



ACP-2021-078 Enabling Remotely Piloted Aircraft System Operations from RAF Fairford - HALE

6 August 2024

[STATEMENT]

The airspace change proposal (ACP) to implement the EDG218 complex (segments A-D) was approved for notification on 16 February 2024. During the CAA's assessment, the sponsor identified a requirement to activate the EDG218 complex in August 2024 for two operational flights. Before the airspace can be activated for the two operational flights in August 2024, the sponsor will need to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of the February 2024 decision, including the provision of suitable airspace arrangements to facilitate entry and exit routes into and out of the EDG218 complex.

The sponsor confirmed that the proposed airspace structures will have some impact on Commercial Air Transport (CAT) in adjacent airspace. However, since publication of the EDG218 complex in the Aeronautical Information Publication, an impacted stakeholder (Birmingham Airport) has identified additional impacts to CAT operations in and out of Birmingham Airport. Several meetings have been held between the sponsor, NATS and Birmingham Airport to discuss the impacts and any possible mitigations that may be required, including changes to the approved EDG218 complex.

The two operational flights in August 2024 are planned to go ahead, subject to the conditions being met by the sponsor for activation in the ACP decision dated 16 February 2024. However, to allow for additional data to be collected from the two operational flights in August 2024 including engagement feedback from airport operators, the sponsor has agreed to carry out a Stage 7 Post Implementation Review (PIR) on completion of the two August 2024 activations. This PIR is in addition to the standard PIR requirement as documented in the ACP decision dated 16 February 2024 (which typically takes place 12 months after implementation).

The CAA has considered its statutory duties under the Air Navigation Directions 2017 and section 70 of the Transport Act 2000. In summary, the ACP remains approved for notification as per the decision dated 16 February 2024. Approval to activate the notified airspace structures by NOTAM for the two operational flights in August 2024 are conditional on the sponsor providing evidence that the conditions are met and all relevant evidence is submitted and assessed by CAA Airspace Regulation. In addition, two further conditions are placed on the approval to reflect engagement feedback from Birmingham Airport about impacts and possible mitigations:

1. The sponsor must conduct a PIR following the two operational flights in August 2024 and submit all necessary information for the PIR to the CAA by **01 October 2024**. This PIR is in addition to the standard PIR requirement as documented in the ACP decision dated 16 February 2024.
2. The PIR requirements stipulated in the February Decision are amended as set out under the 'PIR Requirements' heading below.

There are several outcomes that could apply to Stage 7 following the PIR for the two operational flights in August 2024. For example, the CAA may require modifications to the EDG218 complex to better achieve the objective and terms of the CAA's approval.

PIR Requirements

- Traffic impact analysis for EDG218 complex with specific focus on impacts to the Birmingham airport operations, to include:
 - Data on air traffic delays.
 - Details of additional resource allocated.
 - Engagement feedback from airport operators.
 - Analysis of additional track miles flown due to activation of the Danger Area (DA).
- Record of occurrences of any airspace activation period that is subsequently unused, including duration of activation prior to cancellation and reasons for cancellation, i.e. weather, air system unserviceability, etc.
- Requests for Danger Area Crossing Services supported and unsupported, with reasoning if unsupported.
- Separate detailed records of all inadvertent excursions from each DA.
- Separate detailed records of all unauthorised incursions of each DA.
- Noting the approval for dispensation from the SARG SUA Safety Buffer Policy, a report will be required to indicate compliance with the dispensation criteria, to include detailed records of all deviations from the dispensation to the Safety Buffer Policy.
- Conduct analysis of the flight parameters for the US HALE RPA to establish the suitability of the DA design.
- Review the relevant LoAs for the management and notification procedures.

[END STATEMENT]