

Beyond visual line of sight unmanned aircraft systems operations in EG D128 - Everleigh

Airspace change decision

CAP 1612

A large, abstract graphic composed of overlapping, semi-transparent blue shapes in various shades, ranging from light cyan to deep navy blue, filling the bottom two-thirds of the page.

Published by the Civil Aviation Authority, 2017

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CAA decision: Beyond visual line of sight unmanned aircraft systems operations in EG D128 - Everleigh

1. This document details the CAA decision regarding the Defence Infrastructure Organisation Service Delivery Training (DIO SD TRG) proposal to conduct Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) within EG D128. The aims of the proposal are to enable to Danger Areas associated with the Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) to be used more efficiently to meet military training requirements, enable BVLOS UAS training to be conducted closer to the ground training facilities and to utilise the most appropriate runway within the SPTA for larger BVLOS UAS. The proposal would result in the upper level of EG D128 being temporarily extended to 2500 ft for a period not exceeding 8 weeks per year for small UAS and in addition, extended to FL80 for a period not exceeding 8 weeks per year for large UAS. The CAA agrees with the Sponsor's assessment that the proposed changes will have a minimal impact to General Aviation operating in the vicinity of EG D128 and that by capping the maximum vertical extent of the Danger Area to FL 80 for BVLOS UAS, there is no requirement to consider the Special Use Airspace – Safety Buffer Policy for Airspace Design Purposes.
2. An operational assessment was conducted that fully considers the operational impacts of the change. The interest of all Operators and Owners¹ and relevant Air Traffic Service providers² has been considered, alongside the CAA's National Security³ and International responsibilities and obligations⁴. The assessment indicates that this change proposal will have minimal impact in terms of access to the airspace to other airspace users.
3. The Sponsor engaged with neighbouring aerodromes and gliding clubs within 20 nm of EG D128. All responses confirmed that the proposal would not adversely impact their aviation activities. The AIP ENR 5.1 currently facilitates the occasional activation of EG D128 up to a maximum vertical limit of 50,000 ft. The proposal restricts the number of occasions that the vertical extent of EG D128 would be temporarily increased to accommodate BVLOS UAS activity, and is therefore considered within the scope of 'occasional' as described in the AIP. The proposal does not seek to change the dimensions of the subject Danger

¹ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(b)

² Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(e)

³ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(f)

⁴ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(g)

Area. For these reasons the CAA concluded that no formal consultation was required.

4. The operational assessment indicates that there are no discernible environmental impacts as a result of the proposed change.
5. A safety assessment was conducted by the sponsor which identified the potential risks associated with the change. Extant mitigation measures used for the operation of Visual Line of Sight (VLOS) UAS and other military activity has been extended to include the operation of BVLOS UAS.
6. Having fully considered its responsibilities under Section 70 of the Transport Act 2000 (the Transport Act), the CAA (Air Navigation) Directions 2001, as varied in 2004 (the 2002 Directions), and the 2014 Guidance to the CAA on Environmental Objectives relating to the exercise of its air navigation functions (the 2014 Guidance)⁵, the CAA is content to support the proposal to allow BVLOS UAS within EG D128 with the following conditions:
 - 6.1 EG D128 shall not be activated for BVLOS UAS >20 kg in excess of 40 days per year unless DIO SD TRG declares that there is an Urgent Operational Requirement.
 - 6.2 EG D128 shall not be activated for BVLOS UAS <20 kg in excess of 40 days per year unless DIO SD TRG declares that there is an Urgent Operational Requirement.
 - 6.3 DIO SG TRG shall maintain a record of BVLOS UAS activity within EG D128, including the times of activation and the maximum vertical limit. This record is to be made available to the CAA on request.
 - 6.4 EG D128 shall not be activated above FL 80 for BVLOS UAS activity.
7. The approval to conduct BVLOS UAS within EG D128 will become effective on 1 March 2018.

Civil Aviation Authority

29 November 2017

⁵ Revised in 2014 by the Department for Transport