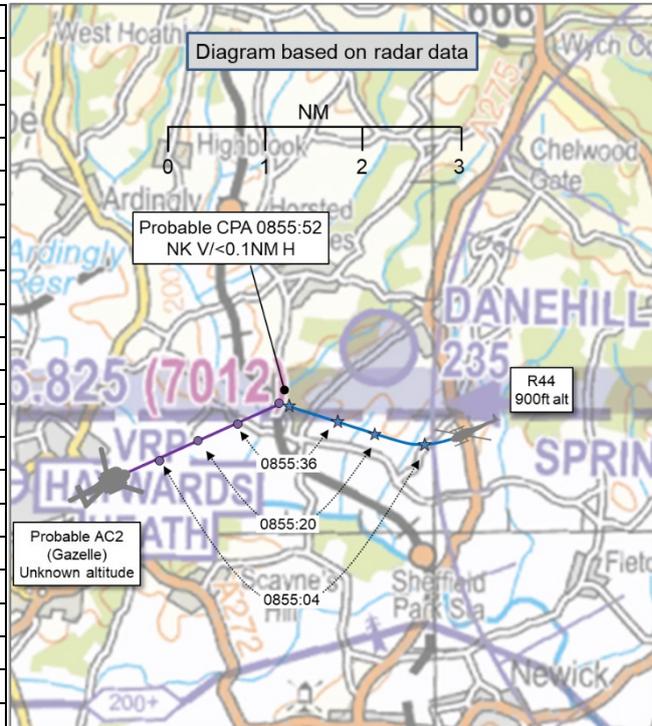


AIRPROX REPORT No 2025210

Date: 23 Sep 2025 Time: 0856Z Position: 5101N 00002W Location: IVO Danehill

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	R44	Gazelle
Operator	Civ Comm	Civ Helo
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	Basic	None
Provider	Gatwick App	N/A
Altitude/FL	900ft	NR
Transponder	A, C, S	None
Reported		
Colours	White	Green, purple
Lighting	Ldg, strobe, nav	Strobes, nav
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	>10km
Altitude/FL	800ft	~900ft
Altimeter	QNH (1027hPa)	NK
Heading	NK	060°
Speed	90kt	NK
ACAS/TAS	PowerFLARM	Not fitted
Alert	None	N/A
	Separation at CPA	
Reported	50ft V/150ft H	~75ft V/~100ft H
Recorded	NK V/<0.1NM H	



THE R44 PILOT reports that, on Tuesday 23rd September 2025, at approximately local time of 9:46am, [their] location [was] 6 miles east of MAY VOR/south of Mayfield Village [they recall]. During their gas pipeline patrol surveillance, the observer spotted some movement of machine, diggers and persons close to the gas pipeline that they were surveying. The pilot was requested by the observer to perform a few orbits around the area to allow the observer to take pictures and assess if it would be necessary to land on-site for more effective and immediate actions to guarantee the safety of the personnel on the ground and also the integrity of the gas pipeline network in the area. It was necessary to orbit to the left to allow the observer to have a clear view of the ground where the work was taking place [and from] different heights. The orbits were done between 500ft to 700ft AGL. After the last orbit, while levelling off the wings, the observer spotted [a] Gazelle helicopter at the 12 o'clock position, approximately 150ft horizontal [separation] and 50ft above. The R44 pilot immediately took evasive action with a left turn to avoid the Gazelle helicopter as it had continued at the same track and altitude. This fact was confirmed by the Gazelle pilot during a [post landing] phone call. As per normal operations, [the R44] had been in two-way communication with the Gatwick Director on frequency 118.950MHz. They were receiving a Basic Service from Gatwick for approximately 30min and did not hear the Gazelle helicopter pilot at any time on that frequency. Later on, when [the R44 pilot] asked the Gazelle pilot about the event, they replied that they hadn't been on the frequency as they had been speaking with Shoreham Information (39NM away).

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

THE GAZELLE PILOT reports that they had been flying [a] Gazelle from a private site north of [...] to another private site south of [...] on a heading of approximately 060°, in good visibility and in unrestricted airspace. Their cruising altitude was around 900ft. At no stage of their planned or actual route did they track east of MAY VOR. The timing and track of their flight mean that the incident could not have occurred at 0846, nor 6 miles east of MAY VOR as stated by the other pilot. The incident occurred at

approximately 0950–1000, around 4 miles NNW of MAY VOR, near Ashdown Park [they recall]. They were in level, steady flight when they became aware of a Robinson R44 only when it suddenly came into view over their right shoulder. The helicopter was climbing from below and behind, approaching from the southwest in an anticlockwise, corkscrew-type manoeuvre. The Gazelle pilot notes that they later spoke directly with the R44 pilot. They told them that they had initially intended to land and then changed their mind and were climbing from approximately 400ft back up to around 900ft when the Airprox occurred. [...]. The R44 had landing lights illuminated, which the Gazelle pilot observed clearly as they passed close to their aircraft during the R44 pilot's evasive manoeuvre. The R44 had a spotter on board, whom the pilot identified as being responsible for spotting during landing, not during general flying. [The pilot opines that] this was concerning, given that the helicopter climbed rapidly into the Gazelle's level from below and behind without either pilot or spotter visually identifying the Gazelle until the last moment. The Gazelle pilot had no prior awareness of the R44's presence [before] it entered their field of view in close proximity. Because the R44 appeared suddenly from beneath their blind spot, they had limited time to take avoiding action. The Gazelle pilot maintained controlled, stable flight rather than making abrupt manoeuvres that risked exacerbating the conflict. The helicopter then passed very close before diverging. After landing, having first spoken to the pilot involved [...] and been dissatisfied with their [...] response, the Gazelle pilot contacted [the operator] directly and spoke to their chief pilot, who informed them only that they would report the matter. [The chief pilot] advised that [the Gazelle pilot] should consider equipping their aircraft with electronic conspicuity so that they could see aircraft such as theirs. The Gazelle pilot notes that they have since purchased a [branded EC unit] integrated with SkyDemon to improve their own situational awareness and minimise the chance of a similar incident occurring again. [...]. In [the Gazelle pilot's] view, the helicopter's steep, climbing, anticlockwise manoeuvre from below and behind, combined with the lack of visual acquisition by the helicopter crew, created a genuine risk of collision. [The Gazelle pilot opines that] the discrepancy in the reported time and position of the incident may warrant clarification, as [the Gazelle pilot's] flight track, departure time and routing make it impossible for the event to have occurred at 0846 east of MAY VOR. This report is an accurate account to the best of [the Gazelle pilot's] recollection. They note that they do not have GPS track files or video from the flight as their aircraft is not equipped with automatic recording equipment.

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

THE SWANWICK TC RADAR CONTROLLER reports that they had been made aware that [R44 C/S] had an Airprox with a Gazelle helicopter outside controlled airspace whilst they had been providing a Basic Service to [R44 C/S]. The R44 pilot did not report this event on the RT and [the controller] has no recollection of the event.

NATS Safety Investigation

The UK Airprox Board advised NATS of an Airprox reported by the pilot of an R44 on a pipeline inspection, and an unknown Gazelle helicopter. The Gatwick Intermediate and Final Approach positions were being operated in a bandboxed configuration (KK APP). The R44 pilot had called onto the KK APP frequency at 0806:08 and requested a Basic Service from the controller. Squawk 3750 was assigned and a Basic Service agreed with the pilot. The pilot reported at 600ft at the time of calling onto the frequency. The task of the R44 was to remain outside controlled airspace initially, with a later join in the vicinity of Buckland.

The R44 pilot filed an Airprox report and stated the location details as, 'at approximately local time 9:46am [0846 UTC], location 6 miles east of MAY VOR/south of Mayfield Village. Review of the radar replay at the time of the report showed the R44 (squawking 3750) completing a series of left-hand orbits, 5.9NM east of the MAY VOR, in the manner described by the pilot. There were no other primary or secondary radar returns observed in the vicinity at the time of the report or in the time immediately prior to or after the event.

The event was not reported on the frequency by the R44 pilot. Subsequent information from UKAB detailed that the event [may have] occurred to the west of the MAY VOR approximately ten minutes later than initially reported. The R44 had transited to the west of the MAY VOR and was operating in

left-hand orbits. A primary return was tracking eastbound and approaching the R44 from the west. The KK APP controller was involved in sequencing inbound aircraft for approach to Gatwick and there was no reference made on the RT to the potential traffic.

CAP774 2.1 details 'Basic Service relies on the pilot avoiding other traffic, unaided by controllers/FISOs. It is essential that a pilot receiving this ATS remains alert to the fact that, unlike a Traffic Service and a Deconfliction Service, the provider of a Basic Service is not required to monitor the flight.'

Radar replay highlighted the primary radar return pass in proximity to the R44 at 0855:49, with a closest point of approach recorded of 0.1NM and no height information available. The R44 pilot undertook another left-hand orbit, which commenced 0.2NM after the closest point of approach between the two aircraft, similar to other orbits prior to and after this interaction. The pilot did not refer to any potential conflict on the RT. The pilot of the R44, in subsequent reporting, noted the closest point of approach was 150ft laterally and 50ft vertically and that they had to change heading to the left to avoid a Gazelle helicopter. The confliction did not show on the radar display at the location initially reported by the pilot, however a subsequent confliction recorded as 0.1NM. There were no separation minima applicable between the two aircraft.

Factual Background

The weather at Gatwick Airport was recorded as follows:

METAR EGKK 230850Z 03011KT CAVOK 12/06 Q1028=

Analysis and Investigation

CAA ATSI

Based on the reports received, ATSI's conclusion after its review is that only one aircraft (the R44) was apparently receiving an ATS (Basic Service). The other was not seen and so Traffic Information could not have been passed by the Gatwick controller.

UKAB Secretariat

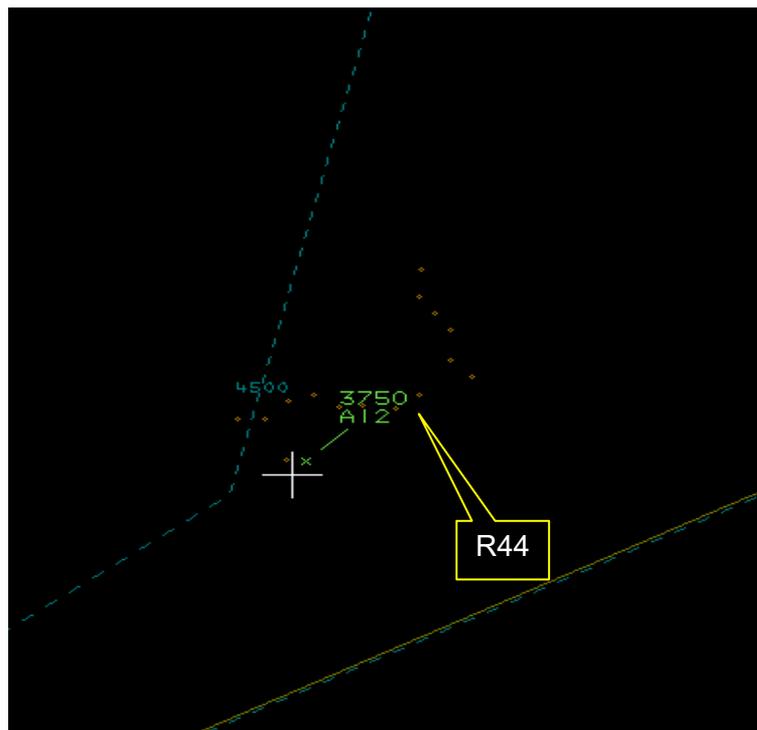


Figure 1: At the R44 pilot's reported CPA 0845:14

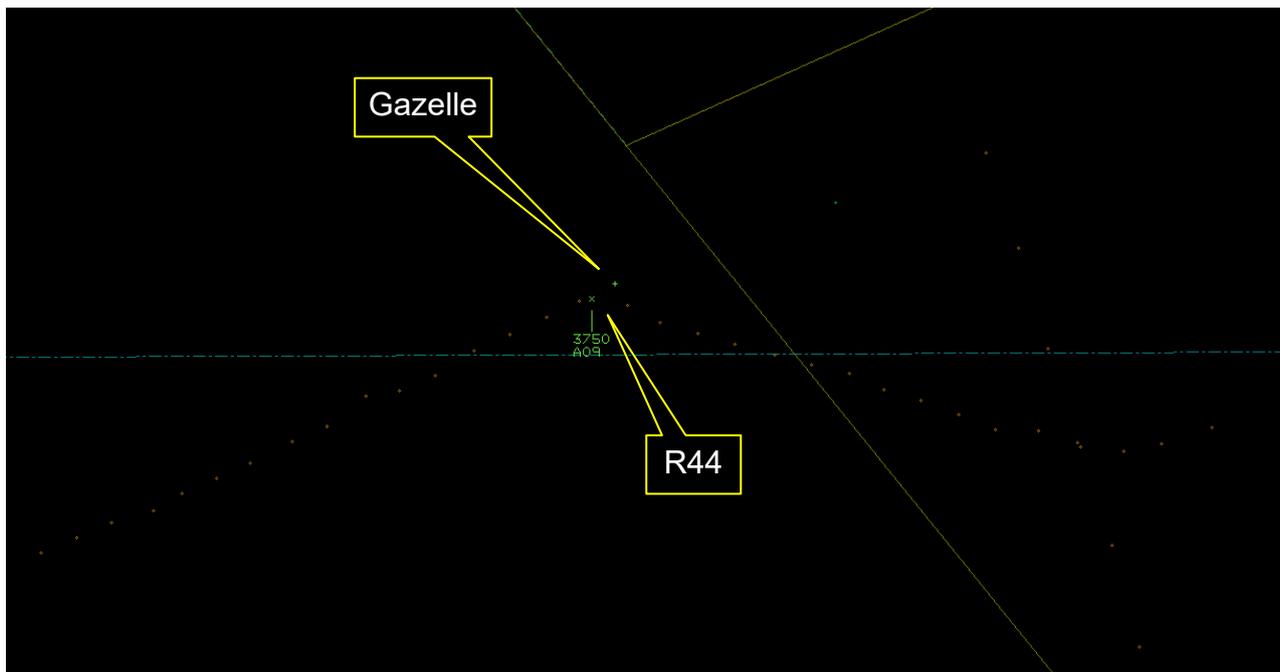


Figure 2: At the Gazelle pilot's reported position of CPA 0855:52

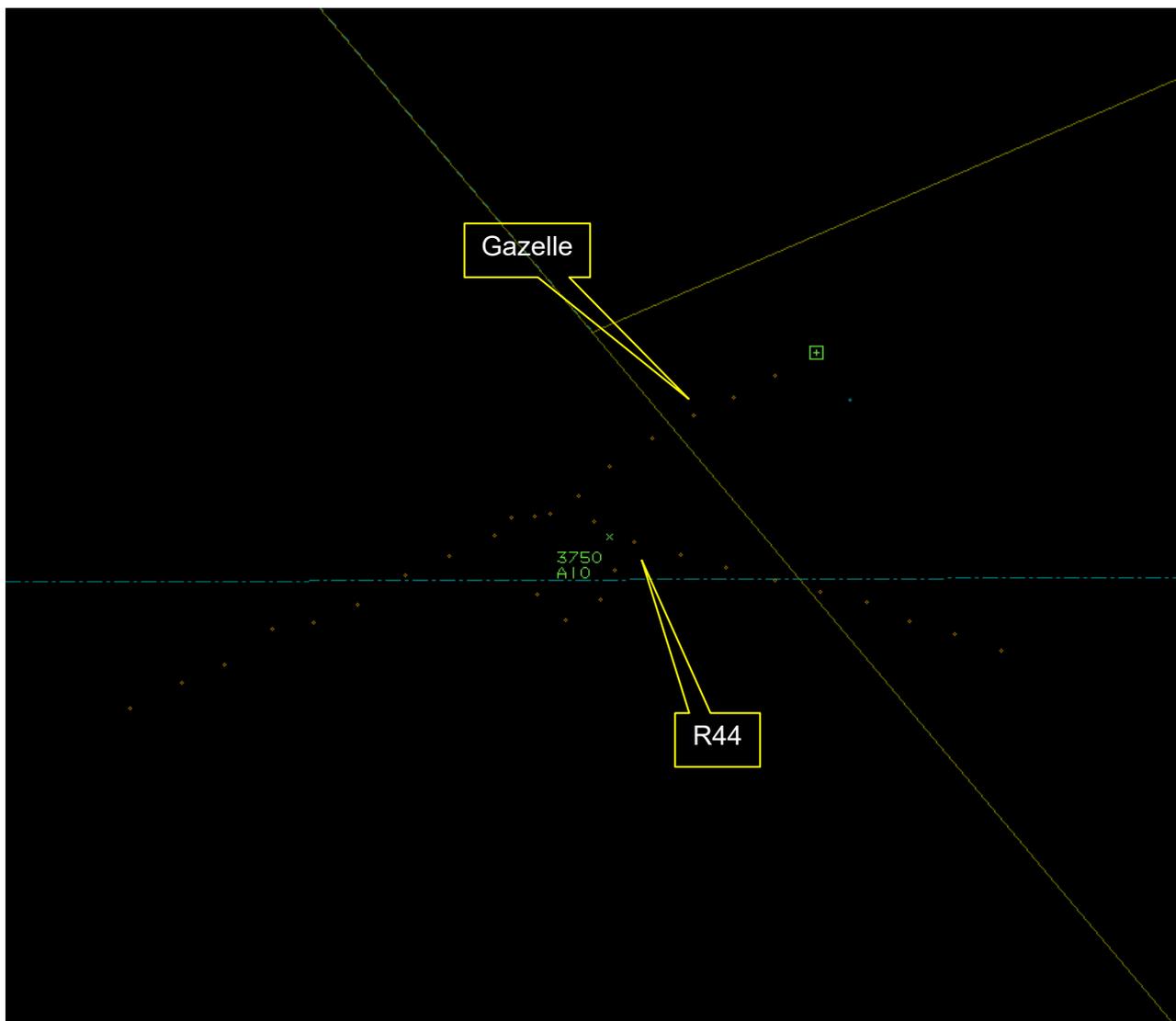


Figure 3: CPA +26sec showing R44 circling to the left.

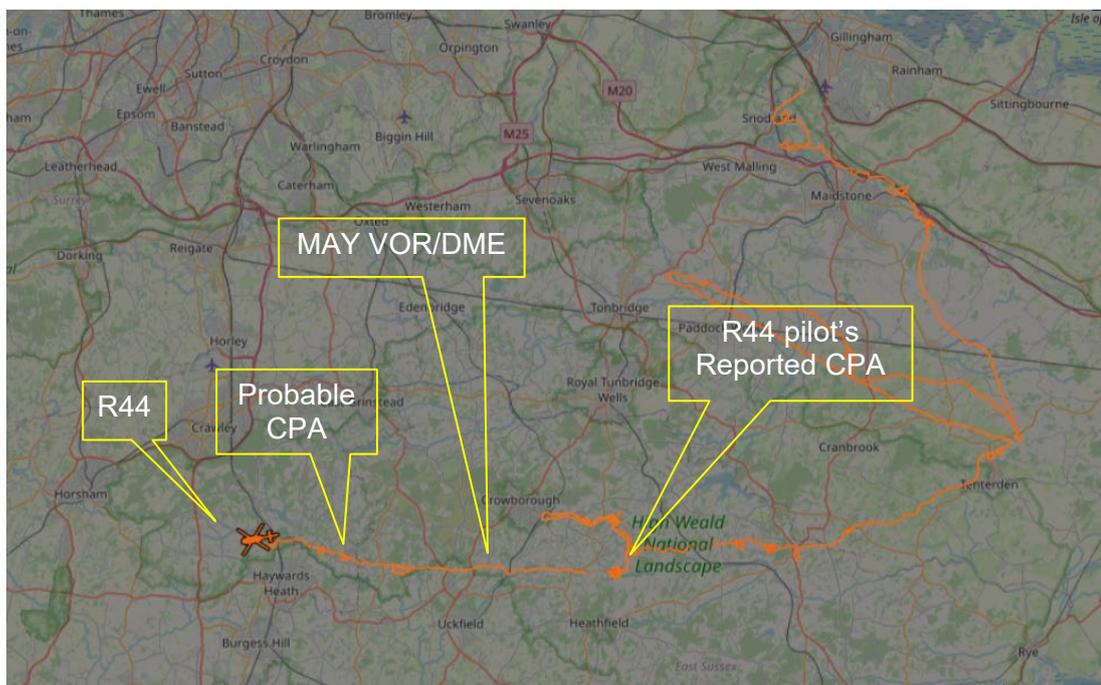


Figure 4: R44 flightpath to CPA + 4min.

The R44 was tracked via radar and identified through Mode S data. A primary radar return shown in Figures 2 and 3 matches the tracking described by the Gazelle pilot but cannot be positively identified as that aircraft. Only the R44 can be seen on an open source aircraft tracking system as shown in Figure 4. The diagram at page 1 is constructed utilising both sources and the pilot-provided reports.

The R44 and Gazelle 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

Summary

An Airprox was reported when an R44 and a Gazelle flew into proximity in the vicinity of Danehill at 0856Z on Tuesday 23rd September 2025. The R44 pilot was operating under VFR in VMC in receipt of a Basic Service from Gatwick Radar, and the Gazelle pilot was operating under VFR in VMC and had not been in receipt of a Flight Information Service.

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.

The Board firstly discussed the actions of the R44 pilot, noting the nature of the flight that they had been on and that they had reported the Airprox to have occurred 6NM to the east of the MAY VOR/DME. Investigation by the UKAB Secretariat which identified an interaction between that aircraft and a second aircraft, appearing as a primary radar track only and coinciding with the report submitted by the Gazelle pilot, led to the conclusion that the incident had occurred approximately 10min later at a point 6NM to the west of the MAY VOR/DME. The R44 pilot reports having been in receipt of a Basic Service from Gatwick Approach, which had not included any Traffic Information relevant to this event but the pilot had not reported the Airprox on frequency at the time. The Board noted that the R44 had been equipped with a commonly utilised electronic conspicuity unit which had unfortunately received no electronic emissions from the Gazelle (**CF5**), and members agreed that the pilot had therefore gained no

¹ (UK) SERA.3205 Proximity.

situational awareness of its presence (CF4). The R44 pilot reports that they had been manoeuvring for better visualisation of their operating area and had gained only a late sighting of the Gazelle (CF6), which had fortuitously allowed the pilot to initiate a late avoiding manoeuvre.

Moving to the actions of the Gazelle pilot, members noted that they had not been in receipt of a Flight Information Service and wished to remind all operators that where such services are available they can significantly contribute to the building of situational awareness. As the Gazelle had not been equipped with an electronic conspicuity capability, this, together with the lack of an active air traffic service, had led the pilot to have not had any situational awareness of the presence of the R44 (CF4). The Board discussed the lack of an active transponder on the Gazelle (CF3), recalling that the pilot had declared the aircraft to have been equipped with a Mode A only unit and it had been unfortunate that no signal had been recorded on radar, with members believing that, had it been so, it would potentially have alerted the Gatwick controller to the possible confliction. Members felt that utilisation of an air traffic service is always advisable where available and, in this case, had the pilot chosen such a service (CF2), it may have alerted the Gazelle pilot to the apparent inactivity of their transponder and potentially provided Traffic Information regarding the R44. Ultimately, with no situational awareness, the Gazelle pilot had seen the R44 at such a late stage that it had been too late to initiate an active avoidance manoeuvre (CF7).

In reviewing the actions of the Gatwick Approach controller, the Board noted that the R44 pilot had requested and been provided with a Basic Service, under which the controller is not required to monitor the flight (CF1). Additionally, as the Gazelle had displayed no transponder signal, the likelihood of the controller recognising the potential for risk and alerting the R44 pilot accordingly had been minimal. Members felt that the controller could have done little more in this case.

Concluding their discussion, members turned their attention to the determination of the risk of collision. They noted that the neither pilot had any advance situational awareness of the presence of the other aircraft (CF4) and that, having visually acquired the Gazelle at a late stage, the R44 pilot had initiated avoiding action thereby reducing the risk of collision. Members consequently agreed that safety margins had been reduced much below the norm and were in agreement that there had been a risk of collision (CF8), assigning a Risk Category B to this event.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK

Contributory Factors:

	2025210			
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				
• Tactical Planning and Execution				
2	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
3	Human Factors	• Transponder Selection and Usage	An event involving the selection and usage of transponders	
• 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	• Identification/ Recognition	Events involving flight crew not fully identifying or recognising the reality of a situation	Late sighting by one or both pilots
7	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				
8	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 Assessment²

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 Gatwick Approach controller was not required to monitor the flight of the R44 whilst under a Basic Service.

Flight Elements:

Tactical Planning and Execution was assessed as **ineffective** because the Gazelle pilot could have utilised a Flight Information Service from Farnborough whilst transiting the area and, although the aircraft had been fitted with a basic transponder, it had not been detected by air traffic radar.

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, although the R44 had carried electronic conspicuity equipment, it had been unable to receive any electronic emissions from the Gazelle.

See and Avoid were assessed as **partially effective** because the R44 pilot had achieved only a late sighting of the Gazelle, and the Gazelle pilot had achieved sight of the R44 only as it had passed from their rear right quarter and too late for the Gazelle pilot to safely initiate an avoidance manoeuvre.

² 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: 2025210		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 Conflicition & 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:			<u>Full</u>	<u>Partial</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Not Present/Not Assessable</u>	<u>Not Used</u>
Provision	✓	!	✗	●			
Application	✓	!	✗	●		○	
Effectiveness							