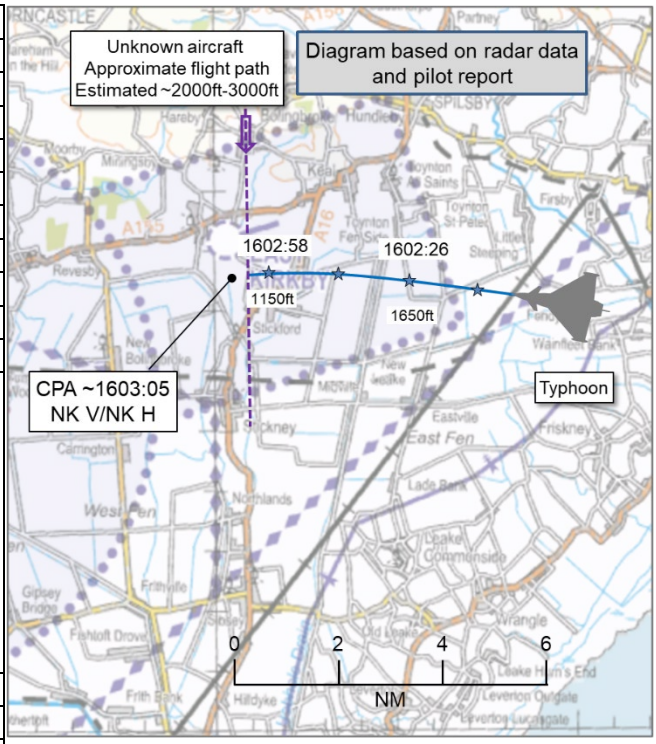
# AIRPROX REPORT No 2026060

Date: 14 Apr 2026 Time: ~1603Z Position: 5307N 00002E Location: 7NM ENE of Coningsby

## PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

| Recorded | Aircraft 1 | Aircraft 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Aircraft | Typhoon | Unknown |
| Operator | HQ Air (Ops) | Unknown |
| Airspace | Coningsby MATZ | London FIR |
| Class | G | G |
| Rules | VFR | Unknown |
| Service | Traffic | Unknown |
| Provider | Coningsby Radar | Unknown |
| Altitude/FL | ~1150ft | NR |
| Transponder | A, C, S | None |
| **Reported** | | |
| Colours | Grey | NR |
| Lighting | Strbs, nav | |
| Conditions | VMC | |
| Visibility | 5-10km | |
| Altitude/FL | 1000ft | |
| Altimeter | QNH (1015hPa) | |
| Heading | 253° | |
| Speed | 300kt | |
| ACAS/TAS | Not fitted | |
| | **Separation at CPA** | |
| Reported | 1000ft V/<0.1NM H | NR |
| Recorded | NR | |




**THE TYPHOON PILOT** reports that [Typhoon C/S] had been RTB (returning to base) from north Norfolk as a singleton on a visual recovery. When they had been at ~1000ft QNH and 6NM on the extended centreline, a light aircraft was seen to pass directly overhead with an estimated separation of 1000-2000ft. The timeline of events below has been taken from the tape review:

1601:50 [Typhoon C/S] called "*field in sight"*, Cgy (Coningsby) App (Approach) replied "*circuit clear, continue Cgy Twr stud "*.

[Typhoon C/S] had been at 083R/13NM from RW25 threshold, 2500ft QNH, 300kt. Radar had been set at 70/70 and 20NM - no factor contacts detected.

1602:05 [Typhoon C/S] cleared to join RW25.

[Typhoon C/S] was 081R/11NM, 2000ft QNH, 300kt. No factor contacts detected on radar.

1603:11 [Typhoon C/S] "*Twr for SA (*Situational Awareness*), light aircraft over the top of me now, heading south*".

Typhoon C/S is 073R/6NM, 1060ft QNH (1120ft RADALT), 300kt, 20° AoB left [at approximate position] N53 07.404 E000 00.102

1603:12-1603:45 Conversation between [Typhoon C/S] pilot and Twr. [Typhoon C/S] pilot stated "*Nothing passed by approach, don't think they have it*" and "(*the light aircraft is) assessed to be 2000-3000ft*".

1605 Whilst downwind in the circuit, the [Typhoon C/S] pilot attempted to acquire the light aircraft on radar but was unable. The light aircraft was only detected visually at short range, it appeared to be a

high-wing design, possibly with a red stripe down the side. There would have been little opportunity to avoid MAC if height separation had been any less [they opine].

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

**THE PILOT OF THE UNKNOWN AIRCRAFT** could not be traced.

**THE CONINGSBY APPROACH CONTROLLER** reports that they had been the Approach controller when [Typhoon C/S] had made a visual recovery. The colour code had been BLU and they were controlling 4 speaking units. When [Typhoon C/S] was within 15NM of Coningsby, a single [uninvolved] Typhoon and [a flight of 2 Typhoons] were handed over from Swanwick(Mil) north of Coningsby by 25NM. Just after the [flight of 2] had made contact, unexpectedly [an additional uninvolved Typhoon] pilot also called who had not previously been handed over by Swanwick(Mil). Relevant traffic working Waddington was called to [the flight of 2] and they requested a heading change to avoid a track 1000ft below their level. The heading change they requested had been to the southwest and had occurred at the same time as the [aircraft working Waddington] also turned to the northwest. During this time, [Typhoon C/S] pilot called visual with the aerodrome and changing to Tower. When joining the visual circuit at 1000ft, [Typhoon C/S] pilot reported having seen a white aircraft with a red stripe approximately 2000-3000ft altitude routeing south. [The Coningsby Approach controller reported that] their capacity was reduced dealing with [uninvolved Typhoon] having unexpectedly called, and dealing with [the flight of 2] heading selection and the Coningsby Approach controller subsequently gave a better heading. At the same time, the Waddington controller [requested further information]. This resulted in the Coningsby Approach controller not having noticed the very slow moving primary contact (in the vicinity of East Kirkby airfield) that was 5NM away from [Typhoon C/S]. On review of the Ricochet [radar recording system], the primary contact was present.

The controller perceived the severity of the incident as 'Low'.

**THE CONINGSBY APPROACH SUPERVISOR** reports that they had been the Supervisor in the Approach Room at the time of the incident. As [Typhoon C/S] had been approaching approximately 20NM from Coningsby (from the southeast) on a visual recovery, the Approach controller received two handovers for recovering aircraft (a pair and singleton) whilst also working 1 x Typhoon on recovery from the north. During this time [the Supervisor] was required to have a discussion in the ACR with the WAD radar controller regarding an avoidance turn they had given to their aircraft due to Coningsby traffic and [the] plan to deconflict. Also, the Swanwick(Mil) East controller rang to discuss an issue with handover regarding [uninvolved Typhoon] (which had also free-called Approach on frequency without prior notification). On [Typhoon C/S] joining the visual circuit, the pilot transmitted that they had seen an aircraft above them as they approached initials. Once [Typhoon C/S] had landed and was on taxy-back to dispersal on ground frequency, [the Coningsby Approach Supervisor] spoke to the pilot to ascertain further information. The pilot reported that there had been a small white aircraft with red markings approximately 2000-3000ft height as they conducted their join to initials. On reviewing the replay and recordings on Ricochet, there had been a very slow moving primary contact routeing north-to-south approximately 8NM to the east of the airfield within the Coningsby MATZ, for which the Approach controller had not passed Traffic Information to [the pilot of the] [Typhoon C/S] before allowing them to change frequency to Tower and join the visual circuit.

## Factual Background

The weather at Coningsby Airfield was recorded as follows:

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METAR EGXC 141550Z 17012KT 9999 FEW045 BKN050 16/06 Q1015 NOSIG RMK BLU BLU=
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## Analysis and Investigation

### Military ATM

The Typhoon was returning to Unit following their sortie. The Coningsby controller was also working a formation of Typhoons and a single Typhoon, all of which were trying to recover to Unit.

Sequence of Events

The Typhoon was initially on Coningsby Approach frequency, which at the time was very busy and the workload was high for the controller.

At 1601:47 the Typhoon pilot reported “field in sight” and changed to Coningsby Tower.

At 1601:57 the Typhoon pilot requested join instructions for the circuit. They were instructed to join and that the circuit was clear.

At 1602:01 the Typhoon pilot reported that they had minimum fuel.

At 1603:08 the Typhoon pilot reported to Coningsby Tower controller “*for SA, light aircraft over the top of me now heading south*”.

At 1603:13, Coningsby Tower acknowledged this, and the Typhoon pilot informed that it “*wasn’t called by Approach suspect they might not have it*”.

The Ricochet replay does show a non-transponding radar return, which should have been subject to Traffic Information by the controller. However, as the contact was non-transponding, there was insufficient information available from the radar return to determine an approximate CPA from the Ricochet data alone.

Therefore, whilst the unknown aircraft was apparent on the Ricochet replay and should have been called to the pilot, no radar-derived CPA could be established. The only separation information available is that reported by the Typhoon pilot, namely 1000ft vertically and less than 1NM laterally.

Local BM Investigation(s)

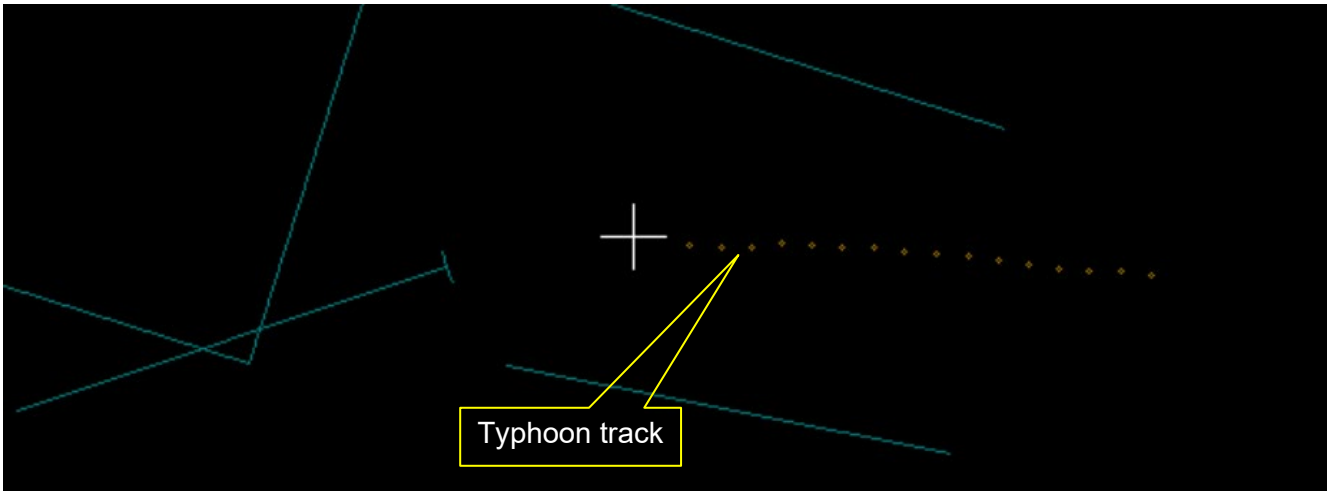
A local investigation was conducted by Coningsby following the event to identify the ATS-related causal/aggravating factors. It was found that the controller had been distracted by the other aircraft under their control at the time and subsequently did not notice the slow-moving contact 5NM from the Typhoon.

2 Gp BM Analysis

The local investigation identified that the controller was distracted by other aircraft on frequency, resulting in reduced situational awareness. Consequently, the controller failed to identify a slow-moving contact relevant to the Typhoon. STCA did not alert as the conflicting traffic was not transponding.

This occurrence highlights the impact that controller workload and competing operational demands can have on traffic monitoring and conflict detection, reinforcing the requirement for effective workload management. Consideration should also be given to the effectiveness of supervisory oversight in recognising elevated workload and providing timely intervention where capacity is exceeded or situational awareness becomes degraded.

### UKAB Secretariat




The Typhoon dropped from radar at 1602:58, approximately 7sec ahead of reported CPA (marked as a white cross above).

The Typhoon was tracked by radar and identified via Mode S data. Unfortunately, the unknown aircraft did not appear either on the NATS radar replay or any of the open-source tracking systems available to the Secretariat.

The Typhoon and unknown aircraft 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 converging then the Typhoon pilot was required to give way to the unknown aircraft.[2] An aircraft operated on or in the vicinity of an aerodrome shall conform with or avoid the pattern of traffic formed by other aircraft in operation.[3]

## Comments

### HQ Air Command

The Typhoon pilot had obtained an ATS (Traffic Service) that was appropriate for their stage of flight and had the aircraft's onboard sensors configured correctly to maximise the chance of detection of stranger traffic. Nevertheless, no warning was passed by the Approach controller and onboard systems did not detect the conflictor. The conflicting aircraft was only acquired visually at a late stage, and this incident serves as a timely reminder that effective lookout must be continued at all stages of flight, as neither ATS nor onboard systems are fully effective barriers to MAC.

This Airprox occurred in the 'stub' of a Military ATZ which, although not controlled airspace, may be considered as equivalent to the 'feathers' of a civilian aerodrome's approach symbology. As such, it is disappointing that the [pilot of the] conflicting traffic did not appear to have attempted to contact Coningsby ATC to inform them of their intentions; noting that civilian pilots flying close to the approach path are '*strongly recommended to contact the aerodrome ATSU before flying within 10NM of any aerodrome with instrument approach feathers*' then it would have been good airmanship to apply the same considerations when flying in the vicinity of RAF Coningsby's approach for the runway in use. This incident will be added to the evidence for justification of establishment of controlled (Class D/E) airspace around Military Main Operating Bases.

### AOPA

Any Airprox reported by a pilot is a result of an assessment of being too close to another aircraft. In this case, the Typhoon pilot had little time to gain situational awareness of the unknown aircraft

[1] (UK) SERA.3205 Proximity. MAA RA 2307 paragraphs 1 and 2.
[2] (UK) SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c)(2) Converging. MAA RA 2307 paragraph 12.
[3] (UK) SERA.3225 Operation on and in the Vicinity of an Aerodrome. MAA RA 2307 paragraph 17.

which was flying over/in a MATZ. AOPA is concerned that pilots would fly through or over a MATZ without following the AIP ENR2.2.1 (Procedures for Penetration of a MATZ).[4] Whilst it isn't required to contact the ATC unit, it is highly recommended for everyone's situational awareness (Note 3 of footnote 4), especially if the transponder isn't working.

**Summary**

An Airprox was reported when a Typhoon and an unknown aircraft flew into proximity 7NM east-northeast of Coningsby at approximately 1603Z on Tuesday 14th April 2026. The Typhoon pilot was operating under VFR in VMC in receipt of a Traffic Service from Coningsby Approach. It was not possible to trace the pilot of the unknown aircraft.

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

Information available consisted of a report from the Typhoon pilot, 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.

Members discussed this event being cognisant of the lack of input from the pilot of the untraced aircraft. They noted that the Typhoon pilot had been on a VFR recovery and established with a Traffic Service from Coningsby. The Board agreed that they had sighted the untraced aircraft at a late stage (**CF9**) as it had passed overhead, and the pilot had reported it on the RT. The Board also agreed that, although in receipt of a surveillance-based service, they had received no Traffic Information relating to the unknown aircraft and that that, together with no electronic conspicuity equipment onboard, had denied the pilot any situational awareness of its presence (**CF8**).

Members expressed disappointment that it had been impossible to trace the second aircraft and recognised that this had been in part due to a lack of radio communication and active electronic conspicuity equipment. They wished to remind all operators that the carriage and use of such equipment can greatly enhance a pilot's situational awareness of nearby traffic and helps others to visually or electronically acquire them, thereby improving safety for all. In this case, members noted that the pilot of the untraced aircraft, if radio equipped, could have sought an Air Traffic Service while operating in this area (**CF7**).

In reviewing the contribution by the Coningsby Radar controller, members noted that their task load had increased rapidly in the moments preceding the Airprox and, although the untraced aircraft had not displayed a transponder, it had shown as a primary return which had offered generic situational awareness (**CF6**), but from which the controller had not recognised a confliction (**CF4**) for the trigger to have passed Traffic Information to the Typhoon pilot (**CF3**), even though they had been providing a Traffic Service (**CF1**). This situation had been magnified by the increased traffic loading for that controller (**CF5**), which had coincided with distraction by telephone conversations for the Supervisor at that time (**CF2**). Members acknowledged that this Airprox had been a textbook combination of factors and that it had been fortunate that an altitude separation had kept the two aircraft apart. They acknowledged the statements within the military operating authority's report that such incidents will

[4] 2.2.1 A MATZ Penetration Service is available from the controlling aerodromes listed at paragraph 2.4 for the provision of increased protection to RTF equipped aircraft. Pilots wishing to penetrate a MATZ, and where required the associated ATZ, are requested to observe the following procedures:
When 15NM or 5min flying time from the zone boundary, whichever is the greater, establish two-way RTF communication with the controlling aerodrome on the appropriate frequency using the phraseology:
'..... (controlling aerodrome), this is ..... (aircraft callsign), request MATZ (and ATZ) penetration.' When the call is acknowledged and when asked to 'pass your message', the pilot should pass the following information: Callsign; Type of aircraft; Position; Heading; Altitude; Intentions (e.g. destination and the intention to route through one or more ATZ); comply with any instructions issued by the controller; maintain a listening watch on the allocated RTF frequency until the aircraft is clear of the MATZ/ATZ; advise the controller when the aircraft is clear of the MATZ/ATZ.
Note 1: Flight conditions are not required unless requested by the controller.
Note 2: Terrain clearance will be the responsibility of the pilot.
Note 3: Since compliance is not compulsory for civil aircraft some aircraft within the MATZ may not be known to the controller. All pilots should therefore maintain a good look-out at all times.

need to be addressed by wider measures, and the development of higher classification of airspace restrictions is one of those options, which would not necessarily be welcomed by all airspace users but may be mitigated by planned future mandates to carry and utilise common standard electronic conspicuity equipment.

Concluding their discussion, members determined that the pilot of the Typhoon, having seen the untraced aircraft as it had passed overhead, had been concerned by its presence without having had any prior indication by RT or onboard equipment, but had been satisfied that there was no risk of collision. Members agreed that, although the proximity may have been uncomfortable and that safety had been degraded, there had been no risk of collision. The Board assigned Risk Category C to this event.

## PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK

Contributory Factors:

| | 2026060 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CF | **Factor** | **Description** | **ECCAIRS Amplification** | **UKAB Amplification** |
| | **Ground Elements** | | | |
| | **• Regulations, Processes, Procedures and Compliance** | | | |
| 1 | Human Factors | • ATM Regulatory Deviation | An event involving a deviation from an Air Traffic Management Regulation. | Regulations and/or procedures not fully complied with |
| | **• Manning and Equipment** | | | |
| 2 | Human Factors | • ATM Leadership and Supervision | An event related to the leadership and supervision of ATM activities. | |
| | **• Situational Awareness and Action** | | | |
| 3 | Human Factors | • ANS Traffic Information Provision | Provision of ANS traffic information | TI not provided, inaccurate, inadequate, or late |
| 4 | Human Factors | • Conflict Detection - Not Detected | An event involving Air Navigation Services conflict not being detected. | |
| 5 | Human Factors | • Task Monitoring | Events involving an individual or a crew/ team not appropriately monitoring their performance of a task | Controller engaged in other tasks |
| 6 | Contextual | • Traffic Management Information Action | An event involving traffic management information actions | The ground element had only generic, late, no or inaccurate Situational Awareness |
| | **Flight Elements** | | | |
| | **• Tactical Planning and Execution** | | | |
| 7 | 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 |
| | **• Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action** | | | |
| 8 | 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 |
| | **• See and Avoid** | | | |
| 9 | 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 |

Degree of Risk: C.

Safety Barrier Assessment[5]

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

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

## Ground Elements:

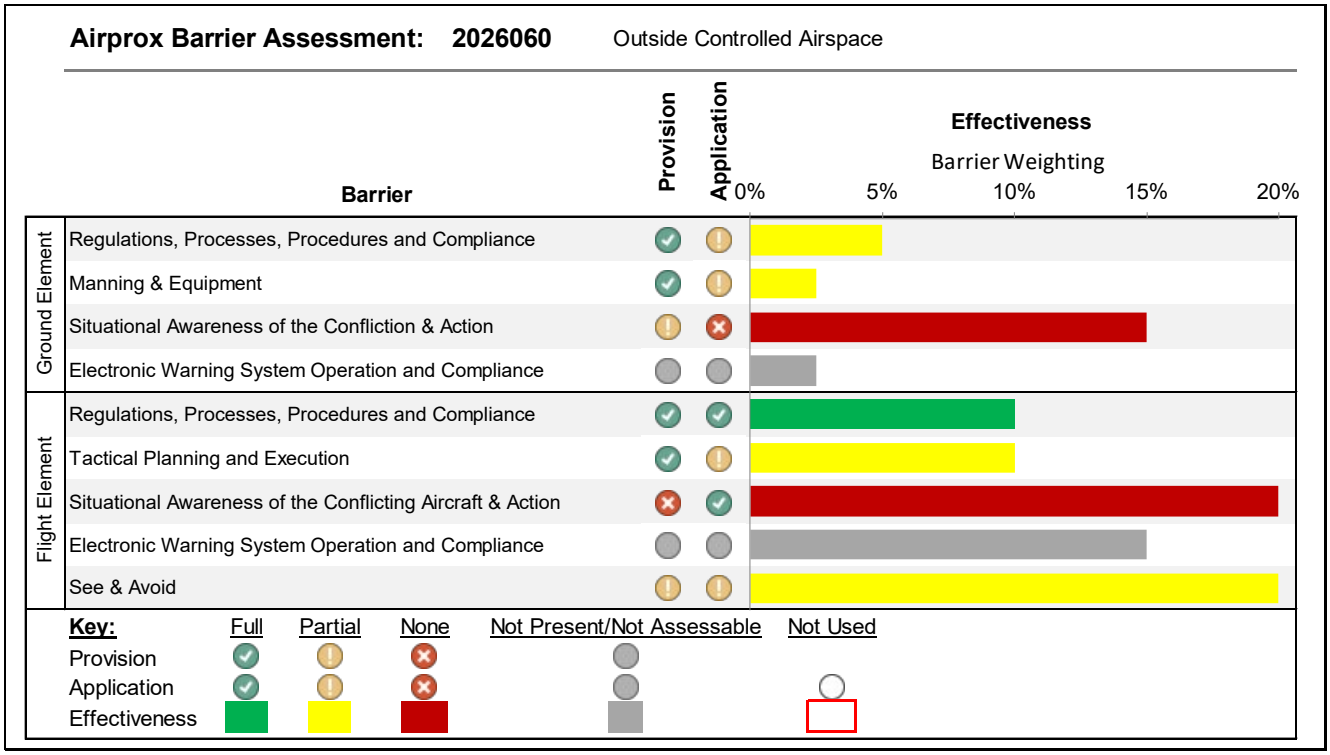
**Regulations, Processes, Procedures and Compliance** were assessed as **partially effective** because the Coningsby controller did not pass Traffic Information regarding the untraced aircraft to the Typhoon pilot.

**Manning and Equipment** were assessed as **partially effective** because the Coningsby Supervisor was engaged in other tasks at and around CPA.

**Situational Awareness of the Confliction and Action** were assessed as **ineffective** because the conflict was not detected and no Traffic Information was passed to the Typhoon pilot.

## Flight Elements:

**Tactical Planning and Execution** was assessed as **partially effective** because the untraced aircraft pilot could have sought a Traffic Service from Coningsby as they had transited southbound.

**Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action** were assessed as **ineffective** because the Typhoon pilot had no prior situational awareness of the presence of the untraced aircraft.

**See and Avoid** were assessed as **partially effective** because the Typhoon pilot only sighted the untraced aircraft at a late stage.