Monthly water situation report: East Anglia

1 Summary - March 2026

March rainfall across East Anglia ranged from 51% to 74% of the long term average for the month. With below average rainfall in March, the soil moisture deficit for East Anglia increased by approximately 17mm between the end of February and the end of March. However, the soil moisture deficit for East Anglia remains normal for the time of year. The majority of river flow report sites recorded normal flows for the time of year. Groundwater levels have continued to increase at the majority of reporting sites, with six sites showing a decline in groundwater levels since February. All report sites for which there is data available, except Bircham Newton, ended March 2026 with groundwater levels categorised as above normal or normal for the time of year. Public water supply reservoirs ended March with levels ranging from 82% to 98% of their full storage capacity.

1.1 Rainfall

Below average rainfall was received across all East Anglia catchments in March 2026. Rainfall totals across East Anglia ranged from 51% to 74% of the long term average (LTA) for the month. The East Anglia area average rainfall for March was 24mm. This total is approximately 60% of the 1991 to 2020 LTA for March and is considered below normal for the time of year. Northern catchments were typically slightly wetter than catchments to the south, with North Norfolk receiving the highest rainfall total of 33mm and South Essex receiving the lowest rainfall total of 17mm for the month. East Anglia rainfall totals across all catchments over the past 3 months have been above normal or notably high. Over the past 12 months, cumulative rainfall totals ranged between 85% and 104% of the LTA, with most catchment totals being categorised as normal for the time of year.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

Following below average rainfall in March the soil moisture deficit (SMD) for East Anglia has increased from 3mm at the end of February to 20mm by the end of March 2026. However, the SMD remains normal for the time of year. There is little variation in SMD values across the area, with all catchments having SMD values in the range of 11mm to 40mm. The hydrological catchments with the highest SMDs are located in the south of the area, with South Essex recording the highest SMD of 27mm at the end of March.

1.3 River flows

March 2026 month mean river flows ranged between 49% to 123% of the LTA, with the majority of river flow report sites categorised as normal for the time of year. In the east, the Waveney and Gipping catchments recorded below normal flows for the time of year, with the

Ouzel catchment in the south west of the area, also recording below normal flows. The Gipping catchment recorded the lowest flows, with the month mean river flow being 49% of the LTA for the time of year. The highest flows were typically towards the centre and west of the area, with the Wissey catchment recording 123% of the LTA.

1.4 Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels have continued to rise in the majority of reporting sites, for which there is data available, for March 2026. Six reporting sites have shown receding groundwater levels through March, indicating a truncated recharge season. All report sites, except Bircham Newton, ended March with groundwater levels categorised as above normal or normal for the time of year. Bircham Newton in north west Norfolk, ended March with groundwater levels categorised as below normal for the time of year.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

Public water supply reservoir levels ranged from 82% to 98% of their full storage capacity. Alton and Abberton reservoirs ended the month with levels above their respective normal operating curves. Grafham, Ardleigh and Hanningfield reservoirs ended the month with levels below their respective normal operating curves.

1.6 Forward look

1.6.1 Probabilistic ensemble projections for river flows at key sites

The river flow projections indicate an approximate 40% or higher probability of normal flows by June 2026 at all forecast sites. For September 2026, flow projections indicate a high probability of normal flows or above for all sites except for the Ely Ouse Denver, which has a higher probability of normal or below normal flows by September 2026.

1.6.2 Probabilistic ensemble projections for groundwater levels in key aquifers

The groundwater projections for September 2026 show a high probability of normal to below normal groundwater levels at most forecast sites. Smeetham Hall projections show an approximate 60% probability of notably high groundwater levels by September 2026. The projections for March 2027 show a high probability of normal or higher levels at the majority of forecast sites. Bircham Newton and Newmarket show a higher probability of below normal or lower groundwater levels by September 2026.

Author: Hydrology Team, hydrology-ean-and-lna@environment-agency.gov.uk

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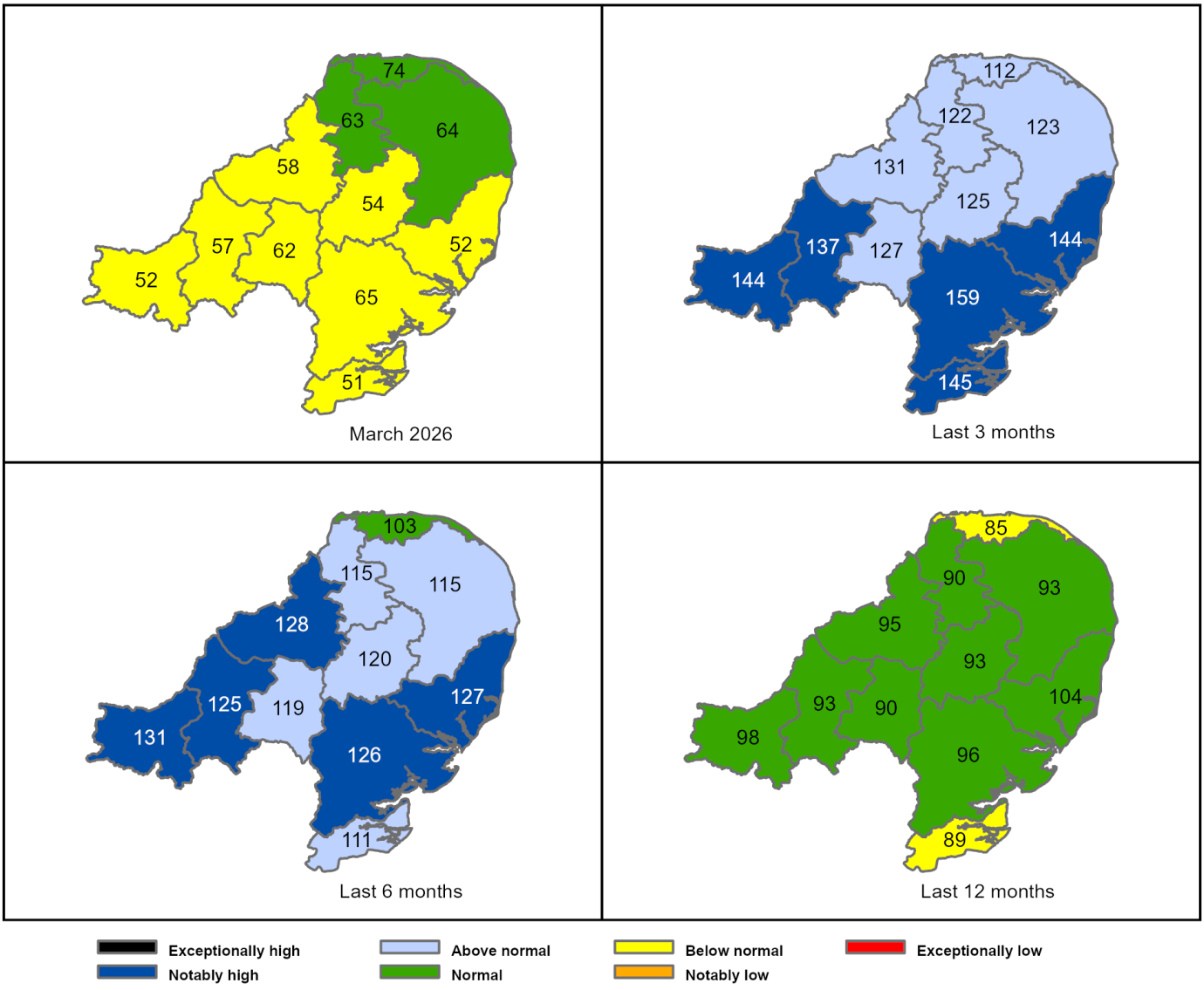
Contact Details: 03708 506 506

2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

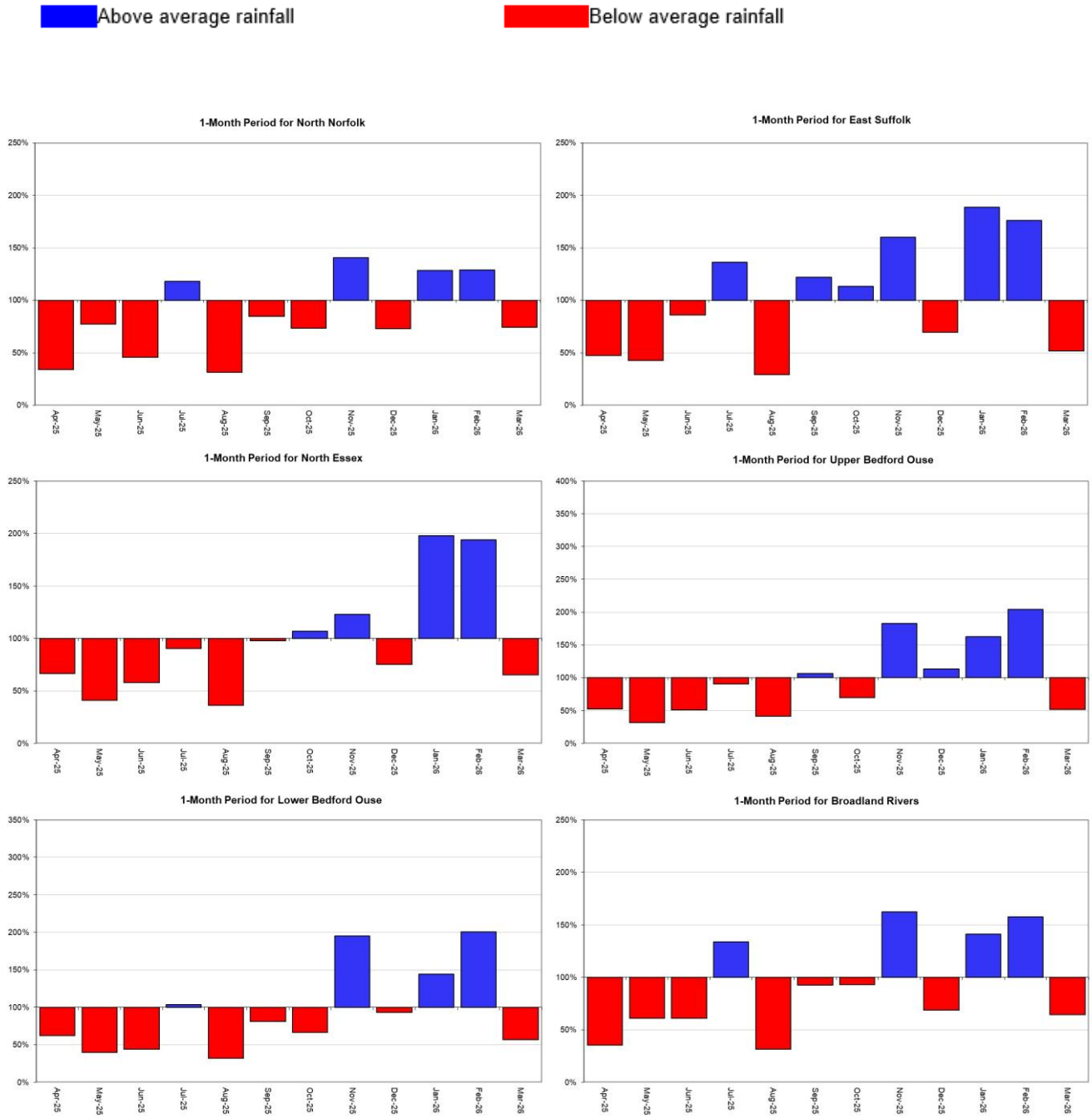
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas across East Anglia, expressed as a percentage of long term average rainfall for the current month (up to 31 March 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months. Category classes are based on an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

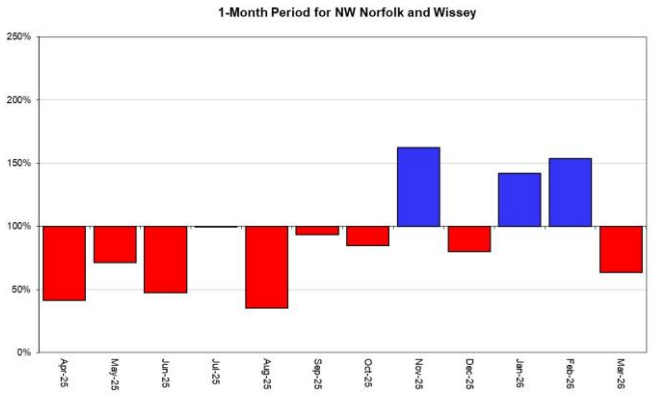


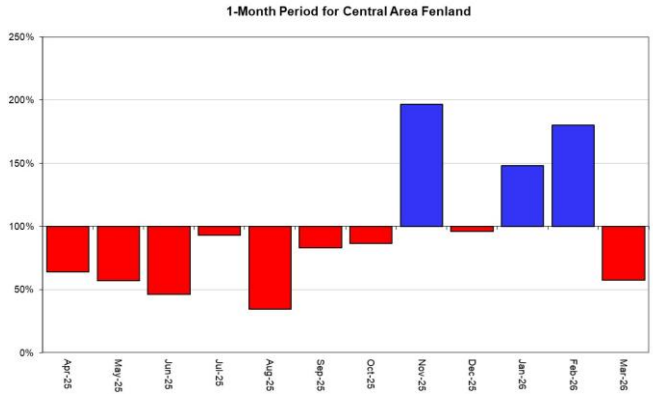
HadUK data based on the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). Provisional data based on Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2026.

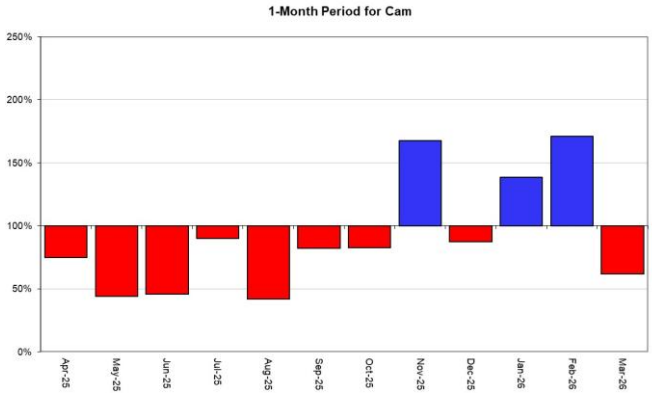
2.2 Rainfall charts

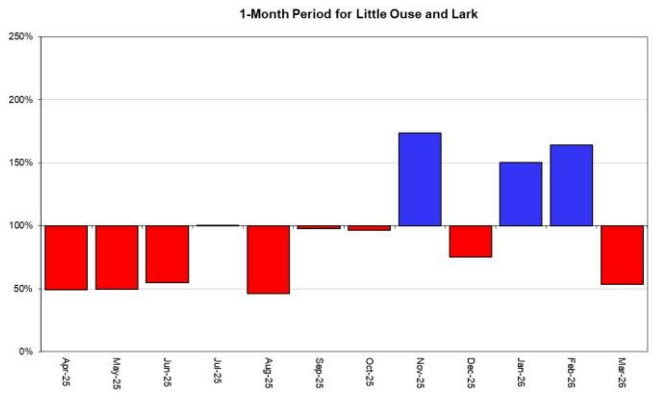
Figure 2.2: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for each region and for England.

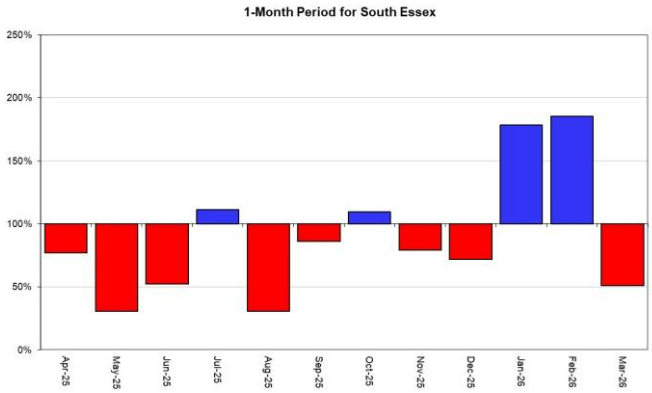






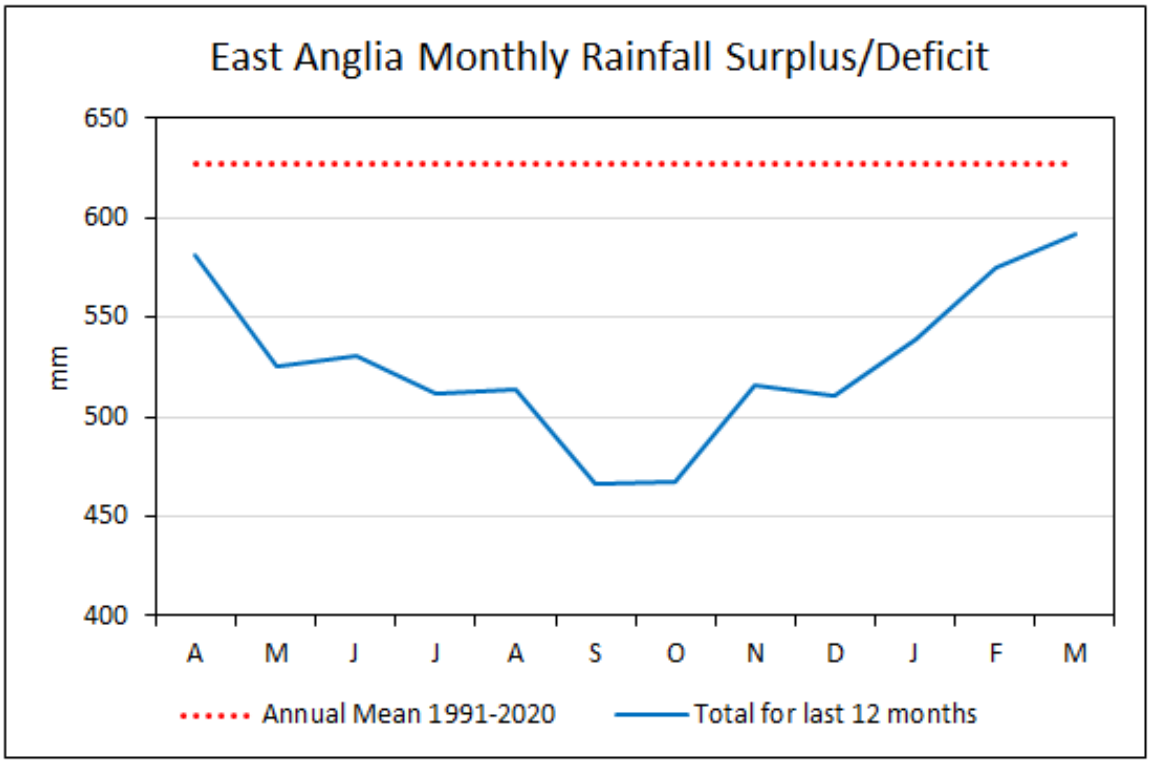






HadUK rainfall data. (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

2.3 Monthly rainfall surplus deficit chart



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

3 Soil moisture deficit

3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

Figure 3.1: Soil moisture deficit values for 31 March 2026. Values based on the weekly MORECS data for real land use.

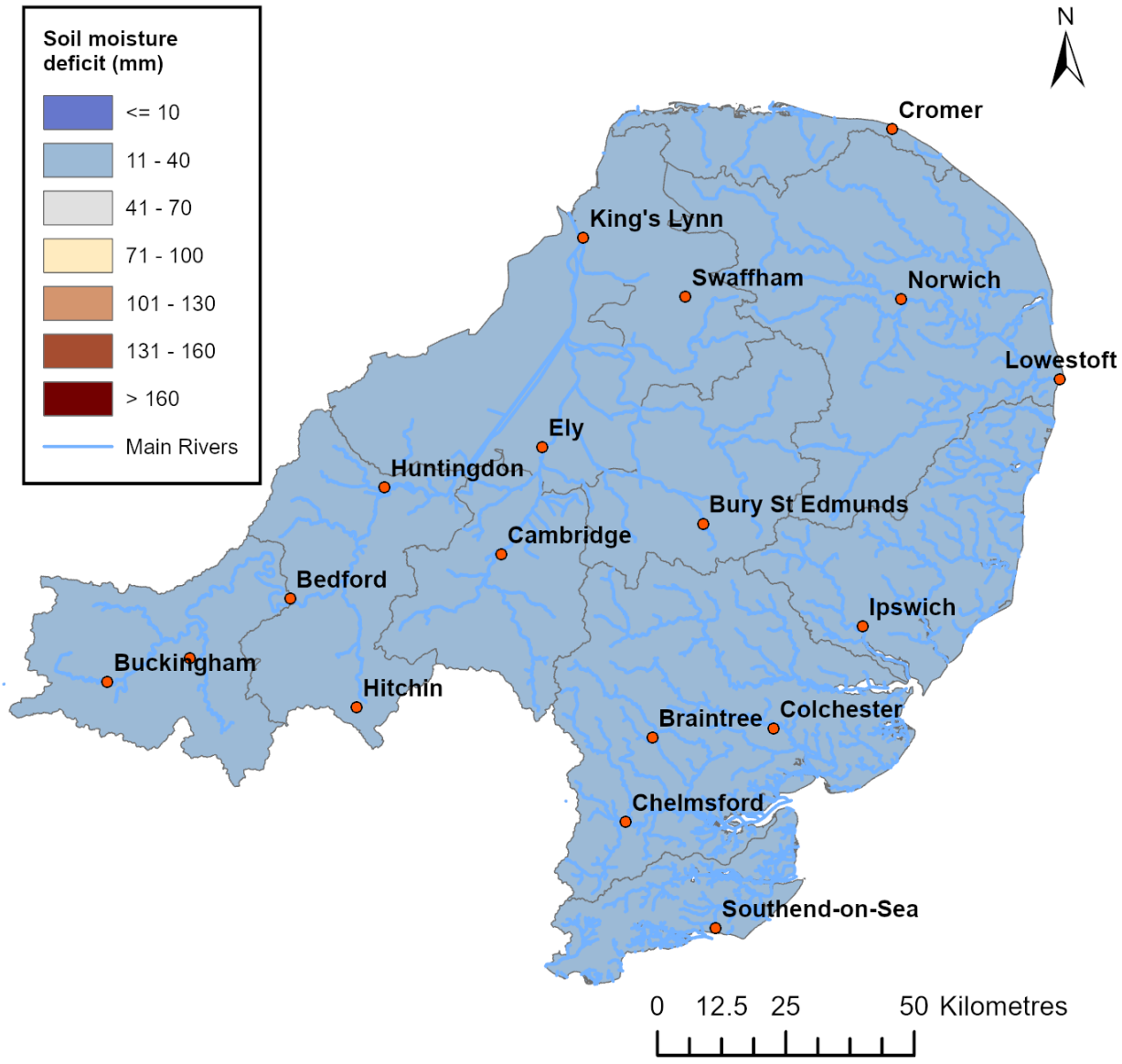
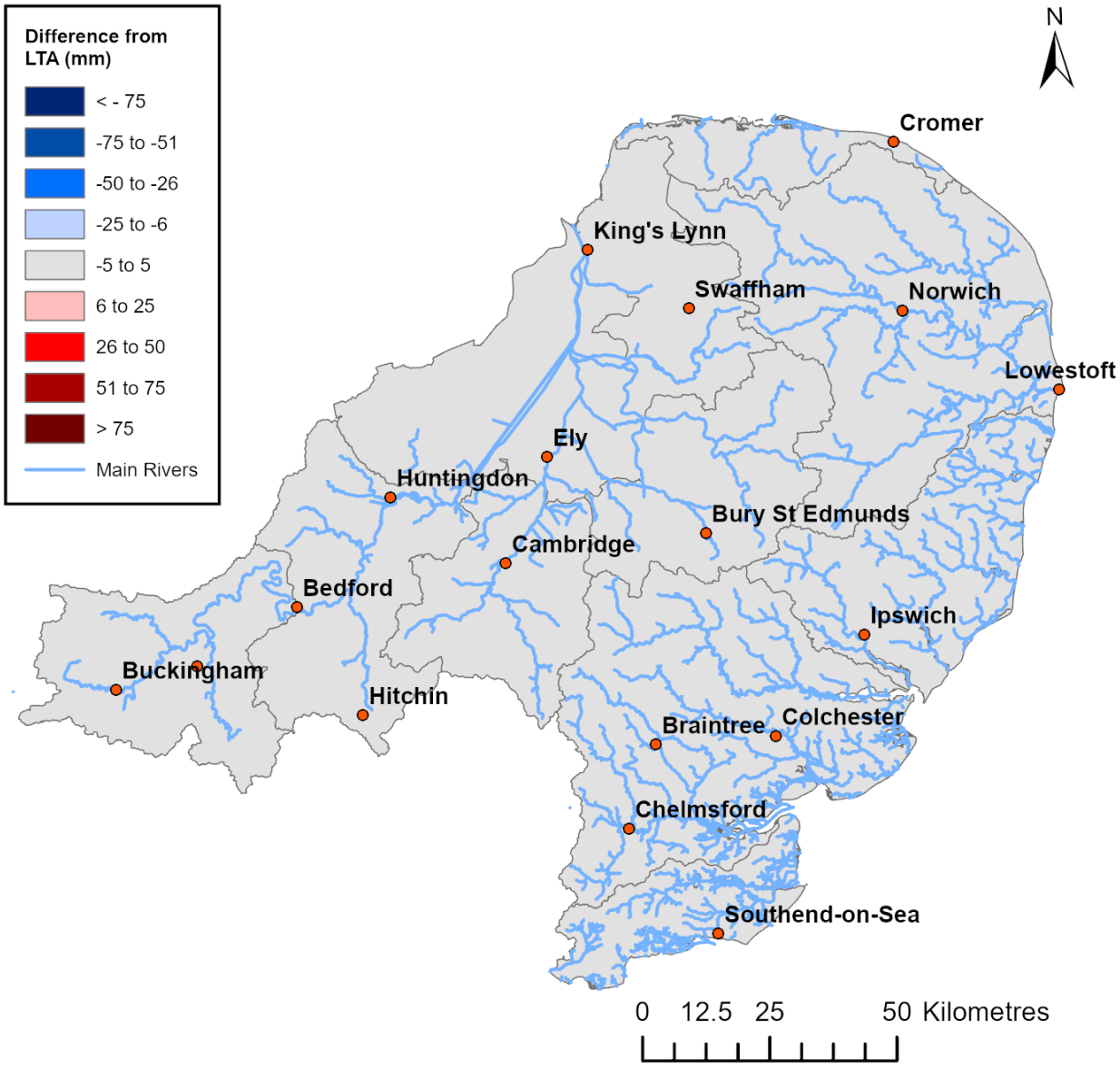
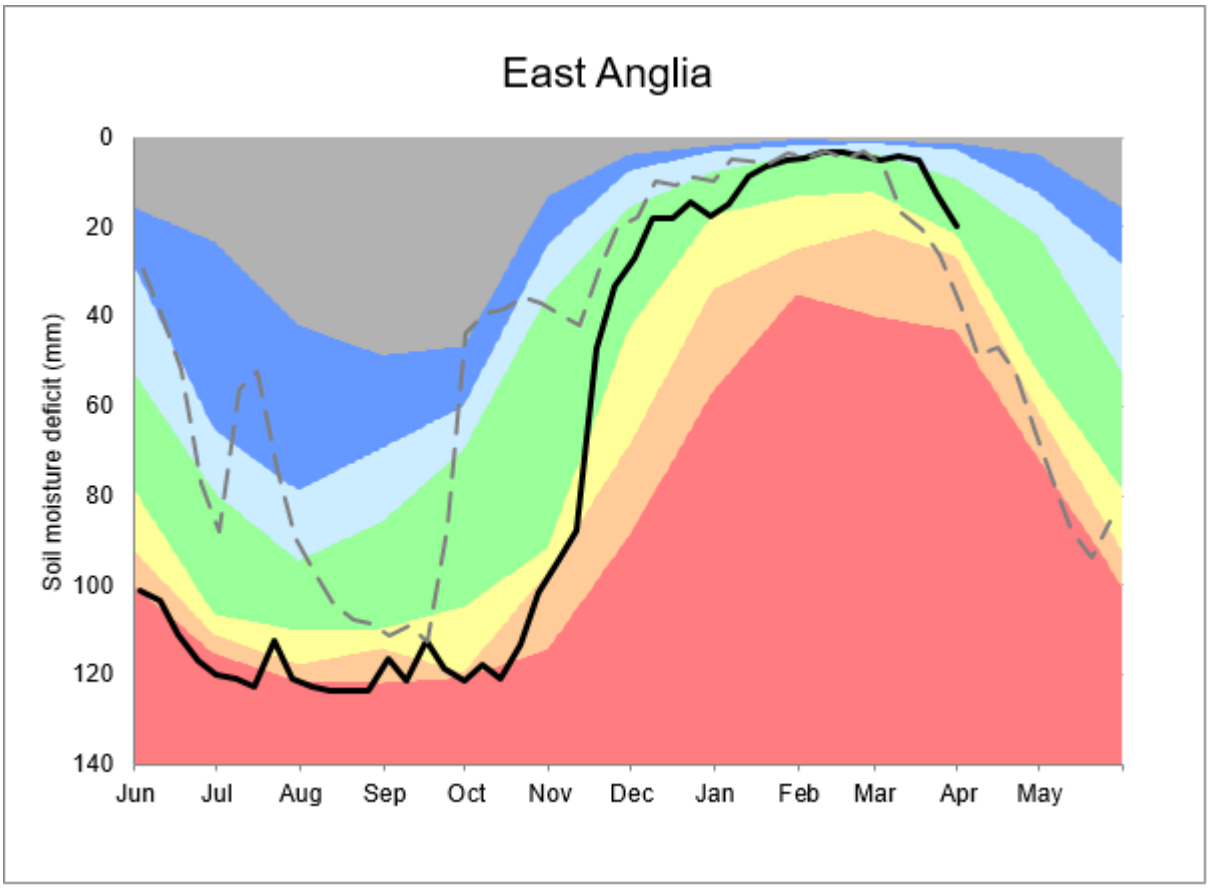


Figure 3.1a: Difference between soil moisture deficit values for 31 March 2026 and the long term average soil moisture deficit values for the end of March. Values based on the weekly MORECS data for real land use.



3.2 Soil moisture deficit charts

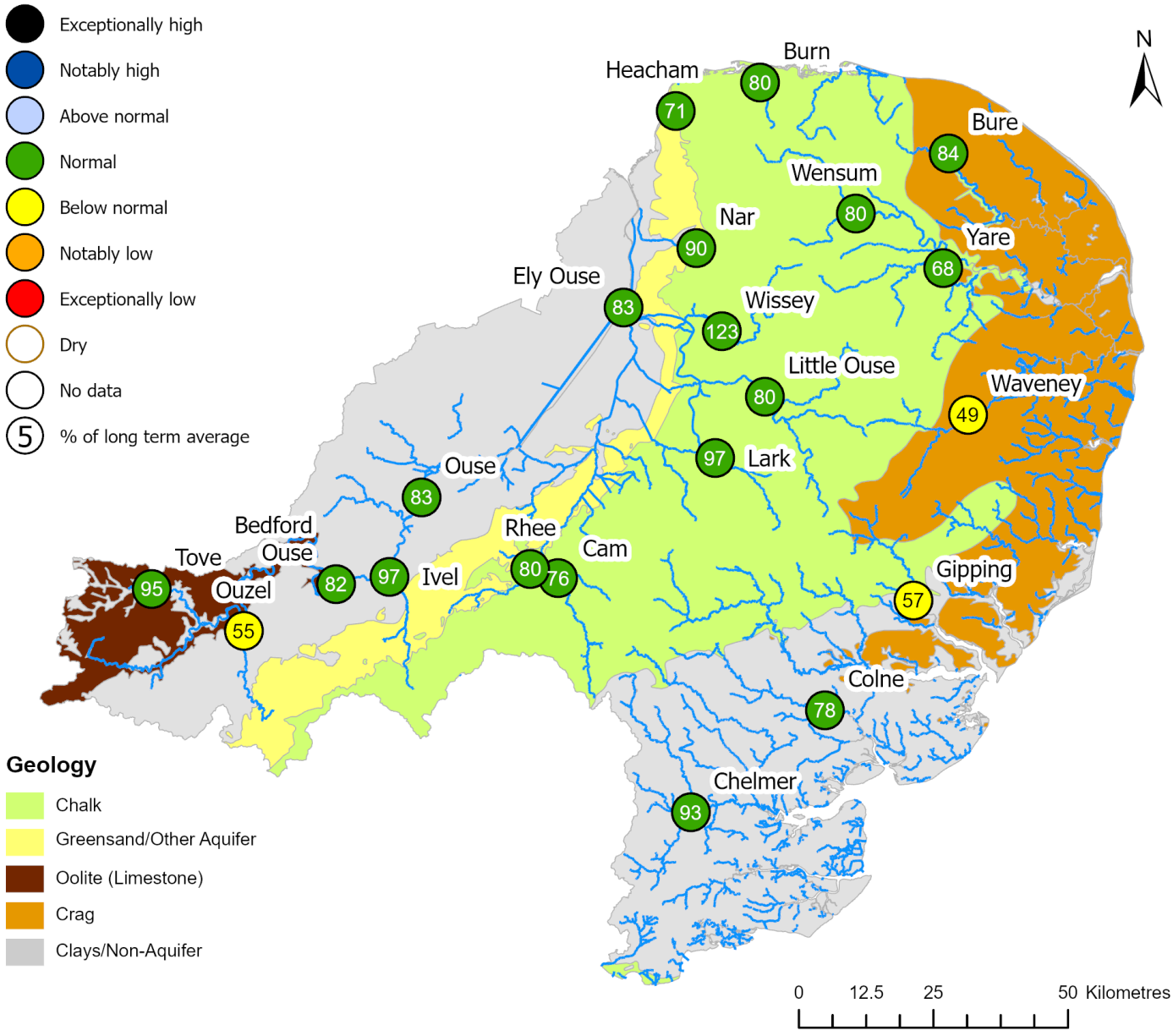
Figure 3.2: Latest soil moisture deficit compared to an analysis of historic 1991 to 2020 long term data set. Weekly MORECS data for real land use.



4 River flows

4.1 River flows map

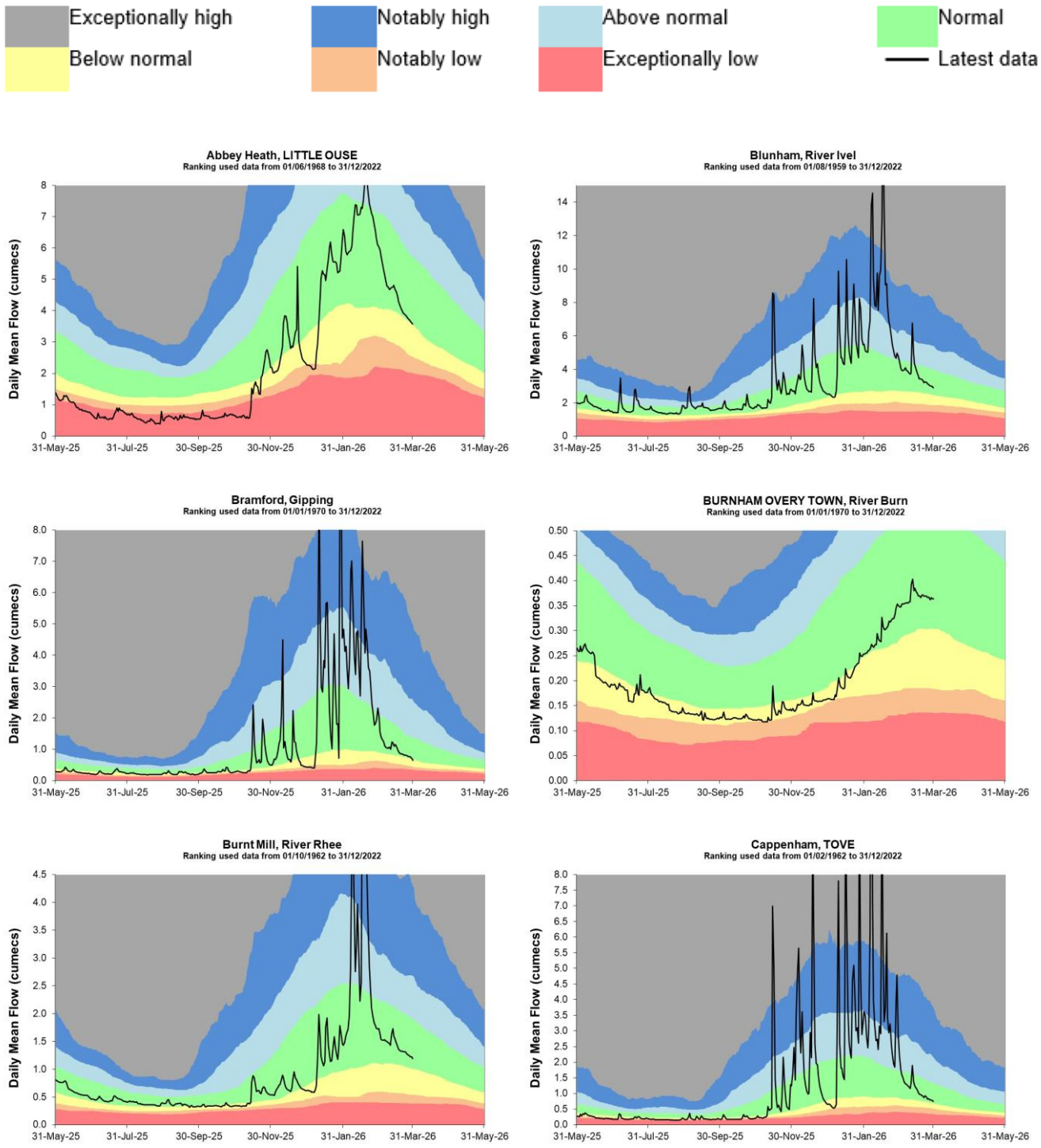
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for March 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic March monthly means Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



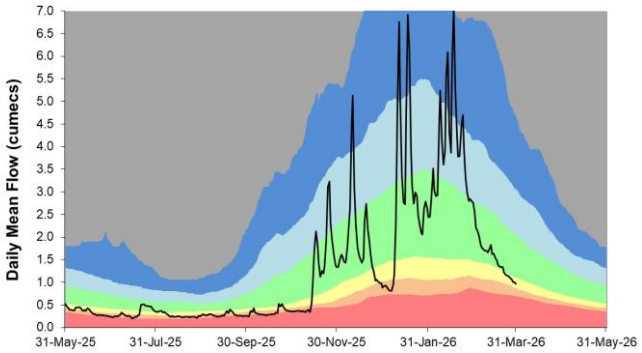
(Source: Environment Agency). Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2026.

4.2 River flow charts

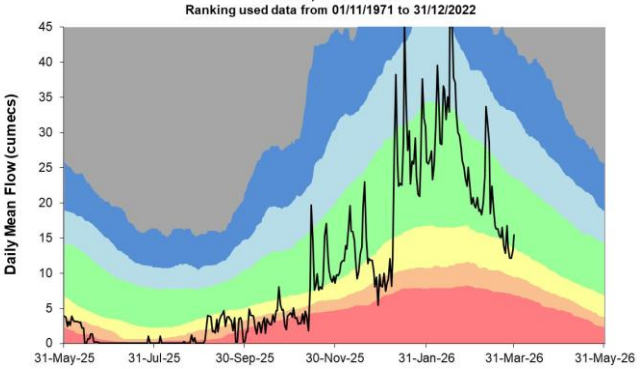
Figure 4.2: Daily mean river flow for index sites over the past year, compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows, and long term maximum and minimum flows.



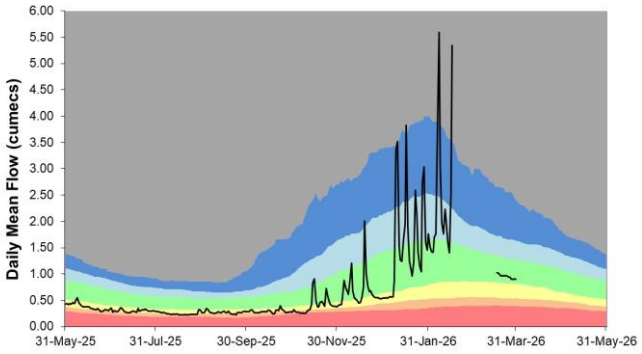
COLNEY, River Yare
Ranking used data from 01/01/1970 to 31/12/2022



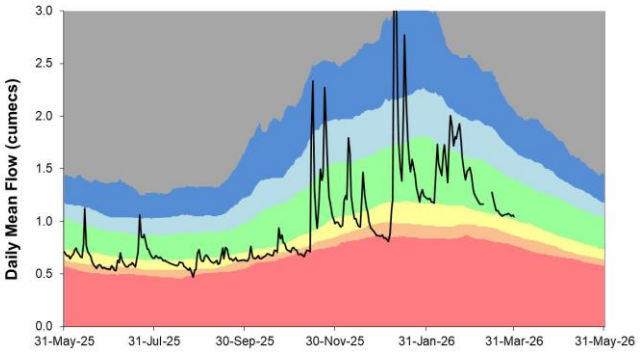
Denver, ELY OUSE
Ranking used data from 01/11/1971 to 31/12/2022



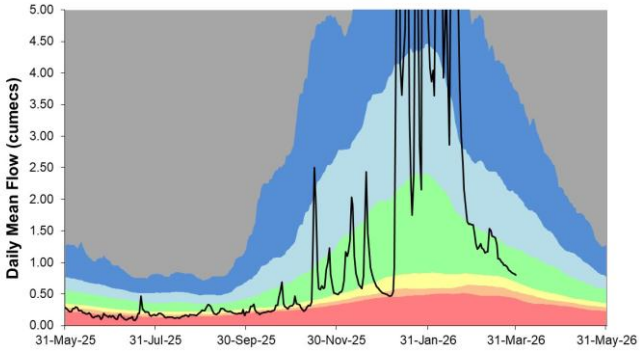
Dernford, CAM
Ranking used data from 21/02/1949 to 23/12/2022



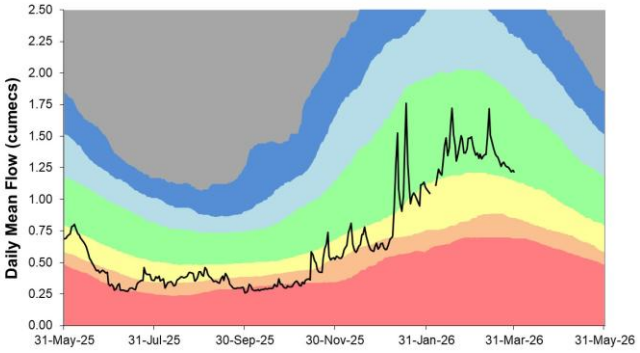
Ingworth, Bure
Ranking used data from 01/01/1970 to 31/12/2022



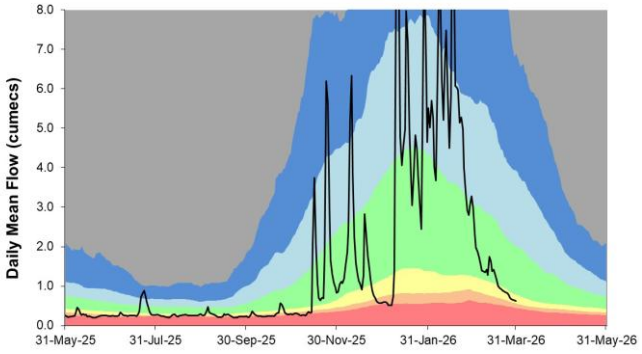
Lexden, Colne
Ranking used data from 01/01/1970 to 31/12/2022



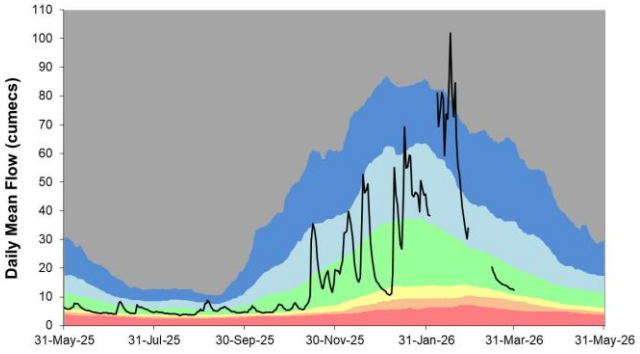
Marham, River Nar
Ranking used data from 01/09/1953 to 31/12/2022

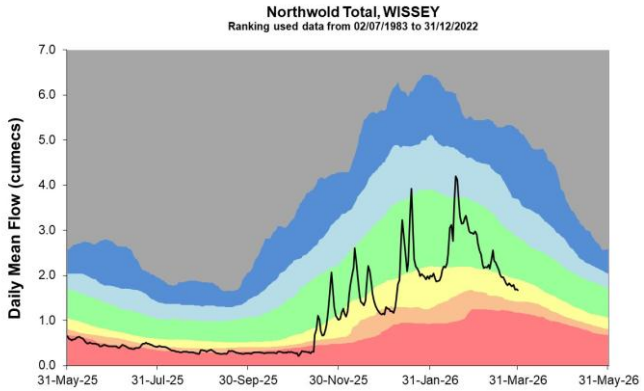


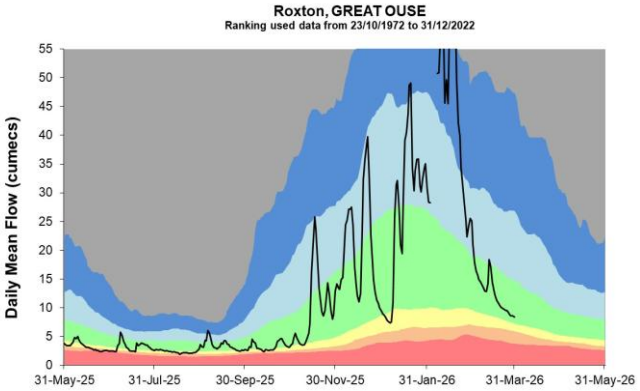
Needham Weir Total, Waveney
Ranking used data from 01/01/1970 to 31/12/2022

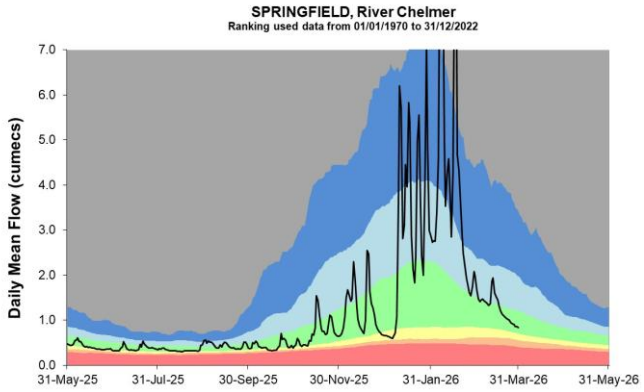


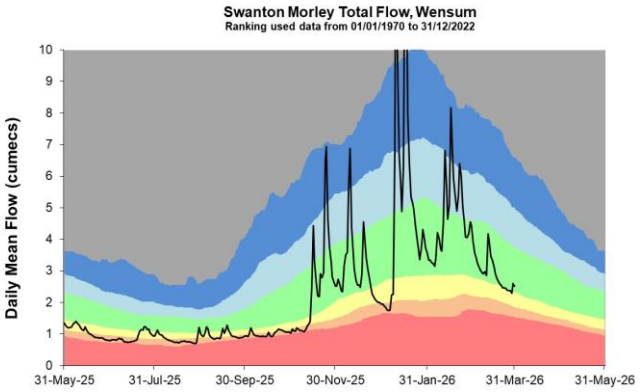
Offord (Gross flows), GREAT OUSE
Ranking used data from 05/03/1970 to 31/12/2022

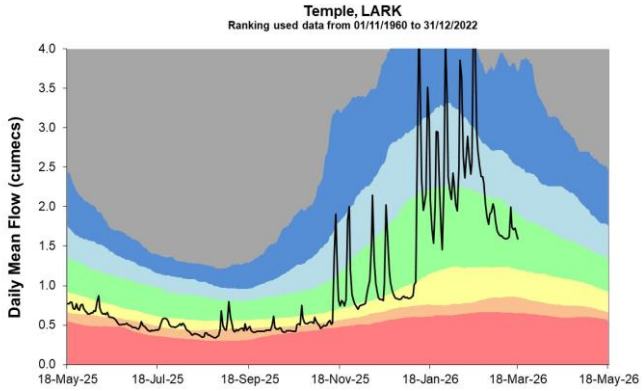


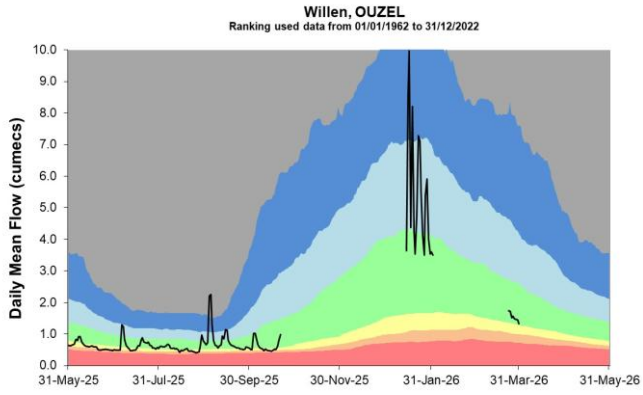










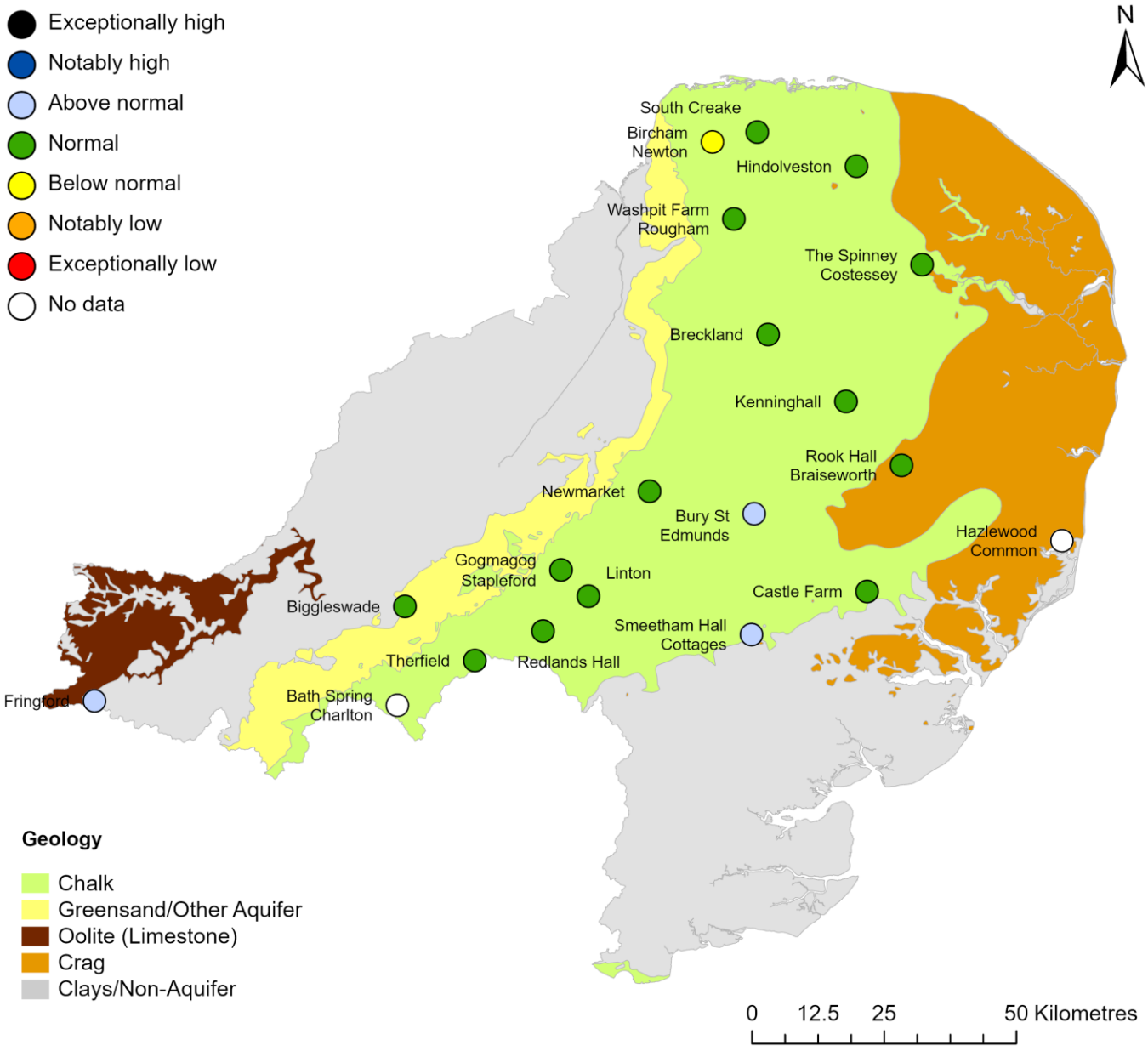


Source: Environment Agency.

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

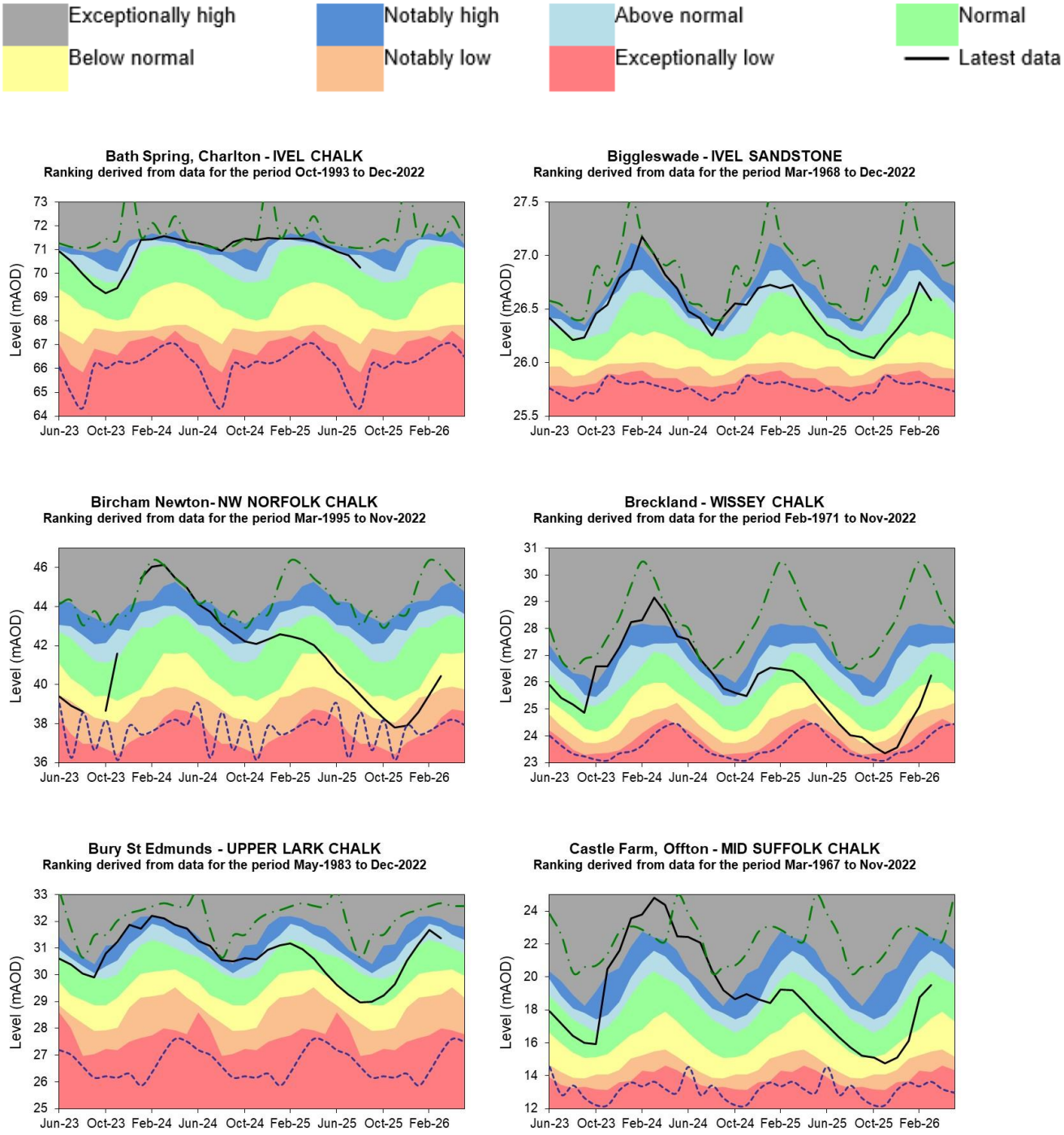
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of March 2026, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic March levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



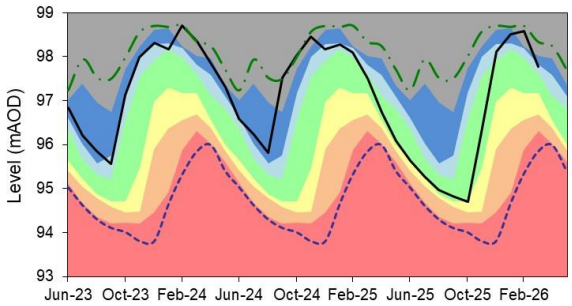
(Source: Environment Agency). Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2026.

5.2 Groundwater level charts

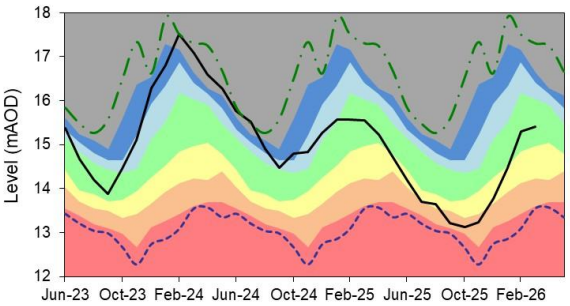
Figure 5.2: End of month groundwater levels at index groundwater level sites for major aquifers. 22 months compared to an analysis of historic end of month levels and long term maximum and minimum levels.



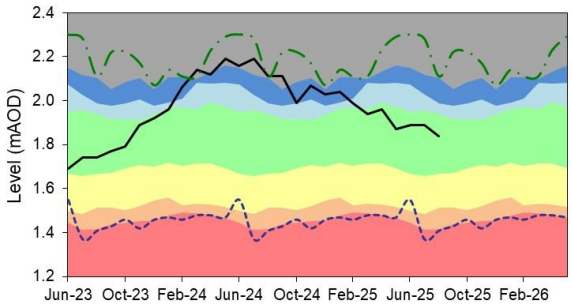
Fringford - GREAT OOLITE
Ranking derived from data for the period Sep-1980 to Dec-2022



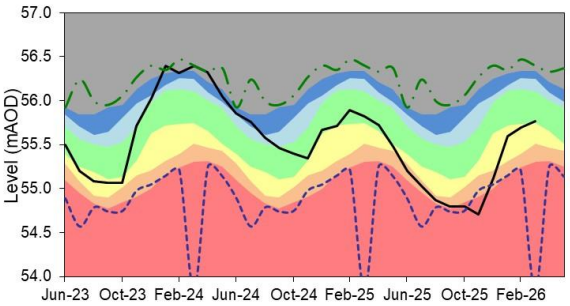
Gog Magog, Stapleford - CAM CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1980 to Dec-2022



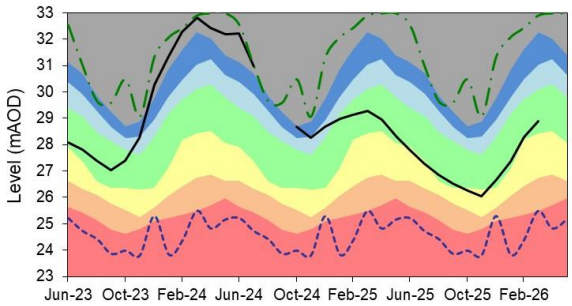
Hazlewood Common - SUFFOLK CRAG
Ranking derived from data for the period Oct-1988 to Nov-2022



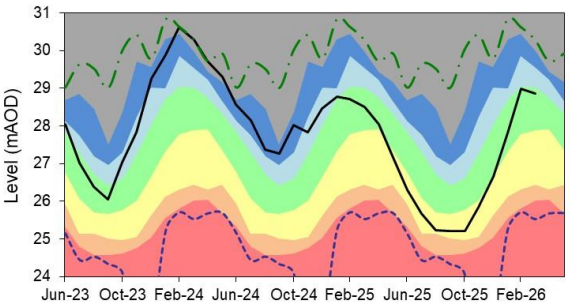
Hindolveston - NORFOLK CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Sep-1984 to Nov-2022



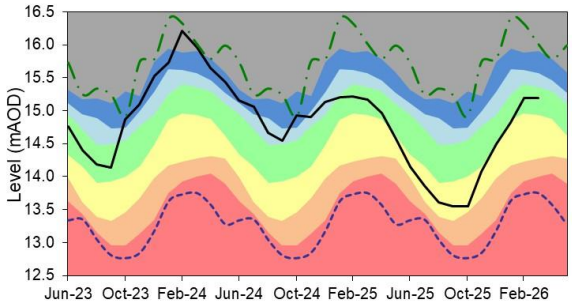
Kenninghall - LITTLE OUSE CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Aug-1973 to Dec-2022



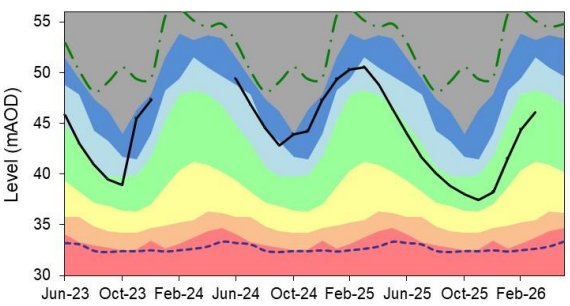
Linton- CAM CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1980 to Dec-2022

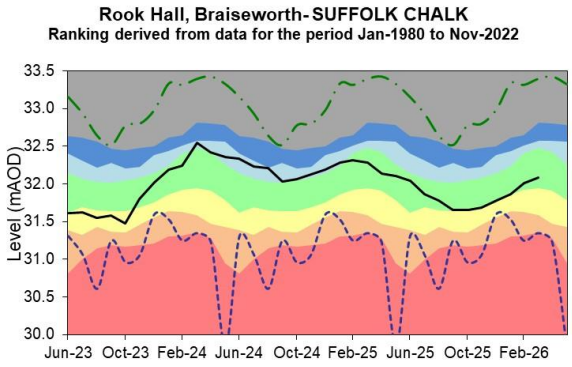


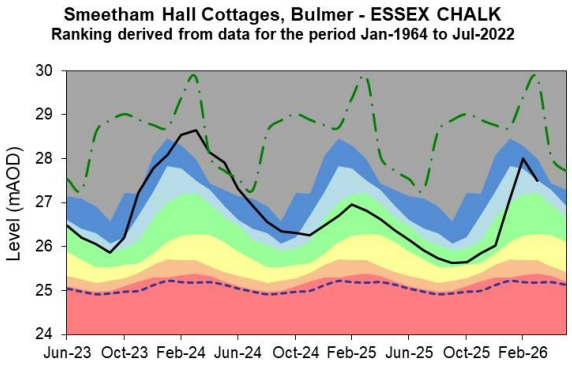
Newmarket - SNAIL CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Feb-1983 to Dec-2022

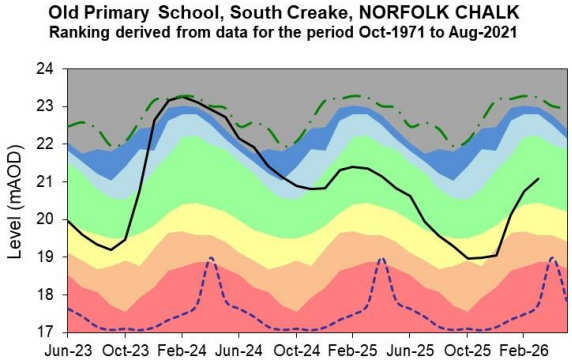


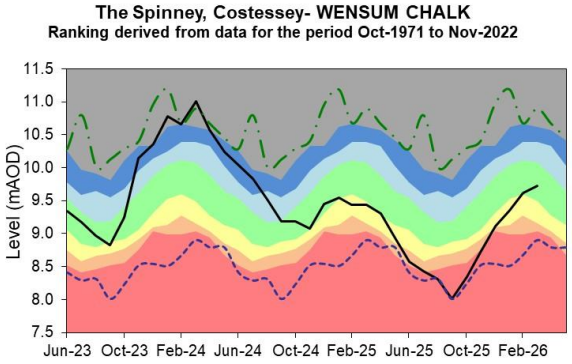
Redlands Hall, Ickleton - CAM CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Aug-1963 to Dec-2022

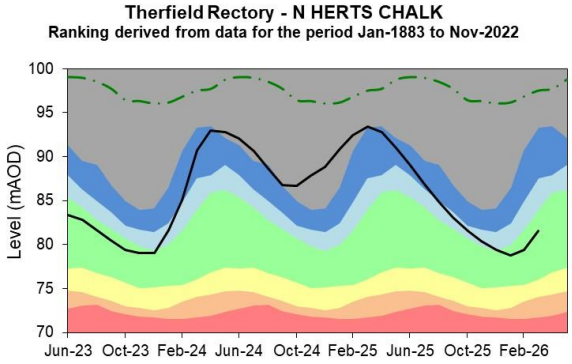


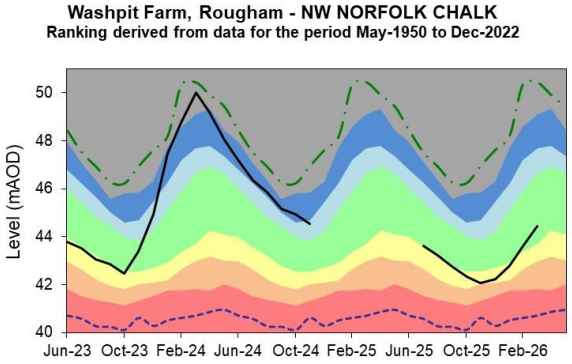








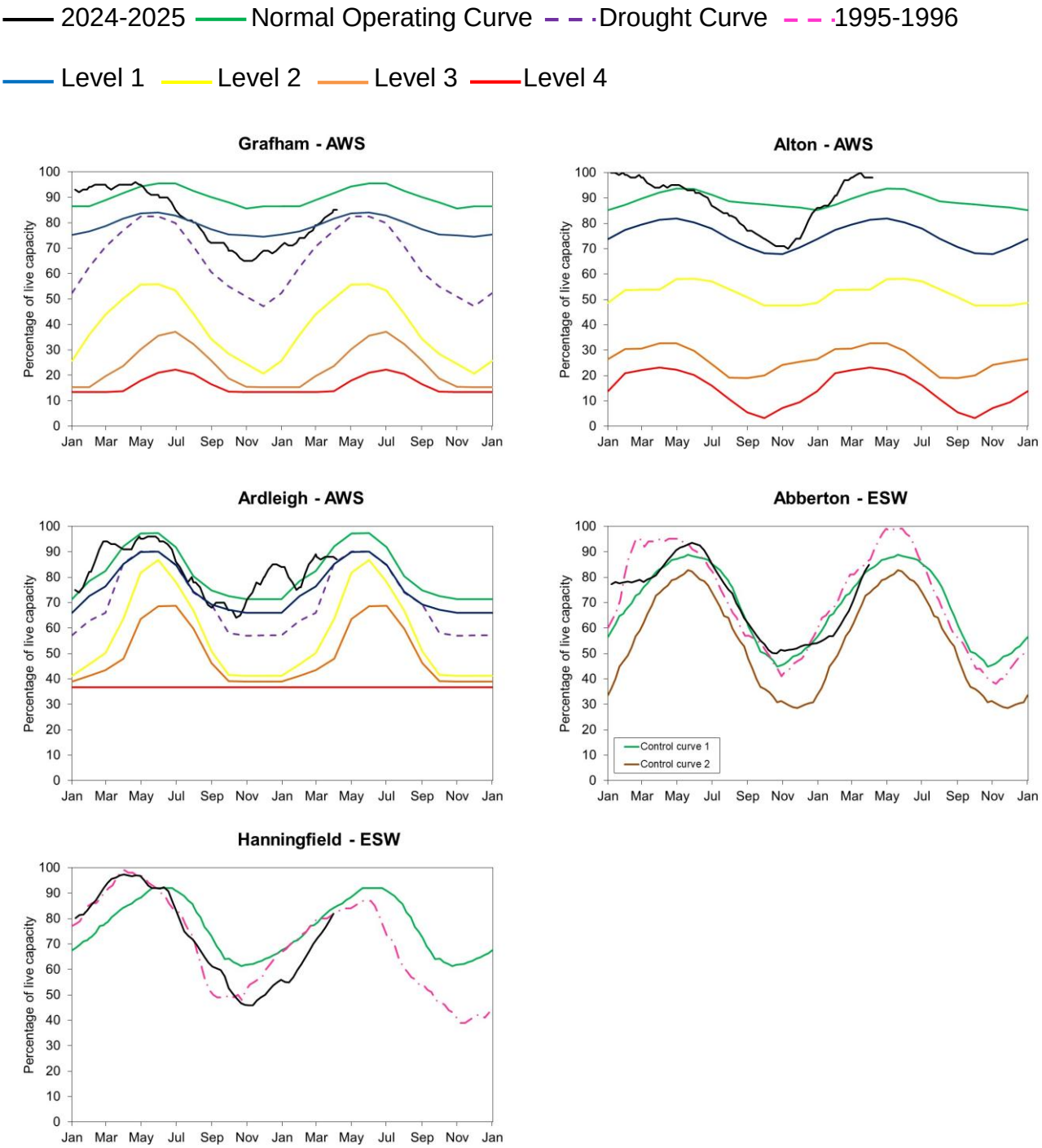




Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

6 Reservoir stocks

Figure 6.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to the normal operating curve, drought curve and dry 1995-1996 stocks. Note: Historic records of individual reservoirs and reservoir groups making up the regional values vary in length.

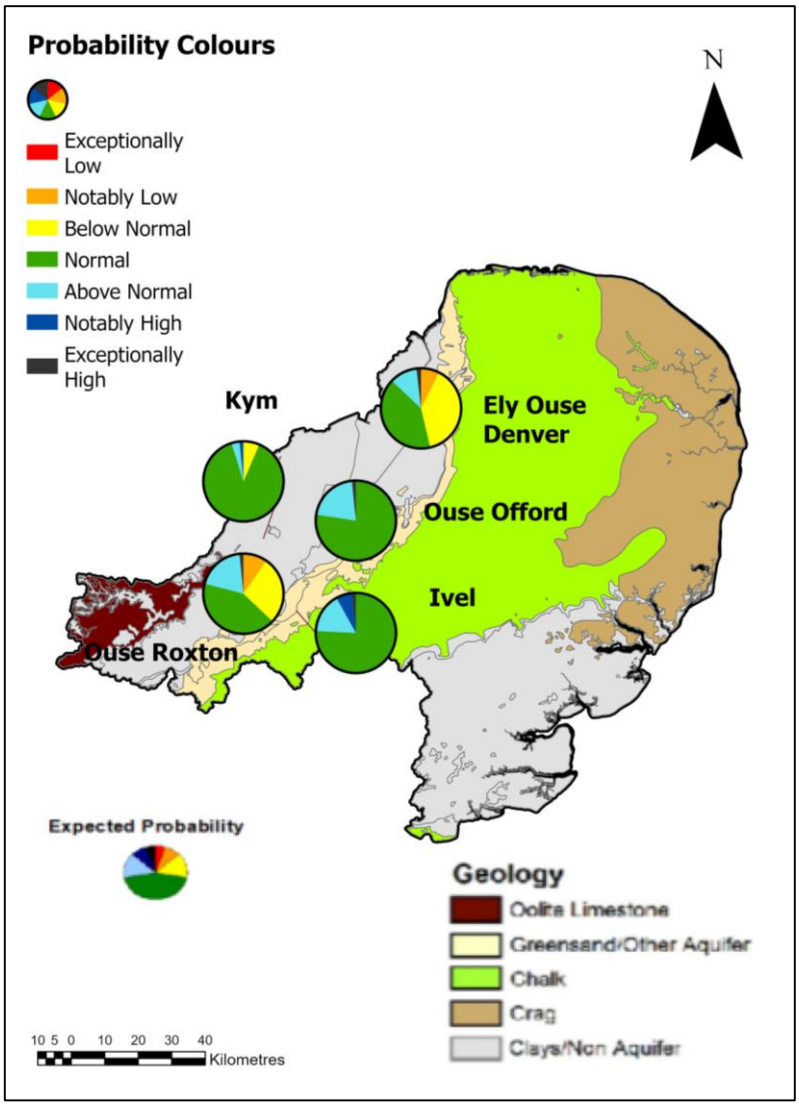


(Source: water companies. For more information on Anglian Water's reservoir level curves, please see Appendix 4 in their Drought Plan).

7 Forward look

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

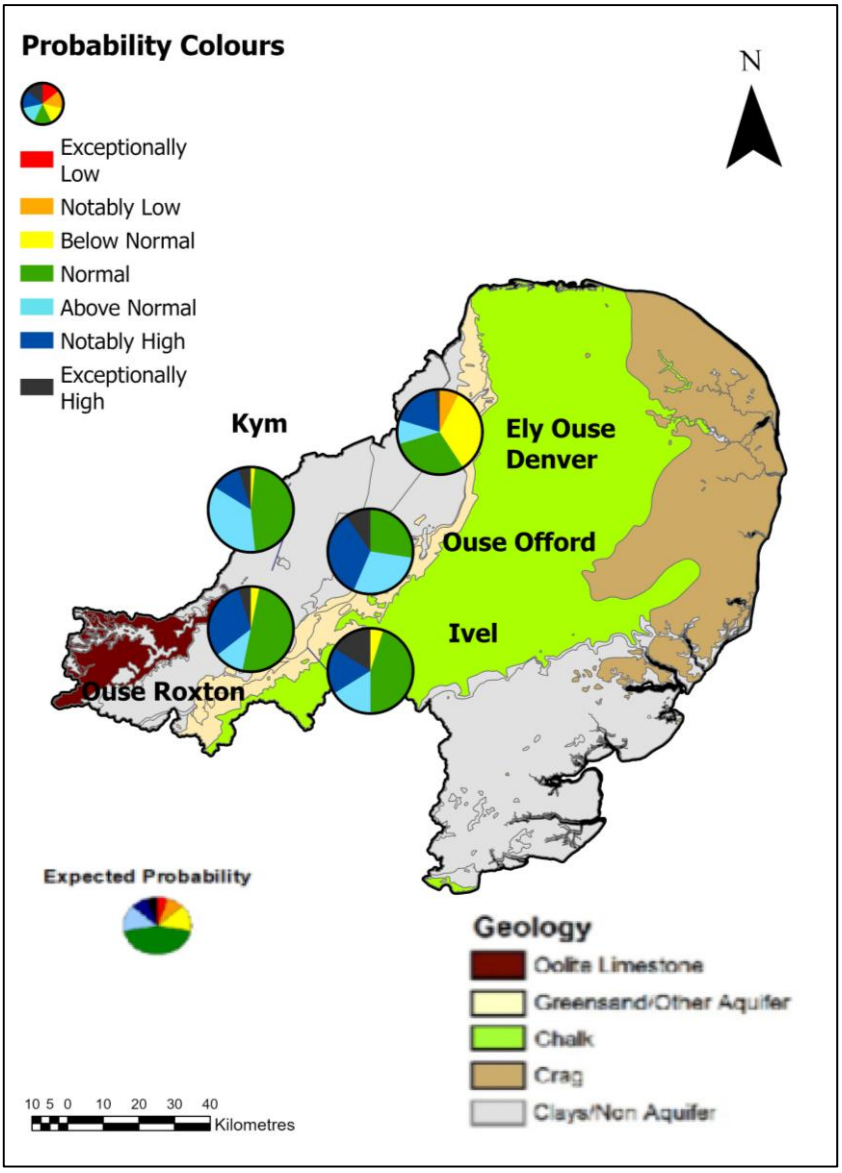
Table available in the appendices with detailed information. Exceptionally high or low levels are those which would typically occur 5% of the time within the historic record. Notably high or low levels are those which would typically occur 8% of the time. Above normal or below normal levels are those which would typically occur 15% of the time. Normal levels are those which would typically occur 44% of the time within the historic record.



Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the surface water flow at each site being, for example, exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Environment Agency) Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS © NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2026.

7.2 Probabilistic ensemble projection of river flows at key sites in September 2026

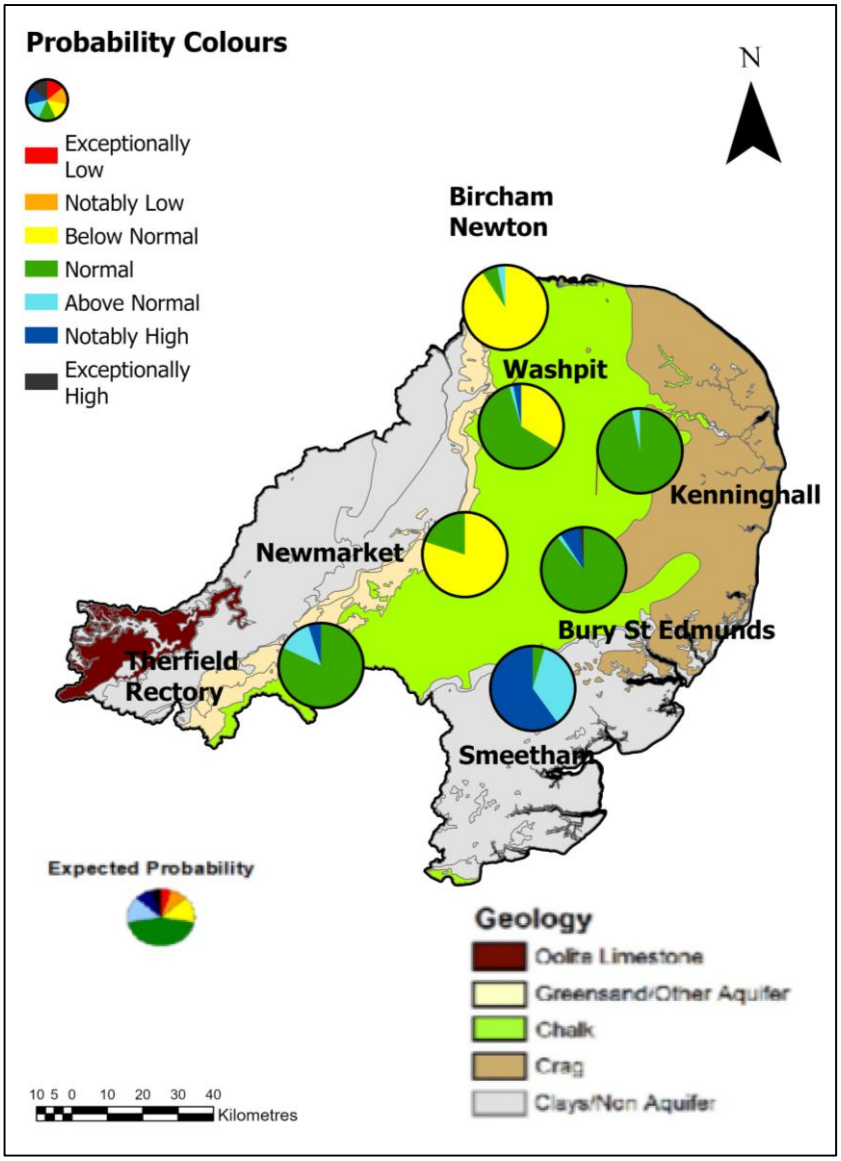
Table available in the appendices with detailed information. Exceptionally high or low levels are those which would typically occur 5% of the time within the historic record. Notably high or low levels are those which would typically occur 8% of the time. Above normal or below normal levels are those which would typically occur 15% of the time. Normal levels are those which would typically occur 44% of the time within the historic record.



Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the surface water flow at each site being, for example, exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Environment Agency) Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS © NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2026

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

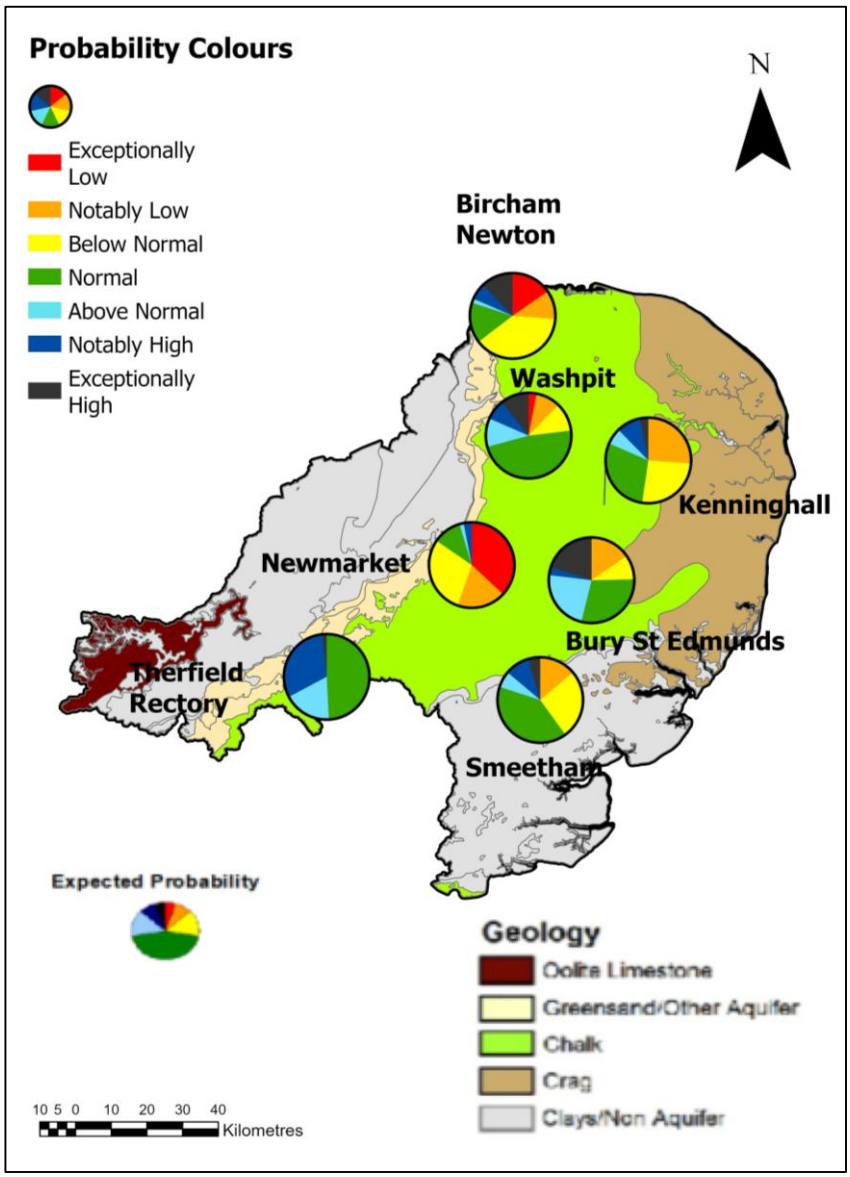
Table available in the appendices with detailed information. Exceptionally high or low levels are those which would typically occur 5% of the time within the historic record. Notably high or low levels are those which would typically occur 8% of the time. Above normal or below normal levels are those which would typically occur 15% of the time. Normal levels are those which would typically occur 44% of the time within the historic record.



Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the groundwater level at each site being, for example, exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Environment Agency)

7.4 Probabilistic ensemble projection of groundwater levels at key sites in March 2027

Table available in the appendices with detailed information. Exceptionally high or low levels are those which would typically occur 5% of the time within the historic record. Notably high or low levels are those which would typically occur 8% of the time. Above normal or below normal levels are those which would typically occur 15% of the time. Normal levels are those which would typically occur 44% of the time within the historic record.



Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the groundwater level at each site being, for example, exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Environment Agency) Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS © NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2026

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	Mar 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Mar 2026 band	Jan 2026 to March cumulative band	Oct 2025 to March cumulative band	Apr 2025 to March cumulative band
Broadland Rivers	64	Normal	Above normal	Above normal	Normal
Cam	62	Below Normal	Above normal	Above normal	Normal
Central Area Fenland	58	Below Normal	Above normal	Notably high	Normal
East Suffolk	52	Below Normal	Notably high	Notably high	Normal
Little Ouse And Lark	54	Below Normal	Above normal	Above normal	Normal
Lower Bedford Ouse	57	Below Normal	Notably high	Notably high	Normal
North Essex	65	Below Normal	Notably high	Notably high	Normal
North Norfolk	74	Normal	Above normal	Normal	Below normal
Nw Norfolk And Wissey	63	Normal	Above normal	Above normal	Normal

South Essex	51	Below Normal	Notably high	Above normal	Below normal
Upper Bedford Ouse	52	Below Normal	Notably high	Notably high	Normal

9.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Mar 2026 band	Feb 2026 band
Abbey Heath	Little Ouse	Little Ouse	Normal	Normal
Blunham	Ivel	Ivel	Normal	Notably high
Bramford	Gipping	Gipping	Below normal	Exceptionally high
Burnham Overy	Burn	Burn	Normal	Normal
Burnt Mill	Rhee	Rhee	Normal	Above normal
Cappenham	Tove	Tove	Normal	Exceptionally high
Colney	Yare	Yare	Normal	Above normal
Denver	Ely Ouse	Cutoff and Renew Channel	Normal	Normal
Dernford	Cam	Cam	Normal	Notably high
Heacham	Heacham	Heacham	Normal	Below normal
Ingworth	Bure	Bure	Normal	Normal
Lexden	Colne	Colne Essex	Normal	Exceptionally high
Marham	Nar	Nar	Normal	Normal

Needham Weir Total	Waveney (lower)	Waveney	Below normal	Above normal
Northwold Total	Wissey	Wissey	Normal	Normal
Offord (gross Flows)	Great Ouse	Ouse Beds	Normal	Exceptionally high
Roxton	Great Ouse	Ivel	Normal	Notably high
Springfield	Chelmer	Chelmer Upper	Normal	Exceptionally high
Swanton Morley Total	Wensum	Wensum	Normal	Normal
Temple	Lark	Lark	Normal	Above normal
Willen	Ouzel	Ouzel	Below normal	Normal

9.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Mar 2026 band	End of Feb 2026 band
Biggleswade	Ivel Woburn Sands	Normal	Above normal
Bircham Newton	North West Norfolk Chalk	Below normal	Below normal
Breckland	Wissey Chalk	Normal	Below normal
Bury St Edmunds	Upper Lark Chalk	Above normal	Above normal
Castle Farm, Offton	East Suffolk Chalk	Normal	Normal
Gog Magog, Stapleford	Cam Chalk	Normal	Normal
Hazlewood Common	East Suffolk Crag	No Data	No Data
Hindolveston	Norfolk Chalk	Normal	Below normal
Kenninghall	Little Ouse Chalk	Normal	Normal
Linton	Cam Chalk	Normal	Normal
Newmarket	Snail Chalk	Normal	Normal
Old Primary School, South Creake	North Norfolk Chalk	Normal	Normal

Redlands Hall, Ickleton	Cam Chalk	Normal	Normal
Rook Hall, Braiseworth	East Suffolk Chalk	Normal	Normal
Smeetham Hall Cottages, Bulmer	North Essex Chalk	Above normal	Notably high
The Spinney, Costessey	Wensum Chalk	Normal	Normal
Washpit Farm, Rougham	North West Norfolk Chalk	Normal	Normal
Therfield Rectory	Upper Lee Chalk	Normal	Normal
Fringford P.s.	Upper Bedford Ouse Oolitic Limestone (great)	Above normal	Exceptionally high

9.4 Ensemble projections tables

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

Percentage of pie chart for each band

Site	Bedford Ouse	Kym	Ivel	Ouse	Ely Ouse
Exceptionally low	0	0	0	0	0
Notably low	10	0	0	0	7
Below normal	27	6	0	0	39
Normal	42	89	76	77	41
Above normal	19	3	16	21	11
Notably high	0	2	6	0	0
Exceptionally high	2	0	2	2	2

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

Percentage of pie chart for each band

Site	Bedford Ouse	Kym	Ivel	Ouse	Ely Ouse
Exceptionally low	0	0	0	0	0
Notably low	0	0	0	0	7
Below normal	3	2	5	0	33
Normal	50	47	45	27	30
Above normal	11	35	16	29	9
Notably high	31	11	18	34	19
Exceptionally high	5	5	16	10	2

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

Percentage of pie chart for each band

Site	Therfield Rectory	Newmarket	Washpit Farm	Bircham Newton	Kenninghall	Bury St Edmunds	Smeetham
Exceptionally low	0.0	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	0.0
Below normal	0.0	80.0	33.8	90.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Normal	82.0	20.0	61.5	6.2	96.9	89.2	4.6
Above normal	13.1	0.0	1.5	3.1	3.1	1.5	35.4
Notably high	4.9	0.0	3.1	0.0	0.0	7.7	60.0
Exceptionally high	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0

9.4.4 Probabilistic ensemble projection of groundwater levels at key sites in March 2027

Percentage of pie chart for each band

Site	Therfield Rectory	Newmarket	Washpit Farm	Bircham Newton	Kenninghall	Bury St Edmunds	Smeetham
Exceptionally low	0.0	36.9	3.1	15.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Notably low	0.0	18.5	9.2	10.8	26.2	15.4	13.8
Below normal	0.0	29.2	10.8	38.5	26.2	9.2	26.2
Normal	49.2	10.8	47.7	15.4	29.2	29.2	40.0
Above normal	18.0	1.5	10.8	1.5	6.2	23.1	6.2
Notably high	31.1	3.1	7.7	6.2	9.2	3.1	9.2
Exceptionally high	1.6	0.0	10.8	12.3	3.1	20.0	4.6