 251ft AGL.

Several paraglider pilots were traced and contacted, two of whom supplied GPS track data for their respective flights. It was determined that one of the paraglider pilots, 'paraglider pilot (B)', had passed through the area from east-to-west whilst the Matrice 350 had been located over the sea. Paraglider pilot (B) reported that they had 'opened' the airspace with ATC at Bournemouth [on behalf of the local club] and had registered their details with the local council as had been required. They had one flight from [their take-off area], landing after two hours or so. The wind had then shifted by a few degrees and, at about 4 o'clock, had allowed for reaching the other side of Bournemouth pier and onwards to Sandbanks to the west and back. On their return, they noticed a police presence on the beach in the vicinity of Bournemouth pier, but had no sight or sound of anything else in the air. After landing, one of their colleagues mentioned that they had seen a number of police officers on

the ground. The beaches were quite busy, particularly around the pier areas. They reported that they 'closed' the airspace with Bournemouth ATC at around 1830.

The paraglider pilot who reportedly passed below the Matrice 350 as it hovered above the TOLA could not be traced. The separation between the Matrice 350 and the paraglider pilot could not be determined.

The Matrice 350 and paraglider 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>2</sup> Authorisation issued to the operator of the Matrice 350 specified the authorised types of operation: a) VLOS as per the definition given in UK Regulation (EU) No. 2019/947, Article 2(7).<sup>3</sup> b) Operations within 50m horizontally of uninvolved persons.<sup>4</sup> For VLOS [...] flights up to 400ft above surface level, in controlled airspace outside the FRZ, the UAS Operator must consider the need to notify the relevant Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP).<sup>5</sup> During the flight, the remote pilot shall: avoid any risk of collision with any manned aircraft and discontinue a flight when continuing it may pose a risk to other aircraft, people, animals, environment or property.<sup>6</sup>

## Comments

### BHPA

The BHPA understands that this incident between one or more paraglider pilots and a commercial drone was as a result of neither side knowing the other was operating there. Paragliding along the Bournemouth foreshore is strictly controlled by the local BHPA club which has negotiated a specific set of conditions that must be adhered to before any flying can take place there.

Firstly, only an advanced level of pilot is allowed to fly the site due to the tricky take-off location and proximity to members of the public, passing cars and nearby properties in the area, and people on the beach, which serves as a landing area.

Secondly, the foreshore is situated within Bournemouth Airport's Class D CTR (surface to 2000ft) and, as such, Bournemouth Airport ATC has to be informed if the club wishes to operate there, which is usually when a southerly wind is blowing and paragliders can soar the 150ft cliffs. The club has negotiated an agreement with Bournemouth ATC who grants them permission to operate between set times and only to a set altitude.

Thirdly, Bournemouth Council actually owns the site and all authorised pilots have to call a telephone number giving their name, BHPA number and wing colour EACH and EVERY time they fly there. The Council is regularly given an updated list of all the club pilots who are allowed to fly that site so that telephoned-in pilot details can be compared and checked.

The BHPA is satisfied that the club followed all its procedures to the letter and had every right to be operating there on that day. The only thing the club may have done additionally would have been to submit a CANP/NOTAM advising any other air users of their activity. The BHPA has suggested to the club that this may be an additional barrier that could mitigate any future Airprox occurrences and we are awaiting their response to our suggestion.

The BHPA understands that the drone operator had not contacted Bournemouth ATC but, if they had, they may have been informed of the paragliding activity taking place. We also understand that the drone company did not list their activity on Drone Assist or Altitude Angel that day. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that an Airprox occurred because neither side knew the other had been there.

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<sup>2</sup> (UK) SERA.3205 Proximity.

<sup>3</sup> Operational Authorisation (Specific Category) as issued to the operator of the Matrice 350 4.1 (1).

<sup>4</sup> Operational Authorisation (Specific Category) as issued to the operator of the Matrice 350 4.1 (3).

<sup>5</sup> Operational Authorisation (Specific Category) as issued to the operator of the Matrice 350 4.4.

<sup>6</sup> Assimilated Regulation (EU) 2019/947- UAS.SPEC.060 Responsibilities of the remote pilot (3)(b).

## Summary

An Airprox was reported when a Matrice 350 and a paraglider flew into proximity at Bournemouth at approximately 1558Z on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025. The Matrice 350 pilot was operating under VLOS in VMC. The paraglider pilot could not be traced.

## **PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS**

Information available consisted of a report from the Matrice 350 pilot, GPS track data for the flight of the Matrice 350, radar photographs/video recordings and a report from the appropriate operating authority. 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.

The Board first considered the actions of the pilot of the Matrice 350. Members noted that their flight had been planned to be conducted within Bournemouth CTR (Class D airspace), outside the FRZ. It was also noted that the Operational Authorisation under which the Matrice 350 had been flown, specified that they 'must consider the need to notify the relevant Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP)' and that they 'must consider the safety risk of the operation and the impact on other air users and provide any necessary coordination with the ANSP if mitigation is required'. Members agreed that coordination with Bournemouth ATC would have been prudent (**CF1**) and may have provided situational awareness for their own benefit as well as for other airspace users.

Members noted that, upon arriving at the task location, the expected TOLA had been unavailable and an alternative had had to be sought. It was noted that the chosen TOLA had been suitable for observation of the area in which the UAV was to be operated, however, the proximity of tall buildings had not provided all-round visibility of the airspace. Cognisant of the requirement to have a full view of the surrounding airspace to be able to identify hazards, some members wondered whether the pressure to have commenced the operational tasking had led to the acceptance of a partially compromised TOLA. Notwithstanding, members noted that two paraglider pilots had been observed passing the TOLA when the Matrice 350 had been over the sea. It was surmised that the Matrice 350 pilot would have subsequently considered the likelihood of further paraglider pilots passing through the area. Members noted that a recreational UAV had been witnessed operating nearby and, once the task over the sea had been completed, the height of the Matrice 350 had been increased accordingly for its return to the TOLA. Members wondered whether the Matrice 350 pilot could have utilised the UAV's camera to assist with ensuring the airspace near the TOLA had been clear.

Members agreed that the pilot of the Matrice 350 had not had situational awareness of the paraglider pilot in question (**CF2**) and noted that they had been first alerted to their presence by their observer with only a few seconds in which to consider their subsequent actions. It was noted that they had considered that the safest course of action had been to halt the descent of the UAV. Members pondered the wording of the applicable regulation whereby the Matrice 350 pilot 'Shall...discontinue a flight when continuing it may pose a risk to other aircraft'. It occurred to members that, as the paraglider had passed beneath the Matrice 350, ascending the UAV may also have been a viable option at that time to have removed any risk of collision. Members appreciated that to have sighted the paraglider in close proximity to the Matrice 350 had caused concern (**CF3**) and agreed that they had acted correctly to halt their descent.

Turning to the actions of the pilot of the paraglider, a member with particular knowledge of paragliding operations explained that the launch-site in question is only available to experienced pilots. It was explained that all paraglider pilots that had launched from that site must have registered their name with the owner of the site and Bournemouth ATC must have been informed. Members noted that, if Bournemouth ATC had been aware of the Matrice 350 operation, a caution could have been passed to the paraglider pilots and, equally, to the operator of the Matrice 350.

Members concluded their discussion and agreed that, once the pilot of the Matrice 350 pilot had been aware of the presence of the paraglider, they had correctly discontinued their descent. Members agreed that safety margins had been reduced and could have been improved through coordination with Bournemouth ATC and an earlier observation of the paraglider pilot from a more suitable TOLA.

However, members were satisfied that there had not been a risk of collision. The Board assigned Risk Category C to this event.

## **PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK**

### Contributory Factors:

	2025058			
CF	Factor	Description	ECCAIRS Amplification	UKAB Amplification
	<b>Flight Elements</b>			
	<b>• Tactical Planning and Execution</b>			
1	Human Factors	• Accuracy of Communication	Events involving flight crew using inaccurate communication - wrong or incomplete information provided	Ineffective communication of intentions
	<b>• Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action</b>			
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
	<b>• See and Avoid</b>			
3	Human Factors	• Perception of Visual Information	<del>Events involving flight crew incorrectly perceiving a situation visually and then taking the wrong course of action or path of movement</del>	Pilot was concerned by the proximity of the other aircraft

Degree of Risk: C.

### Safety Barrier Assessment<sup>7</sup>

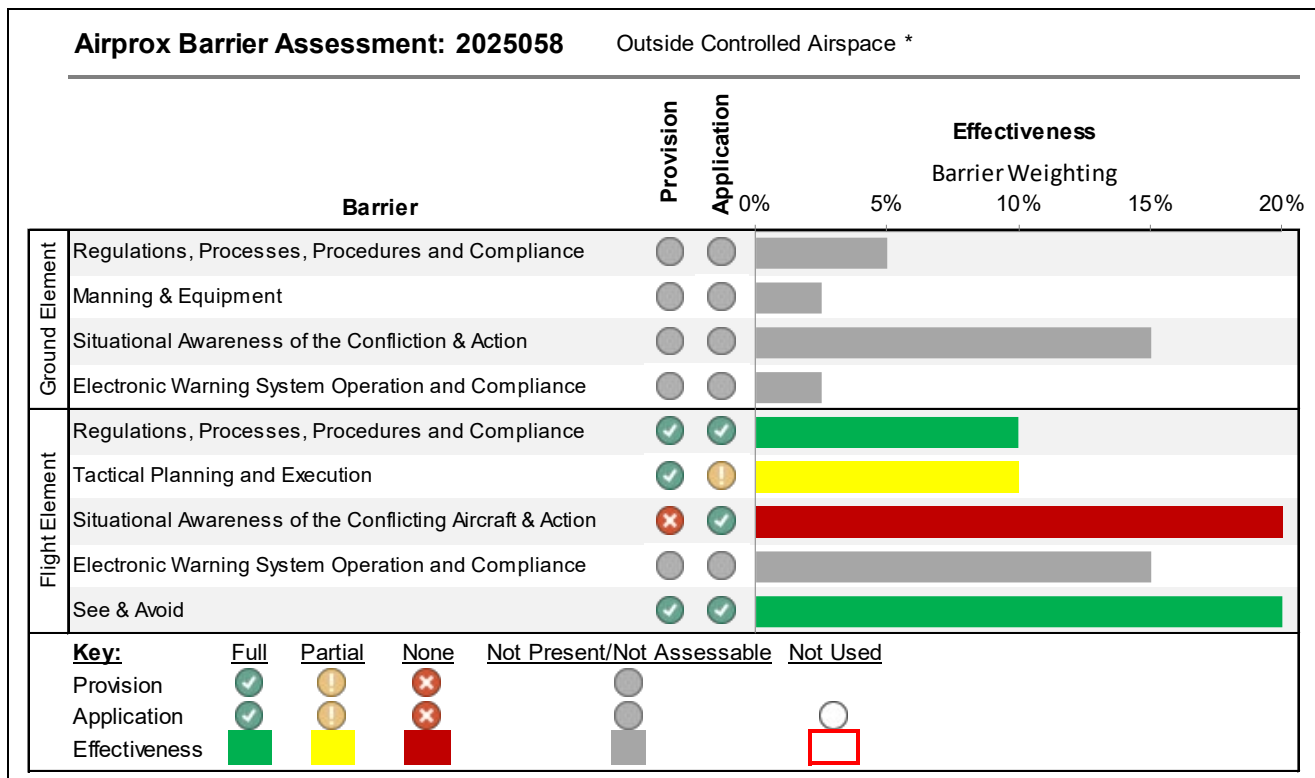
In assessing the effectiveness of the safety barriers associated with this incident, the Board concluded that the key factors had been that:

#### **Flight Elements:**

**Tactical Planning and Execution** was assessed as **partially effective** because it would have been prudent for the pilot of the Matrice 350 to have advised Bournemouth ATC of their flight.

**Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action** were assessed as **ineffective** because neither pilot had situational awareness of the presence of the other aircraft.

<sup>7</sup> The UK Airprox Board scheme for assessing the Availability, Functionality and Effectiveness of safety barriers can be found on the [UKAB Website](#).



\* The Airprox occurred in Bournemouth CTR, Class D airspace. Neither pilot had been required to have been in receipt of an ATS and had, essentially, operated as if outside controlled airspace.