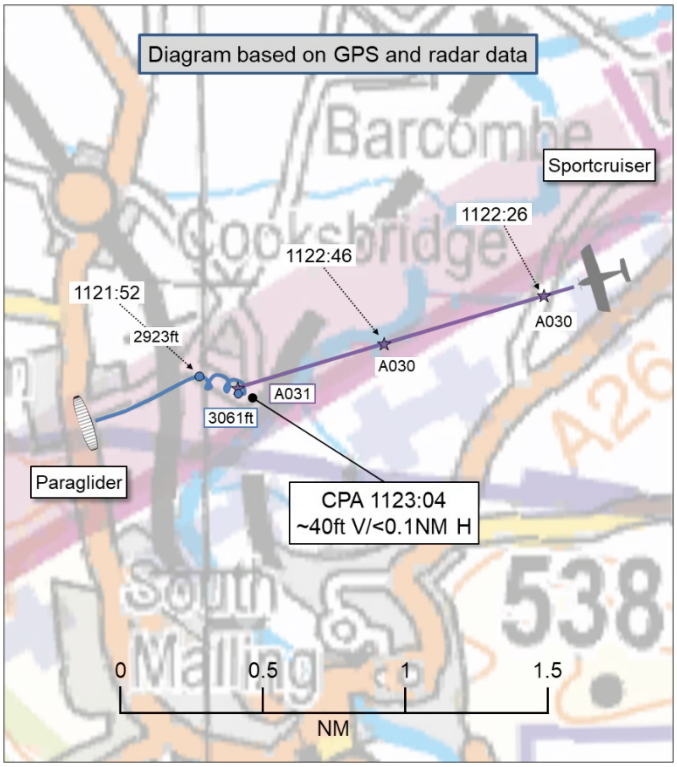
AIRPROX REPORT No 2025195

Date: 05 Sep 2025 Time: 1123Z Position: 5054N 00000E Location: 1NM N Lewes

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Paraglider	SportCruiser
Operator	Civ Hang	Civ FW
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	None	Basic
Provider	N/A	F'borough LARS E
Altitude/FL	3061ft	3100ft
Transponder	Not fitted	A, C, S
Reported		
Colours	White, orange	Red, white
Lighting	None	Strobes, nav
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	>10km
Altitude/FL	3000ft	3000ft
Altimeter	QNH	NR
Heading	*circling*	270°
Speed	20kt	100kt
ACAS/TAS	FLARM	PilotAware
Alert	None	None
Separation at CPA		
Reported	0ft V/30m H	*Not seen*
Recorded	~40ft V/<0.1NM H	



THE PARAGLIDER PILOT reports that they entered a 0.9m/s thermal near Hamsey and had completed about three turns to the right when they observed an aircraft approaching from their east-northeast at something like 50m. They had not heard it approach despite, or perhaps because of, wearing an open-faced helmet with no ear covers. They estimate a [horizontal separation of] 30m at CPA, but it felt, and looked, like 10m. Their paraglider was not affected by the aircraft's turbulence.

[The pilot of the paraglider described their avoiding action as 'none', commenting that] it was too quick and they were already doing all they could have done, i.e. circling to be more apparent.

They tried to continue their flight but were too shaken and landed near Heathfield. The other aircraft appeared to continue unperturbed on its course. They suspect that the head-on approach made it, from their perspective, quieter and less visible than would have been the case if the other aircraft had flown past by a greater margin.

They commented that they were aware of the possibility of encountering other traffic as, earlier in the day, they saw a white twin pass between two gaggles of paragliders working the same thermal overhead Devils Dyke just 300ft vertically below.

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

THE SPORTCRUISER PILOT reports that they have [fitted an EC device] in their aircraft and keep a good visual lookout as there are often many gliders in that area of Sussex. They had been in a level cruise and talking to Farnborough LARS East radar for that sector. They were not informed of any close aircraft, nor had they been visual with any.

THE FARNBOROUGH LARS EAST CONTROLLER reports that they were [first notified of this event] via an email from UKAB. After a review of the reported incident, the pilot [of the SportCruiser] called on

frequency at 1110 for a Basic Service. A squawk (1736) was given and the QNH was passed. The pilot maintained 3000ft throughout most of the flight and, at the time of the reported Airprox, there appeared to be nothing on the radar display ahead of the aircraft.

At time 1123:23, a primary-only contact appeared 1/4 of a mile behind the aircraft for one sweep and then faded (there was no trail data as it appeared and then faded). The pilot [of the SportCruiser] did not report anything on the RT and called to leave the frequency at 1134, thanking the controller for their service before they transferred to [an en-route frequency].

Factual Background

The weather at Gatwick was recorded as follows:

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METAR EGKK 051120Z 25008KT 200V280 9999 FEW036 20/11 Q1021
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Analysis and Investigation

Farnborough Unit Investigation

Description of the event:

The pilot of [the SportCruiser] contacted the Farnborough LARS East frequency at 1109:48, approximately 8NM south-west of Headcorn, and requested a Basic Service. Squawk 1736 was issued with the aircraft tracking south-west, maintaining 3000ft. [The pilot of the SportCruiser] continued to track south-west towards position TIMBA where the aircraft changed onto a westerly track, still maintaining altitude 3000ft. No further transmissions were made between the pilot of [the SportCruiser] and Farnborough LARS East prior to the confliction.

The Airprox report from the paraglider pilot stated the confliction occurred overhead Hamsey which was approximately 1.5NM north of Lewes at time 1122 (Figure 1).

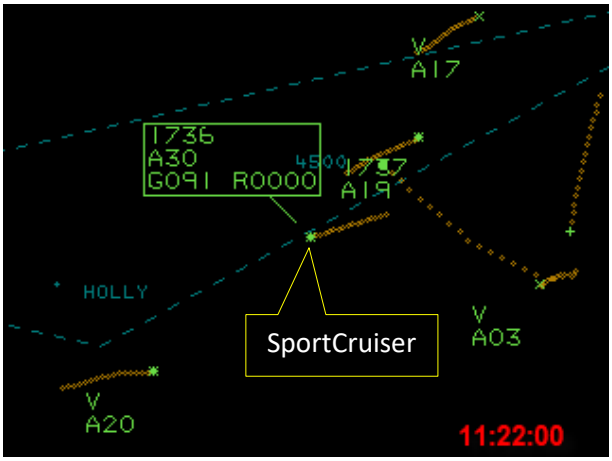


Figure 1 – NODE radar
(1122 – 1min 4sec before CPA)

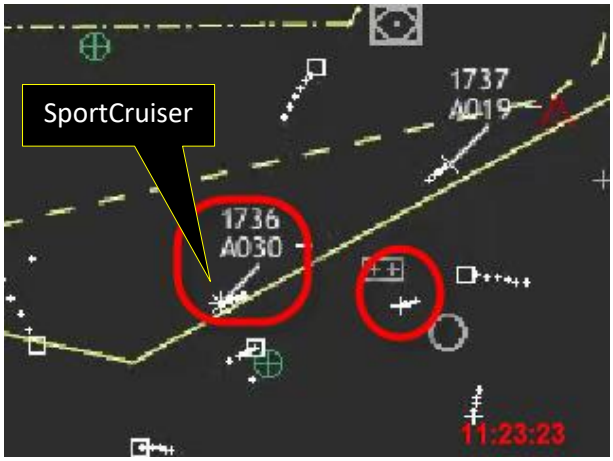


Figure 2 – Farnborough radar
(1123:23 – 19sec after CPA)

The paraglider pilot's reported position correlated with the positioning and altitude of [the SportCruiser], however, NODE radar displayed no primary contacts in the vicinity of Hamsey. Farnborough radar did however display a number of primary targets on radar in the vicinity of [the SportCruiser], although none could be associated with the paraglider. Therefore, a closest point of approach was not attainable from NATS available data.

Investigation:

Information available to the investigation included; CA4114 from the Farnborough LARS East (LARS) controller, Initial Watch Management Investigation Report and [de-identified] Airprox reports from the paraglider pilot and the pilot of the SportCruiser.

[The pilot of the SportCruiser] had been receiving a Basic Service from Farnborough LARS East. The paraglider pilot report provided a third-party link to their flight data, suggesting they may have been […] tracking via Hamsey towards [their destination] as part of a cross-country competition.

The provided data displayed that the paraglider was at a maximum of 935m above mean sea level (AMSL) abeam Hamsey, which would equate to 3067ft AMSL, therefore correlating with the paraglider pilot's reported altitude of the confliction at 3000ft, and Mode-C data from [the SportCruiser].

Paragliding activity is often notified via NOTAM or as a Civil Aircraft Notification Procedure (CANP) to advise other airspace users of this activity. NATS NOTAM Office provided Safety Investigations with all NOTAMs regarding paraglider activity on this day and found no correlating NOTAMs with this activity in any areas on the displayed routeing.

Conclusion:

The pilot of a paraglider subsequently reported an Airprox with [the SportCruiser] in the vicinity of Hamsey and suggested the closest point of approach was 0ft and 30m. No primary contact was displayed on NODE or Farnborough radar that correlated with the paraglider, therefore, this could not be confirmed by NATS data.

UKAB Secretariat

An analysis of the NATS radar replay was undertaken and the SportCruiser could be positively identified from Mode S data. The paraglider was not observed on the replay. The pilot of the paraglider kindly supplied GPS track data for their flight. It was by combining the data sources that the diagram was constructed and the separation at CPA determined. The moment of CPA was assessed to have occurred between the radar sweeps at 1123:02 (Figure 3) and 1123:06.

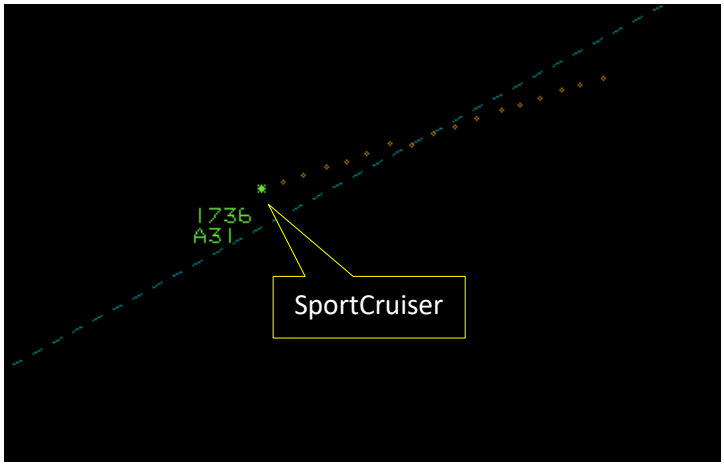


Figure 3 - 1123:02

The paraglider and SportCruiser pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard.[1] If the incident geometry is considered as head-on or nearly so then both pilots were required to turn to the right.[2]

Comments

AOPA

Both pilots had electronic conspicuity equipment which, unfortunately, did not provide an alert. This flight safety hazard will continue until the Department for Transport announces a common form of electronic conspicuity and the equipment is fitted by every pilot, or the manufacturers produce

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

equipment that will interoperate. AOPA is very relieved that, in this case, providence stopped a mid-air collision.

BHPA

The BHPA is very relieved to hear that this Airprox did not have a more tragic outcome. From the submitted reports, we can almost certainly assume that the SportCruiser pilot had no sighting whatsoever of the paraglider pilot and the paraglider pilot only saw the SportCruiser when it was practically upon them at a frighteningly close distance. Neither pilot took, or was capable of taking, any avoiding action. In fact, the paraglider pilot was so traumatised by the close proximity at CPA, that they felt unable to continue their flight and landed.

The Farnborough Unit investigation mentioned the fact that there were no NOTAMs in place for the incident area. This is a 'red herring' as the paraglider pilot was on a cross-country flight (possibly flying a competition task) and submitting a NOTAM covering a theoretically huge tasking area would not have been possible.

The BHPA feels that one of the most important aspects of this Airprox is that both aircraft were carrying some kind of EC equipment, which is highly commendable. In this instance, the device fitted to the SportCruiser was capable of 'seeing' the signal from the paraglider's device if the relevant licence had been purchased by its owner. We are not sure in this incident whether the EC device fitted to the SportCruiser had the licensed capability of 'seeing' the other signal or not. However, the BHPA would like to strongly recommend to all owners of that brand of equipment that the additional situational awareness of aircraft such as hang gliders, paragliders, sailplanes, paramotors, etc. could be gained by upgrading their devices to have that capability.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a paraglider and a SportCruiser flew into proximity 1NM north of Lewes at 1123Z on Friday 5th September 2025. The paraglider pilot was operating under VFR in VMC, not in receipt of a FIS. The SportCruiser pilot was operating under VFR in VMC in receipt of a Basic Service from Farnborough LARS East.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots, radar photographs/video recordings, GPS track data from the flight of the paraglider pilot and a report from the air traffic controller involved. 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 paraglider pilot, and members noted that they had seen several other paraglider pilots earlier that day and had been aware of "*the possibility of encountering other traffic*". Members commended the paraglider pilot for having carried an EC device but agreed that it would not have been expected to have detected the proximity of the SportCruiser (**CF3**). A member with particular experience of paragliding operations explained that seeking and maintaining lift within a thermal had required the pilot's focus which, to some degree, may have drawn their attention away from an otherwise more thorough visual scan of the area. Additionally, it was suggested that, as the SportCruiser had tracked almost directly towards the paraglider, there had likely been very little propagation of aircraft noise forwards to have provided a warning to the paraglider pilot of its approach. It was therefore agreed that the paraglider pilot had not had situational awareness of the presence of the SportCruiser (**CF2**). As the SportCruiser had not been sighted until the moment of CPA, too late for the paraglider pilot to have taken any meaningful action, it was agreed by members that that effectively constituted a non-sighting (**CF4**).

Members next turned their attention to the actions of the Farnborough LARS East controller, and it was agreed that they had not been required to have monitored the flight of the SportCruiser under the terms of a Basic Service (**CF1**). Notwithstanding, members noted that there had not been any primary returns observed on their radar display that correlated to the position of the paraglider. Consequently, members

agreed that there had been little that the Farnborough LARS controller could have done to have assisted matters.

Members next considered the actions of the pilot of the SportCruiser, and it was noted that they had elected to have been in receipt of a Basic Service. As such, members agreed that they would not have been expected to have received any Traffic Information along their route and that they had borne the responsibility for collision avoidance unaided by the controller. Members recalled their earlier thoughts regarding the information that had been available to the Farnborough LARS controller and agreed that the presence of the paraglider had not been known and could not have been highlighted to the SportCruiser pilot even if they had requested a higher level of service. Consequently, it was agreed by members that the selection of a Basic Service had not been a contributory factor in this particular instance.

Members next pondered the capability of the EC device fitted to the SportCruiser. It was concluded that a supplementary subscription service had been available for their device which may have enabled indirect detection of the emissions from the paraglider pilot's EC device. However, it was not clear to members whether such a subscription had been active in this case and, having noted that no alert had been received by the SportCruiser pilot, agreed that their EC device had likely not been compatible (**CF3**). It was agreed that the SportCruiser pilot had not had situational awareness of the presence of the paraglider (**CF2**) and had not sighted it at any stage during the encounter (**CF4**).

The matter of the risk of collision was next considered. It was agreed by members that the separation had reduced to the bare minimum and that it had been entirely providential that the aircraft had not collided. The Board concluded that there had been a very serious risk of collision (**CF5**) and assigned Risk Category A to this event.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK

Contributory Factors:

	2025195			
CF	**Factor**	**Description**	**ECCAIRS Amplification**	**UKAB Amplification**
	Ground Elements			
	• Situational Awareness and Action			
1	Contextual	• ANS Flight Information Provision	Provision of ANS flight information	The ATCO/FISO was not required to monitor the flight under a Basic Service
	Flight Elements			
	• 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
	• Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance			
3	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			
4	Human Factors	• Monitoring of Other Aircraft	Events involving flight crew not fully monitoring another aircraft	Non-sighting or effectively a non-sighting by one or both pilots
	• Outcome Events			
5	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: A.

Safety Barrier Assessment[3]

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

Ground Elements:

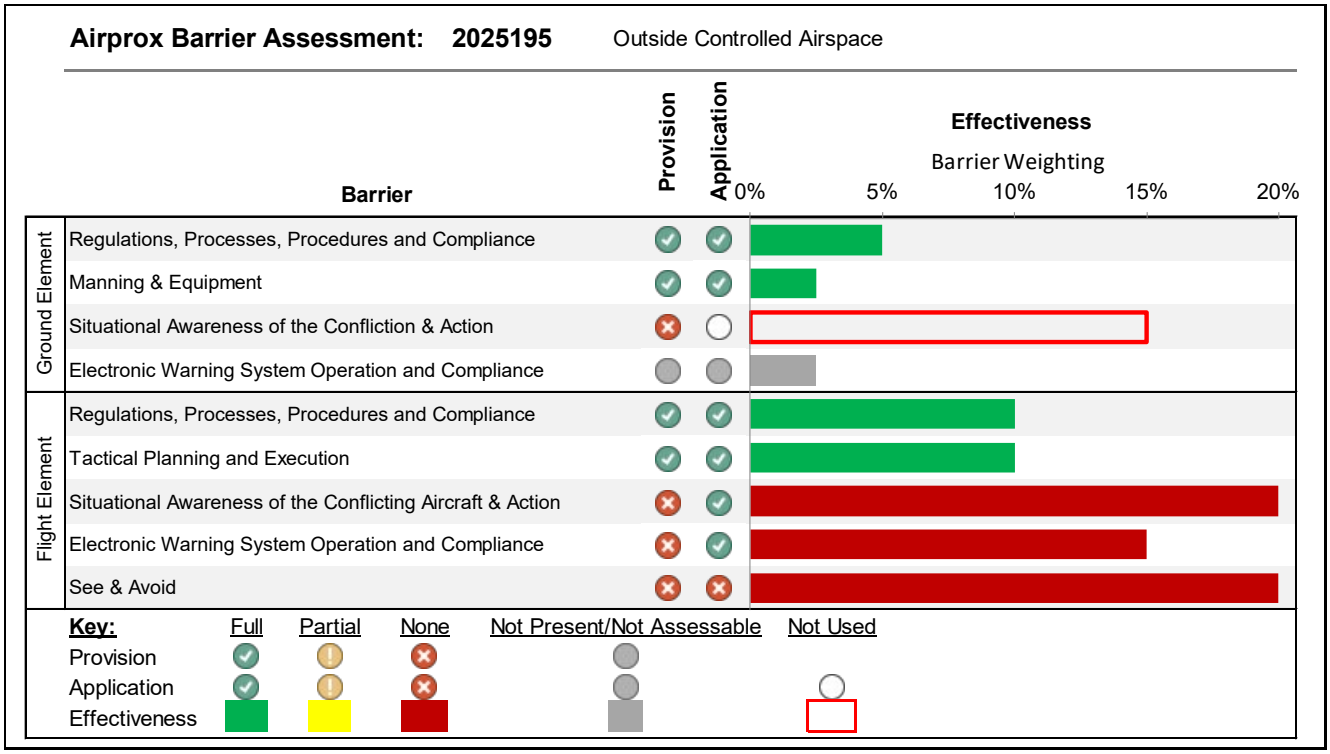
Situational Awareness of the Confliction and Action were assessed as **not used** because the Farnborough LARS controller had not been required to have monitored the flight of the SportCruiser under the terms of a Basic Service.

Flight Elements:

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.

Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance were assessed as **ineffective** because the EC devices, as fitted to the Sportcruiser and carried by the paraglider pilot, would not have been expected to have detected the other aircraft.

See and Avoid were assessed as **ineffective** because the pilot of the paraglider had not sighted the SportCruiser until the moment of CPA. The pilot of the SportCruiser had not visually acquired the paraglider.



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