

FRAMEWORK BRIEFING NOTES FOR EG D128 AIRSPACE CHANGE PROPOSAL

Introduction

1. DIO SD Training, as sponsor for Danger Area EGD128 Everleigh, presented a Framework Briefing to the Safety & Airspace Regulation Group on Tues 27 Jun 17. The brief outlined the intent to operate Beyond Visual Line Of Sight (BVLOS) Remotely Piloted Air Systems (RPAS) within EG D128. The following points were explained:

Requirement

2. To operate BVLOS RPAS within D128.
3. Approval to conduct such activities will allow for increased training by:
 - a. Extending the present BVLOS training area across the Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) to align with ground training areas without changing the airspace design.
 - b. Facilitate the training of ab initio RPAS students in an area adjacent to their ground school.
 - c. Provide a suitable location for the training of pilots of larger RPAS to operate under austere conditions from a remote location

Flight Profiles

4. All flying will be restricted to remain within the lateral boundaries of D128. Below FL 85 the D128 structure does not encroach within 5nm of Controlled Airspace and therefore DIO SD TRG considers that the CAA Buffer Policy does not need to be applied for activity below this level.

Operations

5. For Mini RPAS training, the requirement is expected to be up to 8 weeks per year, operating up to a maximum altitude of 2500ft ASML and promulgated by NOTAM. For these activities, a Restricted Operating Zone (ROZ)¹, the dimensions of which will be the minimum required to achieve the training objectives, will be established within the boundaries of D128. Mini RPAS have operated successfully in the adjacent SPTA areas for many years using technology proven, without failure, to keep the air system within its allocated area. The RPAS will automatically return to a pre-programmed location if communications are lost and flight may also be terminated at any time if considered necessary.

6. When considered appropriate, radio-equipped air sentries may be deployed to alert operators of any approaching aircraft.

7. Training for RPAS users from an austere site within D128 will also be practised for a maximum of 8 weeks per year. This will require an additional operating height of up to FL 80.

8. The AIP lists the upper level of D128 as 1400ft, with occasional use up to 50,000ft. BVLOS RPAS operations will require use of the Danger Area up to the altitudes/levels stated in paragraphs 5 and 7, which will be promulgated by NOTAM.

Other D128 Airspace Users

¹ ROZs are used to deconflict multiple military operations within the SPTAs.

9. All military users of the SPTA are prioritized by Joint Helicopter Command (JHC) and de-conflicted as required by SPTA Air Ops.
10. Private operators can continue to function in accordance with established or revised LoAs. General aviation traffic wishing to transit the area will be accommodated as per paragraph 12.

Effects on General Aviation (GA)

11. The closest civil airport to D128 is Thrupton which has co-existed for many years without detriment to either party. The airport publishes arrival and departure procedures which include the requirement to call Boscombe Down, who can provide an ATS or flight information as required. There is no foreseen requirement for existing procedures or flight profiles to be amended. Thrupton ATZ currently overlaps with D126 in which BVLOS RPAS ops are conducted as stated in the AIP ENR 5.1. Adoption of the same operating procedures for BVLOS within D128 will provide the same safety mitigations and therefore it is considered that there will be no impact to Thrupton.
12. From statistical data, there has, to date, been very little requirement for GA traffic to transit either through, or above, D128. Nevertheless, any such requests will be accommodated wherever possible, as per current practices. As previously stated at Paragraphs 5 & 7, Mini RPAS ops will not be above 2500ft and austere location operations will only require a FL80 upper level for specific phases of flight.

Air Safety

13. Radar coverage of SPTA is provided from the adjacent facility at Boscombe Down. The SPTA Air Operations Cell currently displays the Secondary Surveillance Radar (SSR) picture from this source, but the system will be enhanced in due course to receive Primary & Secondary Radar data - provisional date Aug 18. Additionally, Boscombe Down will provide an ATS to RPAS pilots for collision avoidance where practicable.
14. A DACS is available on both VHF & UHF during operating hours. A DAAIS is available on frequency or by telephone out of hours.
15. Several years of operating experience with various BVLOS RPAS in adjacent training areas has perfected proven emergency recovery procedures. These will also be replicated for all RPAS training conducted within D128.

Actions Arising

16. The following actions were determined during the course of the meeting:
 - a. DIO SD Training to provide supporting data to the CAA to verify the sponsors intent not to consider the Buffer policy for airspace design.
 - b. The CAA would provide advice on the degree of consultation is required.