Monthly water situation report: Thames Area

1 Summary - February 2026

Thames area received 108mm of rainfall in February, which was 199% of the long term average (LTA). It was the third wettest February in Cotswolds East. Soil moisture deficits (SMD) were negligible in all areal units by the end of the month. Saturated soils allowed significant effective rainfall to occur, with 248% of the LTA for the area. Monthly mean river flows increased at 14 of our indicator sites in February. Seven of our sites were exceptionally high, while 7 were notably high. The rivers Cherwell at Banbury and Wey at Tilford recorded their second highest February flows on record. Groundwater levels increased at the majority of our indicator sites in February in response to the above average recharge. Five sites were exceptionally high. Farmoor reservoir was above average while the Lower Thames reservoirs were below average for the time of year. In February, a total of 22 fluvial alerts, 6 groundwater alerts, and 8 flood warnings were issued.

1.1 Rainfall

Thames area received 108mm of rainfall in February, which was 199% of the LTA. Exceptionally high rain fell across the 3 northernmost rainfall units (Cotswolds West, Cotswolds East, and Cherwell). Cotswolds East received over two and a half times the LTA for February, the third wettest since 1871. The remaining areal units received notably high rainfall, apart from Wey Greensand, which was above normal. Over the past 3 months, all areal units received exceptionally high rainfall.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

SMDs were negligible in all areal units by the end of the month which meant they were wetter than usual. Saturated soils allowed significant effective rainfall to occur, 248% of the LTA at the end of the month.

1.3 River flows

Monthly mean river flows increased at 14 of our indicator sites in February. Seven of our sites were exceptionally high while 7 were notably high. The river Cherwell at Banbury recorded 325% of its LTA average monthly flow, the second highest February on record, behind only 2024. The river Wey at Tilford also recorded its second highest February flow, behind only 2014.

1.4 Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels increased at most of our indicator sites in February in response to the above average rainfall. All sites are within the above normal to exceptionally high range.

Groundwater levels were exceptionally high at:

- Ampney Crucis (great oolite)
- Fringford (great oolite)
- Marcham (corallian)
- Rockley (chalk)
- The Flashes (lower greensand)

Groundwater levels were notably high at:

- Gibbet Cottages (chalk)
- Long Sutton (chalk)
- Frith Cottage (lower greensand)
- Model Farm (upper greensand)

Groundwater levels were above normal at:

- Jackaments Bottom (inferior oolite)
- Stonor (chalk)

1.5 Reservoir stocks

Reservoir stocks in Farmoor increased from 80.4% to 98.7%, while the Lower Thames reservoirs increased from 88.6% to 90%. Farmoor reservoir was above average while the Lower Thames reservoirs were below average for the time of year.

1.6 Environmental impact

In February, a total of 22 fluvial alerts, 6 groundwater alerts, and 8 flood warnings were issued for rivers across the Thames area. At the end of February, no abstraction licences were being constrained in the area to protect water resources.

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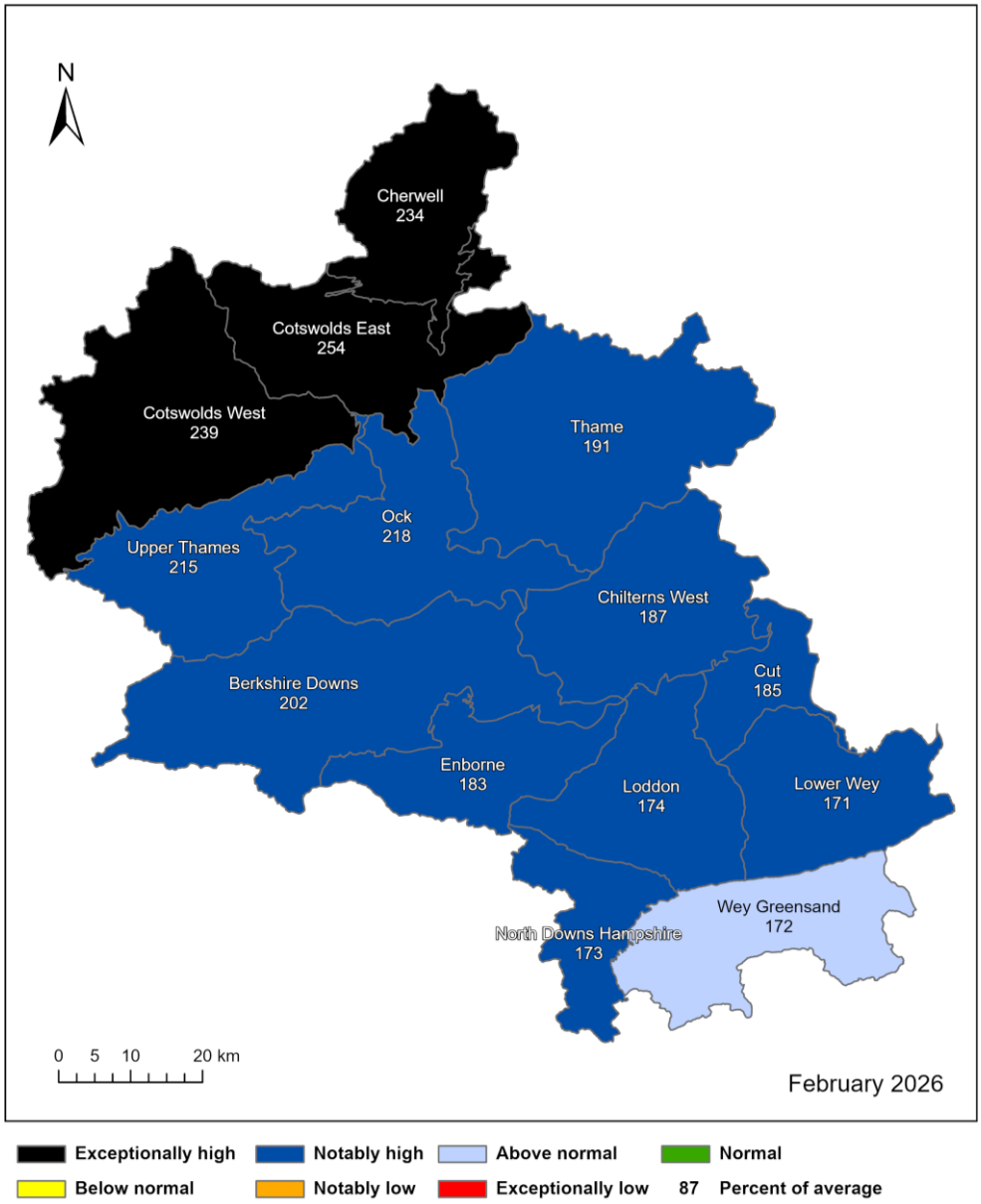
Contact Details: 030708 506 506

2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

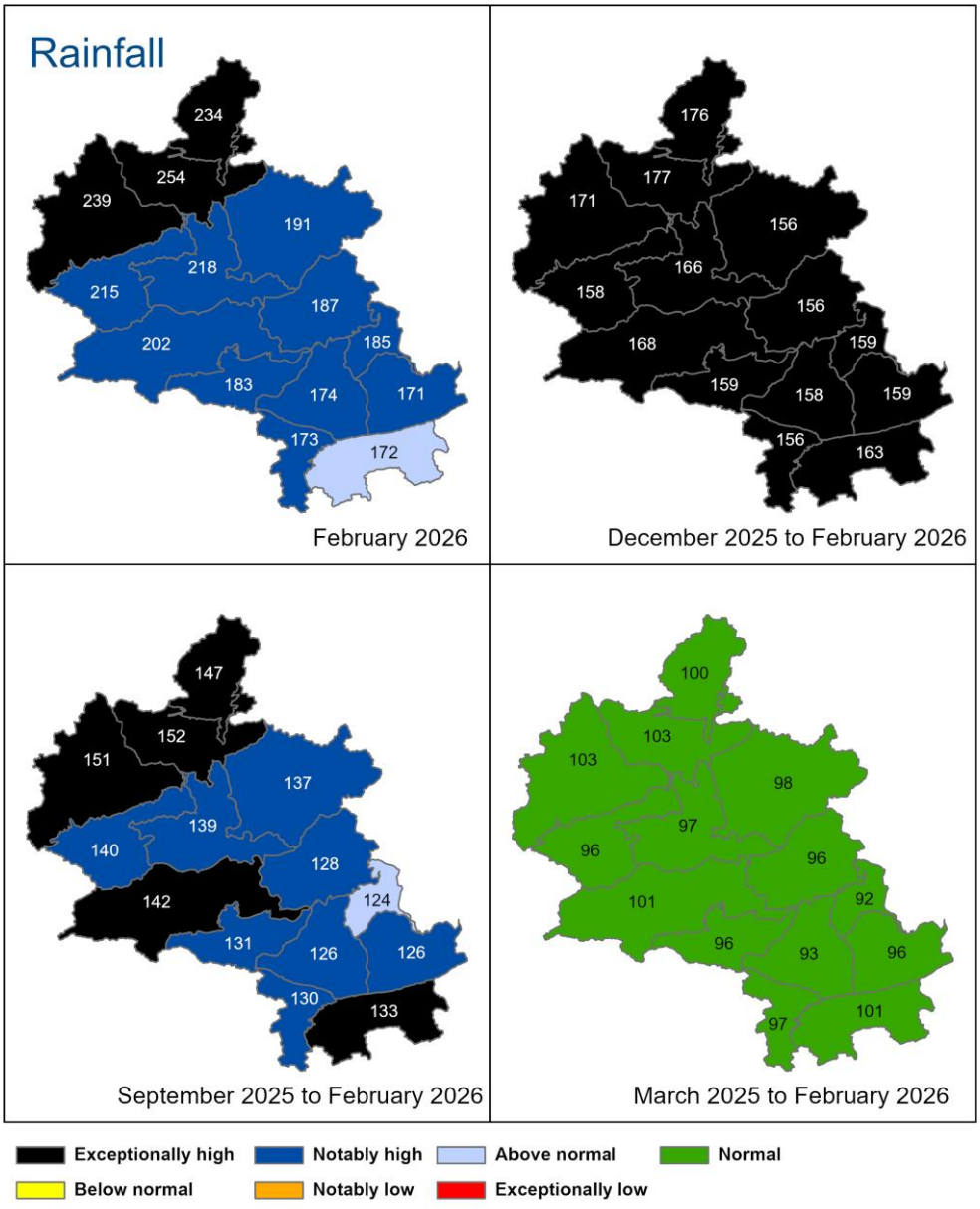
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 28 February 2026), classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



Rainfall data for Jan 2025 onwards, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to Jan 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from registered rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

2.2 Rainfall map (2)

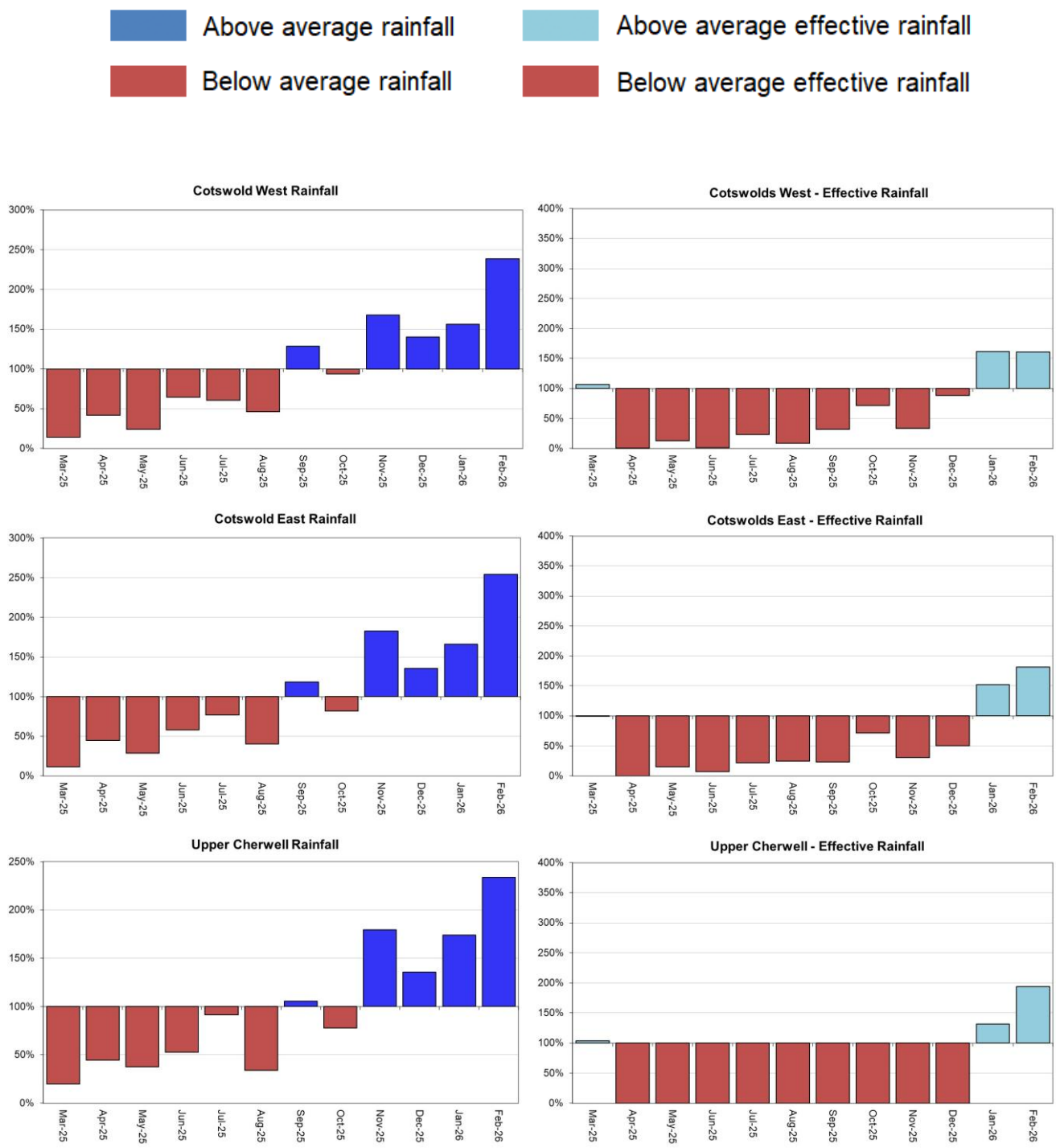
Figure 2.2: Total rainfall for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 28 February 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

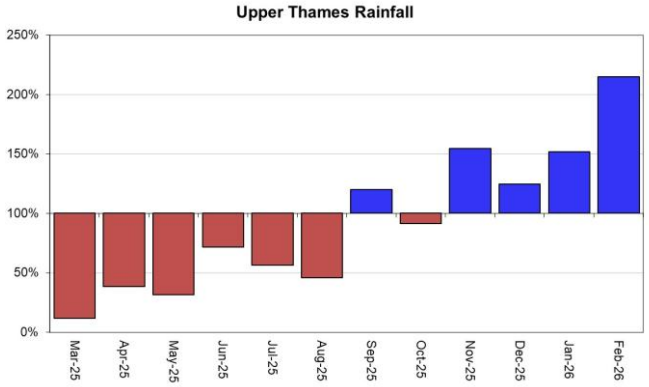


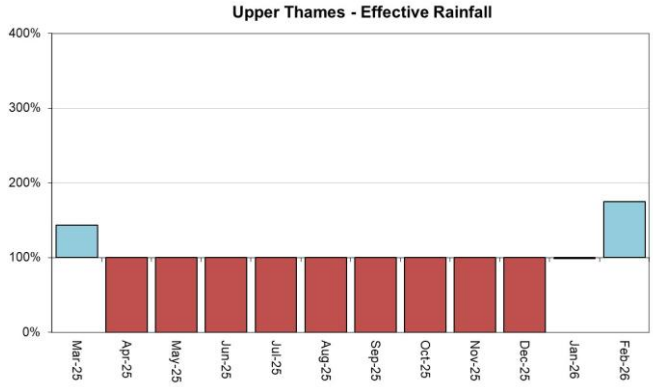
HadUK data based on the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges (Source: Met Office). Provisional data based on Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency).

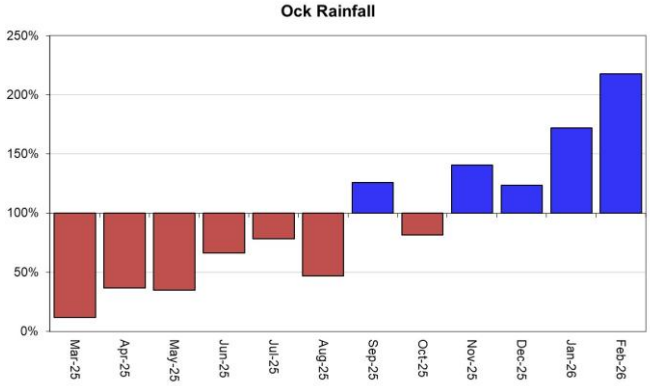
2.3 Rainfall charts

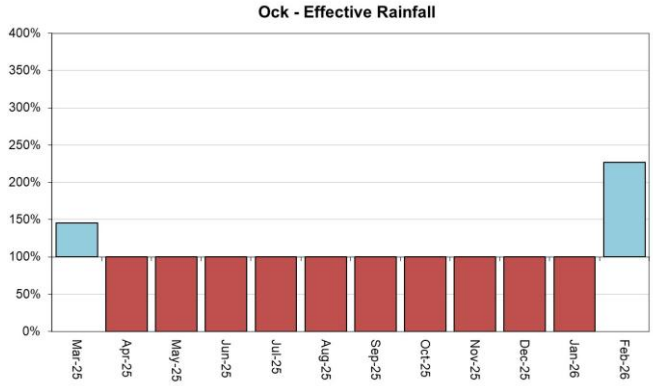
Figure 2.3: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for each areal unit.

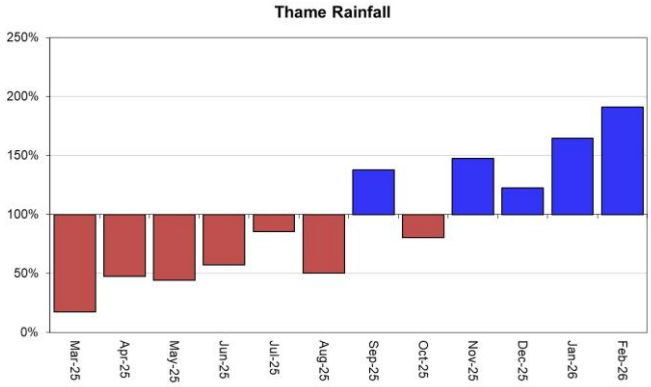


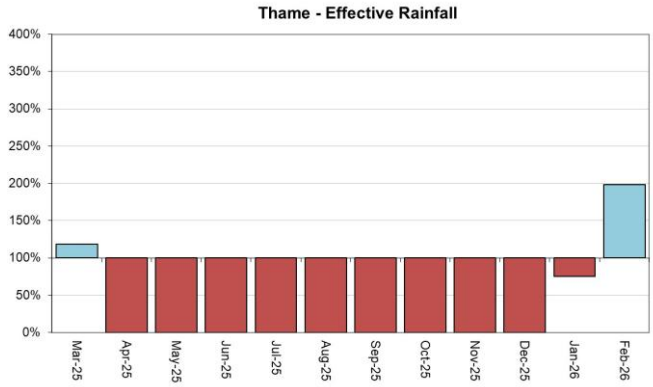

Upper Thames Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26

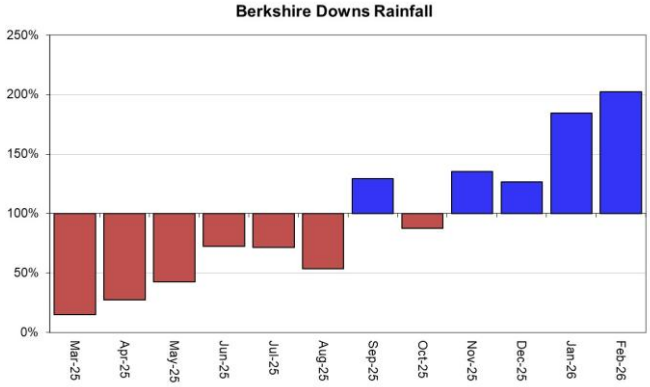

Upper Thames - Effective Rainfall
400%
300%
200%
100%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26

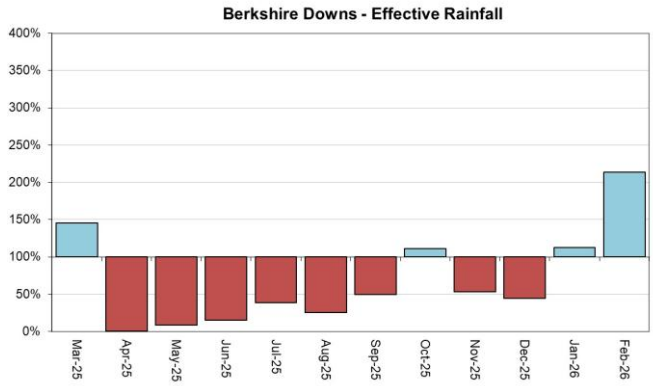

Ock Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26

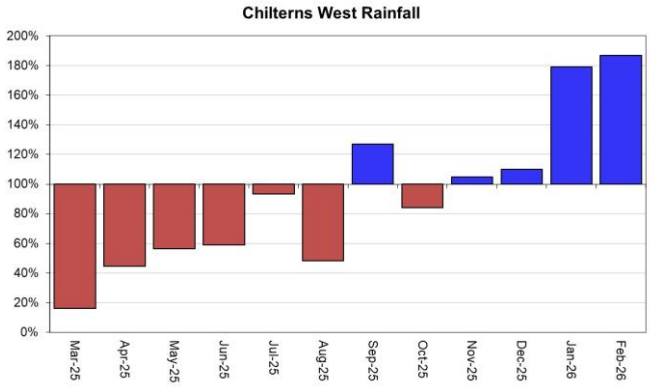

Ock - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26

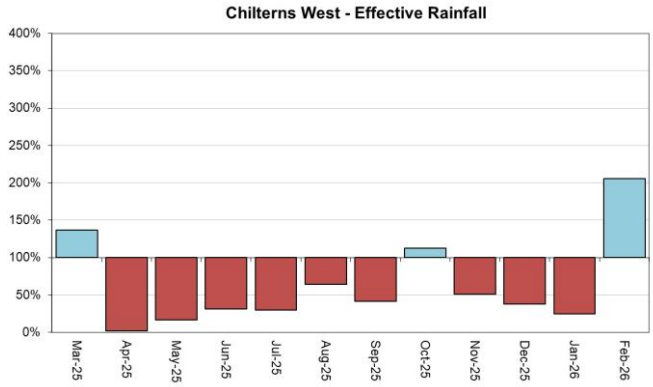

Thame Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26

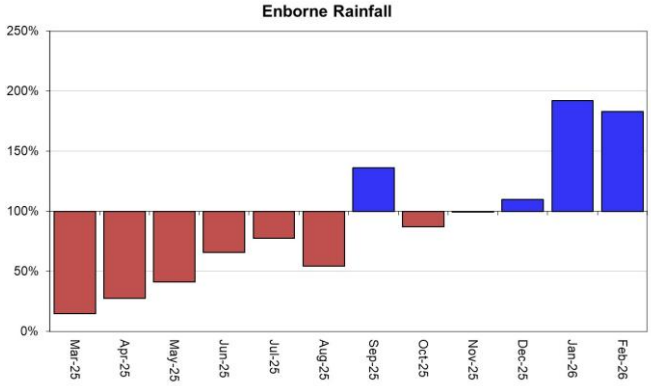

Thame - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26

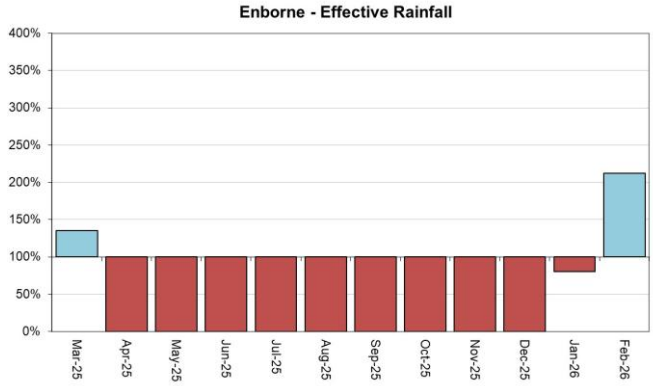

Berkshire Downs Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26

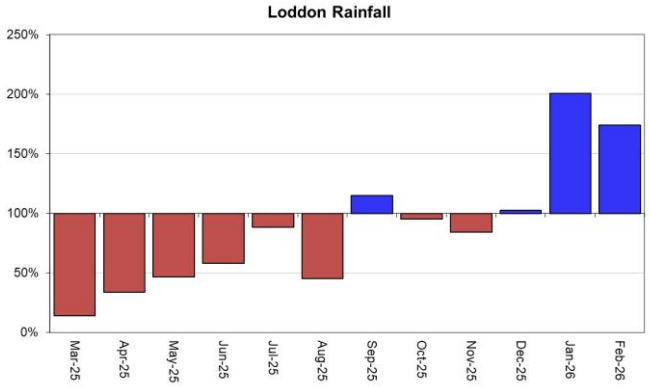

Berkshire Downs - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26

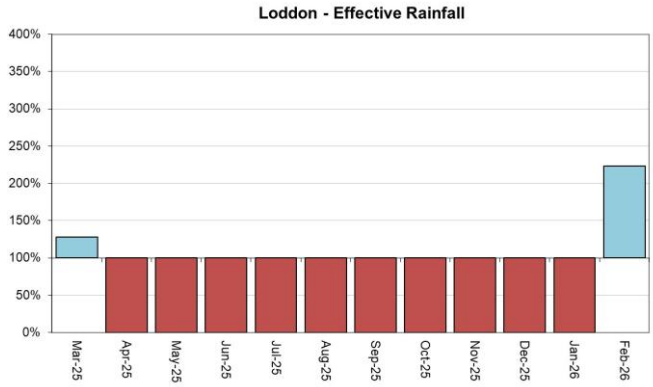

Chilterns West Rainfall
200%
180%
160%
140%
120%
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26

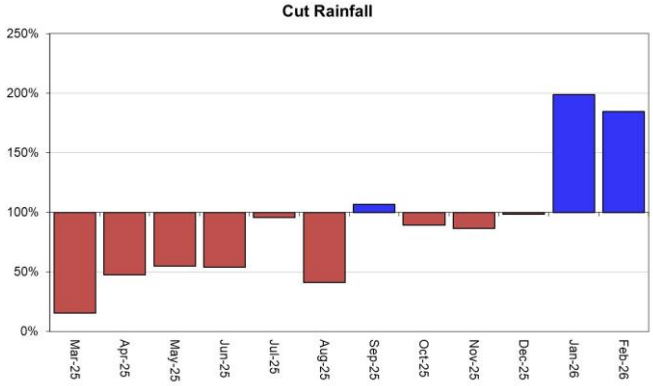

Chilterns West - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26

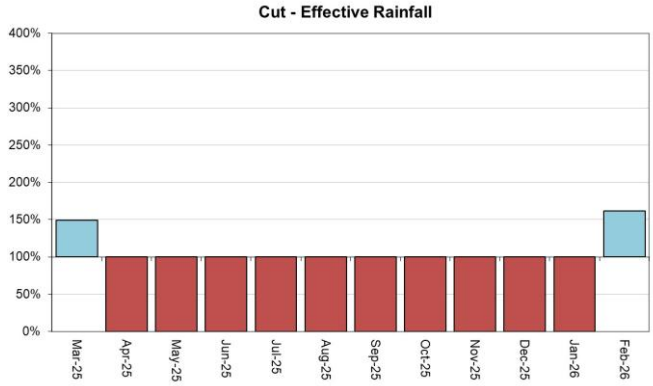

Enborne Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26

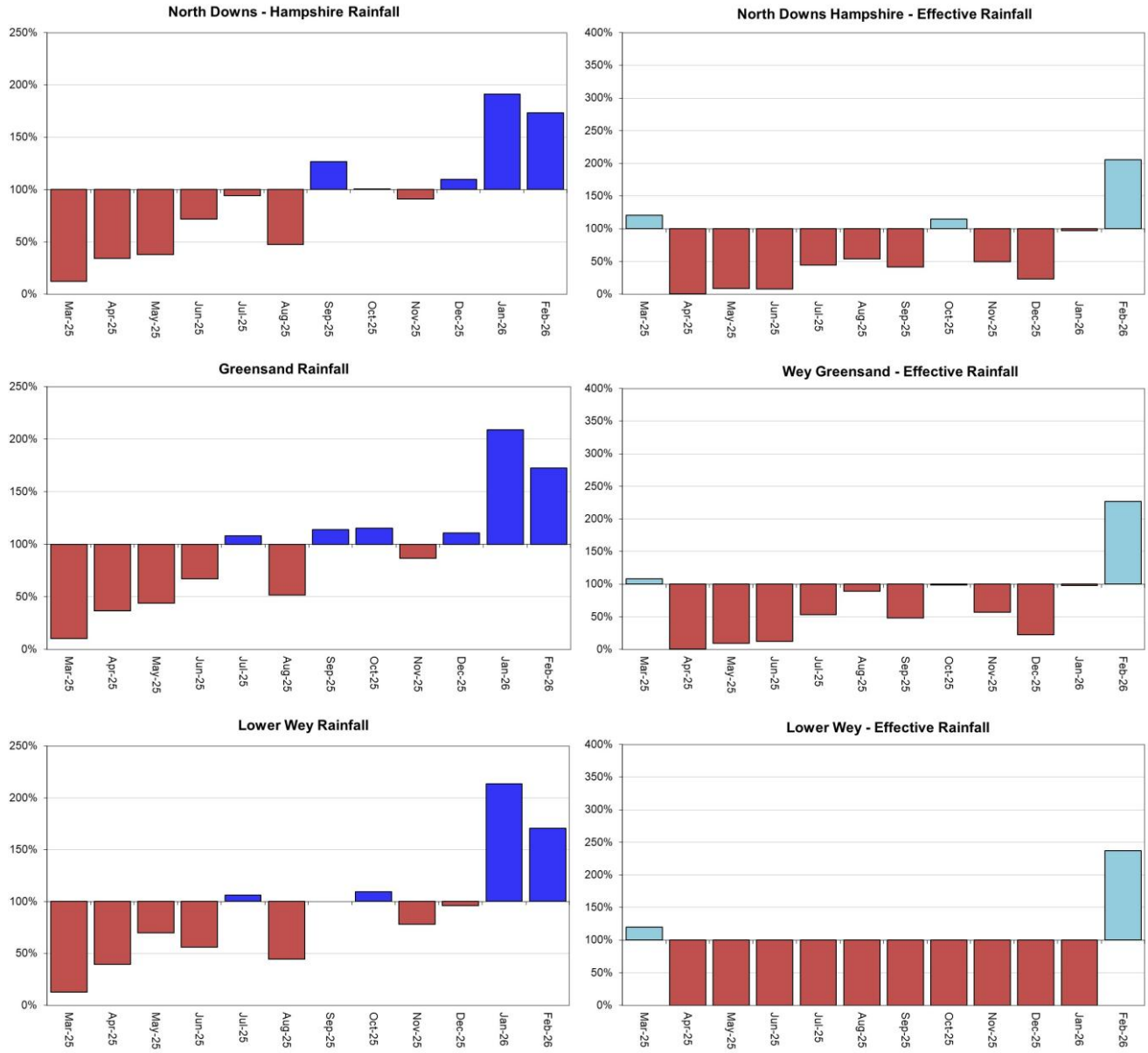

Enborne - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26


Loddon Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26


Loddon - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26


Cut Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26


Cut - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26



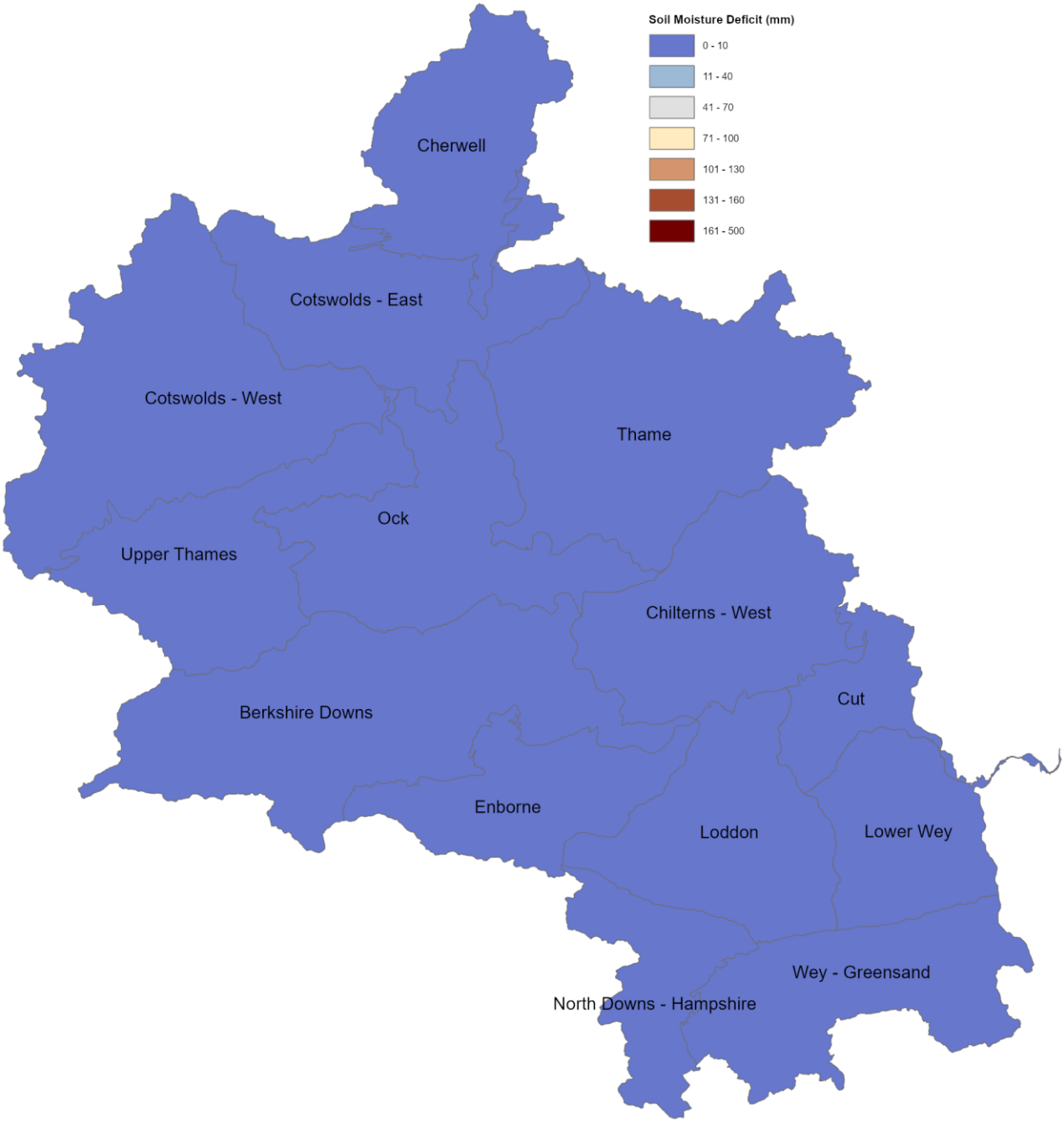
HadUK rainfall data. (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

EA effective rainfall data (Source: EA Soil Moisture Model)

3 Soil moisture deficit

3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

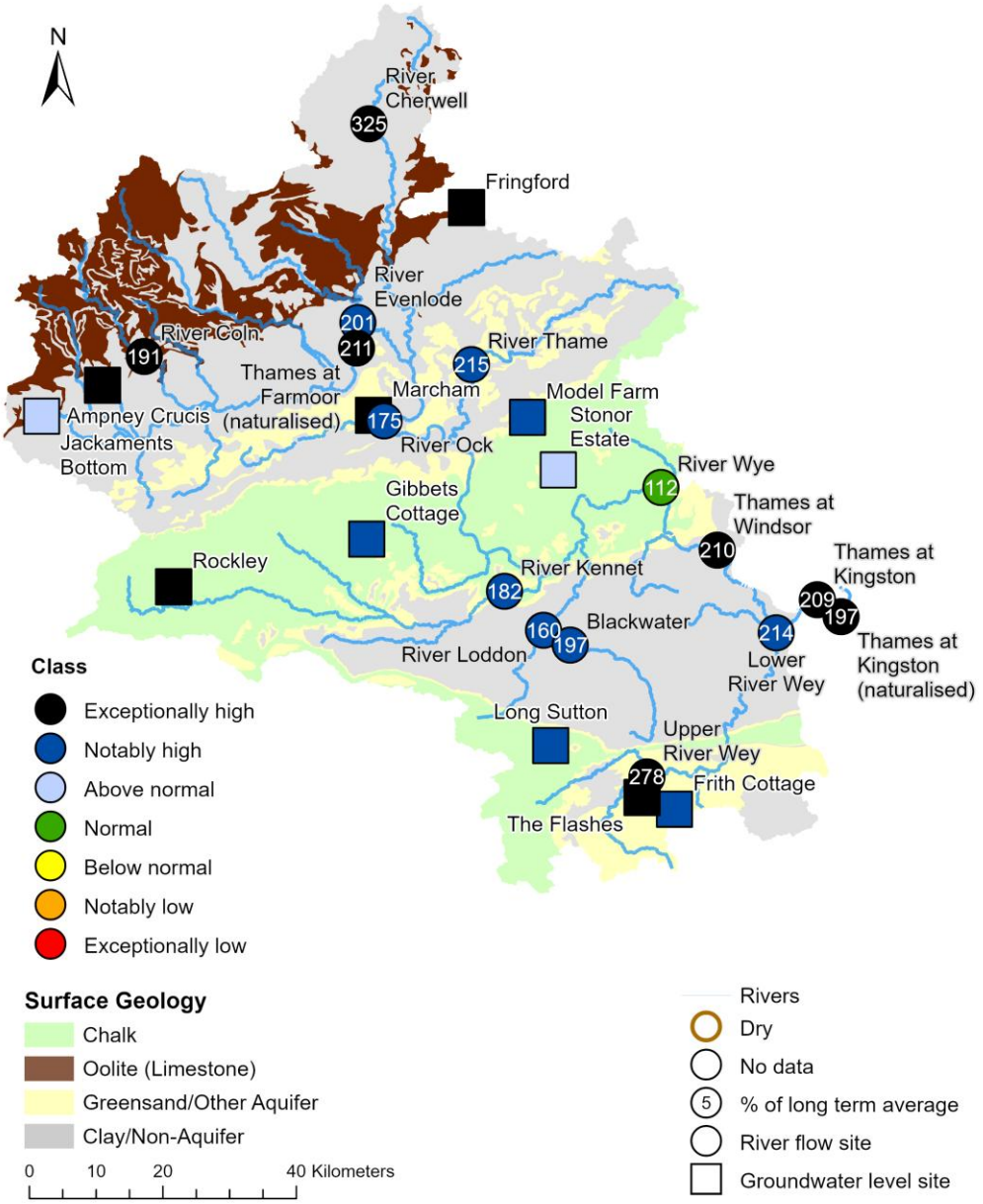
Figure 3.1: Soil moisture deficits for the week ending 28 February 2026. Shows the areal SMD estimate in millimetres.



4 River Flow and Groundwater Status

4.1 River flow and groundwater level map

Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites and end of month groundwater levels 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 means.

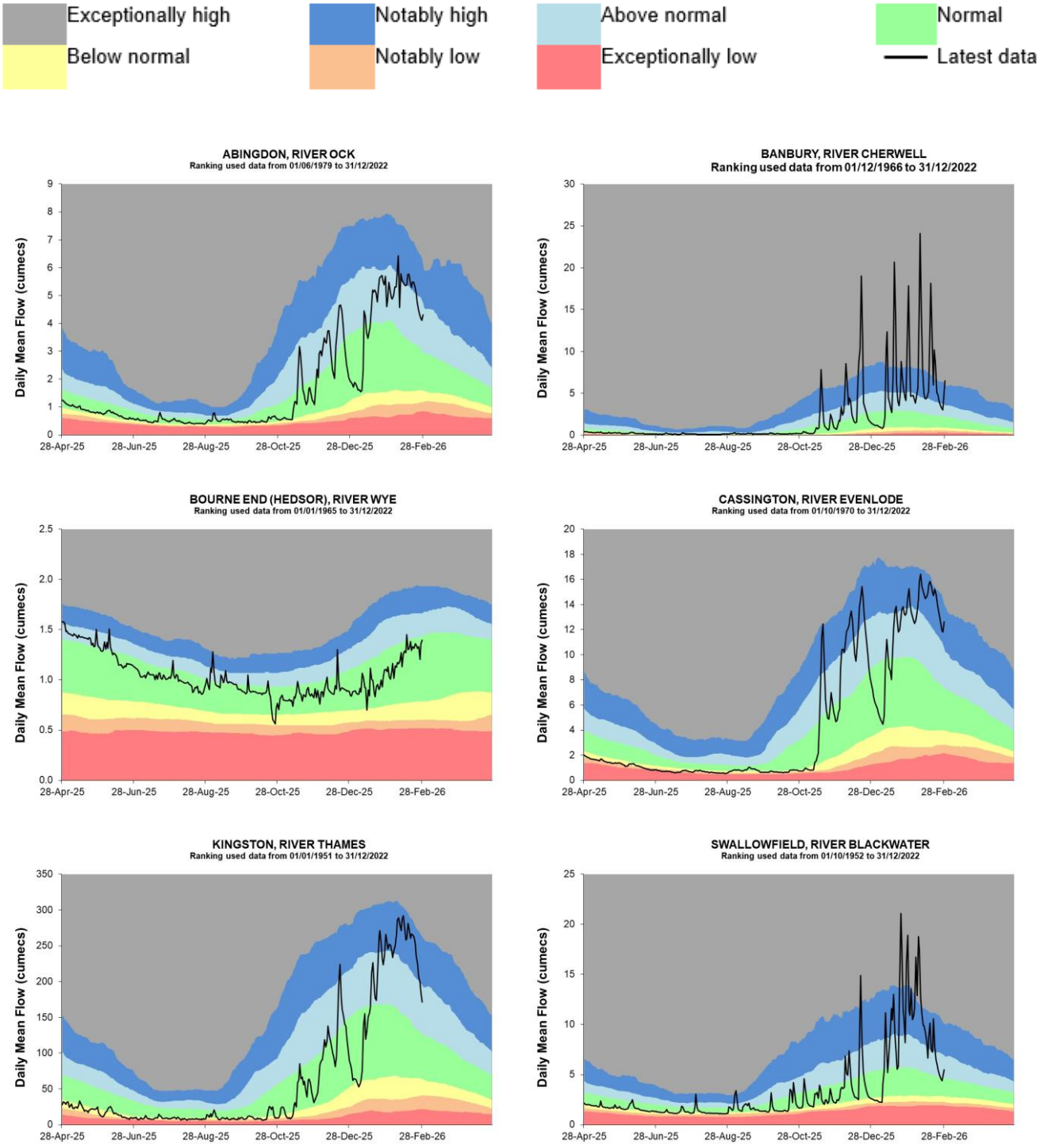


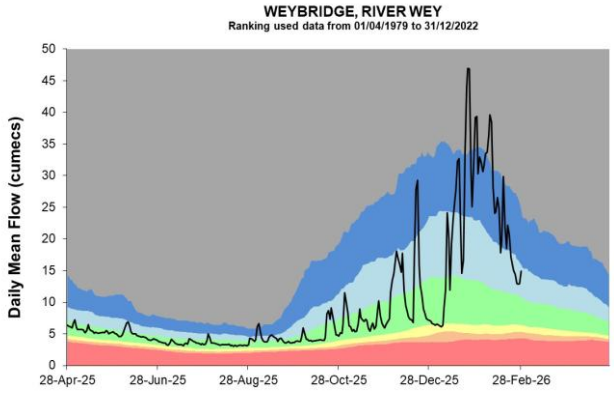
(Source: Environment Agency). © Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright and Database Rights 2026 – AC0000807064.

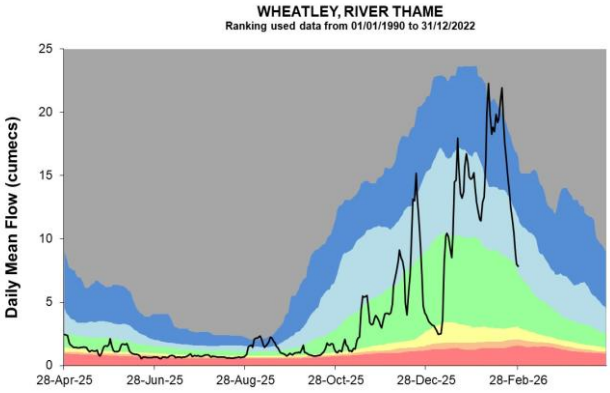
5 River flows

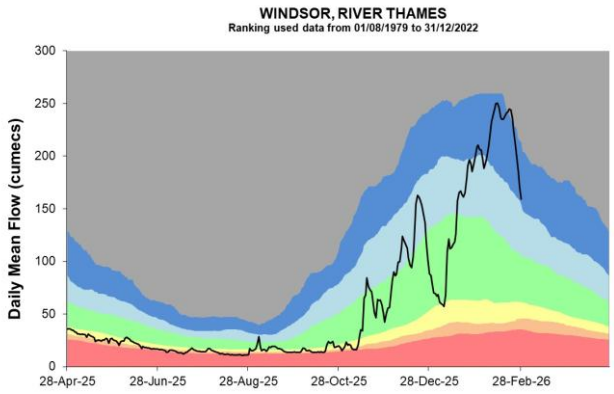
5.1 River flow charts

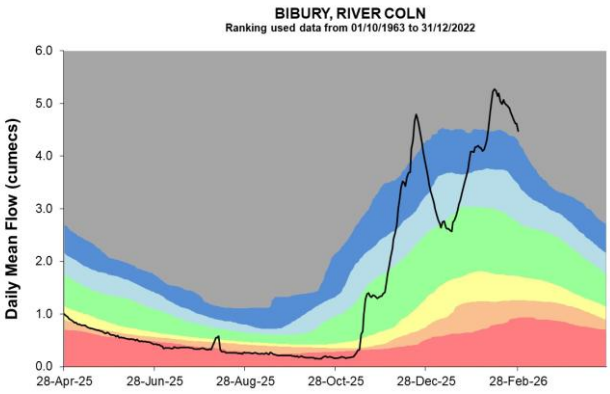
Figure 5.1: Daily mean river flows for indicator sites compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows, and long term maximum and minimum flows.

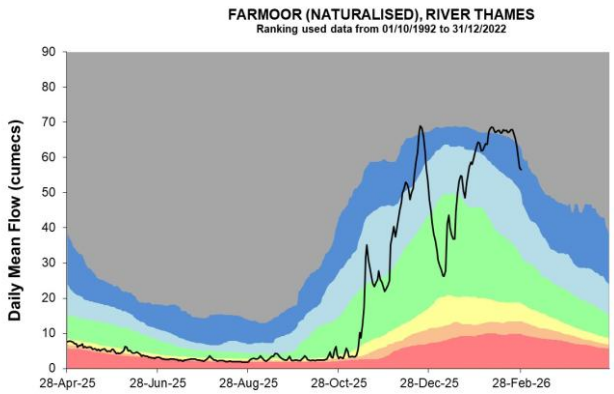


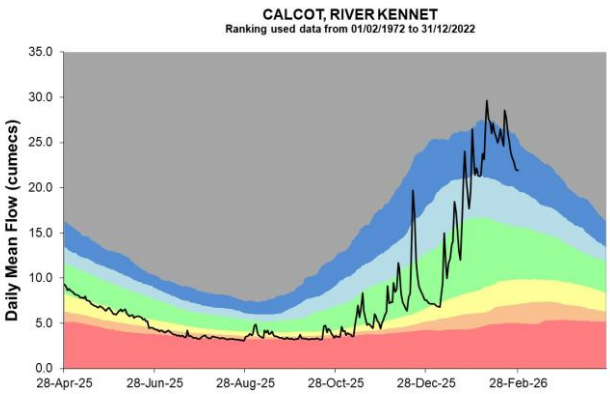

WEYBRIDGE, RIVER WEY
Ranking used data from 01/04/1979 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
50
28-Apr-25
28-Jun-25
28-Aug-25
28-Oct-25
28-Dec-25
28-Feb-26

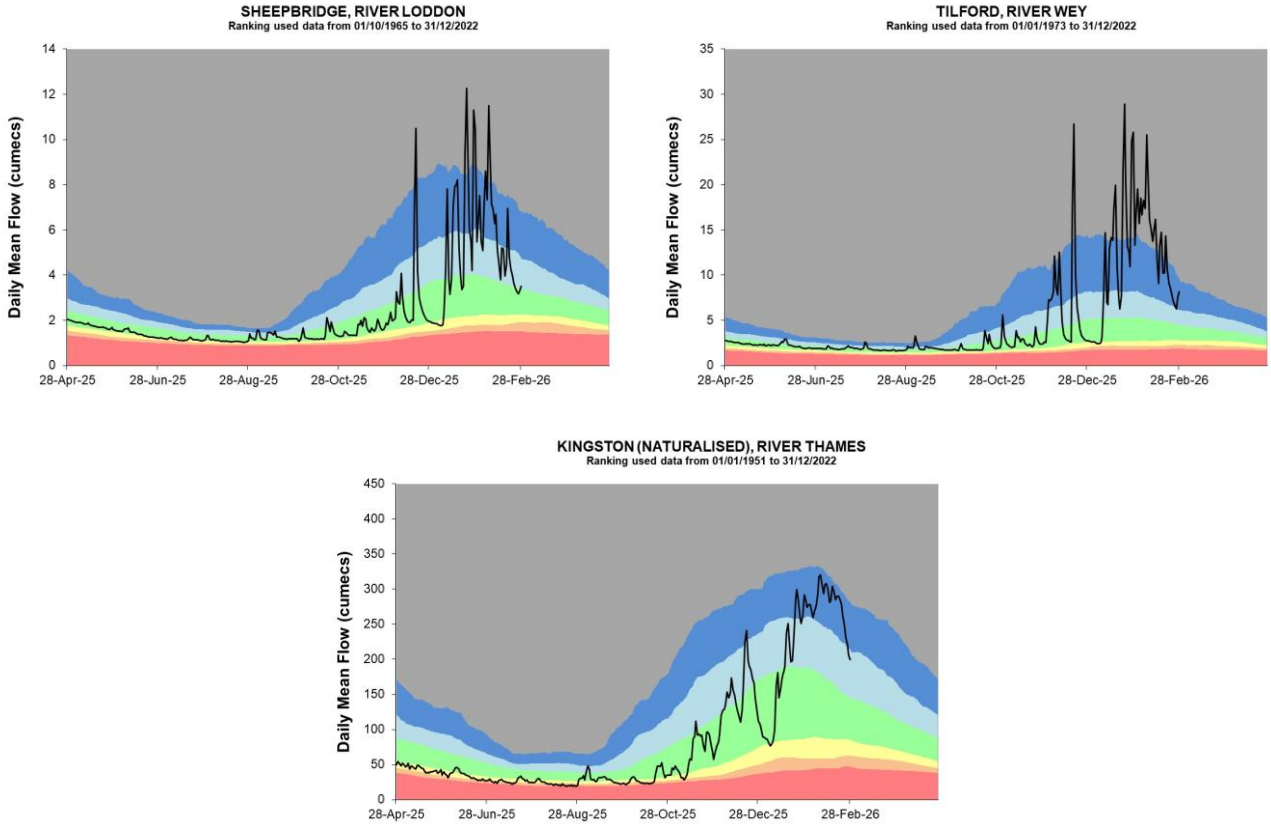

WHEATLEY, RIVER THAME
Ranking used data from 01/01/1990 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0
5
10
15
20
25
28-Apr-25
28-Jun-25
28-Aug-25
28-Oct-25
28-Dec-25
28-Feb-26


WINDSOR, RIVER THAMES
Ranking used data from 01/08/1979 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0
50
100
150
200
250
300
28-Apr-25
28-Jun-25
28-Aug-25
28-Oct-25
28-Dec-25
28-Feb-26


BIBURY, RIVER COLN
Ranking used data from 01/10/1963 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0.0
1.0
2.0
3.0
4.0
5.0
6.0
28-Apr-25
28-Jun-25
28-Aug-25
28-Oct-25
28-Dec-25
28-Feb-26


FARMOOR (NATURALISED), RIVER THAMES
Ranking used data from 01/10/1992 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
28-Apr-25
28-Jun-25
28-Aug-25
28-Oct-25
28-Dec-25
28-Feb-26


CALCOT, RIVER KENNET
Ranking used data from 01/02/1972 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0.0
5.0
10.0
15.0
20.0
25.0
30.0
35.0
28-Apr-25
28-Jun-25
28-Aug-25
28-Oct-25
28-Dec-25
28-Feb-26

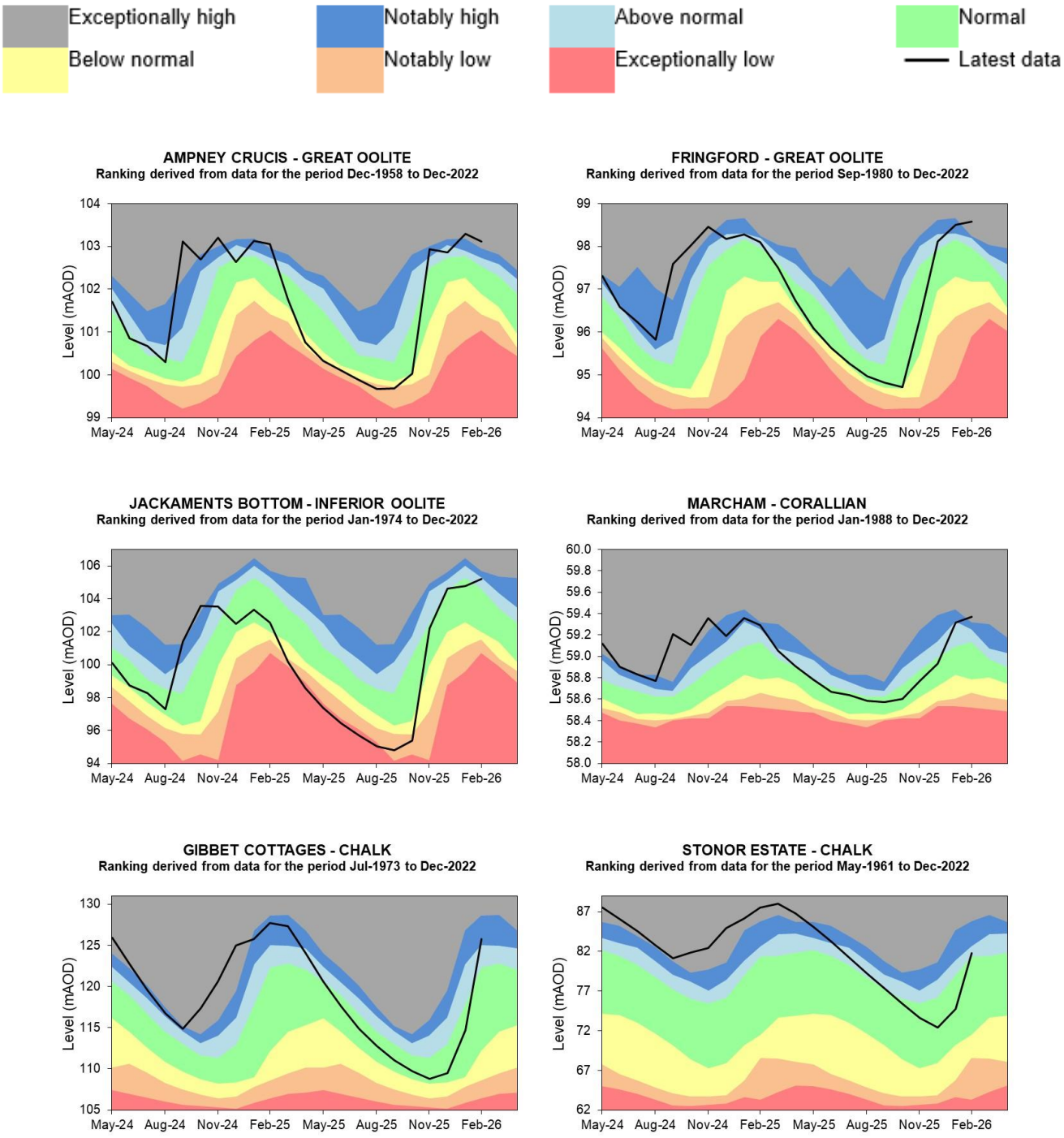


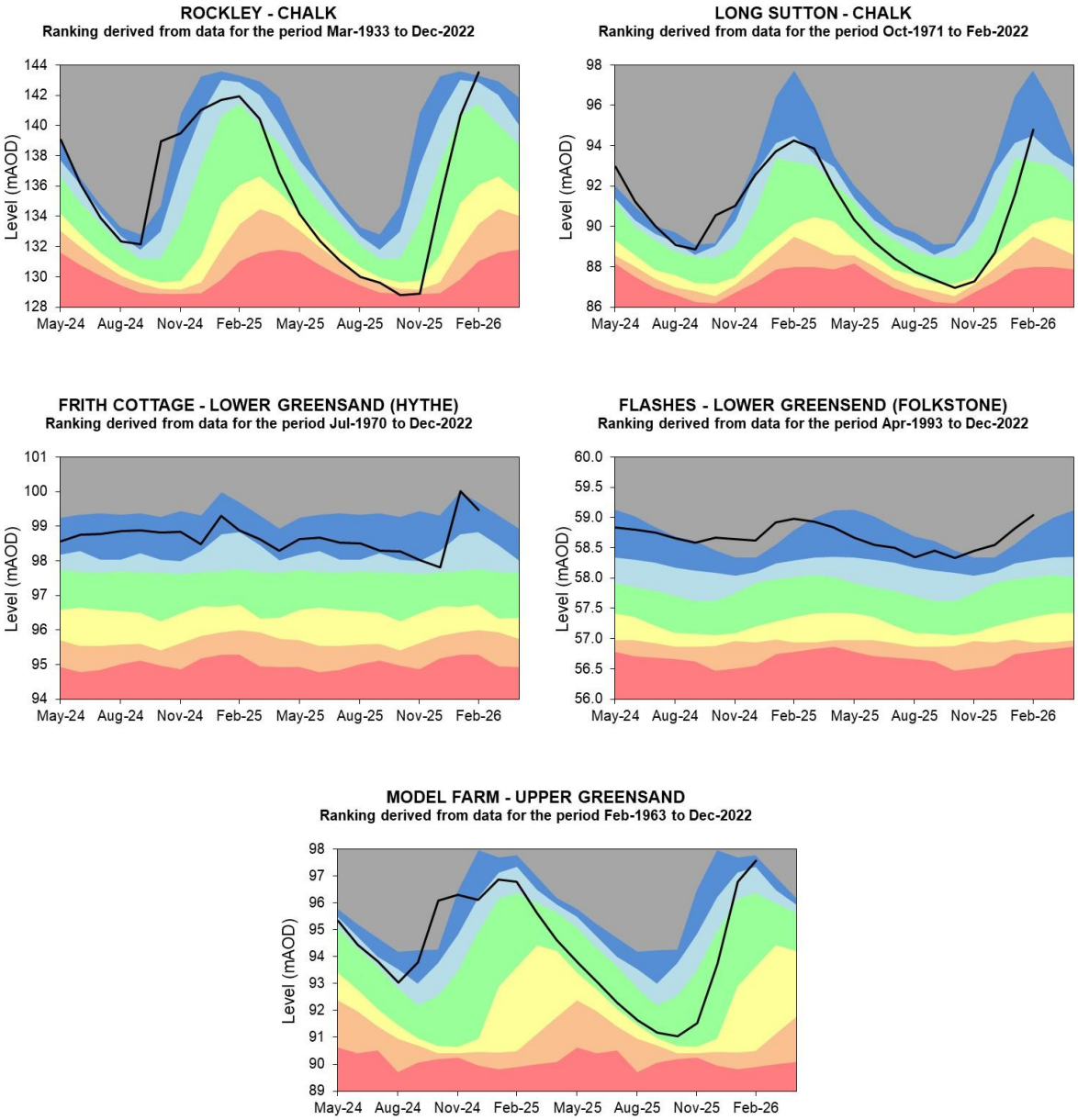
Source: Environment Agency.

6 Groundwater levels

6.1 Groundwater level charts

Figure 6.1: End of month groundwater levels for indicator sites, compared to an analysis of historic end of month levels, and long term maximum and minimum levels.

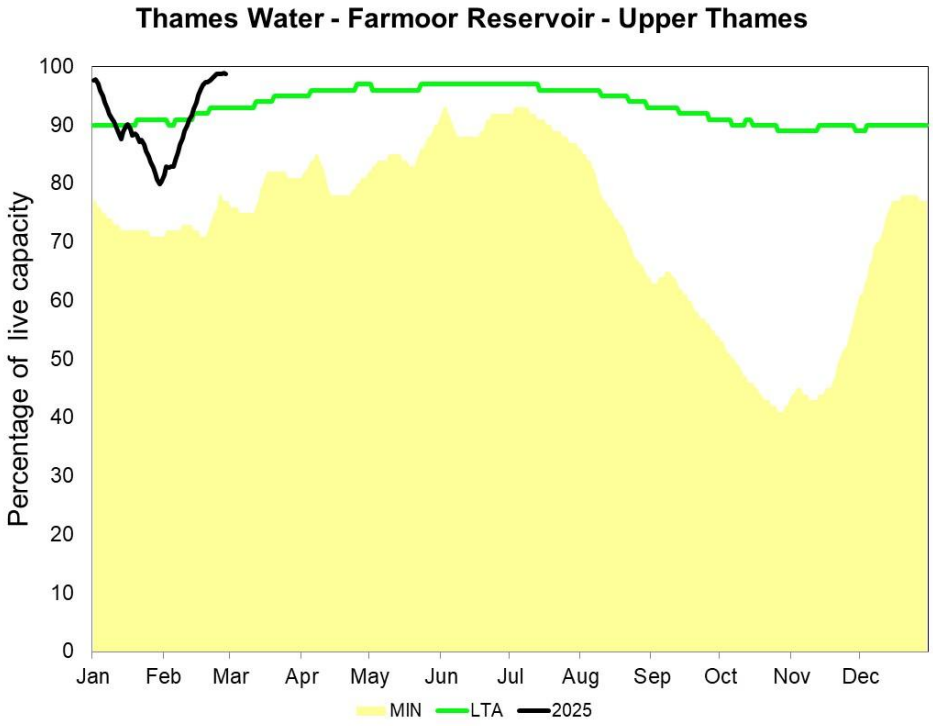


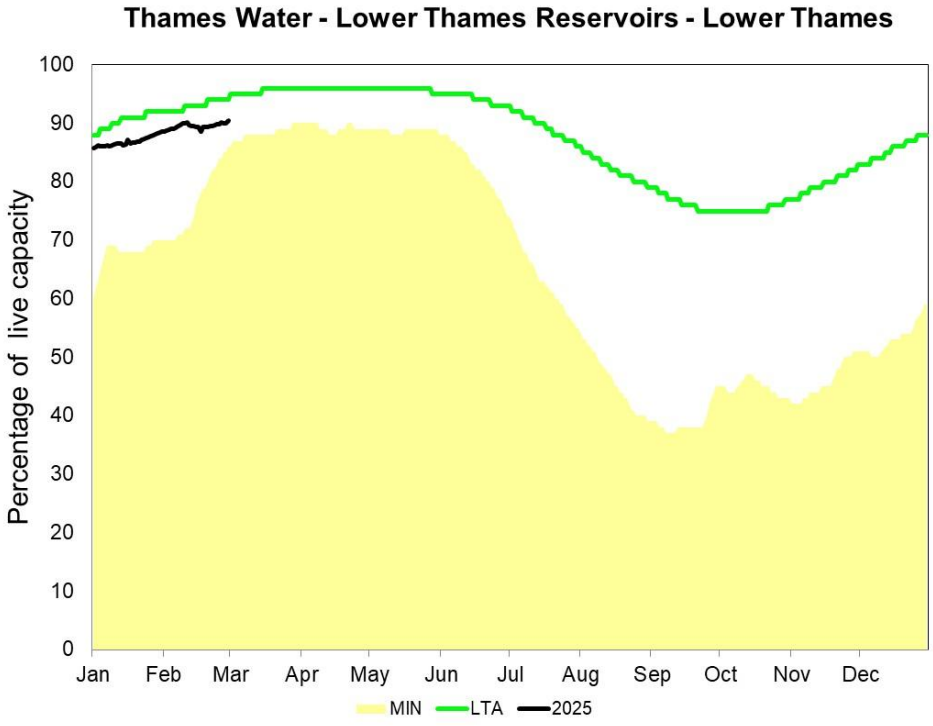


Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

7 Reservoir stocks

Figure 7.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to minimum and average stocks.

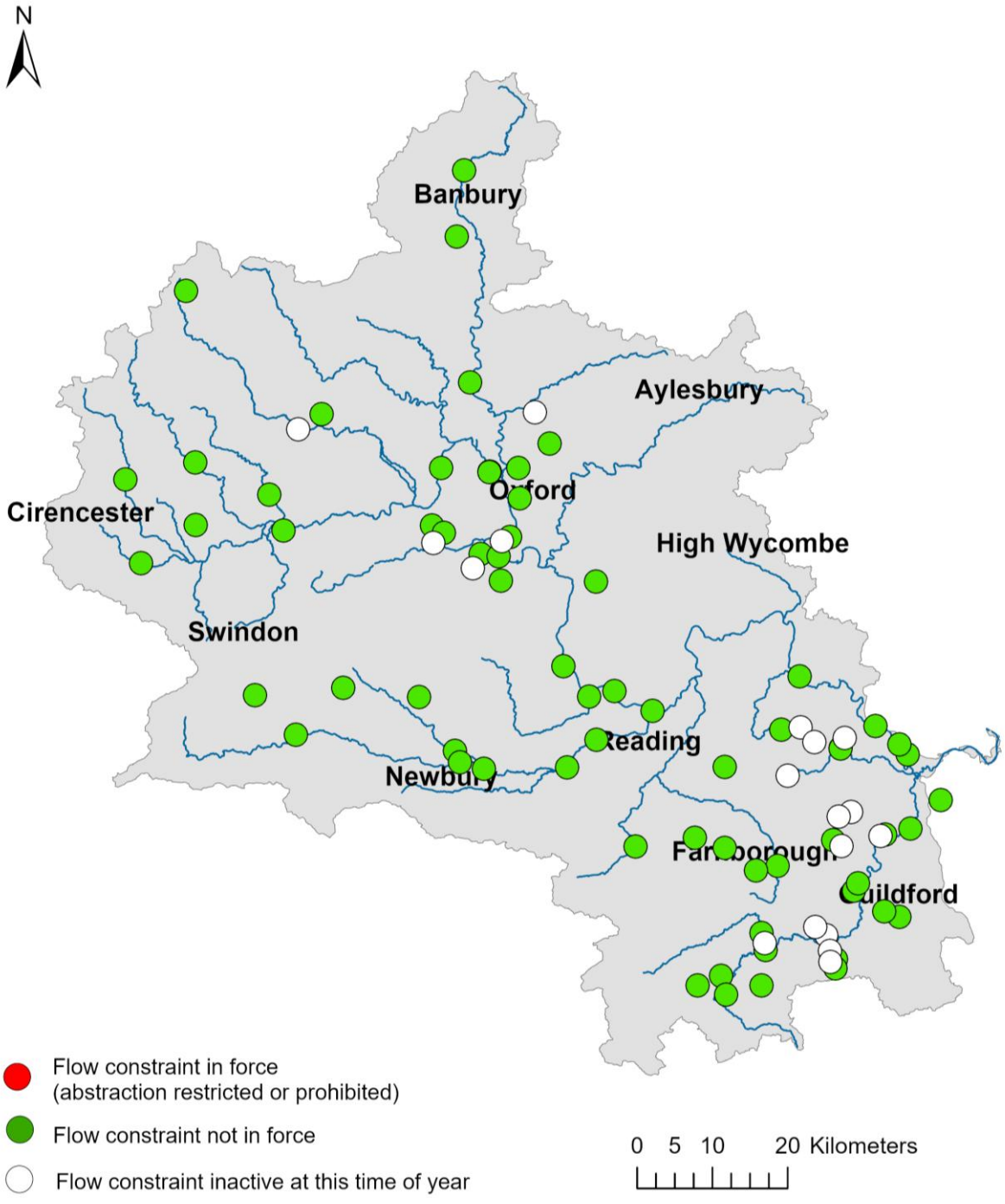




(Source: water companies).

8 Flow Constraints

8.1 Figure 8.1: End of month flow constraints in Thames Area.



8.2 Summary of flow constraints

Week ending	01/02/26	08/02/26	15/02/26	22/02/26
	0	0	0	0

9 Summary of rainfall, effective rainfall and soil moisture deficit

9.1 Rainfall and effective rainfall

Area	Rainfall (mm) 28 day Total	Rainfall (mm) February LTA	Rainfall (mm) % LTA	Effective Rainfall (mm) 28 day total	Effective Rainfall (mm) February LTA	Effective Rainfall (mm) % LTA
Cotswolds - West	145	61	238	124	43	286
Cotswolds - East	131	52	254	110	33	337
Berkshire Downs	121	60	203	100	41	244
Chilterns - West	102	54	187	81	34	234
North Downs - Hampshire	122	70	173	100	52	192
Wey - Greensand	116	67	172	95	49	193
Upper Thames	109	50	216	87	29	296
Cherwell	113	48	235	93	29	317
Thame	89	46	192	68	25	270
Loddon	91	52	174	69	32	213
Lower Wey	88	52	170	67	32	209
Ock	98	45	218	76	24	322
Enborne	105	58	180	83	40	207
Cut	87	47	184	65	25	255
Thames Area	**108**	**55**	**199**	**87**	**35**	**248**

HadUK rainfall data (Source: Met Office Crown copyright 2025)
EA effective rainfall data (Source: EA Soil Moisture Model)

9.2 Soil moisture deficit

Area	SMD (mm) Day 28	SMD (mm) LTA
Cotswolds - West	0	3
Cotswolds - East	0	4
Berkshire Downs	0	3
Chilterns - West	0	6
North Downs - Hampshire	0	3
Wey - Greensand	0	3
Upper Thames	0	5
Cherwell	1	4
Thame	0	7
Loddon	0	4
Lower Wey	1	4
Ock	0	10
Enborne	0	3
Cut	1	8
Thames Area	**0**	**5**

HadUK rainfall data (Source: Met Office Crown copyright 2025)
EA effective rainfall data (Source: EA Soil Moisture Model)

9.3 Winter rainfall and effective rainfall

Winter period: 01/10/2025 to 28/02/2026						
Area	Rainfall (mm) Total	Rainfall (mm) LTA	Rainfall (mm) % LTA	Effective Rainfall (mm) Total	Effective Rainfall (mm) LTA	Effective Rainfall (mm) % LTA
Cotswolds - West	639	415	154	424	271	156
Cotswolds - East	562	357	157	329	206	159
Berkshire Downs	573	399	144	333	215	155
Chilterns - West	473	367	129	232	181	128
North Downs - Hampshire	617	475	130	384	297	130
Wey - Greensand	622	457	136	386	281	137
Upper Thames	493	345	143	227	157	145
Cherwell	504	327	154	250	160	156
Thame	427	311	137	184	129	143
Loddon	457	359	127	197	164	120
Lower Wey	448	345	130	200	162	123
Ock	437	309	141	168	115	147
Enborne	513	394	130	279	208	134
Cut	403	319	126	137	117	117
Thames Area	**512**	**370**	**138**	**266**	**190**	**140**

HadUK rainfall data (Source: Met Office Crown copyright 2025)
EA effective rainfall data (Source: EA Soil Moisture Model)

10 Glossary

10.1 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).

10.2 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.

11 Appendices

11.1 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
Berkshire Downs	202	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal
Chilterns West	187	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Cotswold East	254	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal
Cotswold West	239	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal
Cut	185	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Above normal	Normal
Enborne	183	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Loddon	174	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Lower Wey	171	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
North Downs - Hampshire	173	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Ock	218	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Thame	191	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Upper Cherwell	234	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal
Upper Thames	215	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Wey - Greensand	172	Above Normal	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal

11.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Feb 2026 band	Jan 2026 band
Abingdon	River Ock	Ock	Notably high	Normal
Banbury	River Cherwell	Cherwell Upper	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Bibury	River Coln	Coln	Exceptionally high	Above normal
Bourne End (Hedsor)	River Wye	Wye Bucks	Normal	Normal
Calcot	River Kennet	Kennet	Notably high	Normal
Cassington	River Evenlode	Evenlode	Notably high	Above normal
Farmoor (Naturalised)	River Thames	Thames	Exceptionally high	Normal
Kingston	River Thames	Thames North Bank	Exceptionally high	Normal
Sheepbridge	River Loddon	Loddon	Notably high	Notably high
Swallowfield	River Blackwater	Loddon	Notably high	Exceptionally high
Tilford	River Wey	Wey Addleston Bourne	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Weybridge	River Wey	Wey Addleston Bourne	Notably high	Exceptionally high
Wheatley	River Thame	Thame	Notably high	Normal
Windsor	River Thames	Thames	Exceptionally high	Normal
Kingston (Naturalised)	River Thames	Thames North Bank	Exceptionally high	Normal

11.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Feb 2026 band	End of Jan 2026 band
Ampney Crucis OBH	Burford Oolitic Limestone (great)	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Frith Cottage	Godalming Lower Greensand	Notably high	Exceptionally high
Gibbet Cottages OBH	Berkshire Downs Chalk	Notably high	Normal
Jackaments Bottom OBH	Burford Oolitic Limestone (inferior)	Above normal	Normal
Marcham OBH	Shrivenham Corallian	Exceptionally high	Above normal
Model Farm	Chiltern Upper Greensand	Notably high	Above normal
Rockley OBH	Berkshire Downs Chalk	Exceptionally high	Above normal
Stonor Estate	South-west Chilterns Chalk	Above normal	Normal
The Flashes OBH	Godalming Lower Greensand	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Long Sutton	North Downs Chalk	Notably high	Normal
Fringford P.S.	Upper Bedford Ouse Oolitic Limestone (great)	Exceptionally high	Notably high