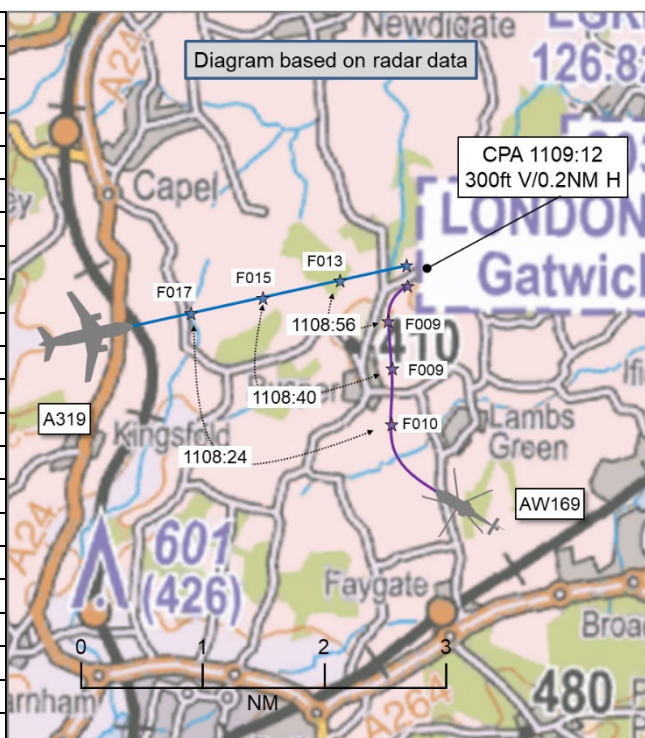


AIRPROX REPORT No 2026078

Date: 24 May 2026 Time: 1109Z Position: 5108N 00016W Location: 3NM WSW of Gatwick Airport

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	A319	AW169
Operator	CAT	HEMS
Airspace	Gatwick CTR	Gatwick CTR
Class	D	D
Rules	IFR	VFR
Service	Radar Control	Radar Control
Provider	Gatwick Approach	Gatwick Approach
Altitude/FL	1000ft	700ft
Transponder	A, C, S+	A, C, S+
ADS-B Out	Observed	Observed
Reported		
Colours	Company	Blue, white, teal
Lighting	Ldg, stb, nav	Nav, anti-col, stb
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	>10km
Altitude/FL	1100ft	500ft AGL
Altimeter	QNH (1030hPa)	QNH
Heading	256°	090°
Speed	150kt	80kt
ACAS/TAS	TCAS II	TCAS II, SkyEcho
Alert	TA	TA
	Separation at CPA	
Reported	300ft V/1NM H	500ft V/1NM H
Recorded	300ft V/0.2NM H	



THE A319 PILOT reports they had been informed by telephone call from the Air Traffic Supervisor at Gatwick upon shutdown when they had been on the gate that they had been in close proximity to helicopter traffic when they had been on final approach.

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

THE AW169 PILOT reports that, when flying as HEMS Captain for [AW169 C/S], they had left [departure airfield] for a HEMS tasking in the area of Hassocks. As they had approached the scene they were stood down and re-tasked to Rusper, inside Gatwick's CTR. En route they gained Gatwick ATC clearance and were informed of [A319 C/S]. With CAVOK conditions they were able to see the [A319] on final approach to Gatwick RW08 and monitored it as they had approached their landing site. The AW169 pilot had good communication with Gatwick and [the A319 pilot] was told about them and their flightpath. The AW169 pilot states that their TCAS alerted them with a TA as they completed the overhead recce of their HEMS landing site and [all crew members] were well aware of [the A319's] presence. A further orbit was completed culminating in a landing and subsequent patient flight to [...]. At no time did they receive a TCAS RA.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'None'.

THE GATWICK APPROACH CONTROLLER reports that they had been working at Gatwick Approach when [the AW169 pilot] had requested entry to the Gatwick zone to attend an incident at Rusper (approximately 1km south of a 3NM final for RW08R). They cleared the AW169 into the Gatwick zone VFR not above altitude 1000ft and passed Traffic Information on the landing aircraft (the A319). The A319 had been on final approach, and Traffic Information was passed (to its pilot) on the AW169. [At the time], the weather had met VFR criteria. Gatwick was operating on RW08R. The APP controller advised the Tower as [the AW169] was likely to get close to the ATZ. The APP controller reports that

they did not pass both aircraft to the Tower as they did not want them transferring frequency until both were visual. They asked the AW169 pilot to clarify the scene of the incident, [and] the pilot advised it was 1km south of the final approach. The AW169 went north of 1km south of the final approach and the controller asked the A319 pilot if they were visual with the AW169 – they replied ‘negative’. The controller asked the AW169 pilot if they were visual with the A319 – they confirmed they were visual. After the A319 had passed abeam the AW169, they were transferred to the Tower frequency.

THE GATWICK AIR CONTROLLER reports that, during their position handover, they were told that [AW169 C/S] was en route to Hassocks. They observed it south of the CTR and routeing southbound. A few minutes later they noticed that it was then routeing northbound and that it had re-entered the CTR. The controller called FIN and queried whether it had been routeing back to Redhill via Capel. They responded negative, [AW169 C/S] was [then] routeing to an incident at Rusper not above 1000ft. The controller asked FIN if they would pass Traffic Information and they said ‘yes’. [A319 C/S] was just establishing for RW08R, and [the controller] anticipated being handed it later than usual due to the required Traffic Information. As [AW169 C/S] had been approaching Rusper, [the controller] was visual with both [the A319 and the AW169], however, neither were on their frequency. [A319 C/S] passed 4DME and approaching 2DME, the controller priority called FIN as [A319 C/S] had not checked in. FIN reported they had just been transferred and simultaneously [A319 C/S] checked in. [The controller] cleared [A319 C/S] to land. After landing [the A319 C/S crew] said they would like to ask a question. However, [the controller] anticipated that the question was about [AW169 C/S] and that it would take longer than their time to vacate, so [the controller] instructed [A319 C/S crew] to ask that question to the Ground Movements Controller (GMC). The controller [transferred] them to 121.805MHz. The [A319 C/S] pilot then reported to the GMC that they wished to talk to Radar, as they were unhappy that they were not visual with [the AW169], and that it was only 300ft below them. [The controller did not] know if they contacted Radar, and they have not reviewed any recordings before writing this report.

Factual Background

The weather at Gatwick Airport was recorded as follows:

METAR EGKK 241050Z 02003KT 310V090 CAVOK 26/16 Q1030=

Analysis and Investigation

NATS Safety Investigation

Description of the event

The pilot of the AW169 had previously been receiving a Basic Service from the Gatwick Approach Director (KK-APP) whilst operating outside controlled airspace (CAS). At 1105:01 (all times UTC), the pilot of the AW169 informed the KK-APP controller they *“have been re-assigned to a job approximately two point five miles southeast of Capel, right on your approach path, would like a zone entry.”* The KK-APP controller issued the pilot with a clearance to enter the zone, VFR not above altitude 1000ft. At 1105:57, the KK-INT controller requested confirmation of the exact location the AW169 was tracking to and the pilot responded: *“the exact location is, Rusper, which is approximately one kilometre south of where your aircraft are going down the approach track at the moment”*. The controller clarified; *“so you think it’s just south of the final approach?”* The pilot responded: *“Affirm, it’s just under a kilometre from the south of the final approach.”*

Note: 1km = 0.54NM

Gatwick Tower telephoned the KK-APP at 1106:26 to request confirmation of the intentions of the AW169. The KK-APP clarified that the AW169 was inbound to a HEMS site at Rusper. It was confirmed the KK-APP would be passing Traffic Information, therefore both aircraft remained on the approach frequency. The KK-APP made the first of a number of Traffic Information advice calls to the pilot of the AW169 at 1106:37: *“... obviously Gatwick is operating runway zero eight right, steady stream of arriving aircraft.”* The pilot responded: *“That’s all copied, we are visual with the arriving aircraft.”* The KK-APP controller at this point telephoned the Group Supervisor Airports to request a

sector split. The pilot of the A319 was issued descent to establish on the ILS at 1107:04 with the usual speed restriction.

At 1107:16, the A319 pilot was issued with Traffic Information of; *“a helimed helicopter, currently in your right, one o’clock, range of about 4 miles, [they’re] going to be working just south of about a four-mile final, not above altitude one thousand feet.”* The pilot responded: *“yep, copied all that.”*

At 1107:57, the AW169 pilot was advised: *“There is an inbound [company] three nineteen at a six-mile final.”* This did not receive a response.

Low level (white) STCA activated at 1108:09 with high level (red) STCA activation at 1108:13.

Further Traffic Information was passed to the AW169 pilot at 1108:17: *“There’s landing traffic at five mile final, just confirm you’re visual?”* The pilot responded, *“affirm visual.”* The controller requested the pilot report when they were at their site, which was acknowledged. The KK-APP controller then informed the A319 pilot *“the helimed helicopter has you in sight, just confirm you’re visual?”* the pilot responded *“negative”* at 1108:37. The controller then gave further Traffic Information of, *“he is in your right, half a mile, one thousand feet.”* The pilot responded, *“copied, looking.”*

At 1108:59, the AW169 tracked further north than advised (minimum distance 0.2NM) and turned right into an orbit of the HEMS site to monitor prior to landing. The closest point of approach occurred at 1109:12 and was recorded on the NODE Multi-Track as 0.2NM and 300ft with the AW169 positioned 0.2NM from the approach track, closer than the previously advised *“just under a kilometre [0.54NM] from the south of the final approach.”* Figure 1.



Figure 1

The AW169 pilot reported at 1109:13; *“overhead scene now, and [unreadable].”* The KK-APP controller then informed the A319 pilot that *“you’ve passed abeam the helimed helicopter, contact the tower.”* Immediately after, the Gatwick Air controller telephoned the KK-APP controller to relay that the A319 was cleared to land due to the required delay in frequency transfer. The KK-APP controller advised[that] the pilot had just been transferred to the AIR frequency.

Once the two aircraft were no longer in close proximity, the AW169 appeared to initiate a second orbit, with the aircraft positioned 0.1NM south of the final approach track prior to landing at the HEMS site at approximately 1110:56.

Investigation

The Gatwick Approach function was operating as Intermediate and Final Directors combined. [A319 C/S] was an Airbus A319 on final approach into Gatwick. [AW169 C/S] was a ‘CAT A’ Agusta AW169 UK HEMS helicopter, initially receiving a Basic Service from the KK-APP controller, outside controlled airspace, prior to the pilot reporting a change in tasking to a HEMS site 1km south of the

Gatwick Approach track. A clearance to enter the Gatwick CTR under a Radar Control Service was subsequently issued. The KK-APP controller was operating in accordance with their responsibilities in relation to the Gatwick CTR (Class D) as detailed in CAP493 Section 1 Chapter 2.1:

- (a) Separate IFR flights from other IFR flights;
- (b) Pass Traffic Information to IFR flights and SVFR flights on VFR flights and give traffic avoidance advice when requested;
- (c) Pass Traffic Information to VFR flights on all other flights and provide traffic avoidance advice when requested.

The AW169 was operating as a Category A flight (clarified by operator) with the KK-APP controller applying CAP493 Section 1 Chapter 4 10C:

'Controllers shall give priority to aircraft according to flight priority category listed below, where category A is the highest priority and Z is the lowest priority.'

With the AW169 pilot reporting the position of the HEMS site as; "just under a kilometre from the south of the final approach", the KK-APP controller co-ordinated with the KK-AIR controller that the A319 would remain on the approach frequency to provide the required Traffic Information to both aircraft.

CAP493 Section 1 Chapter 5 – 3.1 stated:

'Separation standards are not prescribed for application by ATC between VFR flights or between VFR and IFR flights in Class D airspace. However, ATC has a responsibility to prevent collisions between known flights and to maintain a safe, orderly and expeditious flow of traffic. This objective is met by passing sufficient Traffic Information and instructions to assist pilots to 'see and avoid' each other.'

As the AW169 pilot had reported visual with the A319, the 'ATC has a responsibility to prevent collisions between known flights and to maintain a safe, orderly and expeditious flow of traffic' had been applied, despite only one pilot reporting being visual with the other.

The AW169 pilot Airprox report stated they were also receiving TCAS TA alerts on the A319, and the pilot of the A319 also advised the Gatwick GMC that they were "getting a TCAS advisory" on the final approach. The pilot was tactically re-tasked to a new HEMS site and reported to the KK-APP controller as Rusper, a known position within the Gatwick CTR, close to the final approach track for RW08 (Figure 2).

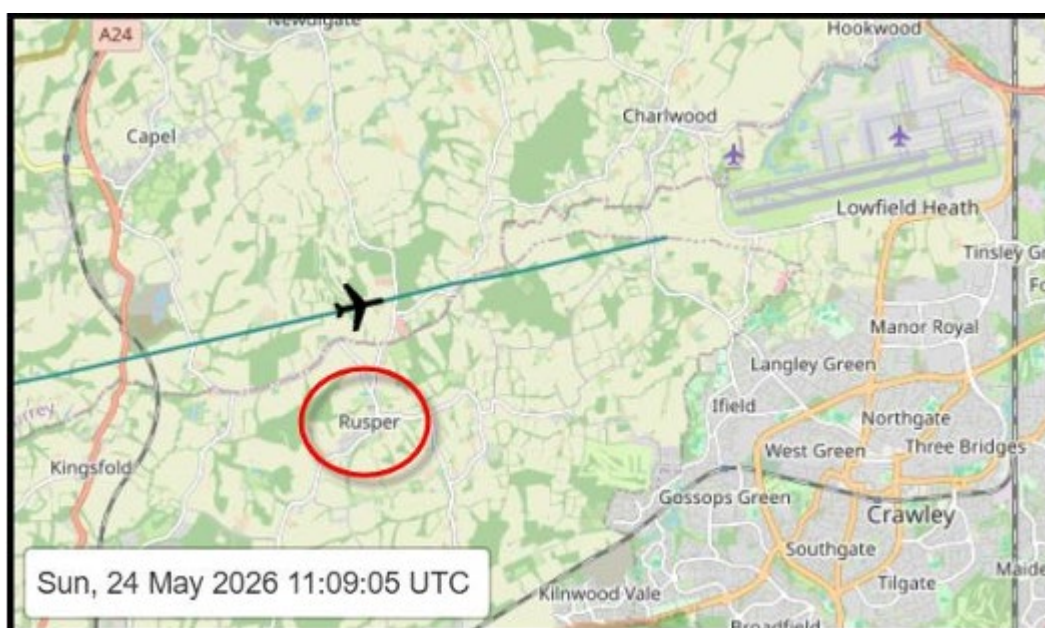


Figure 2

The pilot reported the position would be “just under a kilometre from the south of the final approach”, therefore the KK-APP controller was defensive about the potential interaction by maintaining [the pilots of] both aircraft on their frequency until the aircraft had passed each other. The CA4114 from the KK-APP controller stated:

‘I didn’t pass both aircraft to the Tower as I did not want them transferring frequency until both were visual.’

The AW169 pilot subsequently tracked closer to the approach track than initially reported, with the closest position being 0.2NM with the A319 and then just 0.1NM south of the approach track once the A319 had already passed.

As stated in the AW169 pilot’s Airprox report and subsequent feedback from the operator [...]:

It should be noted that the AW169 was inbound to ‘an improvised landing site near the village of Rusper’, performing an ‘overhead recce of their HEMS landing site and were well aware of the A319 presence. A further orbit was completed culminating in a landing.’ This ‘recce’ potentially took the aircraft closer to the approach track than the pilot intended and had previously reported to the KK-APP controller. It should be noted that the AW169 was still effectively maintaining visual separation against the A319.

The A319 pilot discussed the event initially with the Gatwick GMC, highlighting:

“The approach controller vectored a, I think an aeromed helicopter, underneath us by about three hundred feet, it was a massive distraction and wanted to know if we could talk to someone about that.”

The pilot subsequently telephoned the TC Operations Supervisor (OS) to discuss the scenario. They reported;

“As we were joining finals, we heard them vectoring an Aeromed helicopter ... we are looking out, and the controller just decided to vector [them] right underneath us by two hundred feet. We weren’t visual on the helicopter, they were visual on us, but it was such a huge distraction, the pilot flying down the right-hand side, trying to concentrate on flying the plane, I’m looking over [them] trying to find out, trying to see if I could see this helicopter, it’s definitely the most uncomfortable I have ever been in terms of traffic ... is this standard practice?”

The OS responded:

“From the controller’s point of view, the Helimed is CAT A, so the option is to break you off the approach, and hold you ... and also, it was always south of the final approach and the helicopter was visual with you so it’s VFR, therefore it’s no loss of separation.”

The pilot further opined:

“We’ve got quite a crude paint on our TCAS, and you know it was a hell of a lot of distraction ... from a practical point of view it’s a massive distraction in the cockpit at a very late stage of the approach.”

The OS acknowledged the pilot’s comments and explained that:

“the other option is you get broken off, so if you’re not happy, you have to say we’ll be glad to be broken off, that’s your choice.”

Conclusions

The AW169 pilot informed the Gatwick Director they were re-tasked to a HEMS site approximately 1km south of the Gatwick approach track, and was issued a subsequent clearance to enter the Gatwick CTR.

The AW169 pilot reported HEMS position as south of the approach track, suggested the VFR/IFR interaction with the A319 on final approach was not perceived to cause a collision risk by the controller, however the controller maintained both aircraft on their frequency in order to provide Traffic Information, aware of the nearby proximity. The Gatwick Director issued multiple instances of Traffic Information to both aircraft, with both aircraft visible to each other on TCAS. The AW169 pilot tracked further north than their initially reported position, although still south of the approach track. The AW169 pilot reported being in sight of the other aircraft (subsequently detailing continuous visual acquisition), therefore mitigating any risk of collision, however the A319 pilot subsequently reported they were not visual, and opined the interaction was a significant distraction in the cockpit whilst at a late stage of final approach.

CAA ATSI

ATSI has nothing to add to the NATS investigation.

UKAB Secretariat

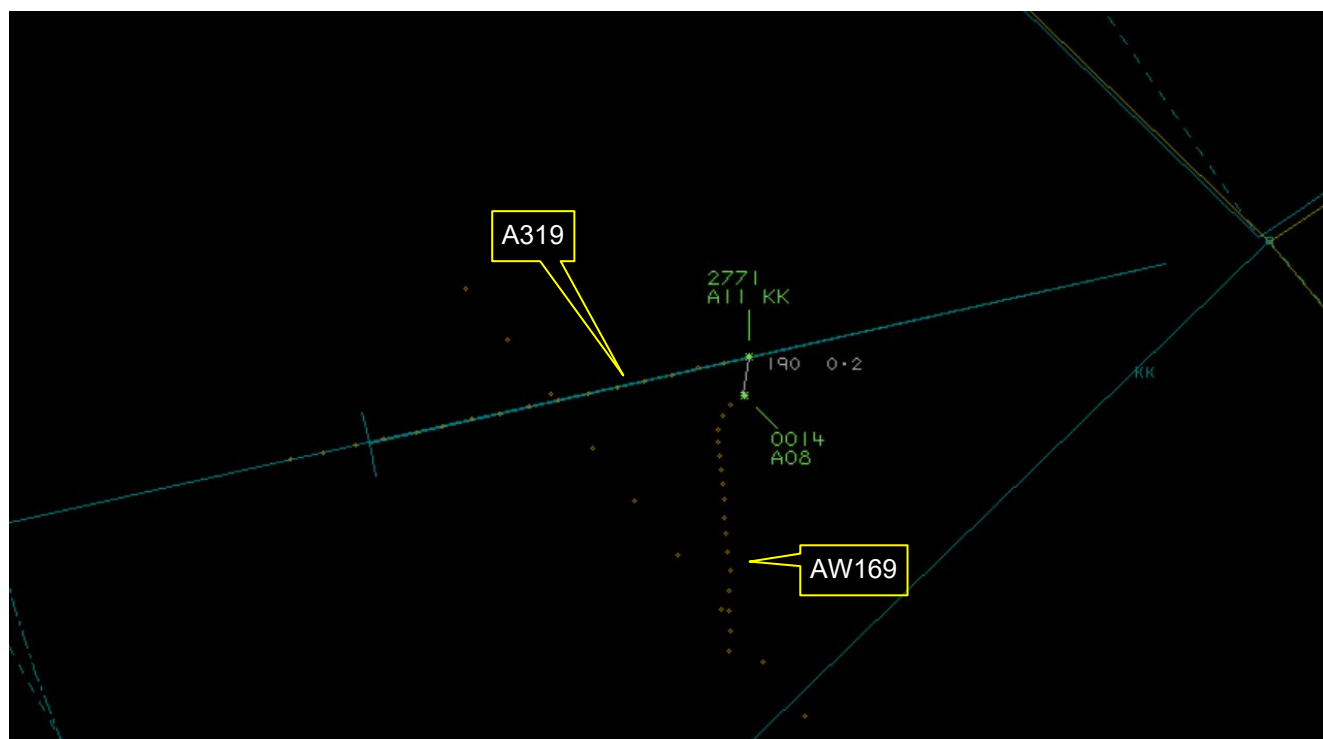


Figure 3: At CPA (1109:12) 300ft V/0.2NM H

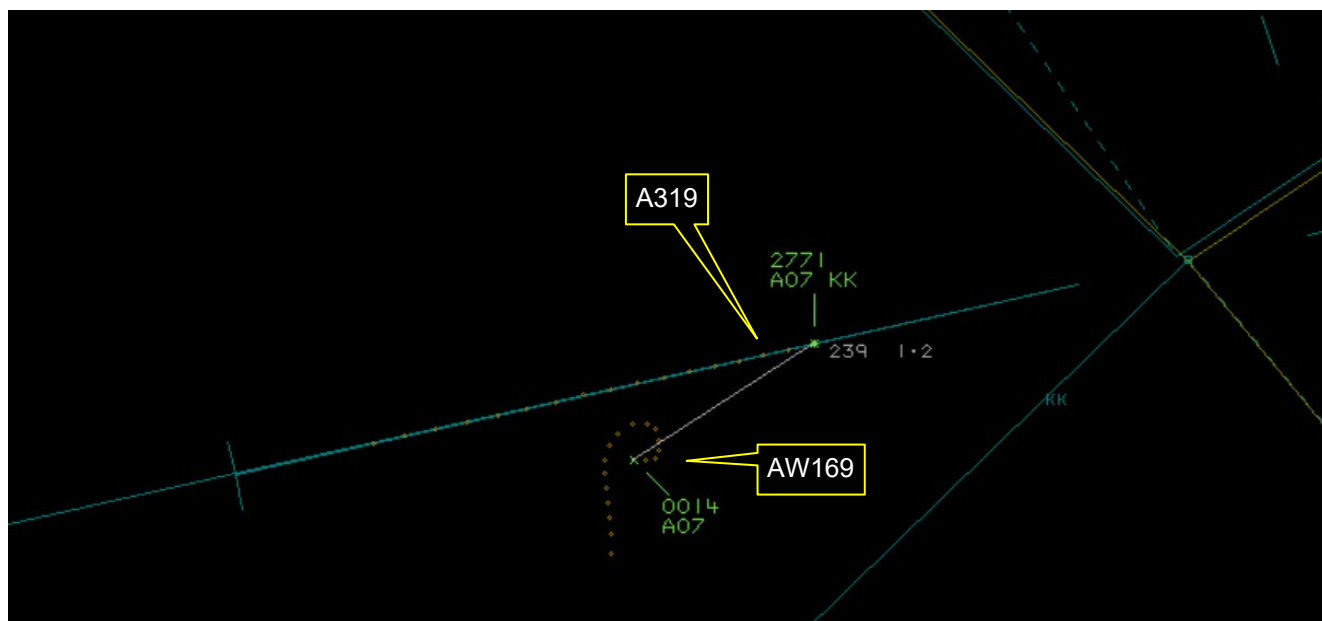


Figure 4: At CPA + 30sec

Both aircraft were tracked by radar and identified through Mode S data. Figure 3 shows CPA and Figure 4 shows the AW169 performing their right-hand orbit to position having completed their overhead recce as described by the reporting pilot.

The A319 and AW169 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 A319 and an AW169 flew into proximity 3NM WSW of Gatwick Airport at 1109Z on Sunday 24th May 2026. The A319 pilot was operating under IFR in VMC and the AW169 pilot was operating under VFR in VMC; both pilots were in receipt of a Radar Control Service from Gatwick Approach.

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 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.

Members discussed the event from all perspectives. They noted that the A319 pilot had been established on their final approach to Gatwick RW08R and had been alerted to the presence of the AW169 which had raised proximity concerns (**CF4**) despite reassurance from the Gatwick Approach controller. These concerns were reinforced through a Traffic Alert within their TCAS unit (**CF5**). The Board accepted that this phase of flight is more demanding on the crew and the distraction wrought through the AW169's presence, without gaining visual contact with it (**CF6**), had led to their discomfort. Members felt that the controller had been fully aware of the dynamic situation and had offered reassurance to the A319 pilot that the AW169 pilot had been aiming for a landing site 1km to the south of the centreline but felt that the AW169 pilot could have alerted the controller to their landing site reconnaissance which, whilst remaining to the south, would have impinged on that 1km lateral clearance (**CF2**). That information would have allowed the A319 pilot to either be comforted by its accuracy or would have allowed them to make the decision to go around if they had remained concerned (**CF3**). The AW169 pilot had been tasked as a priority to a landing site to the south of the centreline and had sought and gained VFR access to Class D airspace whilst remaining in radio contact

¹ (UK) SERA.3205 Proximity.

with the Gatwick Approach controller to enable safe passage of 2-way RT. They had visually acquired the approaching A319 and had been satisfied that their planned reconnaissance and landing would not put them into conflict with it. The AW169 pilot reported that they had received a TCAS Traffic Alert (**CF5**) but had been comfortable that there had been no direct risk of collision.

The Board noted that the Gatwick Approach controller had received an STCA indication (**CF1**) confirming the relative positions of the 2 aircraft and had elected to keep both aircraft on the same frequency as they had been reluctant to change frequency for both aircraft whilst one pilot had not visually acquired the other.

Concluding their discussion, members appreciated that the A319 pilot had been unable to visually acquire the AW169 having been warned of its presence by their TCAS and through Traffic Information from the Approach controller and had been uncomfortable that their approach would bring the two aircraft into proximity at this stage of their flight. The Board also acknowledged that the AW169 had been acting as a Category A flight, its crew had been visual with the A319, they had been operating as VFR traffic in Class D airspace and had confirmed that they would remain to the south of the approach lane. Members were satisfied by the actions taken by the controller to ensure both aircraft remained on the same frequency, that the separation between the aircraft had remained adequate and that there had been no risk of collision. The Board assigned Risk Category E to this event and members agreed on the following contributory factors:

CF1. The NATS radar Short Term Conflict Alert (STCA) activated during this event.

CF2. The AW169 pilot could have been clearer that their site reconnaissance would take them closer to the RW08R approach lane.

CF3. The A319 pilot could have elected to go around if uncomfortable with the proximity of the AW169.

CF4. The A319 pilot had been concerned by the proximity of the AW169.

CF5. Both the A319 and the AW169 TCAS had given a Traffic Alert indication.

CF6. The A319 pilot did not visually acquire the AW169.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK

Contributory Factors:

	2026078			
CF	Factor	Description	ECCAIRS Amplification	UKAB Amplification
	Ground Elements			
	• Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance			
1	Technical	• STCA Warning	An event involving the triggering of a Short-Term Conflict Alert (STCA) Warning	
	Flight Elements			
	• Tactical Planning and Execution			
2	Human Factors	• Accuracy of Communication	Events involving flight crew using inaccurate communication - wrong or incomplete information provided	Ineffective communication of intentions
3	Human Factors	• Insufficient Decision/Plan	Events involving flight crew not making a sufficiently detailed decision or plan to meet the needs of the situation	Inadequate plan adaption
	• Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action			
4	Human Factors	• Unnecessary Action	Events involving flight crew performing an action that was not required	Pilot was concerned by the proximity of the other aircraft
	• Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance			

5	Contextual	• ACAS/TCAS TA	An event involving a genuine airborne collision avoidance system/traffic alert and collision avoidance system traffic advisory warning triggered	
• See and Avoid				
6	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

Degree of Risk: E.

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:

Flight Elements:

Tactical Planning and Execution was assessed as **partially effective** because the A319 pilot could have elected to go around and the AW169 pilot could have been clear that, although their landing site was 1km south of the centreline, their area reconnaissance would draw them closer.

Airprox Barrier Assessment: 2026078		Within Controlled Airspace				
		Barrier	Provision	Application	Effectiveness Barrier Weighting	
					0%	20%
Ground Element		Regulations, Processes, Procedures and Compliance	✓	✓	100%	
		Manning & Equipment	✓	✓	75%	
		Situational Awareness of the Conflication & Action	✓	✓	75%	
		Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance	✓	✓	50%	
Flight Element		Regulations, Processes, Procedures and Compliance	✓	✓	25%	
		Tactical Planning and Execution	✓	⚠	25%	
		Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft & Action	✓	✓	50%	
		Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance	✓	✓	75%	
		See & Avoid	✓	✓	25%	
Key:		Full	Partial	None	Not Present/Not Assessable	Not Used
Provision		✓	⚠	✗	●	
Application		✓	⚠	✗	●	○
Effectiveness		■	■	■	■	■

² The UK Airprox Board scheme for assessing the Availability, Functionality and Effectiveness of safety barriers can be found on the [UKAB Website](#).