

Monthly water situation report: Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Area

1 Summary - February 2026

February was an exceptionally wet month across the Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Area, with rainfall totals exceeding twice the long term average.

This continued the very wet conditions experienced throughout winter, resulting in saturated soils and widespread exceptionally high river flows and groundwater levels. Several river flow and groundwater monitoring sites recorded their highest February levels on record. Reservoir stocks across the area remained healthy and at or above their normal operating curves.

1.1 Rainfall

Rainfall during February was reasonably distributed throughout the month, with multiple rainfall events contributing to the total rather than a single prolonged and intense period. The most significant rainfall occurred around 5 and 27 February, although rainfall was recorded somewhere in the area on every day of the month.

Across the Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Area (LNA), total rainfall was 93mm (221% of the long term average, LTA). This is classified as exceptionally high and represents the sixth wettest February on record.

At the catchment scale, the eastern hydrological areas fell within slightly lower classification bandings. The Steeping, Great Eau and Long Eau received 202% of LTA, while the South Forty Foot and Hobhole recorded 207% of LTA, placing both in the notably high banding.

Looking at longer-term accumulations, the winter period (November to February) is now the wettest on record, exceeding the previous record (2024) by 46mm. The six-month period from September to February ranks as the fourth wettest on record, reflecting the strong influence of the wet winter following an exceptionally dry summer. This pattern is further illustrated in the longer-term rainfall maps, which shows 12-month totals within the normal to above normal range.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

Soil moisture deficit (SMD) remained very low throughout February, reflecting the persistently wet winter conditions. Across the area the mean SMD at the end of the month was 4mm, compared to 2mm at the end of January.

All hydrological areas were classified within the normal to below normal deficit range for the time of year, indicating soils close to field capacity across much of the area. These conditions limited the capacity of soils to absorb rainfall and contributed to rapid runoff responses in rivers.

1.3 River flows

River flows across the area responded strongly to the exceptionally high rainfall totals recorded during February. Monthly mean flows increased to exceptionally high levels across most of the area, compared to January, when flows were largely above normal to notably high. Daily mean flows remained elevated throughout the month due to the persistence of rainfall and saturated catchment conditions.

Of the 12 indicator sites, 75% (nine sites) recorded exceptionally high monthly mean flows, while the remaining three sites, located in the north-east of the area, returned notably high flows.

In total, four sites recorded their highest February mean flow on record, including sites on the River Welland (Ashley, Barrowden/Tixover and Kates Bridge/King Street), and Langworth on the Barlings Eau. The remaining key sites, such as those on the River Nene, were comparable to monthly means observed in February 2024.

1.4 Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels across all monitored aquifers were above normal to exceptionally high during February, continuing the upward trend observed in January, when most sites ended the month within the above normal to notably high range.

One monitoring site, Hanthorpe in the Lincolnshire Limestone, returned its highest groundwater levels on record for February, while Grainsby in the chalk remained with above normal levels since January.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

Reservoir storage across the region remained generally healthy. Pitsford and Hollowell reservoirs were both operating at 100% capacity by the end of the month. Covenham Reservoir remained below its seasonal control curve.

1.6 Environmental impact

During February 2026 a total of 45 Flood Alerts and 13 Flood Warnings were issued across the area. The most significant activity occurred between 5 and 7 February and again around 28 February. All water transfer schemes remained switched off throughout the month. No abstraction licence cessations were issued.

1.7 Forward look

1.7.1 Projections for river flows at key sites

March 2026: Model projections indicate a high likelihood of higher than normal flows across all forecast sites during March. Under below average rainfall scenarios (60 to 80% of LTA), most sites are projected to remain within the normal to exceptionally high flow range. Under average to wetter scenarios (100 to 120% of LTA), flows at most sites are projected to fall within the notably high to exceptionally high range.

June 2026: Model projections indicate an increased probability of above normal flows across the forecast sites. Under below average to average rainfall scenarios (60 to 100% of LTA), flows at most sites are projected to fall within the normal range. Under a wetter scenario (120% of LTA), sites show a greater likelihood of above normal flows.

1.7.2 Projections for groundwater levels in key aquifers

March 2026: Model projections indicate a high likelihood of groundwater levels remaining exceptionally high across the key aquifers by March. Across all four rainfall scenarios (60 to 120% of LTA), groundwater levels at the forecast sites are projected to fall within the exceptionally high banding.

September 2026: Model projections suggest a greater probability of groundwater levels remaining higher than normal in September. Under below average rainfall scenarios (60 to 80% of LTA), most sites are projected to remain within the normal to above normal range. Under average to above average rainfall scenarios (100 to 120% of LTA), groundwater levels at most sites show an increased likelihood of remaining above normal or higher.

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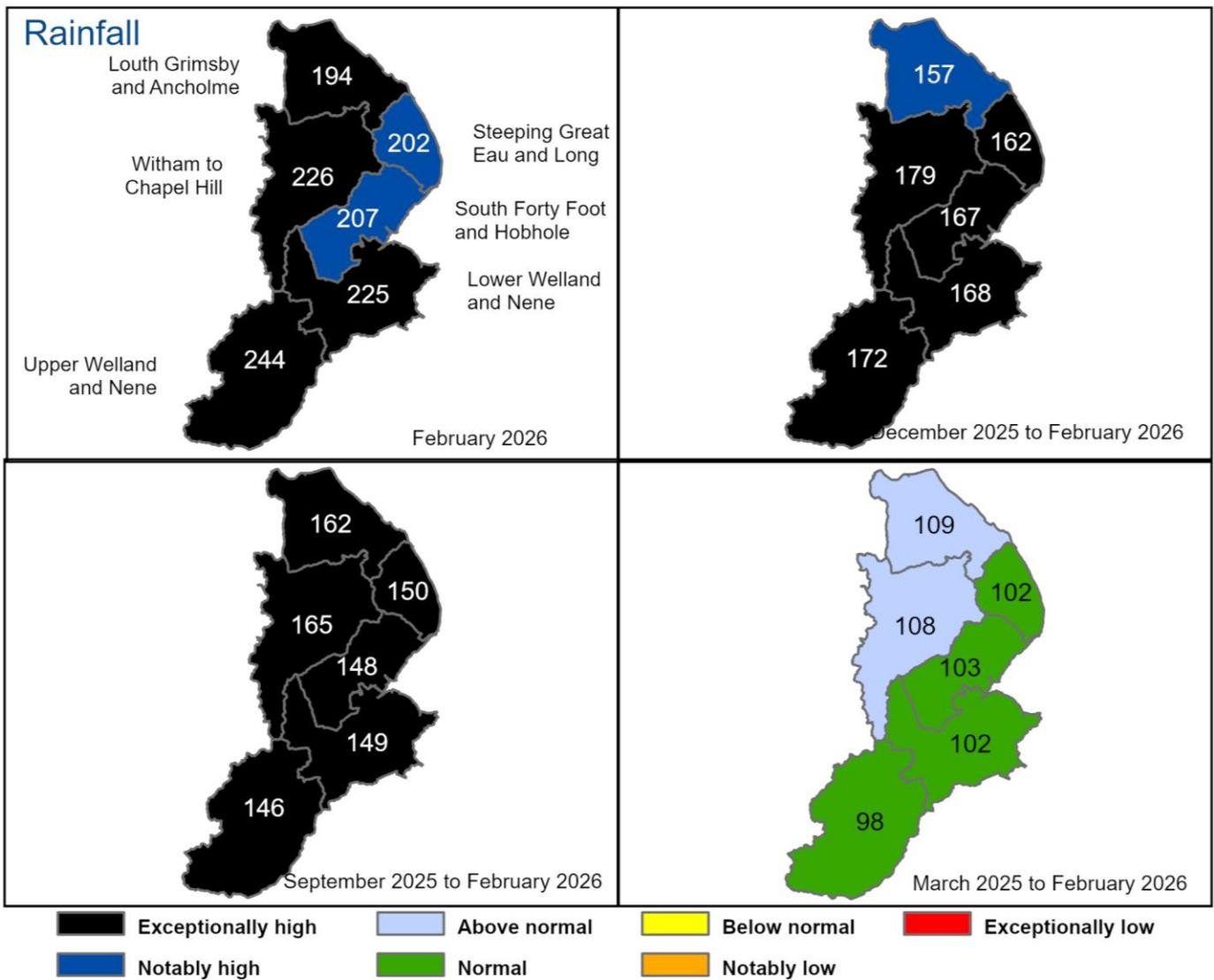
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Contact Details: 03708 506 506

2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas across Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, expressed as a percentage of long term average rainfall for the current month (up to 28 February 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months. Category classes are based on an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

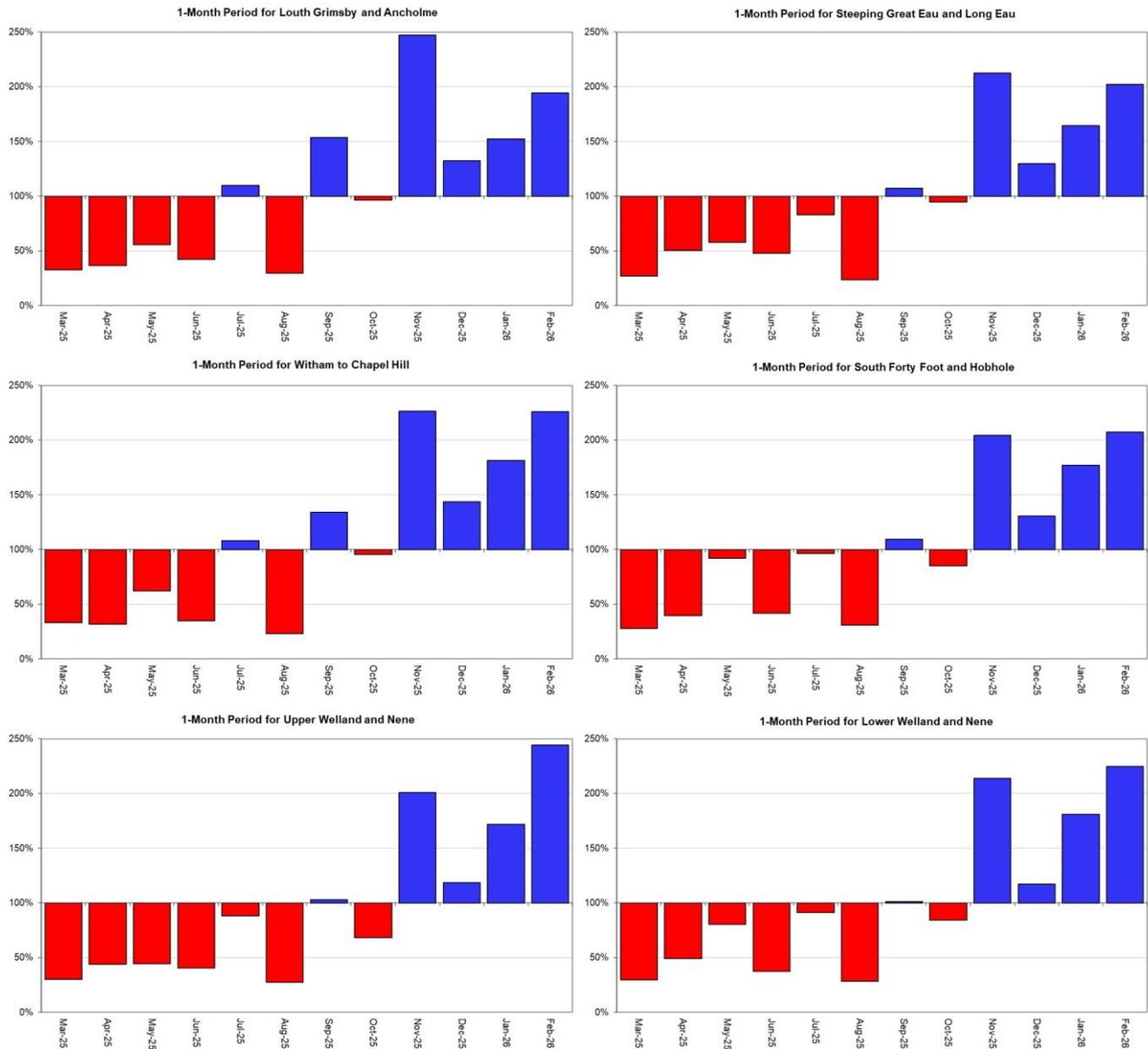


HadUK data based on the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges
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 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. Crown
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2.2 Rainfall charts

Figure 2.2: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for each hydrological area.

■ Total Rainfall in Millimetres ■ Long Term Average Rainfall in Millimetres

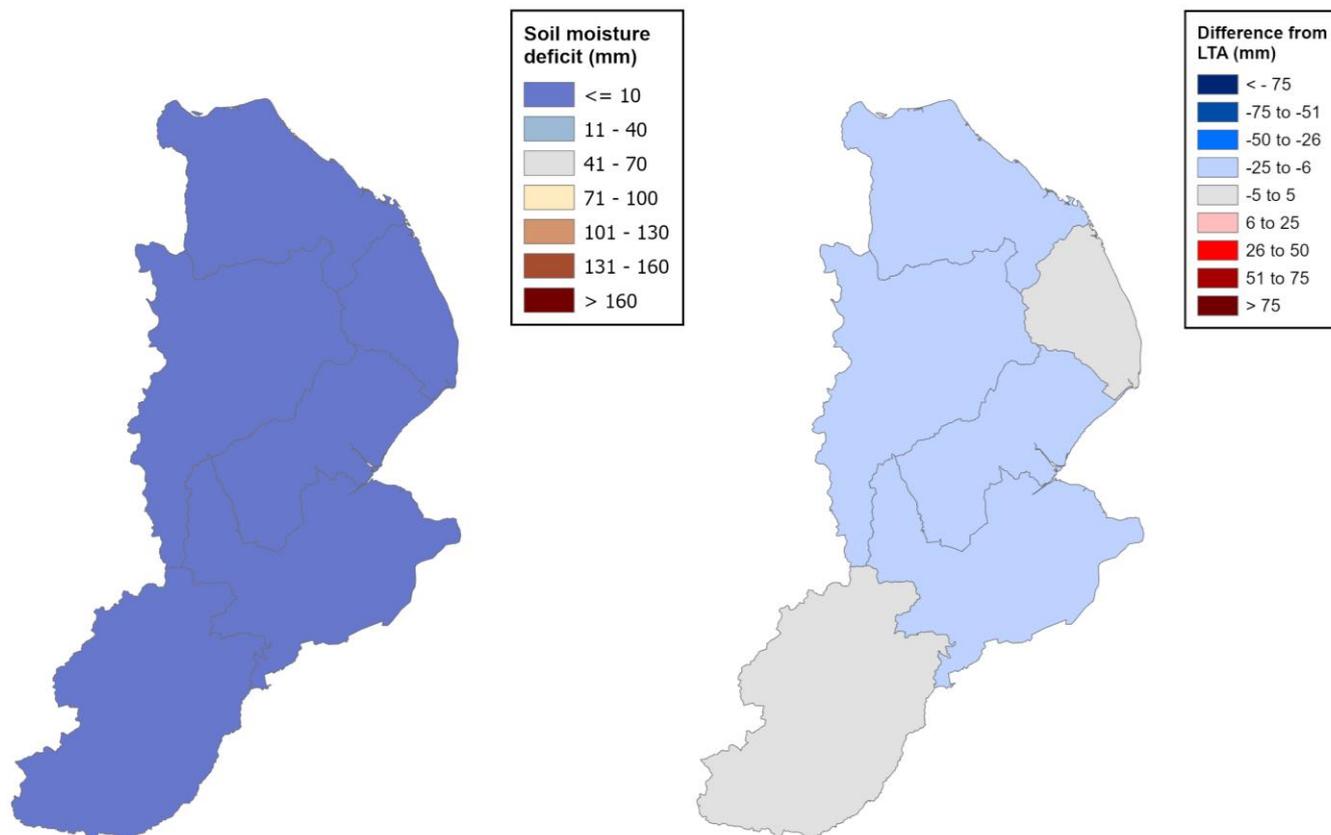


HadUK rainfall data. Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026.

3 Soil moisture deficit

3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

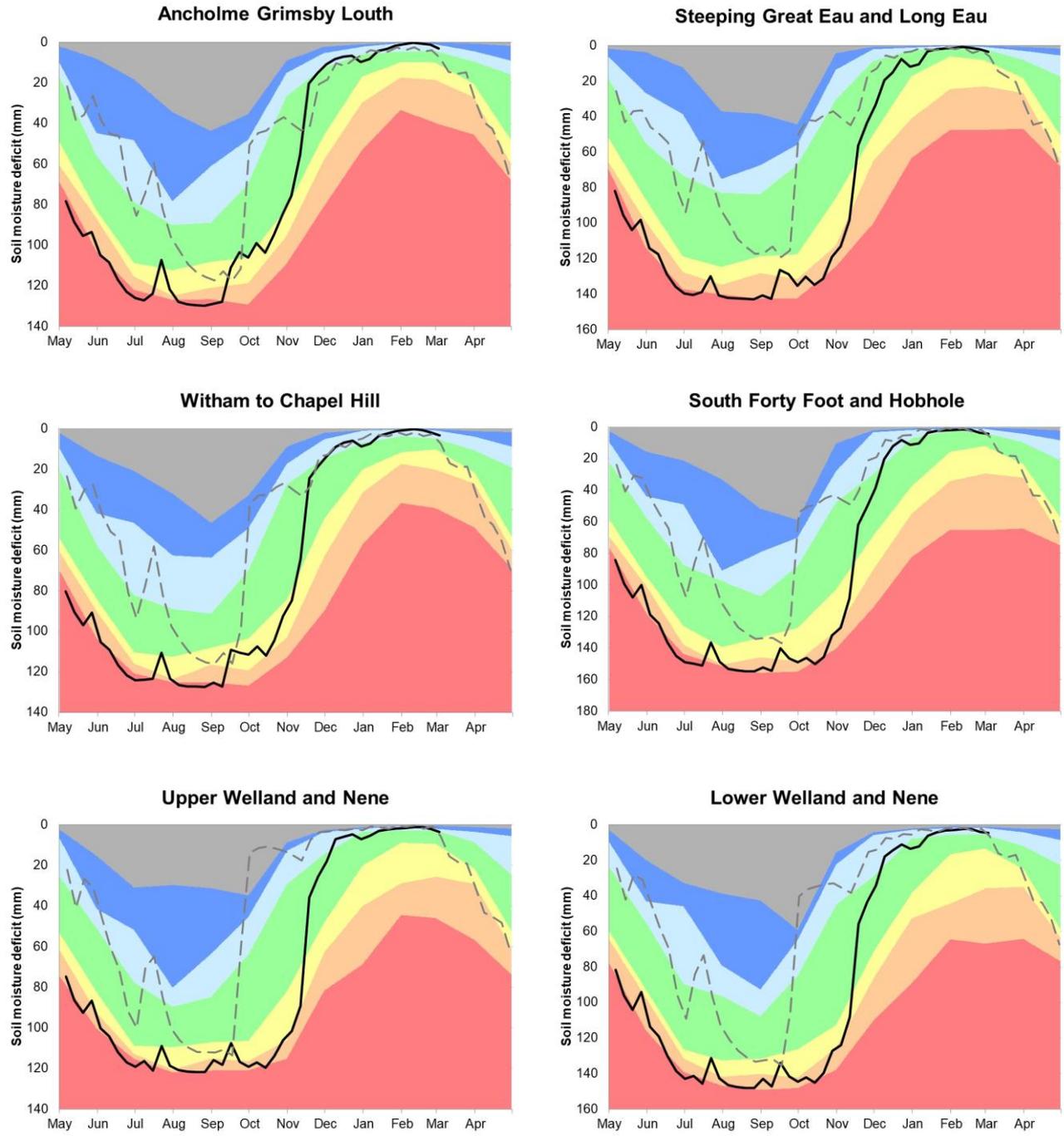
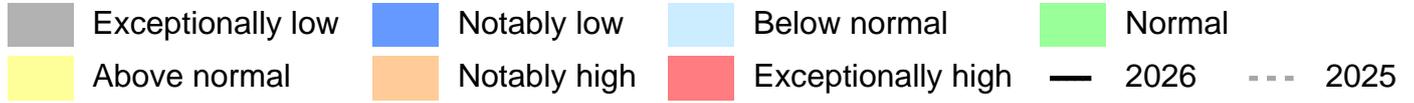
Figure 3.1: Left map shows Soil moisture deficits for weeks ending 28 February 2026. Right map shows the difference (mm) of the actual soil moisture deficit from the 1991 to 2020 long term average soil moisture deficits. MORECS data for real land use.



Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026. © Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright and Database Rights (2026) AC0000807064.

3.2 Soil moisture deficit charts

Figure 3.2: Latest soil moisture deficit compared to previous year, maximum, minimum, and 1991 to 2020 long term average. Weekly MORECS data for real land use.

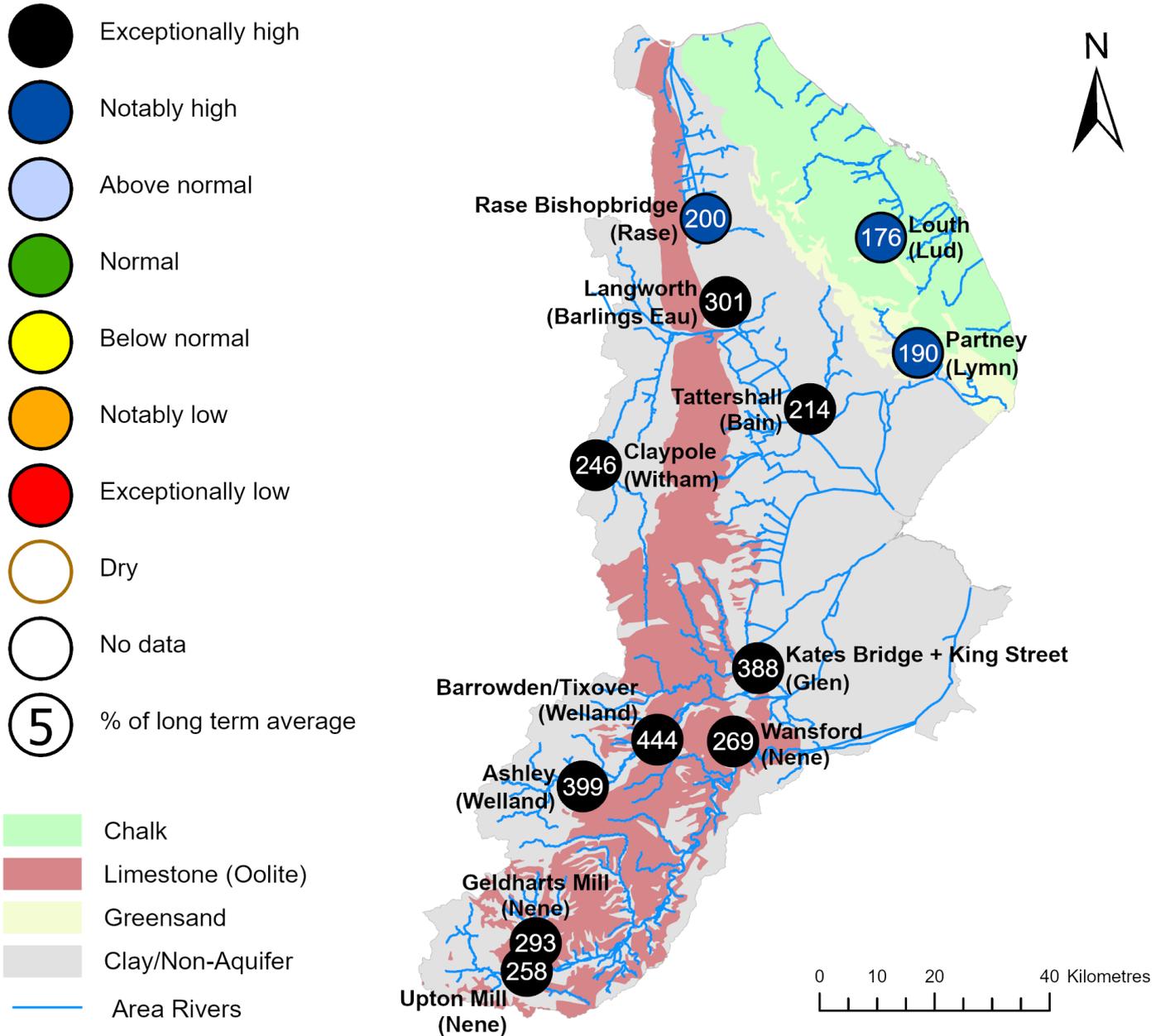


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4 River flows

4.1 River flows map

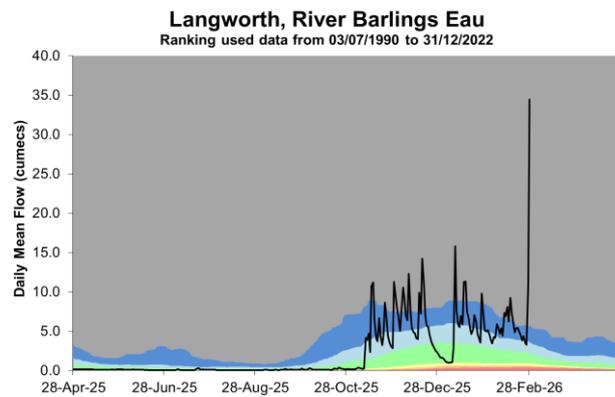
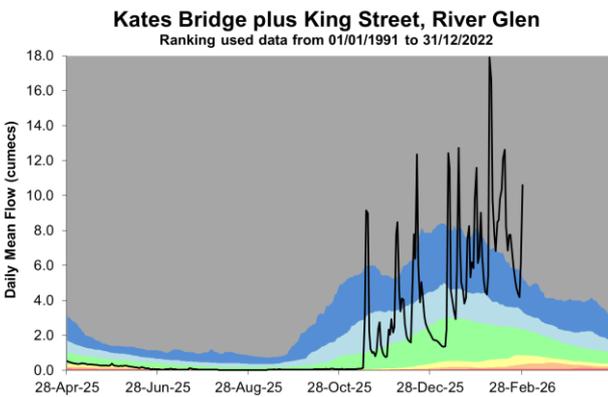
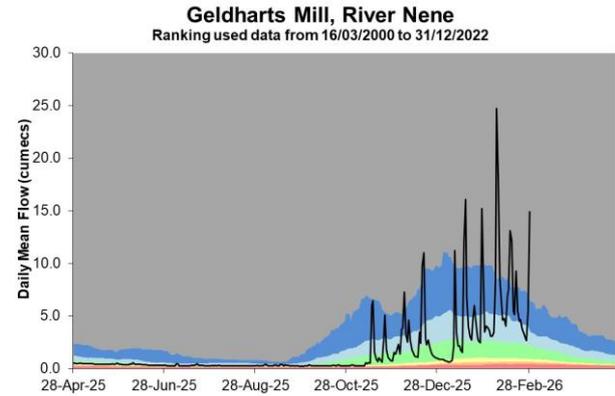
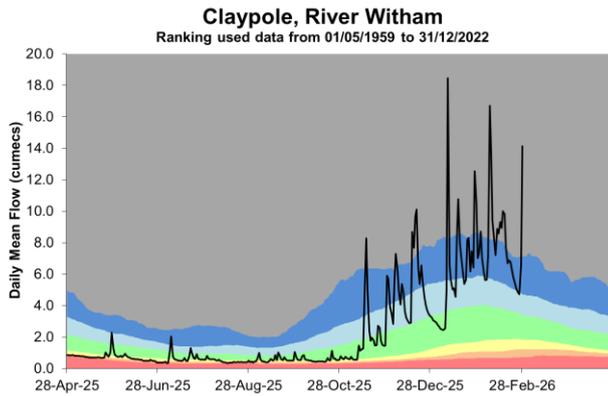
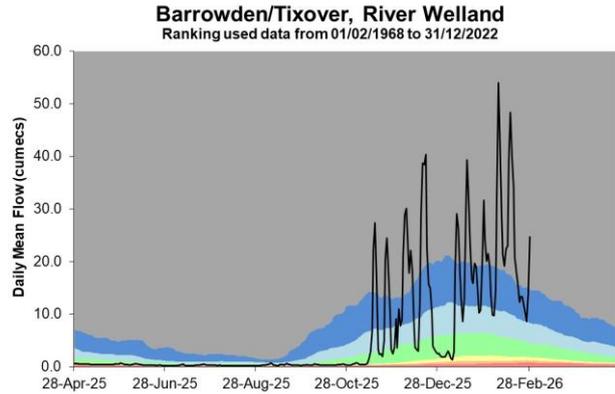
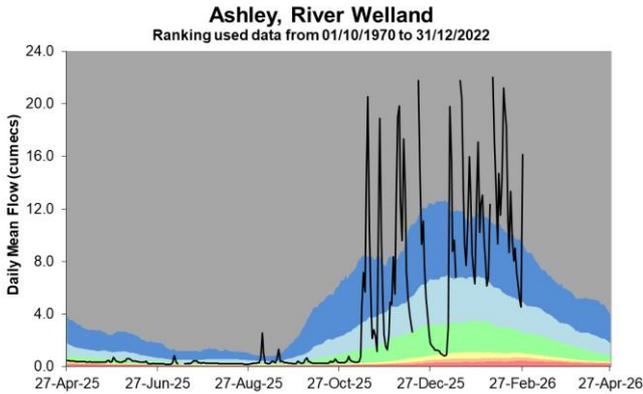
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for February 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic February monthly means Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

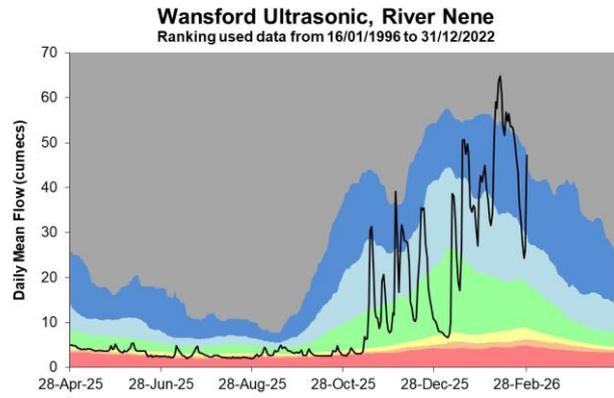
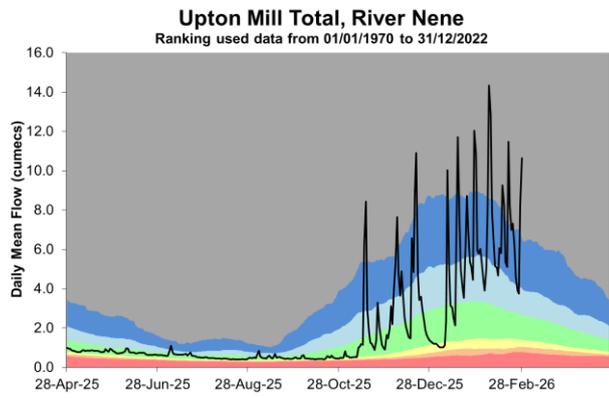
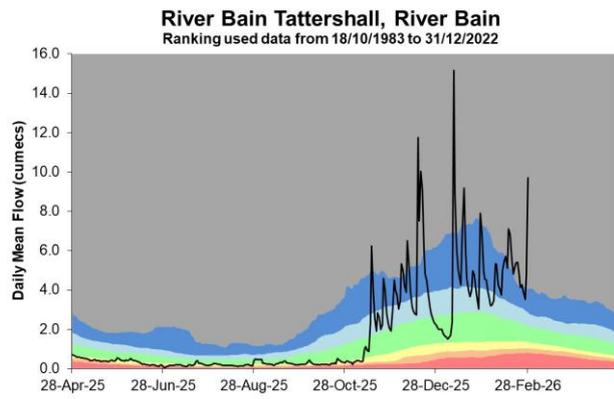
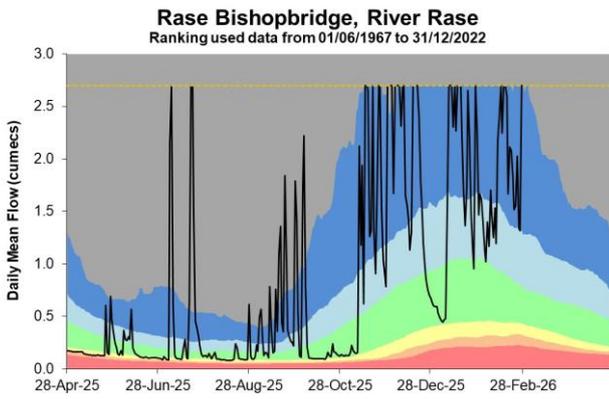
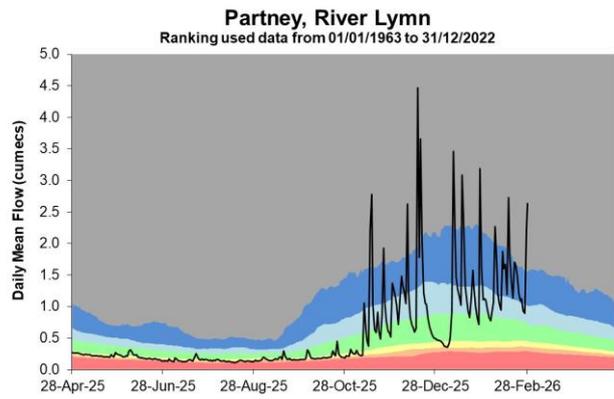
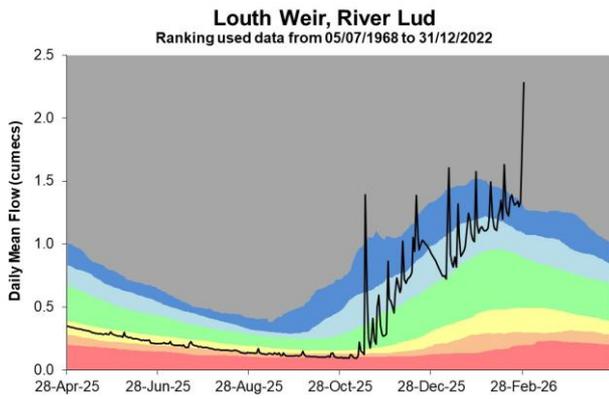


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4.2 River flow charts

Figure 4.2: Daily mean river flow for index sites over the past year, compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows, and long term maximum and minimum flows.



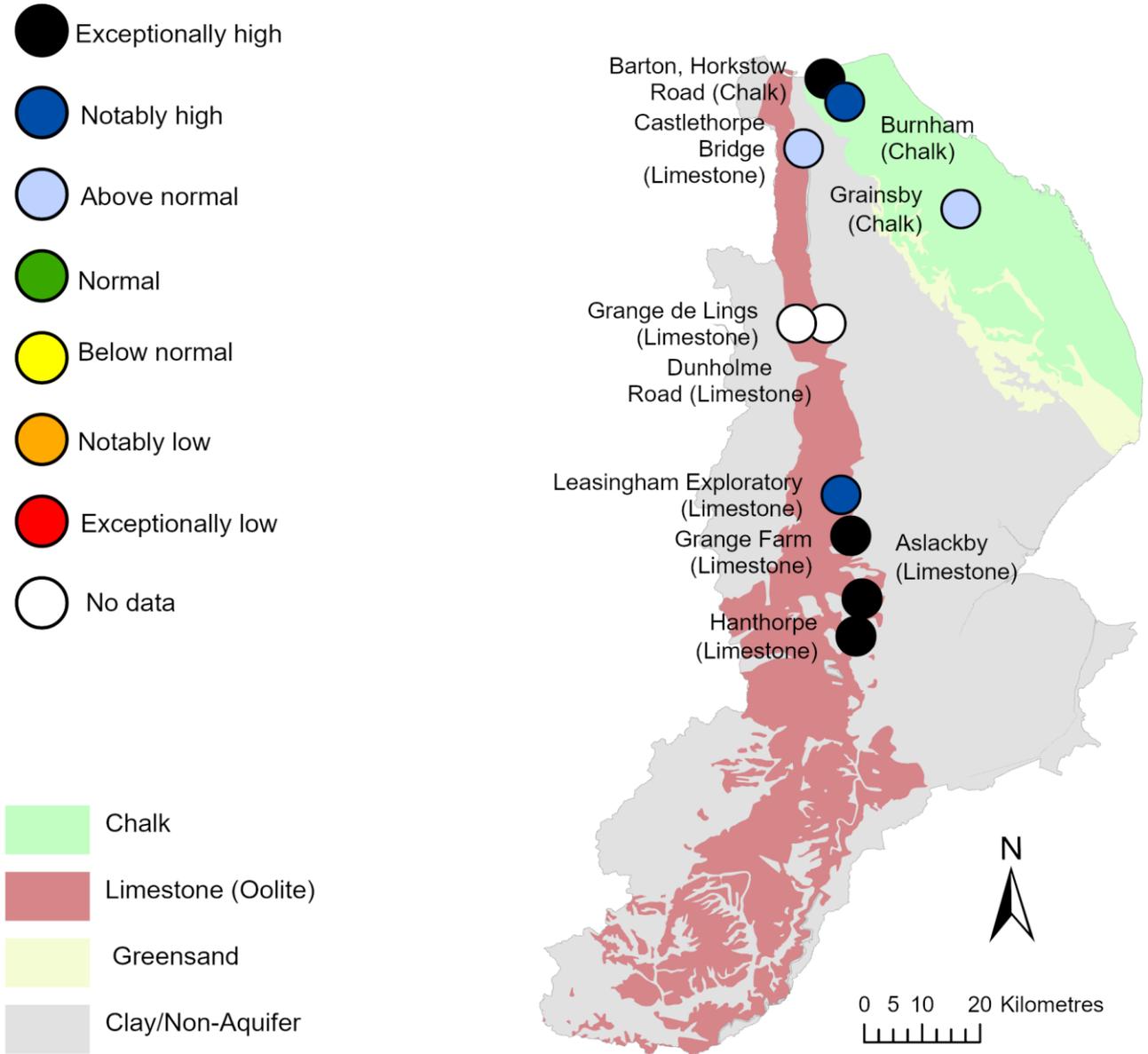


Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

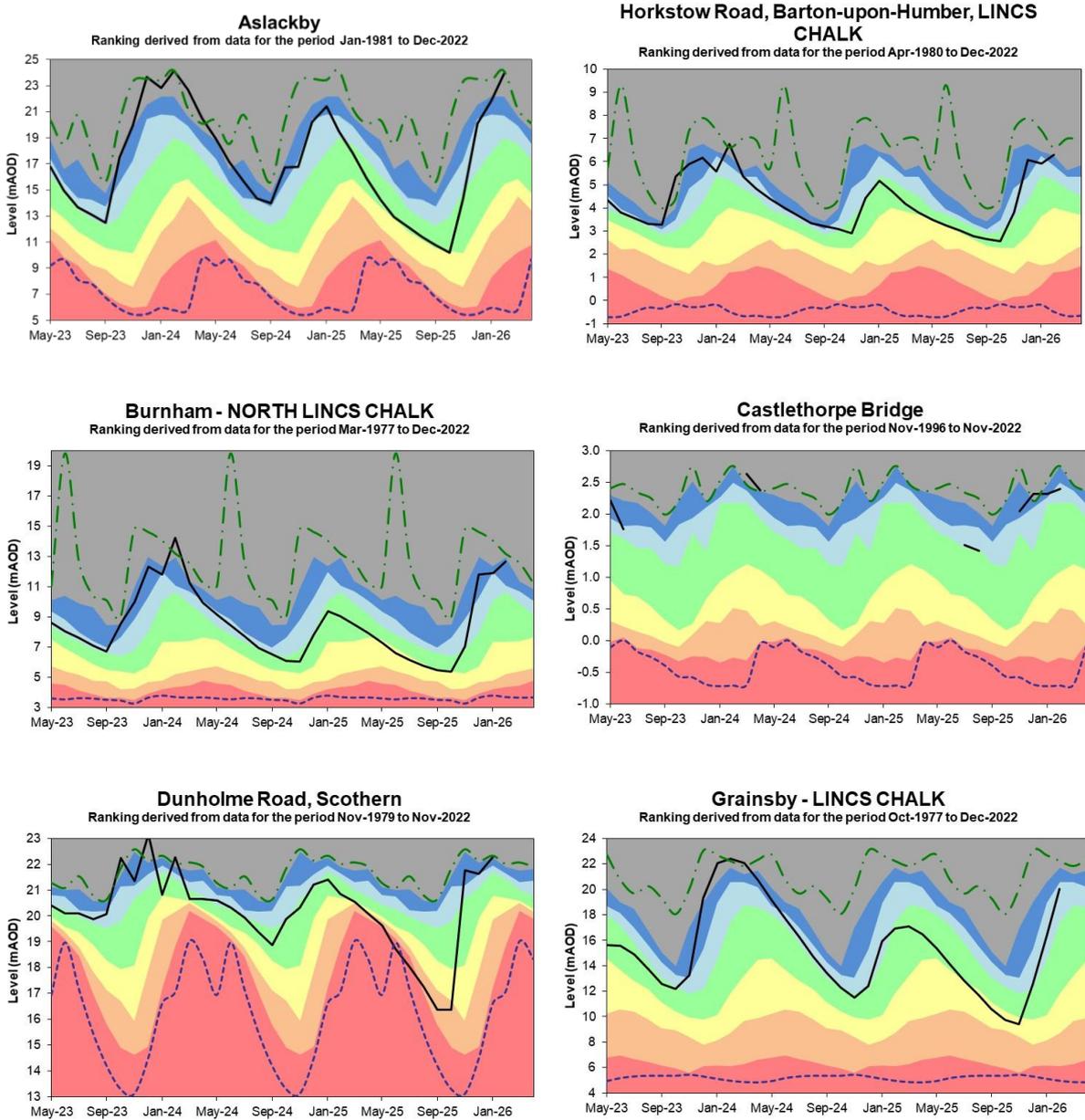
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of February 2026, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic February levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



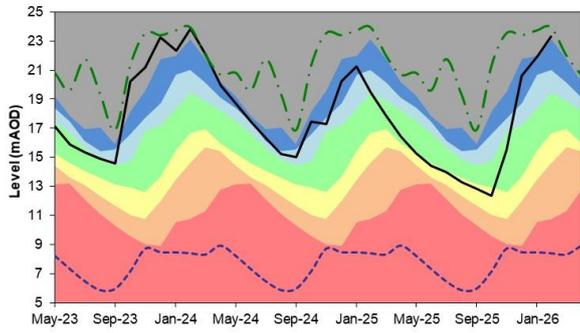
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5.2 Groundwater level charts

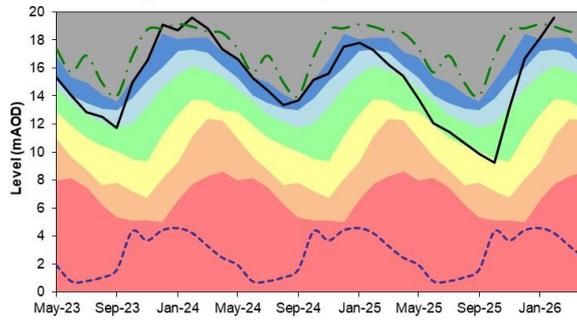
Figure 5.2: End of month groundwater levels at index groundwater level sites for major aquifers. 22 months compared to an analysis of historic end of month levels and long term maximum and minimum levels.



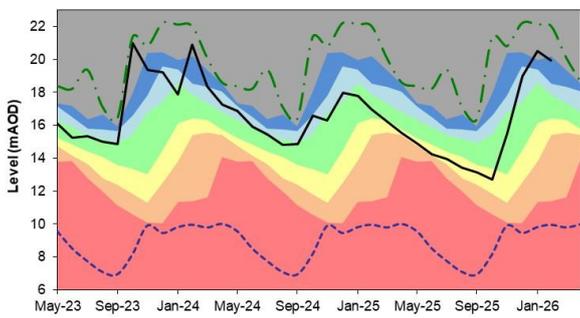
Grange Farm, Aswarby - LINCS LIMESTONE
Ranking derived from data for the period Dec-1970 to Dec-2022



Hanthorpe - LINC'S LIMESTONE
Ranking derived from data for the period Jul-1972 to Dec-2022



Leasingham Exploratory - LINC'S LIMESTONE
Ranking derived from data for the period Sep-1972 to Dec-2022

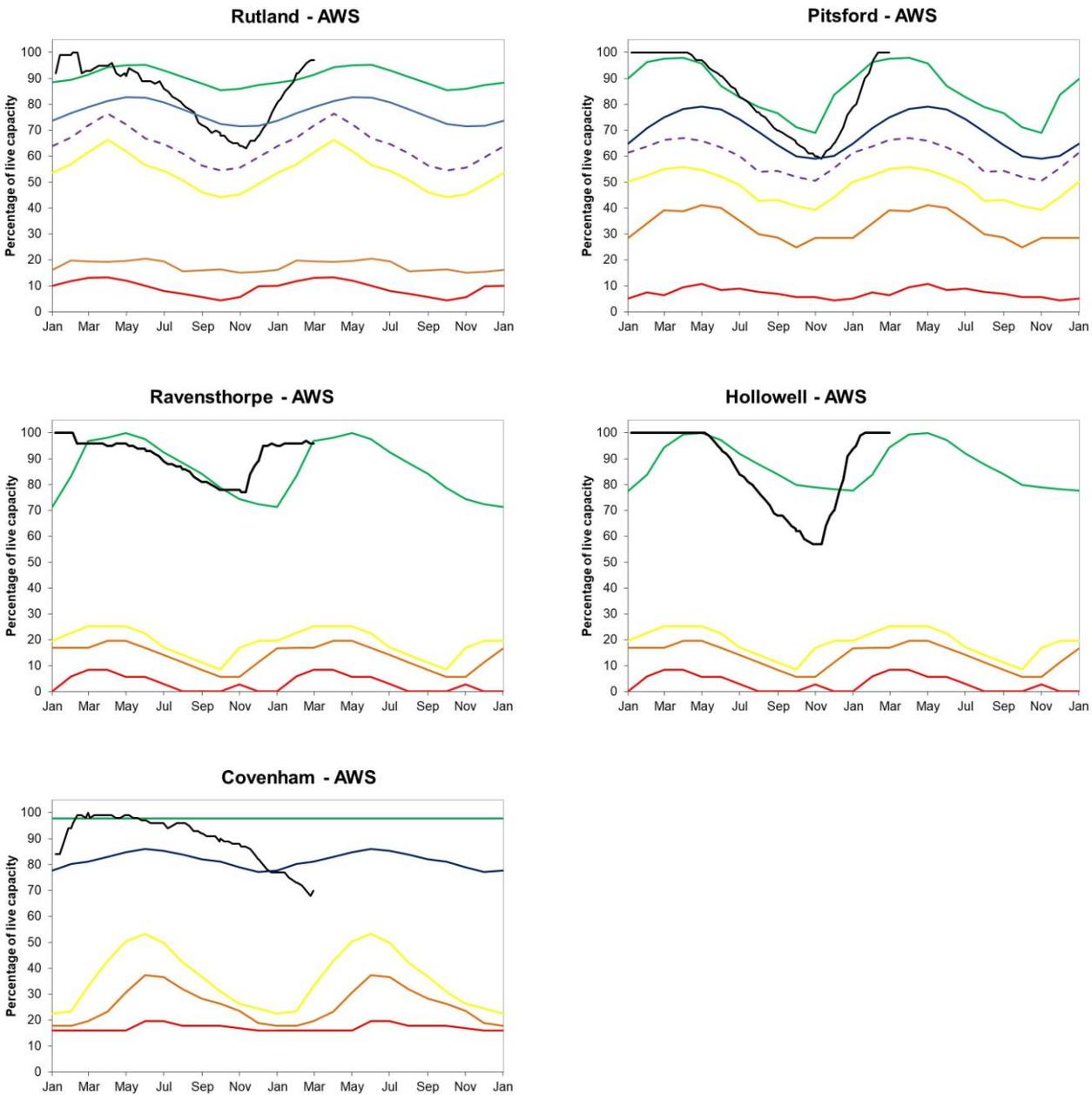


Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

6 Reservoir stocks

Figure 6.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to the normal operating curve and drought curves.

- Drought Curve — Normal Operating Curve — Latest Data — Level 1
- Level 2 — Level 3 — Level 4

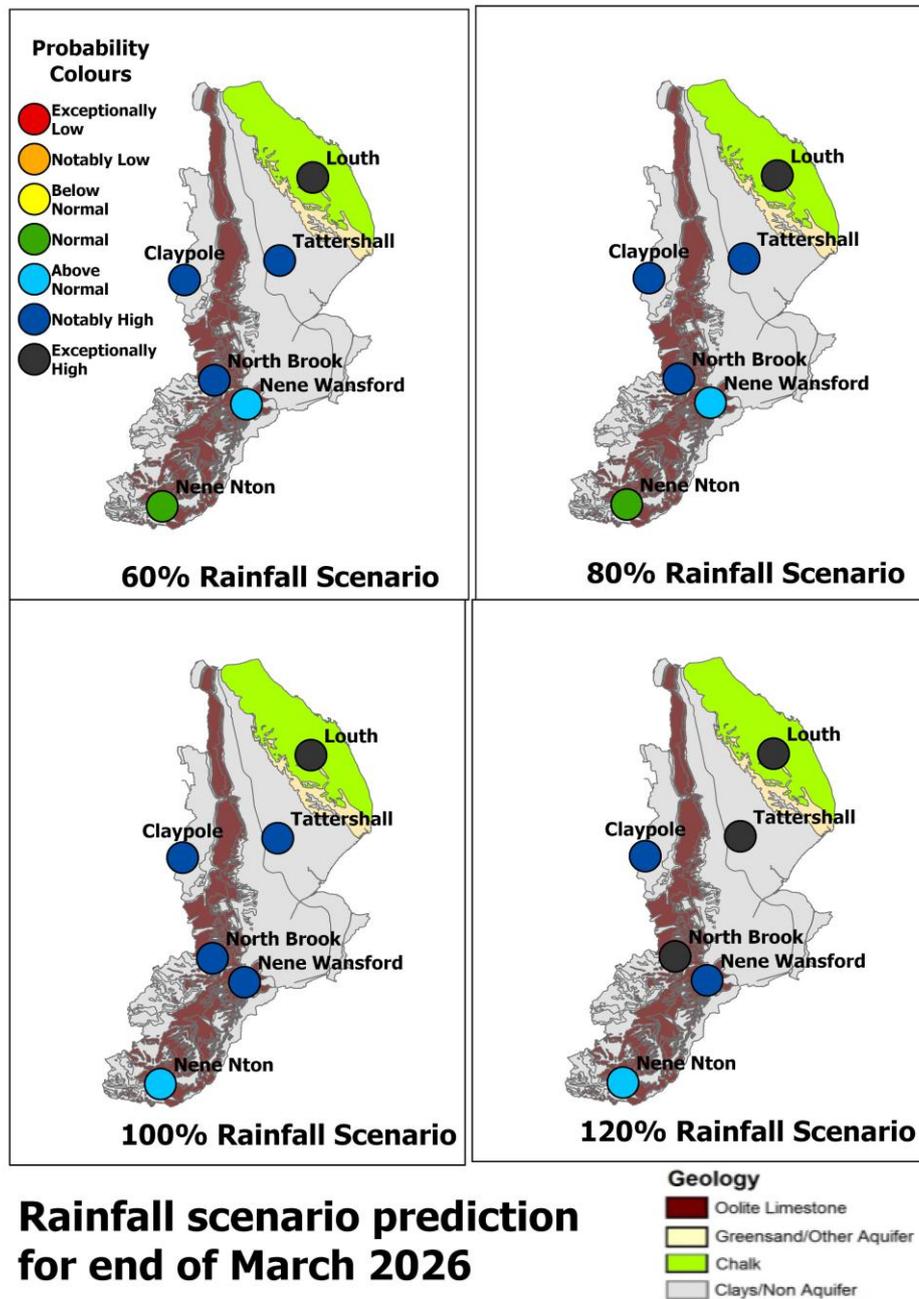


Source: Anglian Water. For more information on Anglian Water’s reservoir level curves, please see Appendix 4 in their [Drought Plan](#).

7 Forward Look

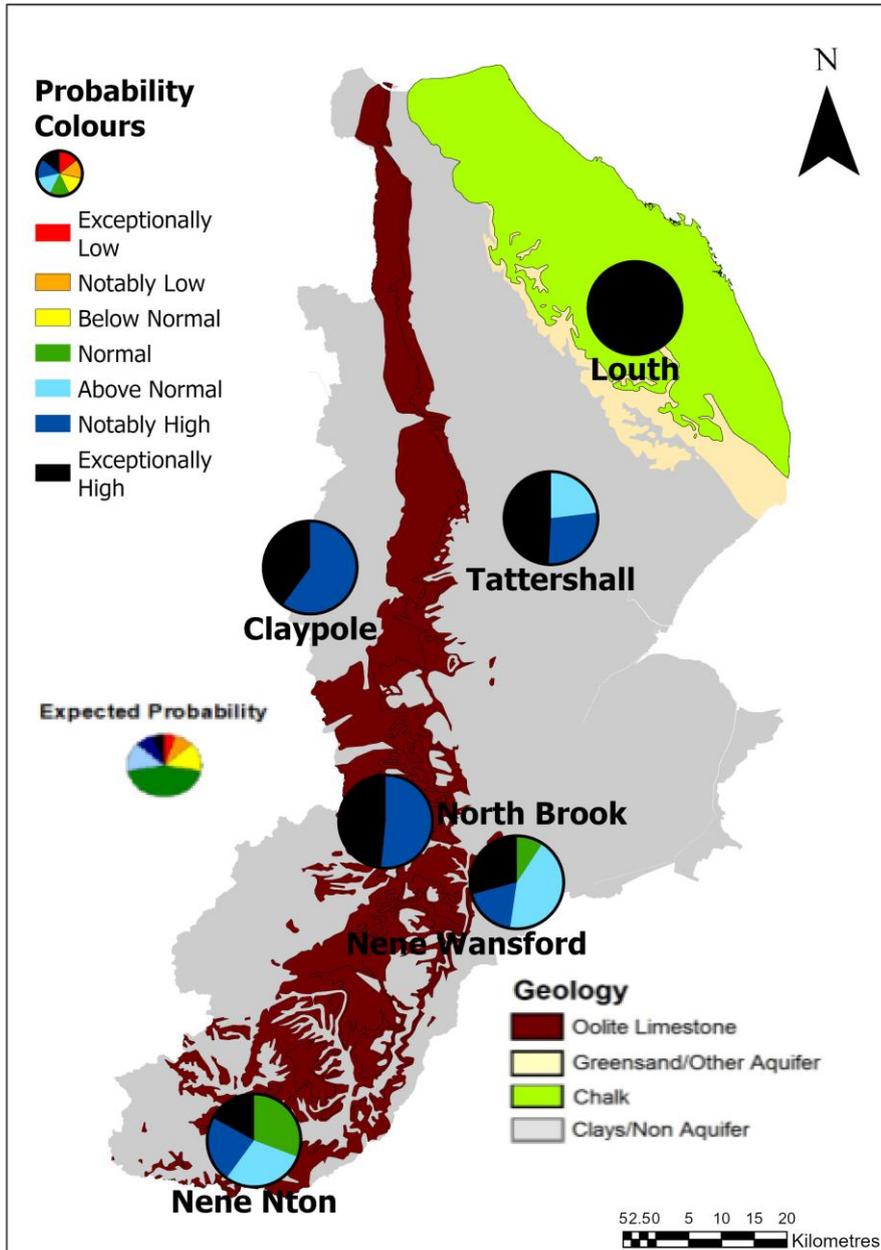
7.1 River flow in March 2026

Figure 7.1: Projected river flows at key indicator sites. Projections based on four scenarios: 120%, 100%, 80% and 60% of long term average rainfall. Rainfall statistics based on occurrence in the historic record since 1871.



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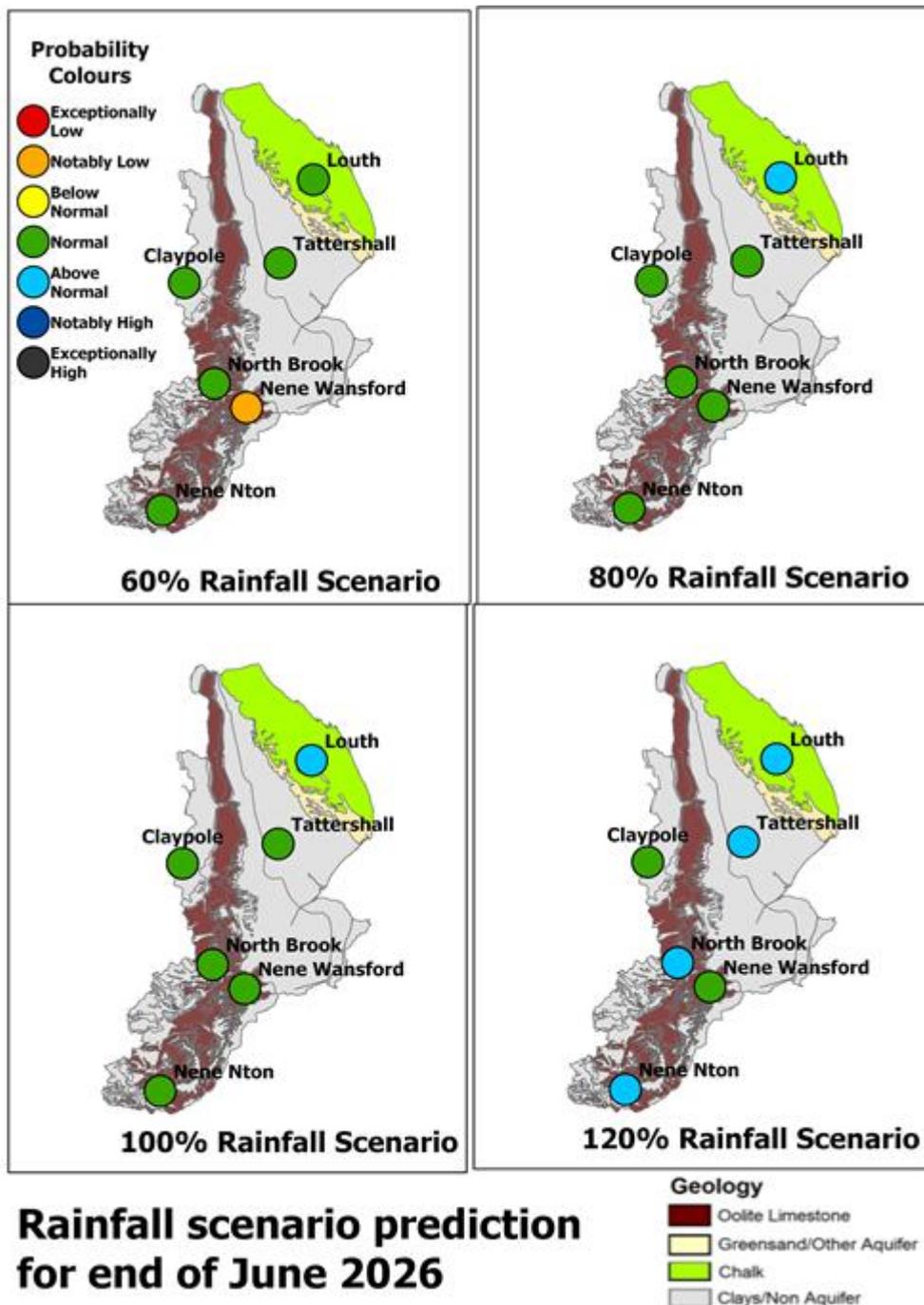
Figure 7.2: Probabilistic ensemble projections of river flows at key indicator sites. Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the surface water flow at each site being e.g. exceptionally low for the time of year.



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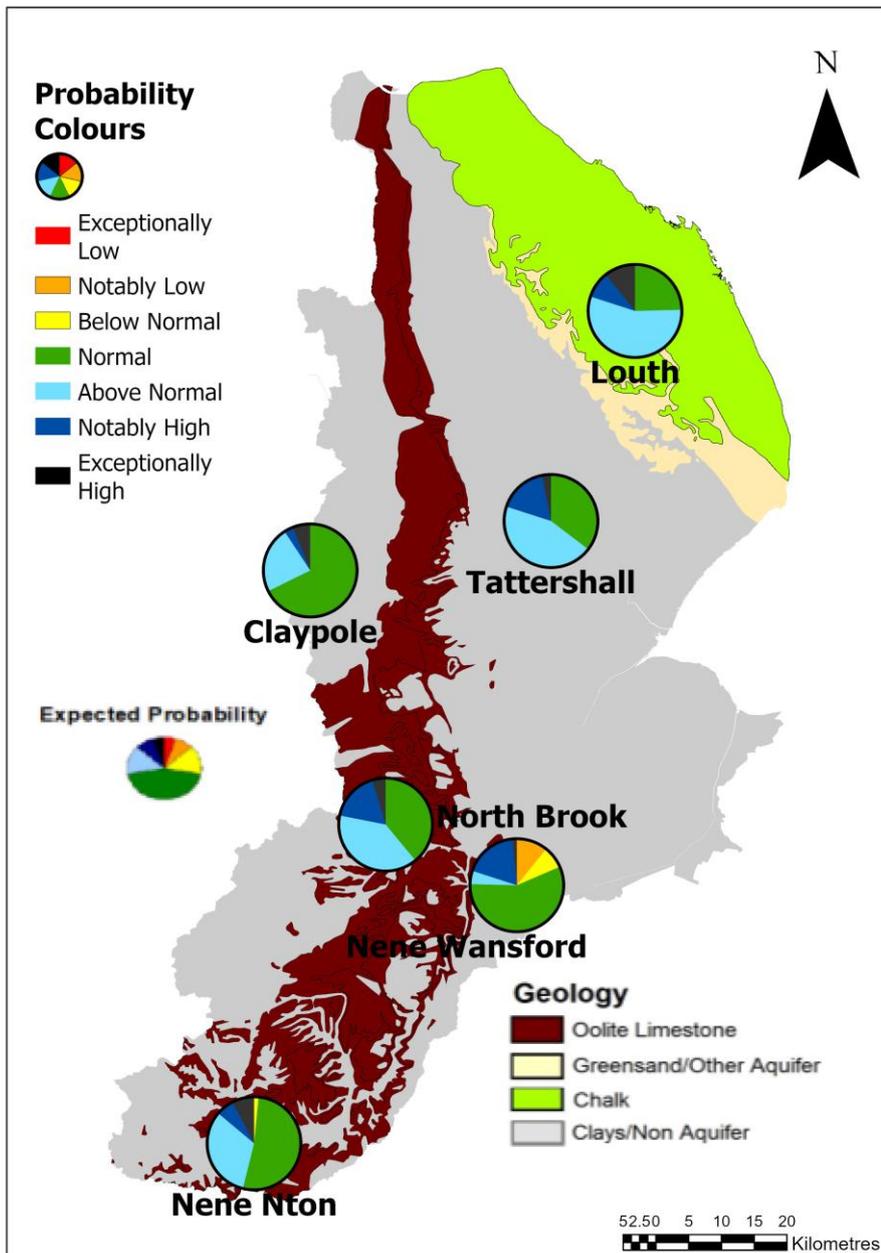
7.2 River flow in June 2026

Figure 7.3: Projected river flows at key indicator sites. Projections based on four scenarios: 120%, 100%, 80% and 60% of long term average rainfall. Rainfall statistics based on occurrence in the historic record since 1871.



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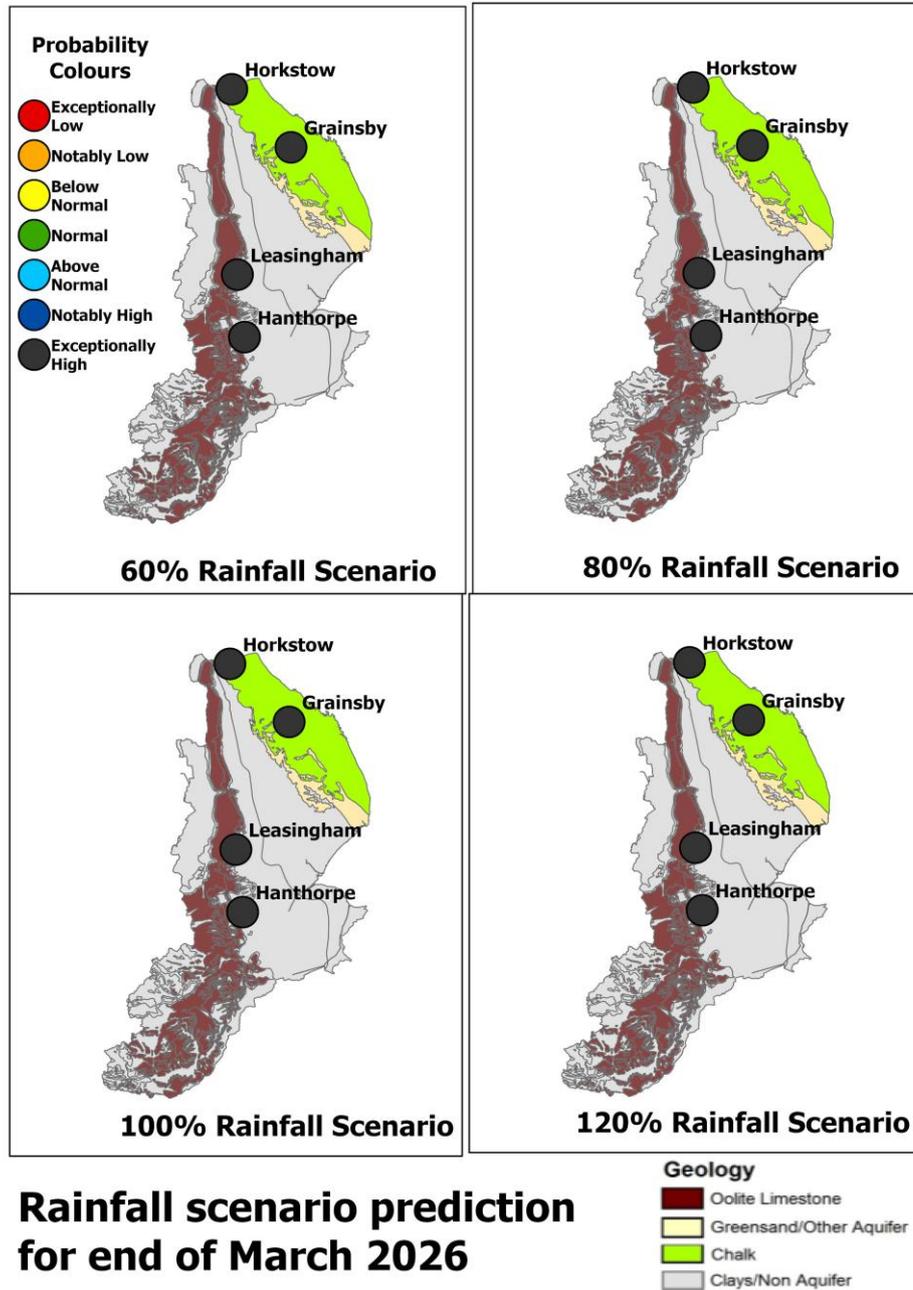
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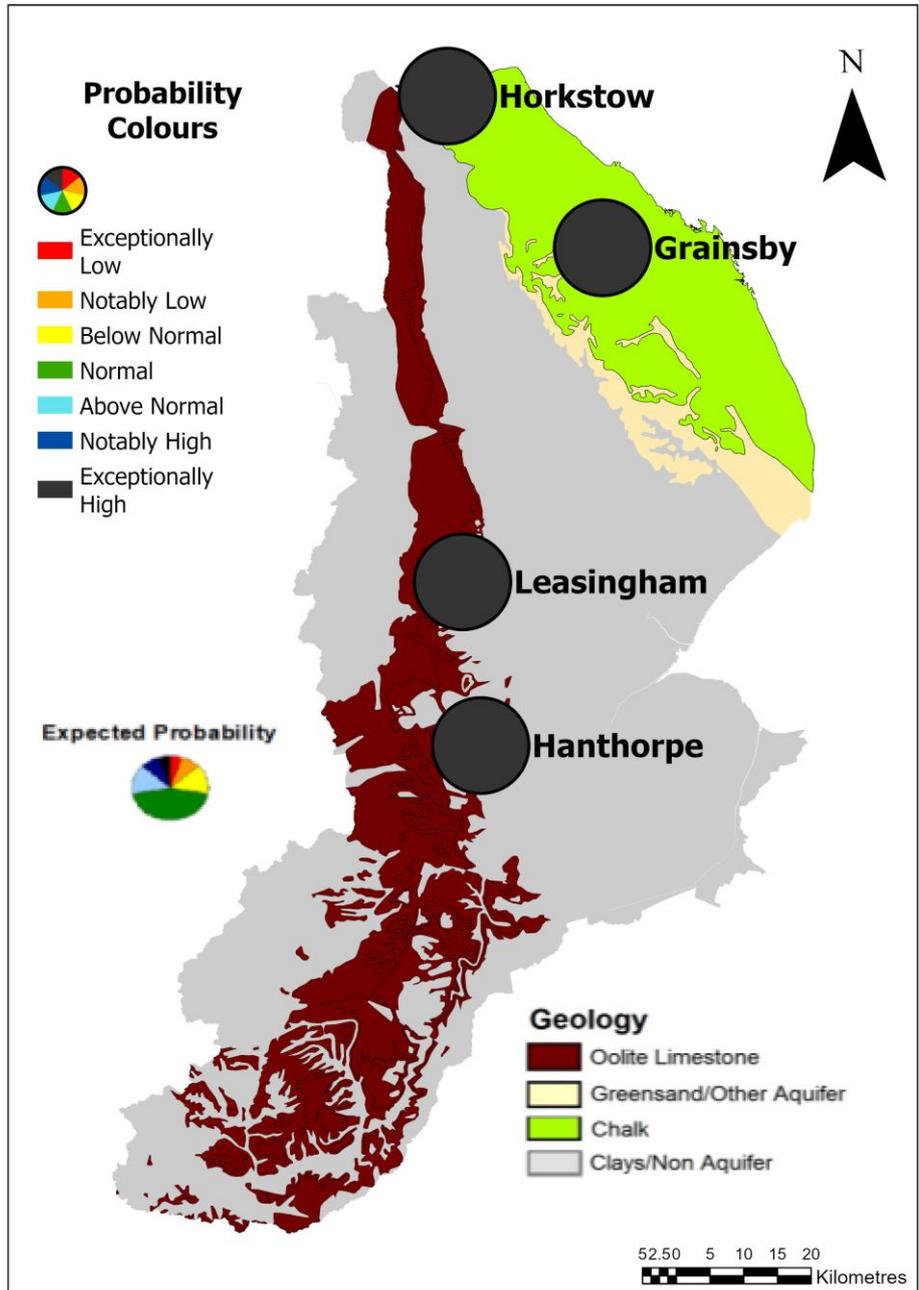
7.3 Groundwater in March 2026

Figure 7.3: Projected groundwater levels at key indicator sites. Projections based on four scenarios: 120%, 100%, 80% and 60% of long term average. Rainfall statistics based on occurrence in the historic record since 1871.



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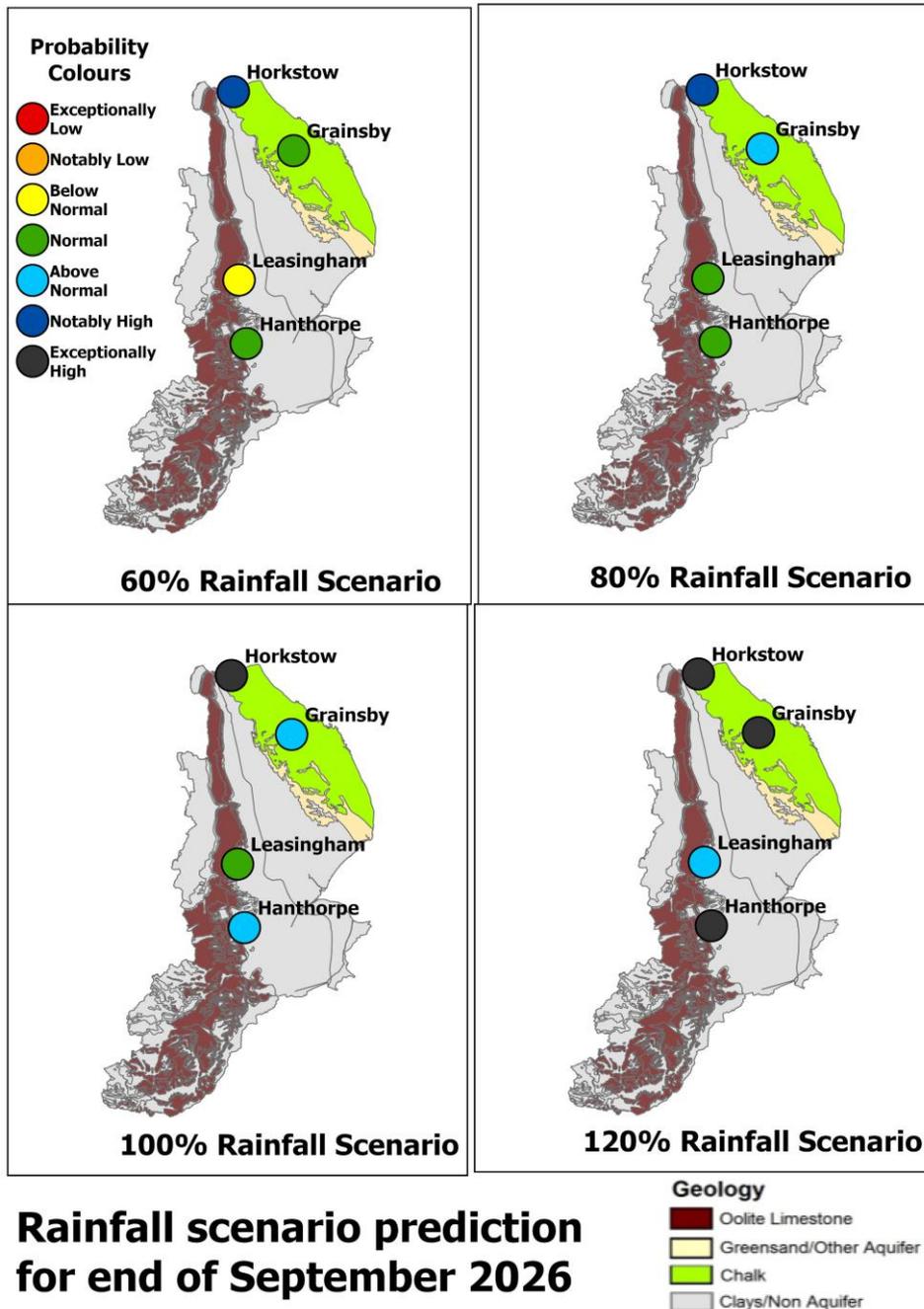
Figure 7.6: Probabilistic ensemble projections of groundwater levels at key indicator sites. Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the groundwater level at each site being e.g. exceptionally low for the time of year.



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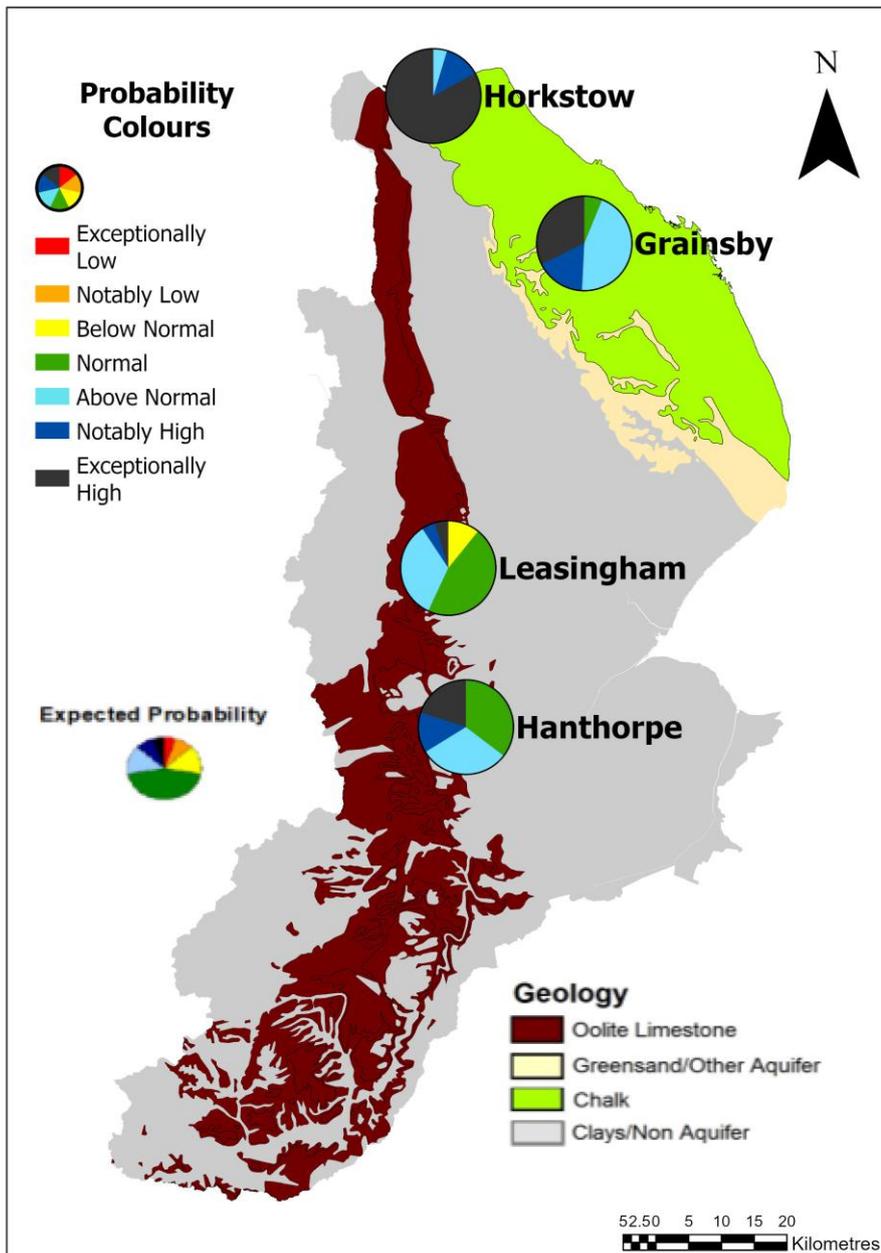
7.4 Groundwater in September 2026

Figure 7.7: Projected groundwater levels at key indicator sites. Projections based on four scenarios: 120%, 100%, 80% and 60% of long term average. Rainfall statistics based on occurrence in the historic record since 1871.



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Figure 7.8: Probabilistic ensemble projections of groundwater levels at key indicator sites. Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the groundwater level at each site being e.g. exceptionally low for the time of year.



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8 Glossary

8.1 Terminology

Aquifer

A geological formation able to store and transmit water.

Areal average rainfall

The estimated average depth of rainfall over a defined area. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Artesian

The condition where the groundwater level is above ground surface but is prevented from rising to this level by an overlying continuous low permeability layer, such as clay.

Artesian borehole

Borehole where the level of groundwater is above the top of the borehole and groundwater flows out of the borehole when unsealed.

Cumecs

Cubic metres per second (m^3s^{-1}).

Effective rainfall

The rainfall available to percolate into the soil or produce river flow. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Flood alert and flood warning

Three levels of warnings may be issued by the Environment Agency. Flood alerts indicate flooding is possible. Flood warnings indicate flooding is expected. Severe flood warnings indicate severe flooding.

Groundwater

The water found in an aquifer.

Long term average (LTA)

The arithmetic mean calculated from the historic record, usually based on the period 1991 to 2020. However, the period used may vary by parameter being reported on (see figure captions for details).

mAOD

Metres above ordnance datum (mean sea level at Newlyn Cornwall).

MORECS

Met Office Rainfall and Evaporation Calculation System. Met Office service providing real time calculation of evapotranspiration, soil moisture deficit and effective rainfall on a 40 by 40 km grid.

Naturalised flow

River flow with the impacts of artificial influences removed. Artificial influences may include abstractions, discharges, transfers, augmentation and impoundments.

NCIC

National Climate Information Centre. NCIC area monthly rainfall totals are derived using the Met Office 5 km gridded dataset, which uses rain gauge observations.

Recharge

The process of increasing the water stored in the saturated zone of an aquifer. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Reservoir gross capacity

The total capacity of a reservoir.

Reservoir live capacity

The capacity of the reservoir that is normally usable for storage to meet established reservoir operating requirements. This excludes any capacity not available for use (for example, storage held back for emergency services, operating agreements or physical restrictions). May also be referred to as 'net' or 'deployable' capacity.

Soil moisture deficit (SMD)

The difference between the amount of water actually in the soil and the amount of water the soil can hold. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

8.2 Categories

Exceptionally high

Value likely to fall within this band 5% of the time.

Notably high

Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Above normal

Value likely to fall within this band 15% of the time.

Normal

Value likely to fall within this band 44% of the time.

Below normal

Value likely to fall within this band 15% of the time.

Notably low

Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Exceptionally low

Value likely to fall within this band 5% of the time.

9 Appendices

9.1 Rainfall table

| Hydrological area | Feb 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020 | Feb 2026 band | Dec 2025 to February cumulative band | Sep 2025 to February cumulative band | Mar 2025 to February cumulative band |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Louth Grimsby And Ancholme | 194 | Exceptionally High | Notably high | Exceptionally high | Above normal |
| Lower Welland And Nene | 225 | Exceptionally High | Exceptionally high | Exceptionally high | Normal |
| South Forty Foot And Hobhole | 207 | Notably High | Exceptionally high | Exceptionally high | Normal |
| Steeping Great Eau And Long Eau | 202 | Notably High | Exceptionally high | Exceptionally high | Normal |
| Upper Welland And Nene | 244 | Exceptionally High | Exceptionally high | Exceptionally high | Normal |
| Witham To Chapel Hill | 226 | Exceptionally High | Exceptionally high | Exceptionally high | Above normal |

9.2 River flows table

| Site name | River | Catchment | Feb 2026 band | Jan 2026 band |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Ashley | Welland Mkt.harb-rockinghm | Welland Rockingham | Exceptionally high | Exceptionally high |
| Barrowden/tixover | Welland (rockingham To Stamford) | Welland Stamford | Exceptionally high | Exceptionally high |
| Claypole | Upper Witham | Witham Bargate Upper | Exceptionally high | Notably high |
| Geldharts Mill | Nene (brampton Branch) | Nene Brampton Bridge | Exceptionally high | Above normal |
| Kates Bridge Plus King Street | Glen (an) | Welland and Glen | Exceptionally high | Notably high |
| Langworth | Barlings Eau | Barlings Eau | Exceptionally high | Notably high |
| Louth Weir | Lud | Louth Canal | Notably high | Above normal |
| Partney | Lymn & Steeping | Lymn Steeping | Notably high | Above normal |
| Rase Bishopbridge | Ancholme | Ancholme W Mid | Notably high | Notably high |
| River Bain Tattershall | Bain | Bain | Exceptionally high | Notably high |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Upton Mill Total | Nene (kislingbury Branch) | Nene Kislingbry Bridge | Exceptionally high | Notably high |
| Wansford Combined | Nene (wollaston To Wansford) | Nene Wansford | Exceptionally high | Above normal |

9.3 Groundwater table

| Site name | Aquifer | End of Feb 2026 band | End of Jan 2026 band |
|-------------------------|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| Aslackby | Limestone (cornbrash Formation) | Exceptionally high | Notably high |
| Barton-upon-humber | Grimsby Ancholme Louth Chalk | Exceptionally high | Above normal |
| Burnham | Grimsby Ancholme Louth Chalk | Notably high | Above normal |
| Castlethorpe Bridge | Grimsby Ancholme Louth Limestone | Above normal | Notably high |
| Dunholme Road, Scothern | Grimsby Ancholme Louth Limestone | | Exceptionally high |
| Grainsby | Grimsby Ancholme Louth Chalk | Above normal | Above normal |
| Grange De Lings | Grimsby Ancholme Louth Limestone | | |
| Grange Farm, Aswarby | Limestone (mudstone - Peterborough Member) | Exceptionally high | Notably high |

| | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Hanthorpe | Limestone (cornbrash Formation) | Exceptionally high | Exceptionally high |
| Leasingham Exploratory | Limestone (rutland Formation) | Notably high | Exceptionally high |

9.4 Ensemble projections tables

9.4.1 Probabilistic ensemble projection of river flows at key sites in March 2026

Percentage of pie chart for each band

| Site | Nene Nton | Nene Wansford | North Brook | Witham Claypole | Lud Louth | Bain Tattershall |
|--------------------|-----------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------|------------------|
| Exceptionally low | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Notably low | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Below normal | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Normal | 30.8 | 9.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Above normal | 29.2 | 43.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 23.1 |
| Notably high | 23.1 | 18.5 | 51.6 | 60.0 | 0.0 | 27.7 |
| Exceptionally high | 16.9 | 29.2 | 48.4 | 40.0 | 100.0 | 49.2 |

9.4.2 Probabilistic ensemble projection of river flows at key sites in June 2026

Percentage of pie chart for each band

| Site | Nene Nton | Nene Wansford | North Brook | Witham Claypole | Lud Louth | Bain Tattershall |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Exceptionally low | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Notably low | 0.0 | 10.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Below normal | 1.5 | 7.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Normal | 52.3 | 56.9 | 39.1 | 67.7 | 24.6 | 35.4 |
| Above normal | 32.3 | 4.6 | 39.1 | 23.1 | 55.4 | 44.6 |
| Notably high | 6.2 | 18.5 | 17.2 | 3.1 | 9.2 | 16.9 |
| Exceptionally high | 7.7 | 1.5 | 4.7 | 6.2 | 10.8 | 3.1 |

9.4.3 Probabilistic ensemble projection of groundwater levels at key sites in March 2026

Percentage of pie chart for each band

| Site | Grainsby | Hanthorpe | Horkstow | Leasingham |
|--------------------|----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| Exceptionally low | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Notably low | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Below normal | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Normal | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Above normal | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Notably high | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Exceptionally high | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

9.4.4 Probabilistic ensemble projection of groundwater levels at key sites in September 2026

Percentage of pie chart for each band

| Site | Grainsby | Hanthorpe | Horkstow | Leasingham |
|--------------------|----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| Exceptionally low | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Notably low | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Below normal | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 10.8 |
| Normal | 6.2 | 35.4 | 0.0 | 46.2 |
| Above normal | 44.6 | 30.8 | 4.6 | 33.8 |
| Notably high | 16.9 | 13.8 | 12.3 | 4.6 |
| Exceptionally high | 32.3 | 20.0 | 83.1 | 4.6 |