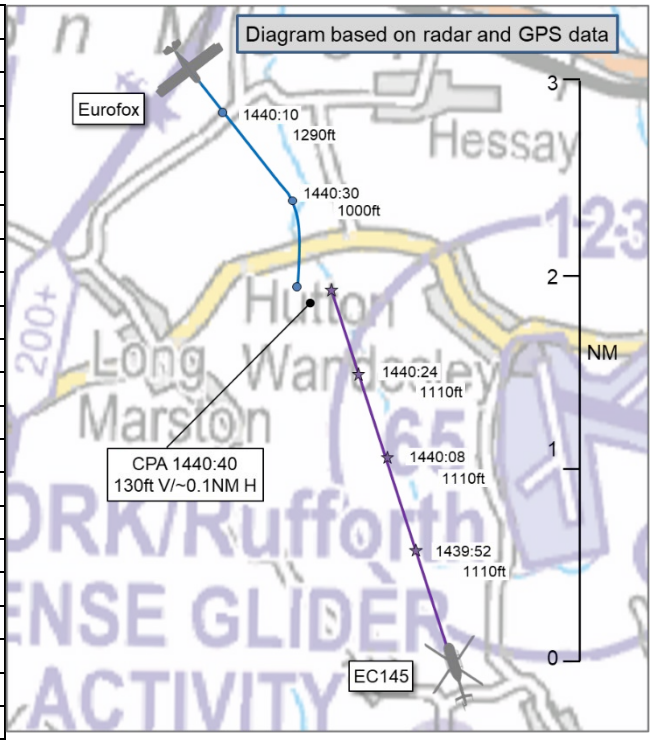
AIRPROX REPORT No 2025153

Date: 16 Jul 2025 Time: 1441Z Position: 5357N 00113W Location: 1.5NM northwest of Rufforth

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Eurofox	EC145
Operator	Civ FW	Civ Comm
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	Listening Out	Unknown
Provider	Rufforth	Unknown
Altitude/FL	~980ft	1110ft
Transponder	Not fitted	A, C, S
Reported		
Colours	Yellow	Yellow
Lighting	Nav, ldg	'*Standard*'
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	>10km
Altitude/FL	~970ft	1000ft
Altimeter	QFE	QNH
Heading	~150°	350°
Speed	~90kt	120kt
ACAS/TAS	FLARM	TCAS I
Alert	None	None
Separation at CPA		
Reported	400ft V/50ft H	100ft V/300m H
Recorded	~130ft V/0.1NM H	



THE EUROFOX PILOT reports that, as part of a glider towing flight and having released the glider at 2500ft AGL, they had initiated a descending turn to position themself for a downwind leg into Rufforth West RW35LH. On levelling out at approximately 1200ft, they observed at a near distance an image that resembled a bumble bee stuck on the windscreen [and] soon realised this to be a helicopter on a direct reciprocal, collision course. The Eurofox pilot took evasive action with a turn to starboard followed by a return to original heading when clear of traffic. [The Eurofox pilot recalls that] the helicopter did not veer from its course, which passed on their port side slightly higher and at a distance of approximately 300-400ft. The Eurofox pilot continued their approach to land with no further incident. The event was witnessed by a glider pilot who was at a higher height and slightly to the east.

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

THE EC145 PILOT reports that they recall the [other] aircraft, but didn't register it as an Airprox so they didn't take note of the details.[1]

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

THE LEEMING CONTROLLER reports that they have checked the tapes and neither the Eurofox nor the EC145 [pilots] had been on frequency at the reported time of the Airprox. From their investigation there had been no Leeming ATC involvement.

[1] The EC145 pilot reports that they had been in receipt of a Basic Service from Leeming Zone. CPA was 27NM SSE of Leeming and 18NM distance from [destination airfield].

Factual Background

The weather at Leeds/Bradford Airport was recorded as follows:

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METAR EGNM 161420Z VRB02KT 9999 FEW045 SCT056TCU 21/10 Q1017=
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Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

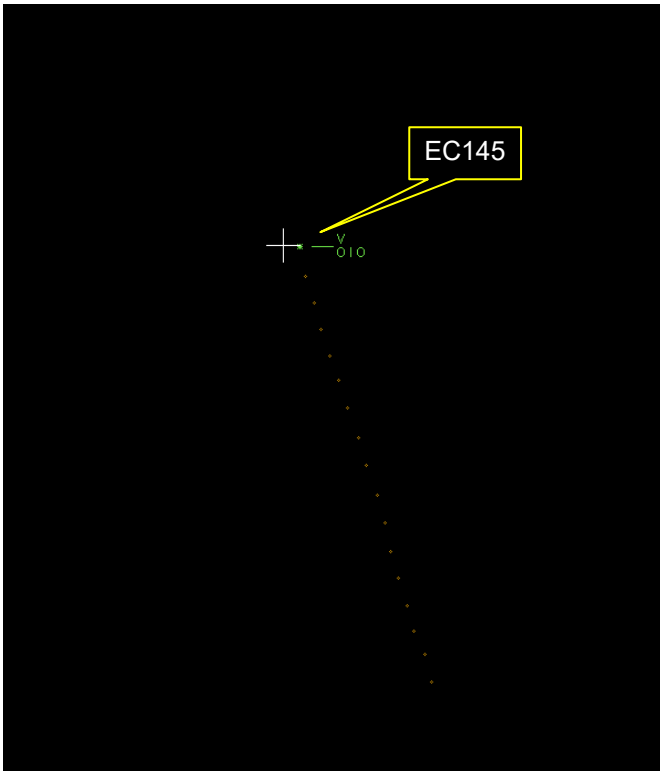


Figure 1: at CPA (1440:40) Eurofox not seen on radar. White cross marks CPA.

Figure 2: Taken from the Eurofox pilot-provided IGC file at 1440:40

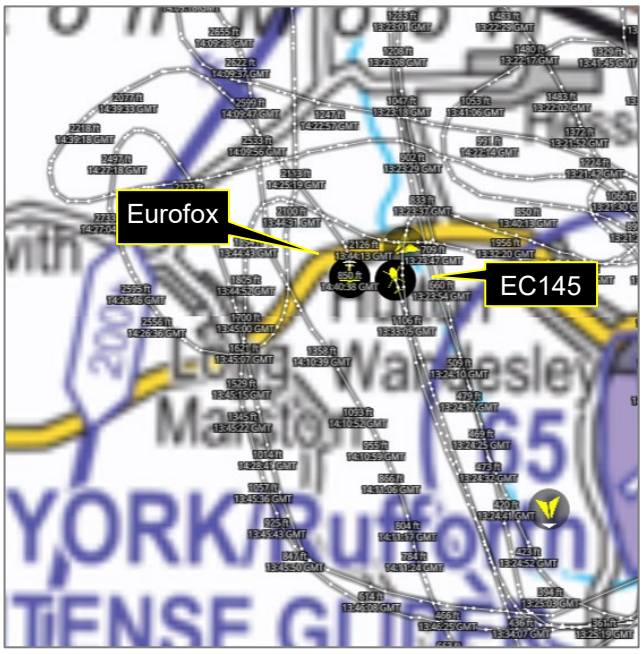


Figure 3: Taken from the Airspace Analyser Tool at 1440:40

The EC145 was tracked via radar and identified through Mode S. The Eurofox did not carry a transponder and did not show on radar as a 'primary only' track. The diagram at page 1 was constructed by combining radar data and the GPS track file provided by the Eurofox pilot. Relative altitudes have been converted to a common pressure setting to allow direct comparison.

The Eurofox and EC145 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 Eurofox and an EC145 flew into proximity 1.5NM northwest of Rufforth Airfield at 1441Z on Wednesday 16th July 2025. The Eurofox pilot was operating under VFR in VMC and had been Listening Out on the Rufforth West gliding frequency, and the EC145 pilot was operating under VFR in VMC, their type of FIS could not be determined.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots and GPS track data for the flight of the Eurofox. 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 firstly considered the actions of the Eurofox pilot, noting the nature of their flight and the lack of an active air traffic service at Rufforth although they had been listening out on the prescribed frequency. The Eurofox pilot had carried an electronic conspicuity (EC) device common to most gliders in the UK but had received no indications from the passing EC145 (**CF5**) and that, combined with a lack of mutual radio frequency, had denied the Eurofox pilot any situational awareness of the presence and proximity of the EC145 (**CF4**). Board members acknowledged that the Eurofox pilot had visually acquired the approaching EC145 and had been sufficiently concerned by its proximity (**CF7**) to initiate avoidance action. Members praised the pilot for their diligence in maintaining a thorough lookout whilst operating in this busy operating area.

Turning to the actions of the EC145 pilot, the Board noted that the pilot had submitted a report when notified of the event and that the pilot had recalled the Eurofox but not deemed it to have been a

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

confliction at the time. As the separation at CPA had been relatively close, members opined that the pilot had flown close enough to the Eurofox to cause that pilot some concern (**CF6**). In reviewing the flightpath of the EC145 up to CPA, the Board felt that the decision to fly in close proximity to a known busy glider site had likely increased the probability of interaction with any traffic at that time and felt that the EC145 pilot may have chosen a different routeing (**CF2**, **CF3**) and, perhaps, have made a call notifying their transit on the published Rufforth frequency (**CF1**). As with the Eurofox, the EC145 had carried EC equipment but this had also not registered any electronic emissions from the Eurofox as it had not been compatible with the Eurofox's equipment (**CF5**). This, combined with the lack of common radio frequency use, had led to a lack of situational awareness of the proximity of the Eurofox for the EC145 pilot (**CF4**).

Members discussed the policy offered in CAP413 paragraph 4.165 '*All transmissions at unattended aerodromes shall be addressed to '(Aerodrome name) Traffic'. No reply to an unattended aerodrome report shall be transmitted*'. They noted that, in this event, had the EC145 pilot switched to the Rufforth frequency, a call on passing as suggested above would possibly have resulted in no response because of that line. Members felt that, as the CAA is currently reviewing CAP413, consideration should be given to softening that transmission restriction to allow the pilots of passing aircraft the potential for general traffic awareness if they call on transiting the area.

When determining the risk, members considered the radar screenshots together with the reports from the pilots. They noted that, although the EC145 pilot reports having seen the Eurofox and determining it to not have been in conflict, members believed that had likely happened after the Eurofox had initiated avoiding action and therefore at that time had not been a threat. Members agreed that the visual acquisition and avoidance manoeuvre by the Eurofox pilot had ensured that there had been no risk of collision, but assessed that safety had been degraded; Risk Category C.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK

Contributory Factors:

	2025153			
CF	**Factor**	**Description**	**ECCAIRS Amplification**	**UKAB Amplification**
	Flight Elements			
	• Tactical Planning and Execution			
1	Human Factors	• Accuracy of Communication	Events involving flight crew using inaccurate communication - wrong or incomplete information provided	Ineffective communication of intentions
2	Human Factors	• Aircraft Navigation	An event involving navigation of the aircraft.	Flew through promulgated and active airspace, e.g. Glider Site
3	Human Factors	• Pre-flight briefing and flight preparation	An event involving incorrect, poor or insufficient pre-flight briefing	
	• Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action			
4	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
	• Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance			
5	Technical	• ACAS/TCAS System Failure	An event involving the system which provides information to determine aircraft position and is primarily independent of ground installations	Incompatible CWS equipment
	• See and Avoid			
6	Human Factors	• Lack of Individual Risk Perception	Events involving flight crew not fully appreciating the risk of a particular course of action	Pilot flew close enough to cause concern
7	Human Factors	• Perception of Visual Information	Events involving flight crew incorrectly perceiving a situation visually and then taking the wrong course of action or path of movement	Pilot was concerned by the proximity of the other aircraft

Degree of Risk: C.

Recommendation: In the CAA review of CAP413, consideration be given to the wording at paragraph 4.165 to permit a response to transmissions on unattended aerodrome frequencies.

Safety Barrier Assessment[4]

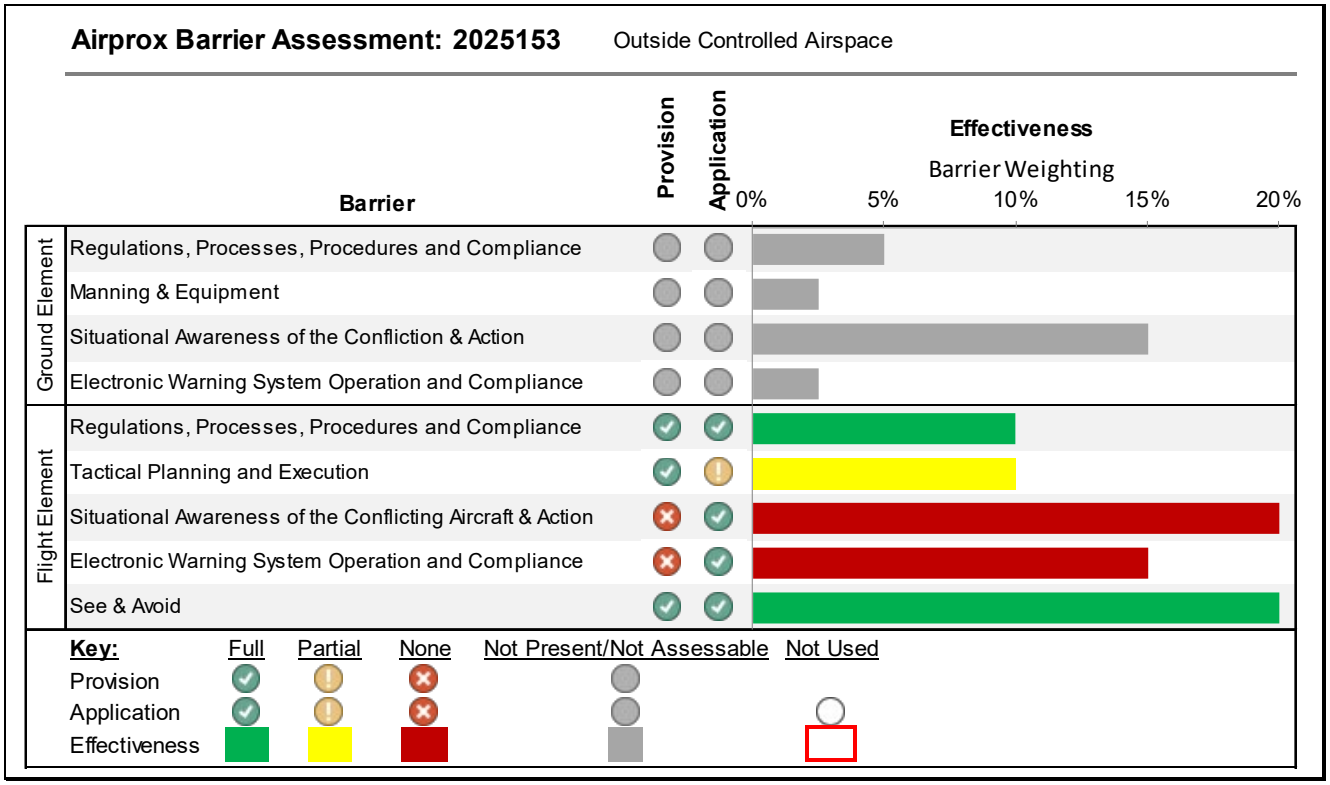
In assessing the effectiveness of the safety barriers associated with this incident, the Board concluded that the key factors had been that:

Flight Elements:

Tactical Planning and Execution was assessed as **partially effective** because the EC145 pilot, having planned to fly adjacent to Rufforth and whilst flying through that promulgated airspace, could have made an awareness call on the published Rufforth frequency.

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

Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance were assessed as **ineffective** because the equipment carried by both aircraft had been unable to register electronic emissions from 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.