



All NATMAC Representatives

30 November 2011

CAA DECISION LETTER

Dear Stakeholders,

HARMONISATION OF SOUTH EAST ENGLAND TRANSITION ALTITUDE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Information Notice 2011/098 issued 20 September 2011 advised that NATS had submitted an Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) for changes affecting the airspace in the southeast corner of the London FIR beneath the Worthing and Clacton Control Areas (CTAs). Upon receipt of the proposal, my staff undertook a detailed analysis of the operational requirements, the environmental assessments and the consultation process. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with an overview of the proposal and my subsequent decision on it.

2 PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

- 2.1 This change seeks to harmonise the Transition Altitude beneath the Worthing and Clacton CTAs at 6000ft. Elements of the Worthing and Clacton CTAs will be redesignated to become part of the London TMA, which will also incorporate parts of airways L9 and L620 to more effectively manage this volume of airspace. The proposal also seeks to rationalise the definition of existing Class C airspace above the London TMA, and the Clacton, Worthing and Daventry CTAs. It should be noted that no new controlled airspace or changes to airspace classification are included in this proposal.

3 STATUTORY DUTIES

- 3.1 My statutory duties are set out in Section 70 of the Transport Act 2000 (the Act), the CAA (Air Navigation) Directions 2001, as varied in 2004 (the Directions), and Guidance to the CAA on Environmental Objectives relating to the exercise of its air navigation functions.¹

¹ Issued in 2002 by the DfT (then called the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions) (the Guidance).

3.2 Safety

3.2.1 My primary duty is to maintain a high standard of safety in the provision of air traffic services and this takes primacy over all other duties.² In this respect, I am content that the proposed airspace design is appropriate for the intended use.

3.3 Airspace Efficiency

3.3.1 I am required to secure the most efficient use of the airspace consistent with the safe operation of aircraft and the expeditious flow of air traffic.³ The changes in this proposal do not affect flight patterns in this area and thus airspace efficiency will be maintained.

3.4 Airspace Users

3.4.1 I am required to satisfy the requirements of operators and owners of all classes of aircraft.⁴ The Sponsor conducted extensive consultation with all affected stakeholder aviation groups as part of the design process. The concerns expressed by the Light Aircraft Association (LAA) and the British Gliding Association (BGA) have been properly considered and I have concluded that the benefit to the majority of airspace users in this instance outweighs those concerns. The main benefits of this proposal are:

- This airspace change will enhance safety, by simplifying airspace structures and boundaries in this region, and ensuring that within and beneath the designated airspace, all aircraft will use the same Transition Altitude. This removes possible operational confusion in this complex area due to the current differences in applicable Transition Altitude and reduces the risk of vertical infringement of Controlled Airspace due to use of the incorrect Transition Altitude.
- For airfields situated below Controlled Airspace in this area, their Transition Altitude will change to reflect the Controlled Airspace above and therefore become 6,000ft. This will simplify their airfield operations and within the adjacent airspace beneath the CTAs.
- It progresses CAA policy to harmonise Transition Altitude inside and outside UK Controlled Airspace.
- A further temporary advantage is to simplify operations below Controlled Airspace in the South East of England prior to the 2012 Olympic Games.

3.4.2 It is important to note that this harmonisation initiative is being conducted in the context of raising the Transition Altitude nationally to a much higher level⁵ (e.g. 18000ft). The national initiative will be preceded by a separate policy consultation and implementation proposal that will enable a redesign of all Standard Instrument Departures, such that aircraft (where possible) will benefit from an unrestricted climb. This has significant environmental benefits in terms of reduced CO₂ emissions and fuel burn. This should also result in aircraft gaining height more rapidly and will trigger a review of airspace base height that may increase the airspace available to general aviation.

² Transport Act 2000, Section 70(1).

³ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(a).

⁴ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(b).

⁵ Planned for winter 2013/Spring 2014, subject to stakeholder consultation.

3.5 Interests of Other Parties

- 3.5.1 I am required to take account of the interests of any person (other than an owner or operator of an aircraft) in relation to the use of any particular airspace or the use of airspace generally. Apart from redefining some controlled airspace base heights which are currently defined as Flight Levels to the equivalent Altitude (e.g. FL55 becomes 5500ft) there is no change to existing controlled airspace dimensions in this proposal.

The rationalisation of the existing Class C airspace is limited to simplification of airspace depiction on relevant charts and of tabular data in the AIP. NATS advise there will be no material change in overall distribution of traffic through this region.

3.6 Environmental Objectives

- 3.6.1 In performing my statutory duties, I am obliged to take account of the Guidance provided by the Secretary of State⁶ - see para 4 below.

3.7 Integrated Operation of ATS

- 3.7.1 I am required to facilitate the integrated operation of air traffic services provided by, or on behalf of, the armed forces of the Crown and other air traffic services.⁷ Interaction with other ATS providers will be accommodated in the same fashion as at present, via extant ATC liaison procedures and/or specific arrangements between ATS Units.

3.8 National Security

- 3.8.1 I am required to take into account the impact that any airspace change may have on matters of national security.⁸ There are no national security issues identified; I am therefore satisfied that national security requirements will not be jeopardised by implementation of the change.

3.9 International Obligations

- 3.9.1 I am required to take into account any international obligations entered into by the UK and notified by the Secretary of State.⁹ These changes occur wholly within UK airspace and do not affect our Neighbour States in this area.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 This change will not affect the way aircraft fly, either vertically or laterally in the prescribed region. IFR flights would fly the same routes and vertical profiles as today. As the position/height of aircraft will not change, there will be no change to noise exposure, CO2 emissions or local air quality.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Sponsor undertook a NATMAC consultation between 8th April 2011 and 1st July 2011 in accordance with the requirements of CAPs 724 and 725. Given that the

⁶ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(d)

⁷ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(e).

⁸ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(f).

⁹ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(g).

changes were at low level and in the main over the English Channel beneath existing controlled airspace, the proposal had little relevance to a large number of representatives. Of the original 35 primary stakeholders, 14 responded: of these responses, 5 supported the proposal and 7 did not object or had no comment. There were 2 objections. The objections were properly considered and I have concluded that the benefit to the majority of airspace users in this instance outweighs those concerns.

6. REGULATORY DECISION

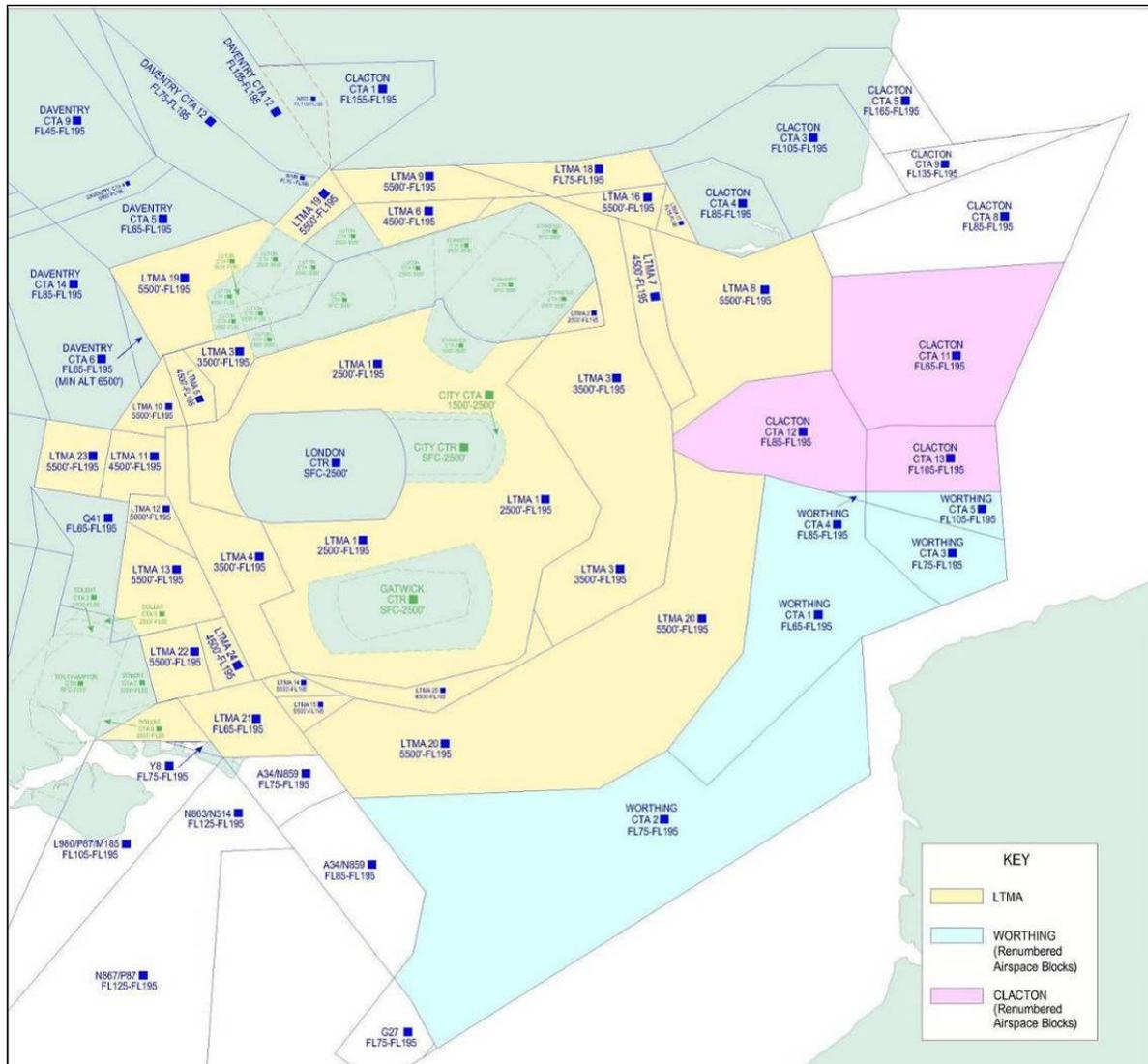
- 6.1 I am content that the proposed airspace design is safe, which satisfies my primary statutory duty. Thereafter, when considering the competing demands of my remaining duties, together with the Directions and Guidance, I am satisfied that the changes and the operational arrangements that have been proposed represent an improvement to the existing airspace structure. I am therefore satisfied that operational benefits will be delivered and consequently, the harmonisation of Transition Altitude in southeast England and the proposals for rationalisation of the existing Class C airspace as proposed was accepted in its entirety. I have therefore approved this change proposal.
- 6.2 The revised airspace will become effective from 8th March 2012 (AIRAC 3/2012 and will be promulgated via a double AIRAC cycle. If you have any queries, the DAP Project Leader, Mr Colin Cordery, may be contacted on 020 7453 6551, or via e mail: colin.cordery@caa.co.uk .

Yours sincerely,

Mark Swan

Mark Swan
Director

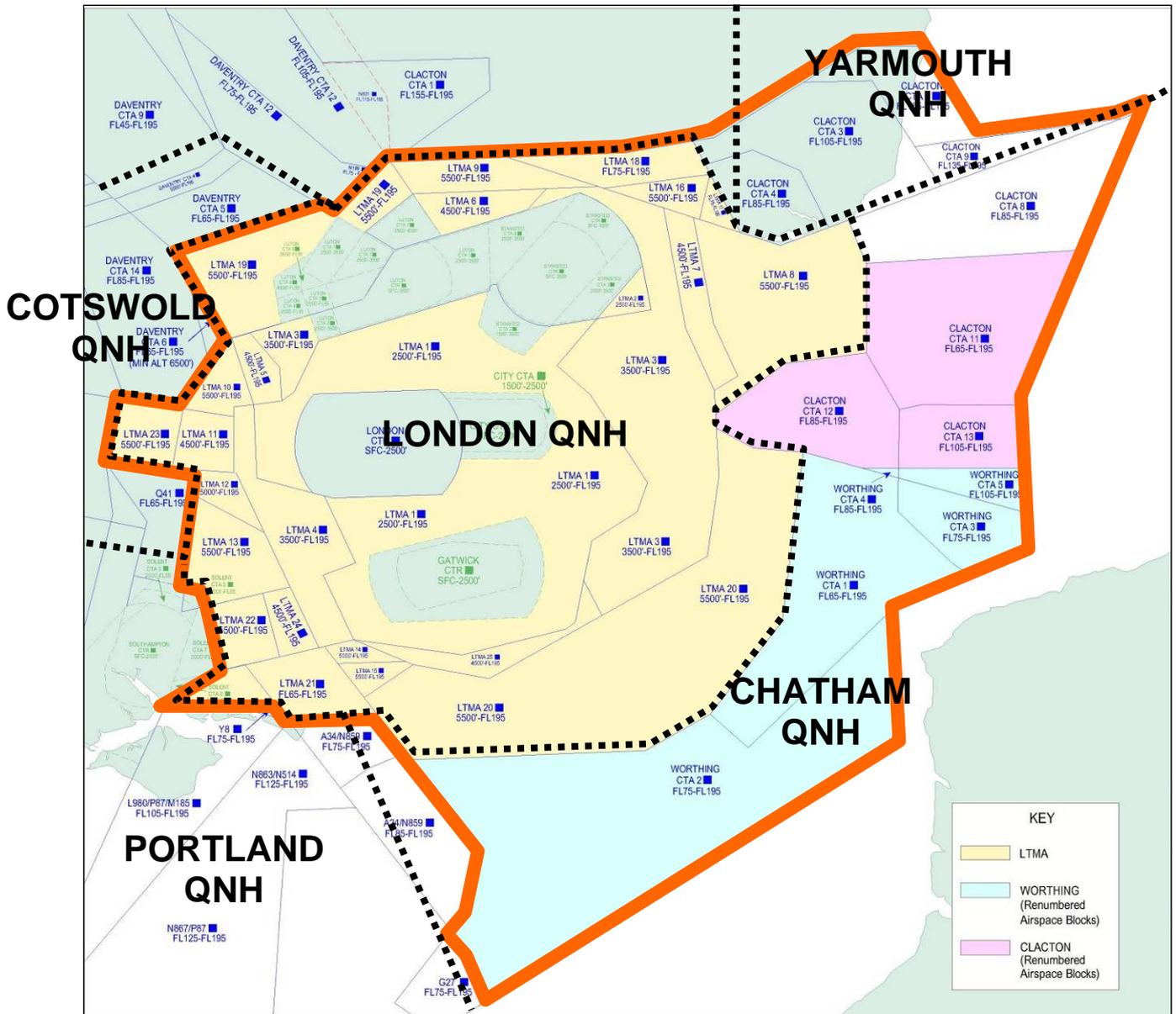
Figure 1 Redefinition of London TMA



Note: No new Controlled Airspace will be established as a result of this airspace redefinition. It should also be noted that there are no changes to routes or procedures.

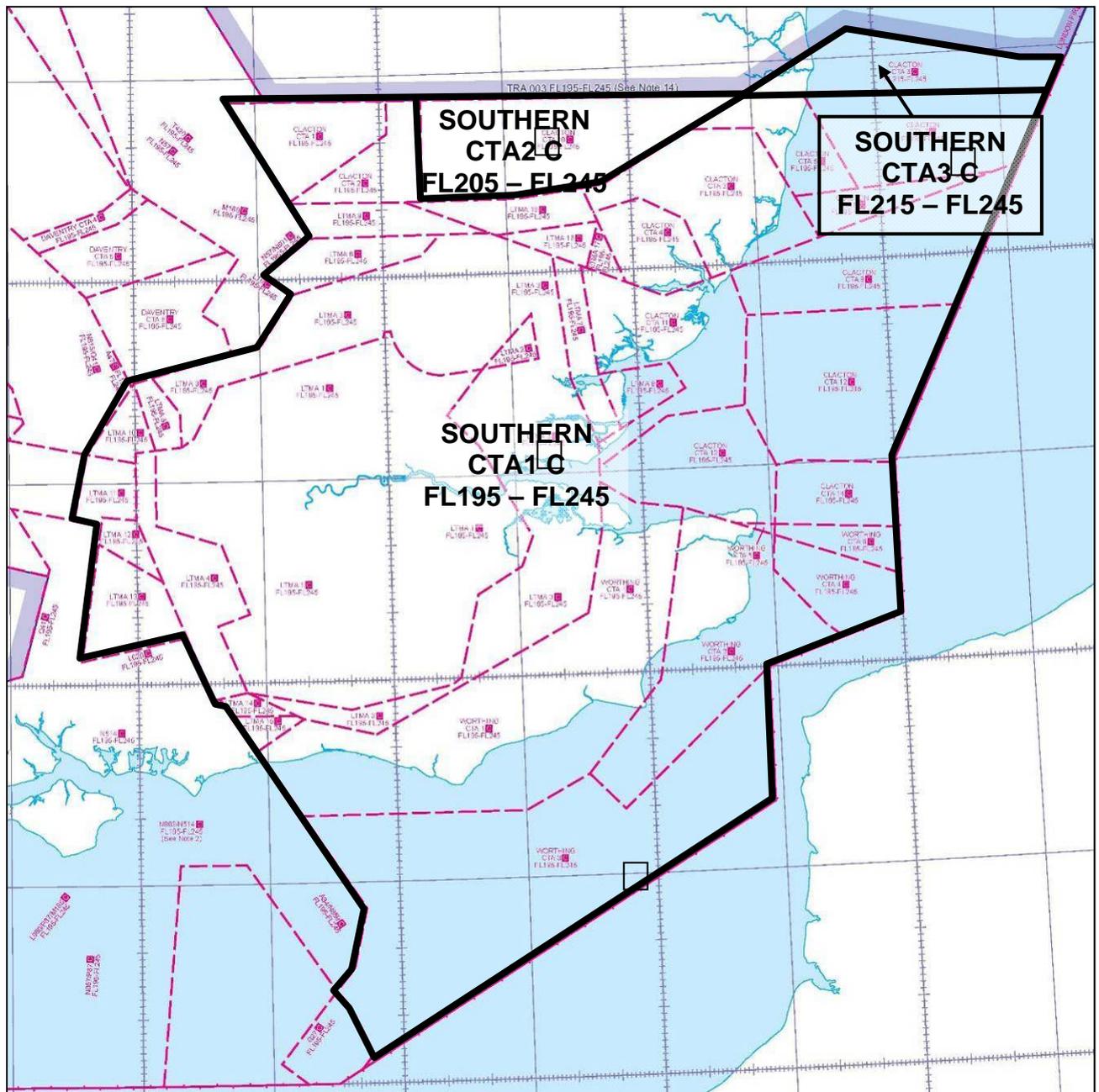
Figure 2 Applicability of 6,000ft Transition Altitude

The orange outline indicates the proposed configuration where a 6,000ft TA will apply.



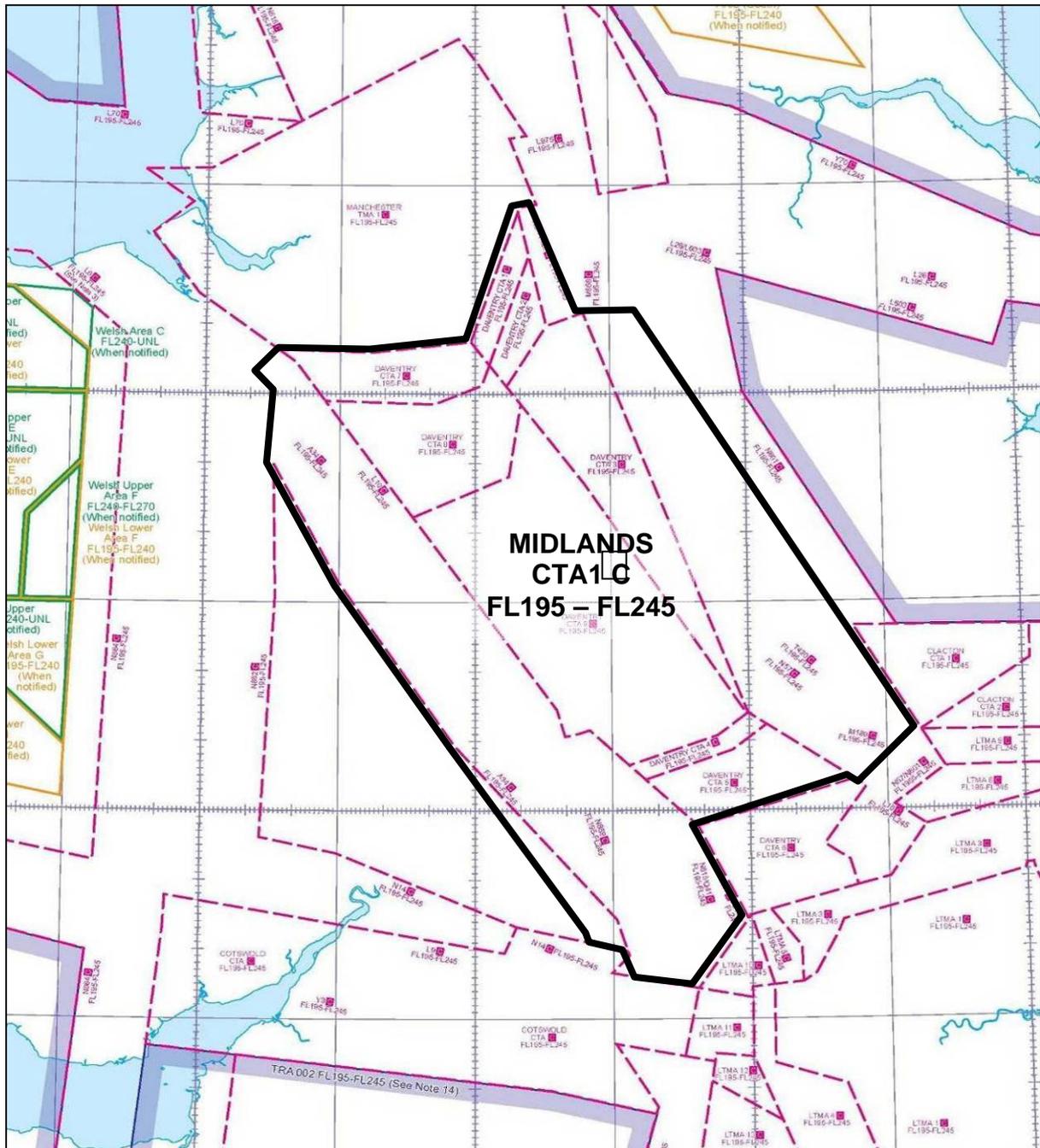
Note: Within CAS, procedures will remain unchanged from present operation. No new Controlled Airspace will be established as a result of this airspace redefinition. There are no changes to routes or procedures.

Figure 3 UK Southeast configuration FL195 – FL245



Note: No new Controlled Airspace will be established as a result of this airspace redefinition. There are no changes to routes or procedures.

Figure 4 UK Midlands configuration FL195 – FL245



Note: No new Controlled Airspace will be established as a result of this airspace redefinition. There are no changes to routes or procedures.