Monthly water situation report: Thames Area

1 Summary - March 2026

Thames area received 30mm of rainfall in March, which was 61% of the long term average (LTA). Soil moisture deficits (SMD) increased to 18mm, which was slightly higher than the LTA. The drier weather meant that effective rainfall dropped to 38% of LTA. River flows responded to the reduction in rainfall by decreasing at the majority of our key indicator sites compared with last month. Likewise, groundwater levels declined at the majority of indicator sites in March and ranged from below normal to exceptionally high, but mostly normal and notably high. Farmoor reservoir was above average while the Lower Thames reservoirs were below average for the time of year. In March, a total of 3 fluvial alerts, and 5 groundwater alerts were issued.

1.1 Rainfall

Thames area received 30mm of rainfall in March, which was 61% of the LTA. Below normal rainfall was recorded across the northern half of Thames area, here areal rainfall units received around half the LTA rainfall expected, while the southern half received normal rainfall for the time of year, but still below average. Three days in March accounted for two-thirds of the month's rain: 6, 12, 15 March, while there were 6 dry days.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

With the drier weather SMD increased across Thames area and ended the month at 18mm, which is slightly drier than the LTA of 10mm. The lower than normal rainfall is reflected in the low effective rainfall which was 38% of LTA.

1.3 River flows

Monthly mean flows decreased across the majority of indicator sites in Thames area. Due to the previous months' high rainfall, and the majority of sites last month being notably or exceptionally high, all rivers in March were normal or higher for the time of year. The majority were normal, while 4 were above normal, and 1, the Coln at Bibury, was notably high.

1.4 Groundwater levels

At the end of the month, groundwater levels declined at the majority of our indicator sites. This signalled the end of the annual recharge season and the onset of recession across the area. Only Gibbet Cottages and Stonor, both in the chalk; and the Flashes in the Lower Greensand (Folkestone) increased. Levels mostly remained in the above normal and notably high ranges for March, as high recharge over the unusually wet winter led to the recession period starting with high groundwater levels. Levels were exceptionally high in the Lower Greensand

(Folkestone), notably high in the Lower Greensand (Hythe) and Corallian, notably high to above normal in the chalk and above normal in the Great Oolite. Normal groundwater levels were observed in the Upper Greensand but levels fell into the below normal range in the Inferior Oolite.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

Reservoir stocks in Farmoor decreased slightly from 98.7% to 98.6%, while the Lower Thames reservoirs increased from 90% to 93%. Farmoor reservoir was above average while the Lower Thames reservoirs were below average for the time of year.

1.6 Environmental impact

In March, a total of 3 fluvial alerts, and 5 groundwater alerts were issued across the Thames area. At the end of March, no abstraction licences were being constrained in the area to protect water resources.

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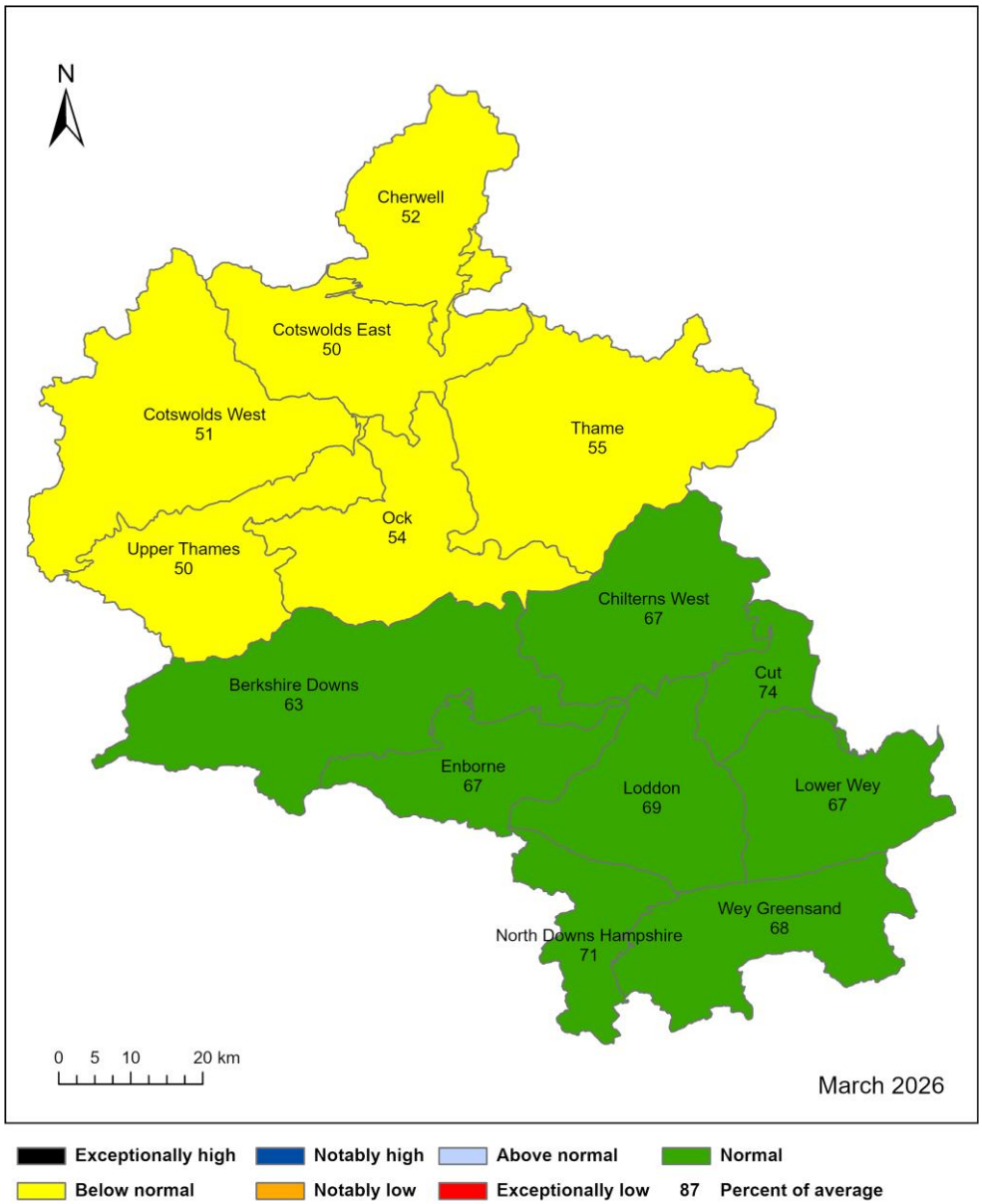
Contact Details: 030708 506 506

2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

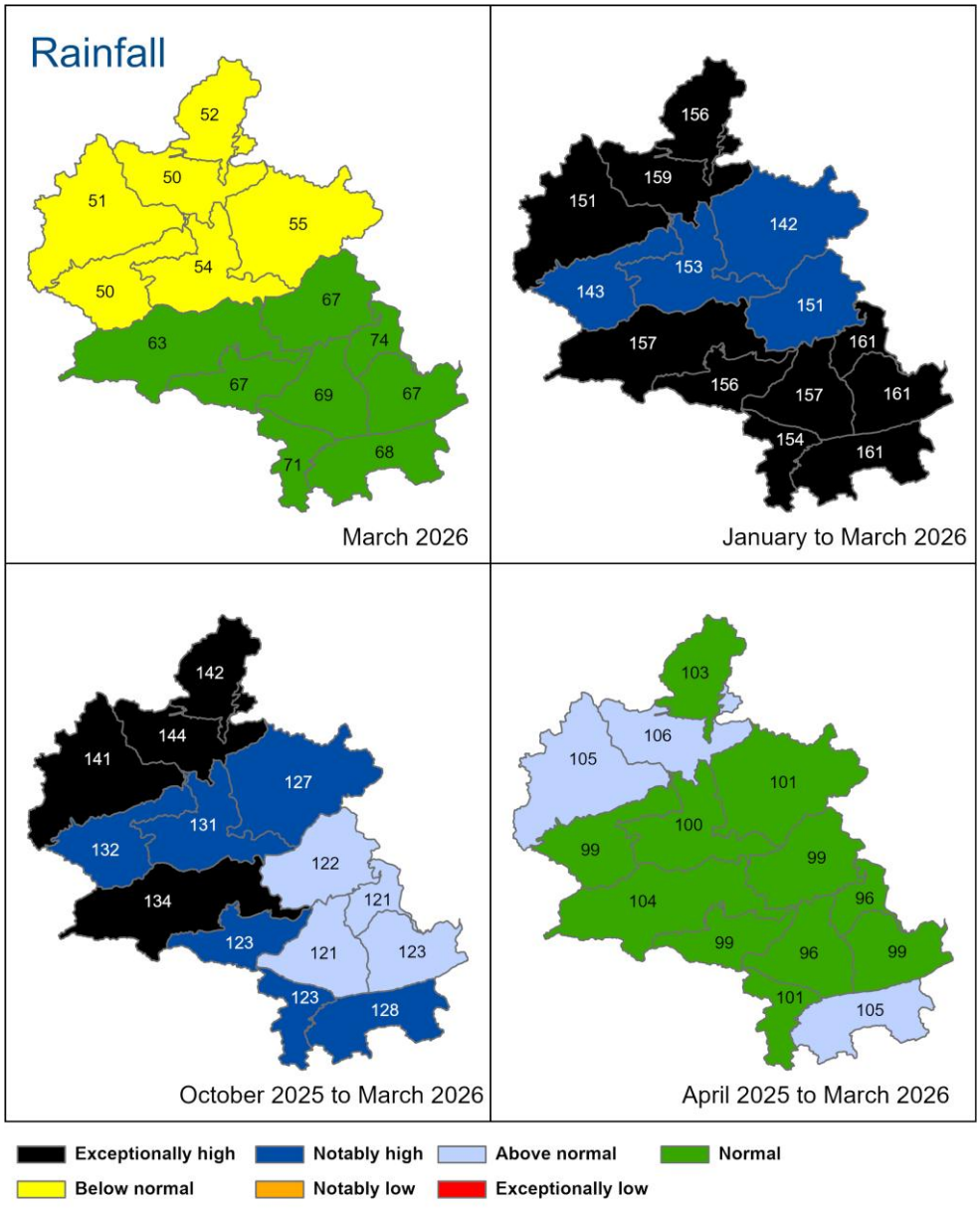
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 31 March 2026), classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



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)

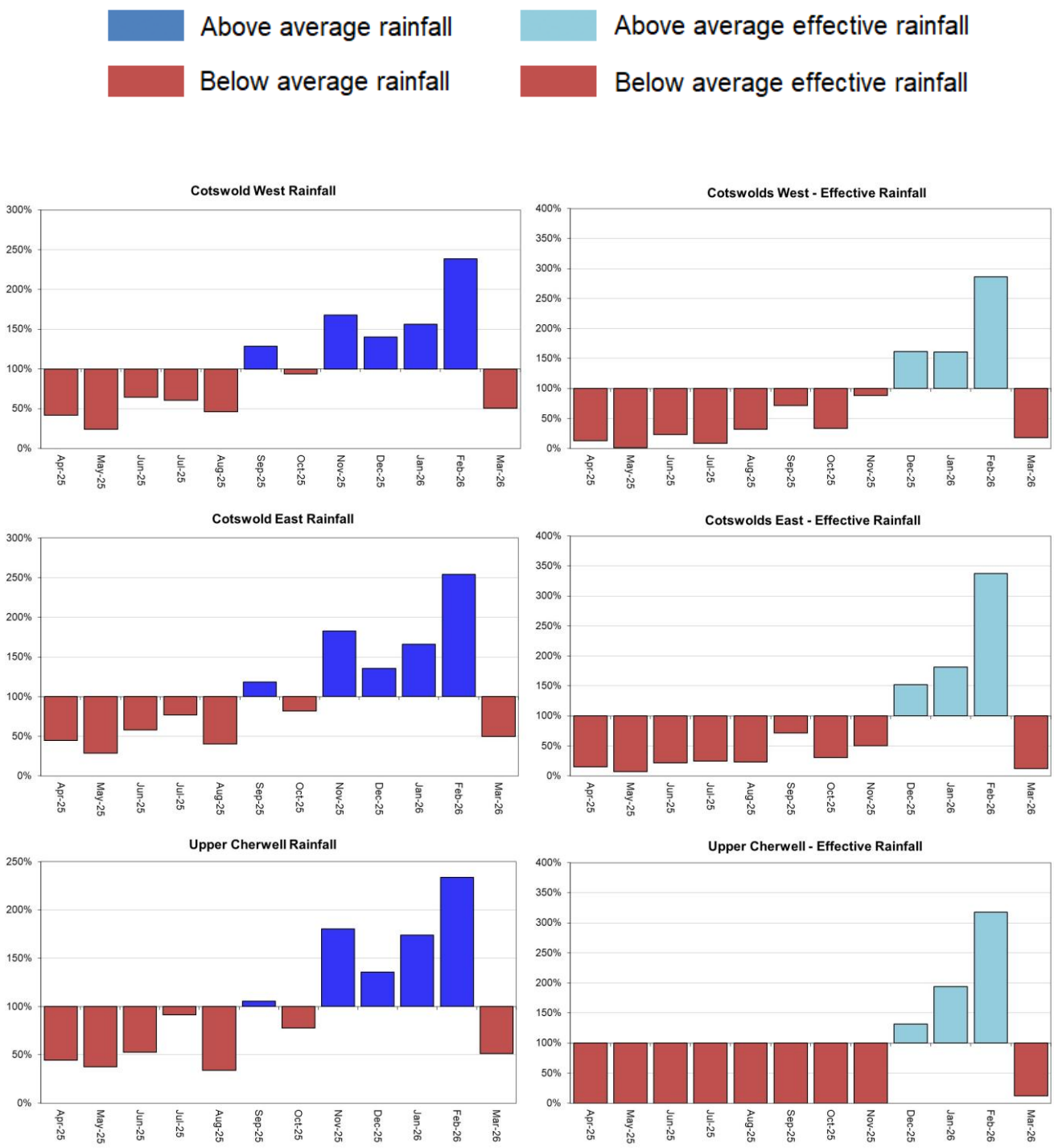
Figure 2.2: Total rainfall for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 31 March 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

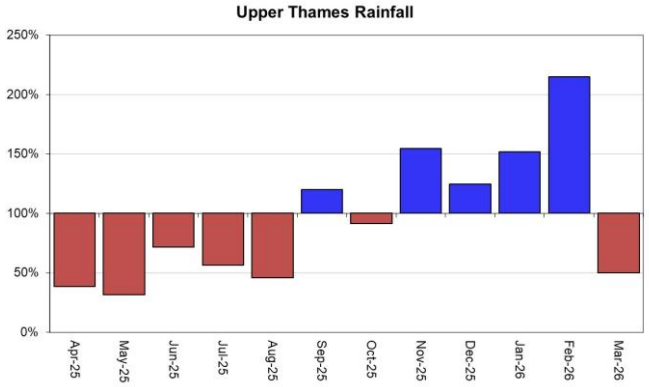


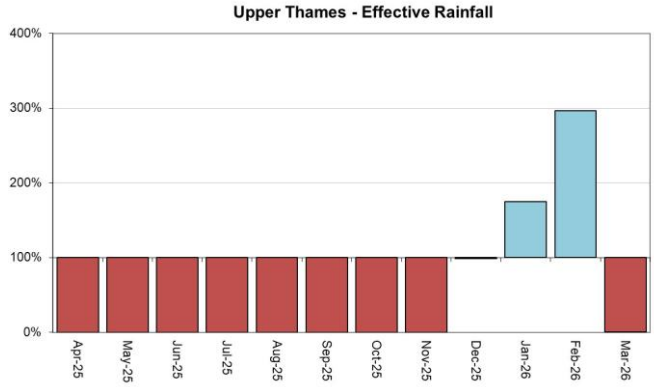
HadUK data based on the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges (Source: Met Office). Provisional data based on Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency).

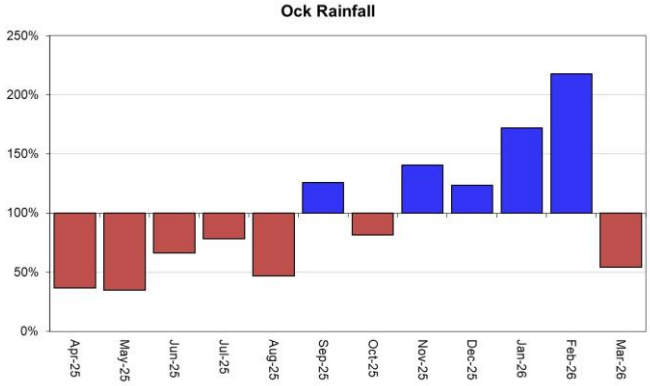
2.3 Rainfall charts

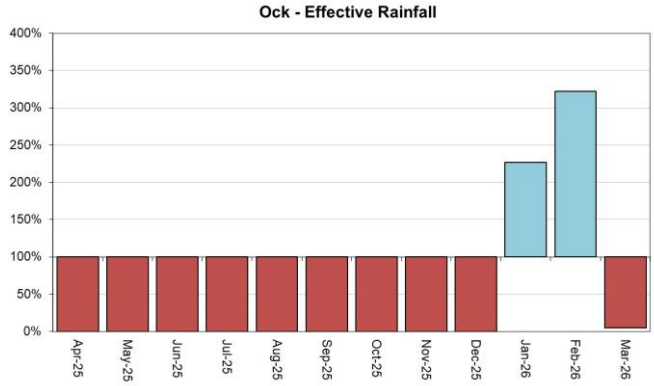
Figure 2.3: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for each areal unit.

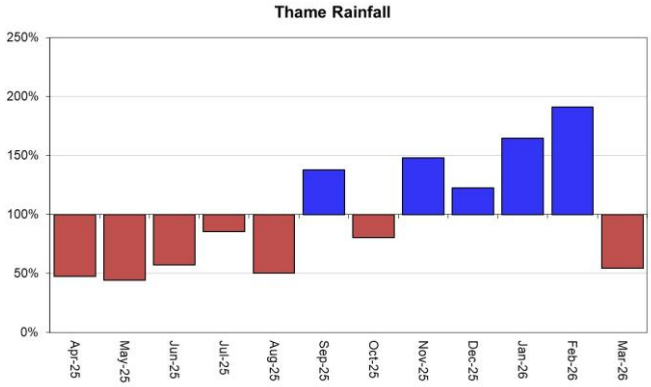


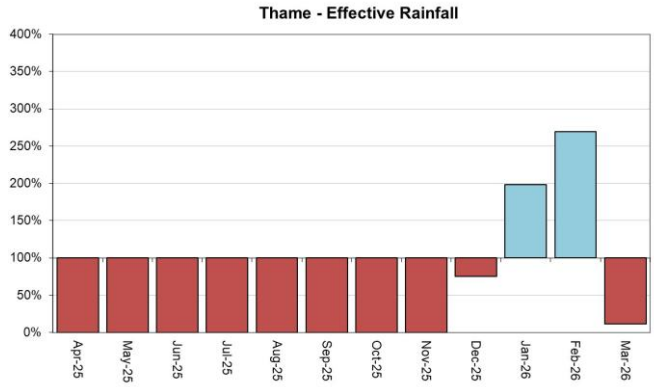

Upper Thames Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26

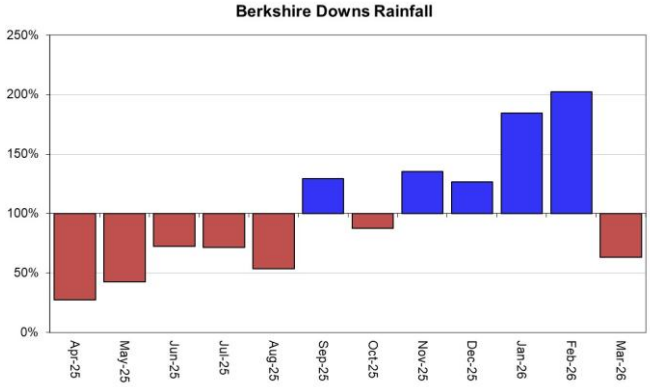

Upper Thames - Effective Rainfall
400%
300%
200%
100%
0%
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26

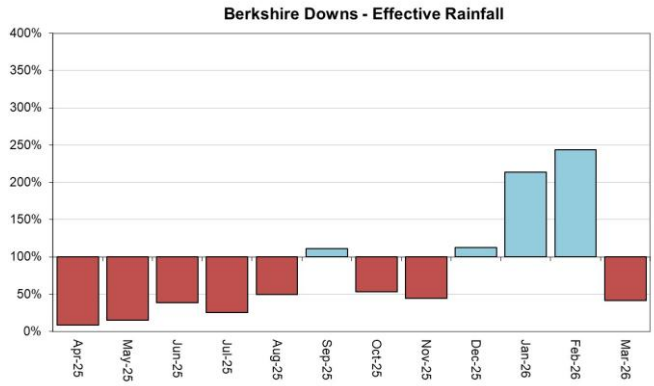

Ock Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26

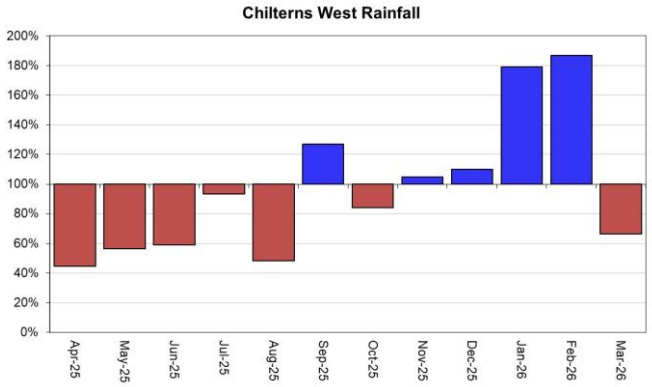

Ock - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26

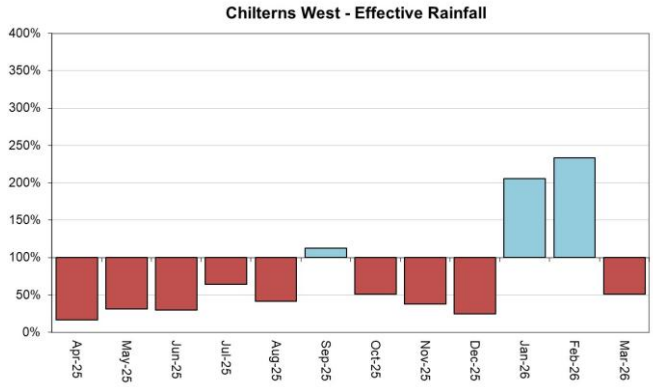

Thame Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26

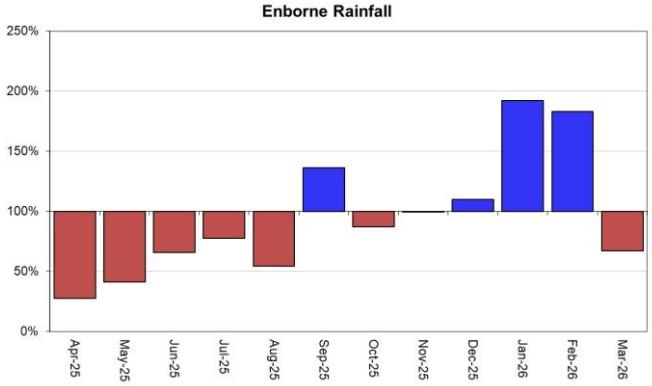

Thame - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26

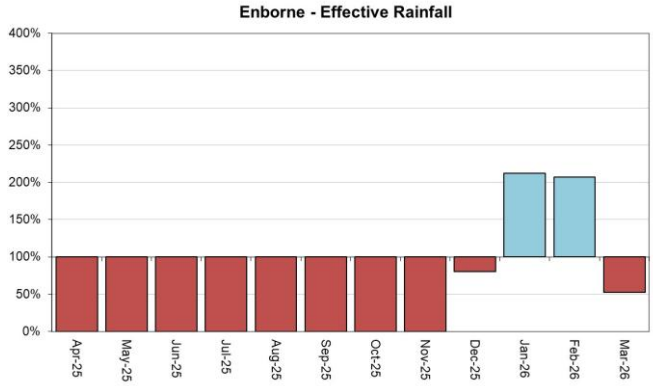

Berkshire Downs Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26

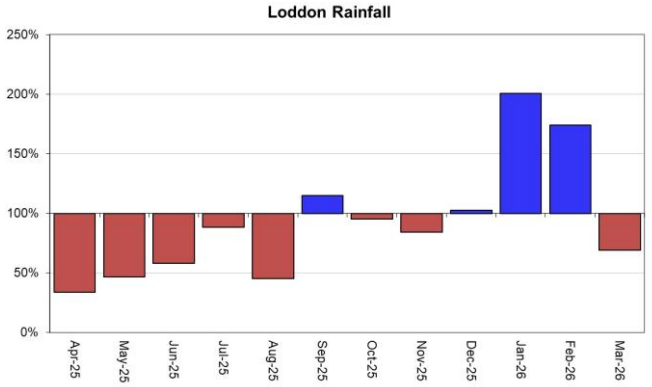

Berkshire Downs - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26

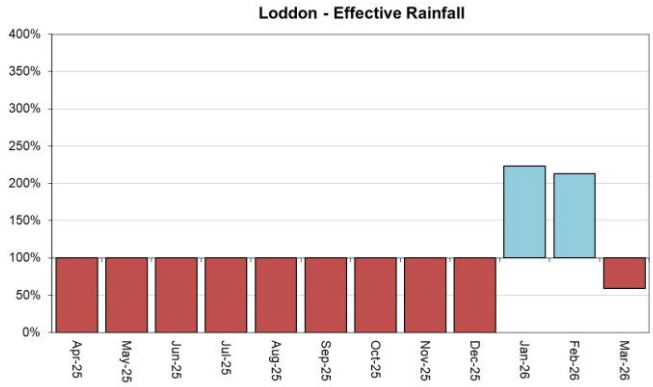

Chilterns West Rainfall
200%
180%
160%
140%
120%
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26

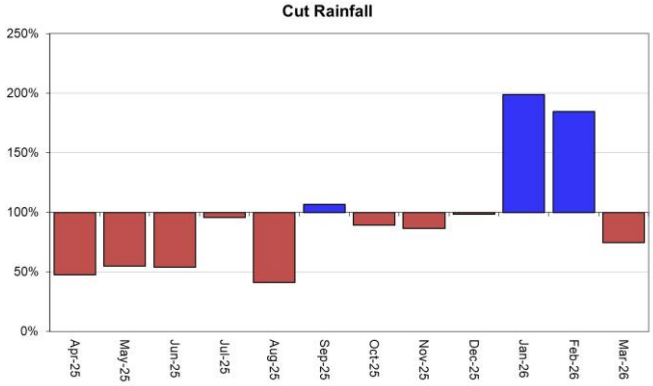

Chilterns West - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26

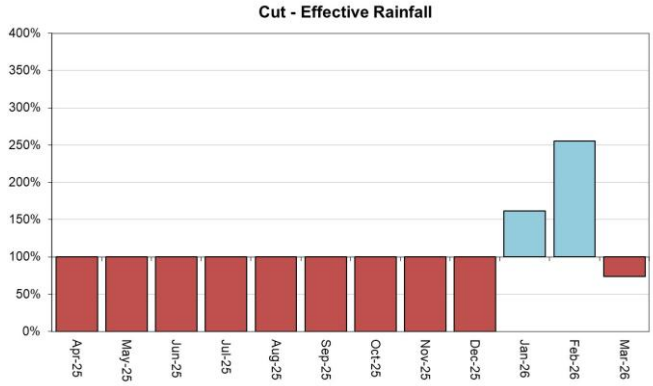

Enborne Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26

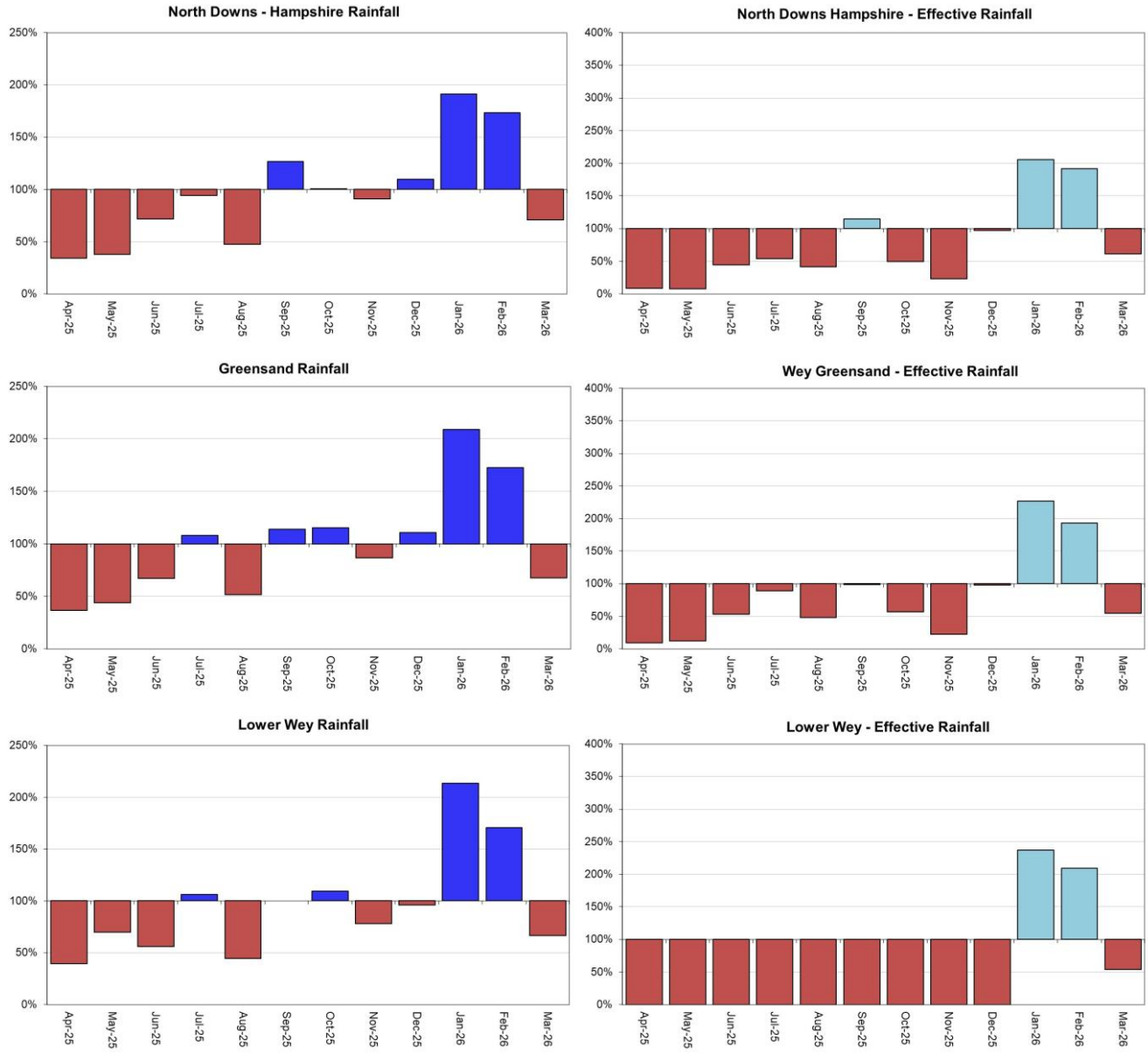

Enborne - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26


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


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


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


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



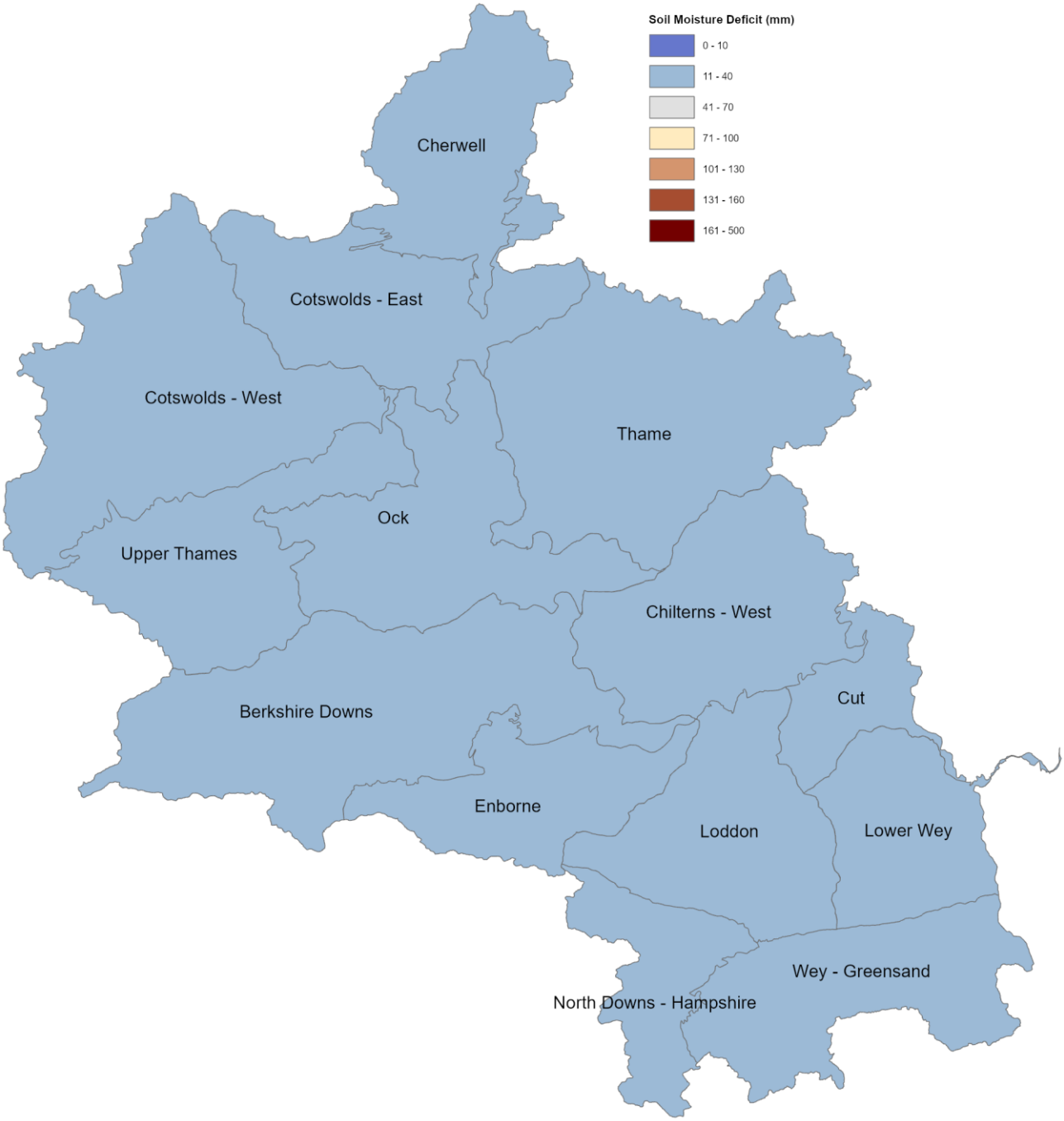
HadUK rainfall data. (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

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

3 Soil moisture deficit

3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

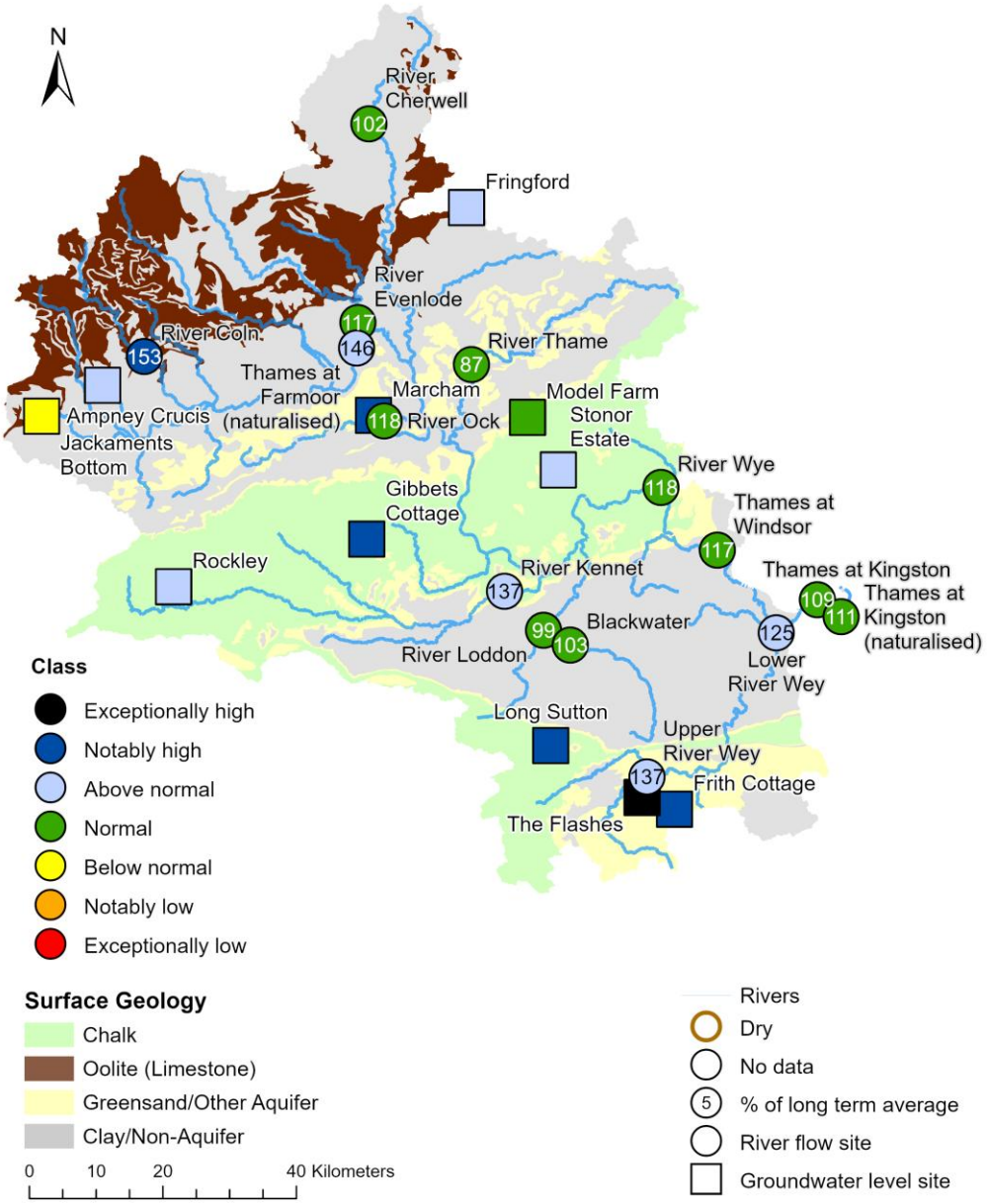
Figure 3.1: Soil moisture deficits for the week ending 31 March 2026. Shows the areal SMD estimate in millimetres.



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 March 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic March means.

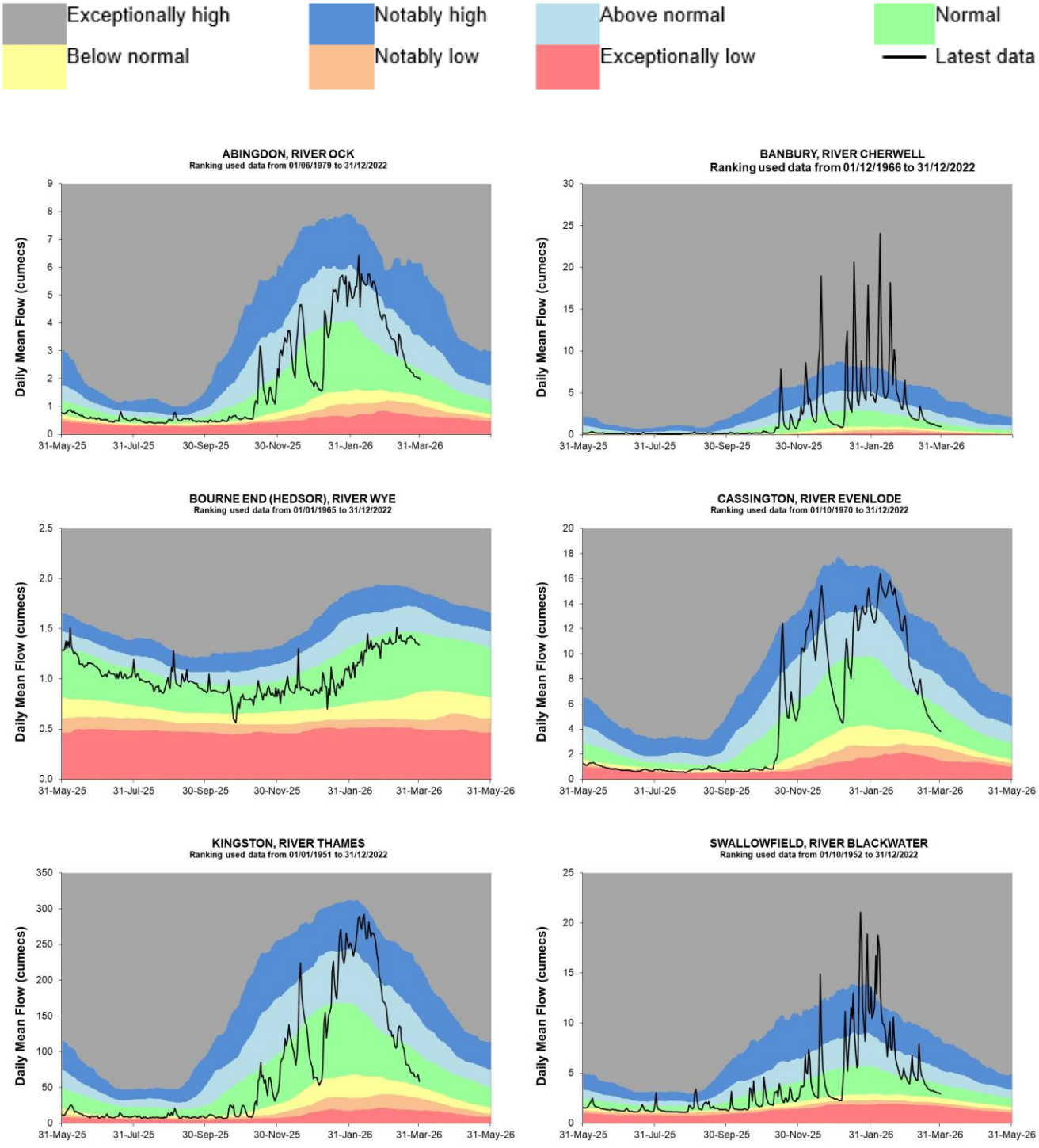


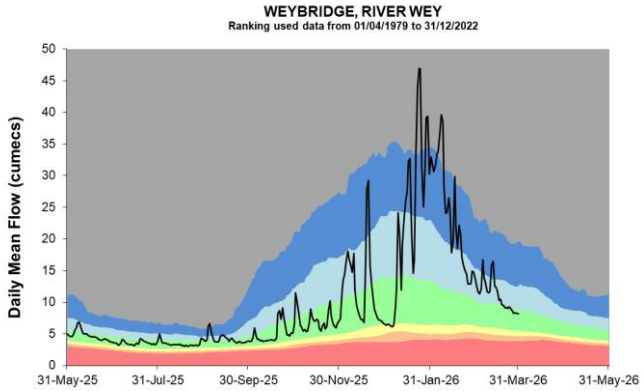
(Source: Environment Agency). © Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright and Database Rights 2026 – AC0000807064.

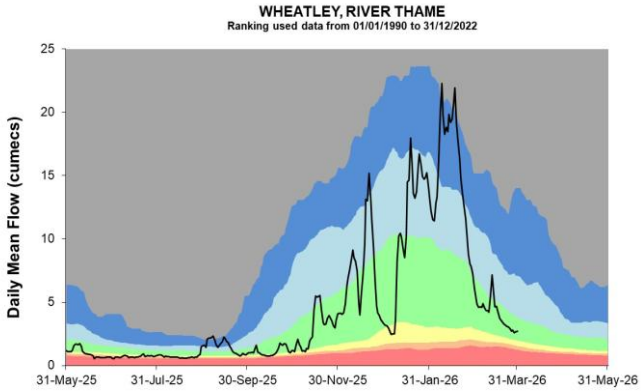
5 River flows

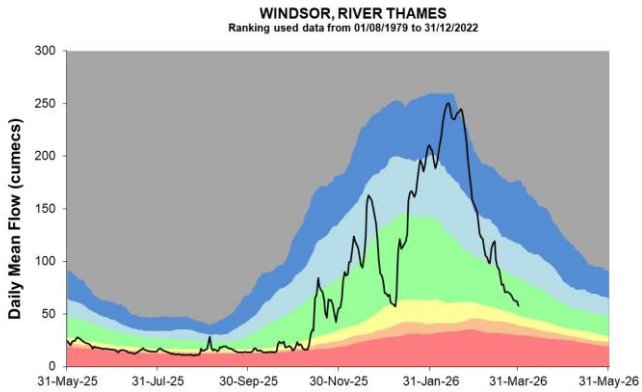
5.1 River flow charts

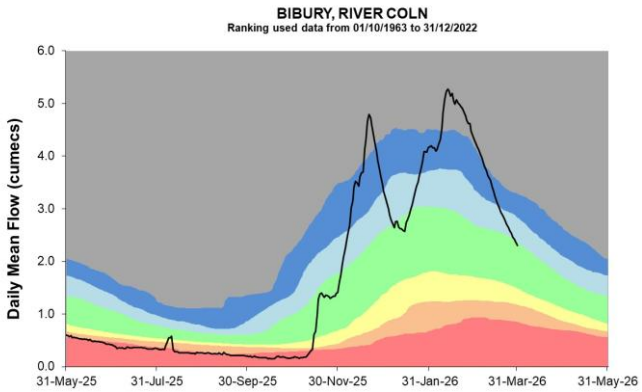
Figure 5.1: Daily mean river flows for indicator sites compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows, and long term maximum and minimum flows.

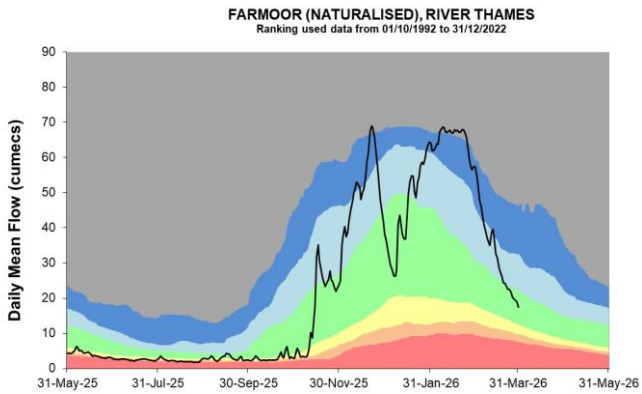


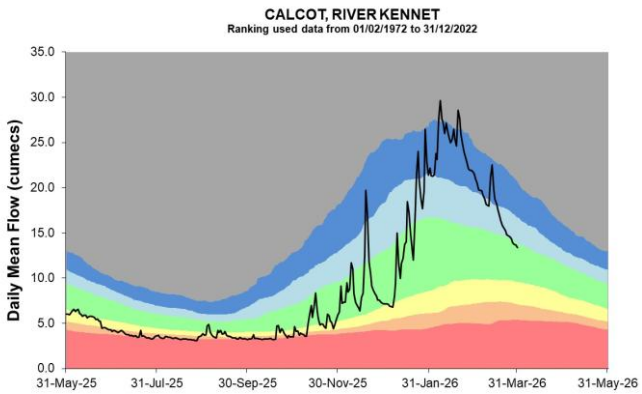

WEYBRIDGE, RIVER WEY
Ranking used data from 01/04/1979 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
50
31-May-25
31-Jul-25
30-Sep-25
30-Nov-25
31-Jan-26
31-Mar-26
31-May-26

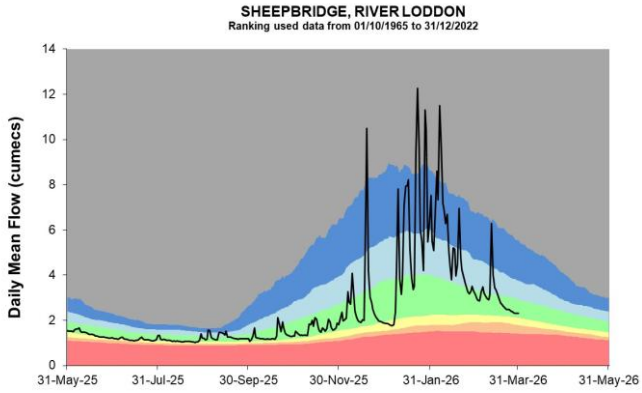

WHEATLEY, RIVER THAME
Ranking used data from 01/01/1990 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0
5
10
15
20
25
31-May-25
31-Jul-25
30-Sep-25
30-Nov-25
31-Jan-26
31-Mar-26
31-May-26

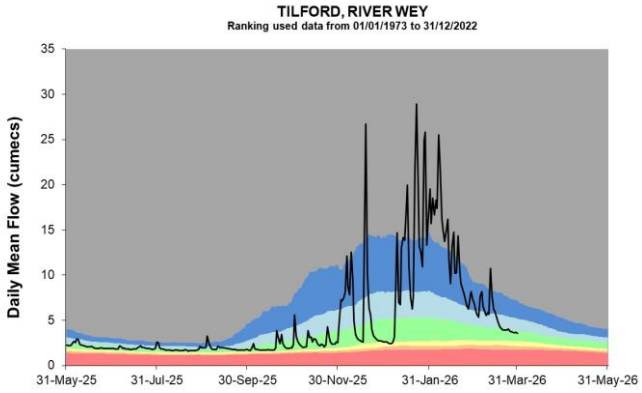

WINDSOR, RIVER THAMES
Ranking used data from 01/08/1979 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0
50
100
150
200
250
300
31-May-25
31-Jul-25
30-Sep-25
30-Nov-25
31-Jan-26
31-Mar-26
31-May-26

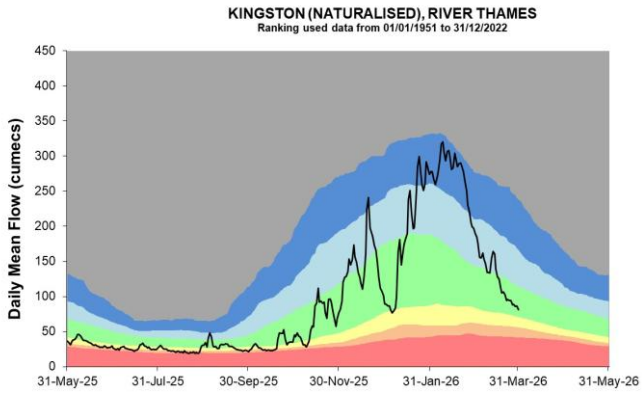

BIBURY, RIVER COLN
Ranking used data from 01/10/1963 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0.0
1.0
2.0
3.0
4.0
5.0
6.0
31-May-25
31-Jul-25
30-Sep-25
30-Nov-25
31-Jan-26
31-Mar-26
31-May-26


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
31-May-25
31-Jul-25
30-Sep-25
30-Nov-25
31-Jan-26
31-Mar-26
31-May-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
31-May-25
31-Jul-25
30-Sep-25
30-Nov-25
31-Jan-26
31-Mar-26
31-May-26





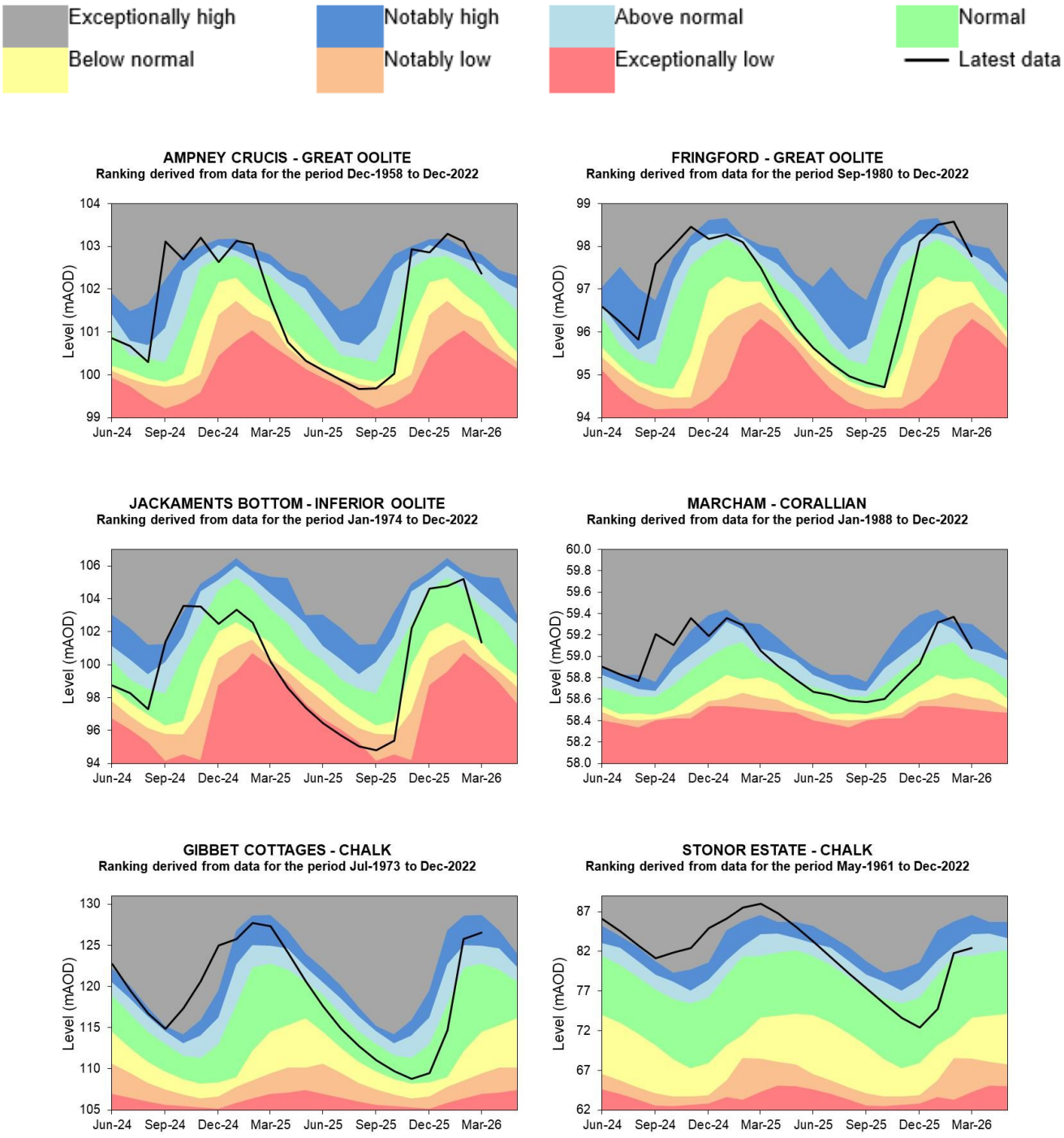


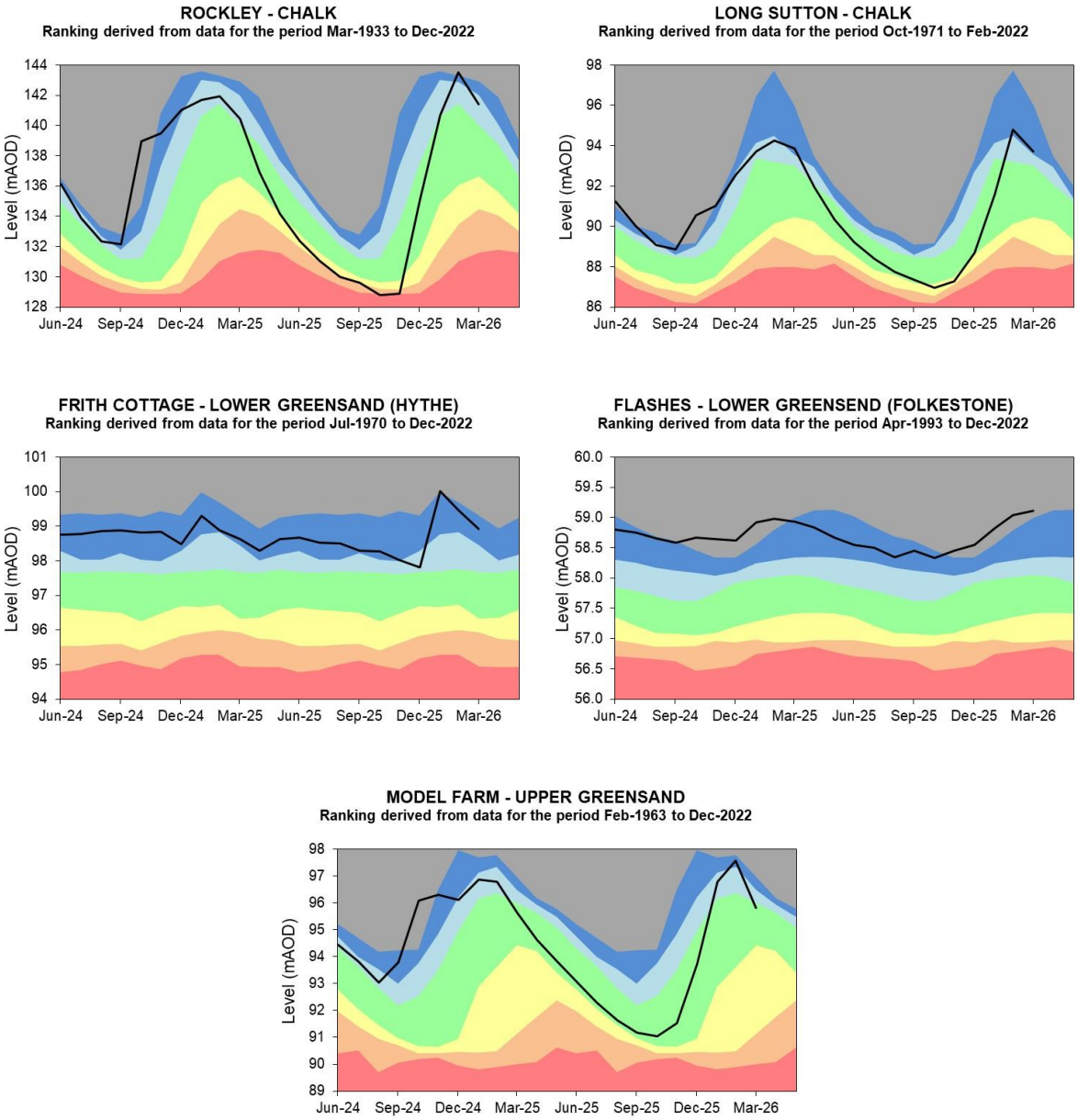
Source: Environment Agency.

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.

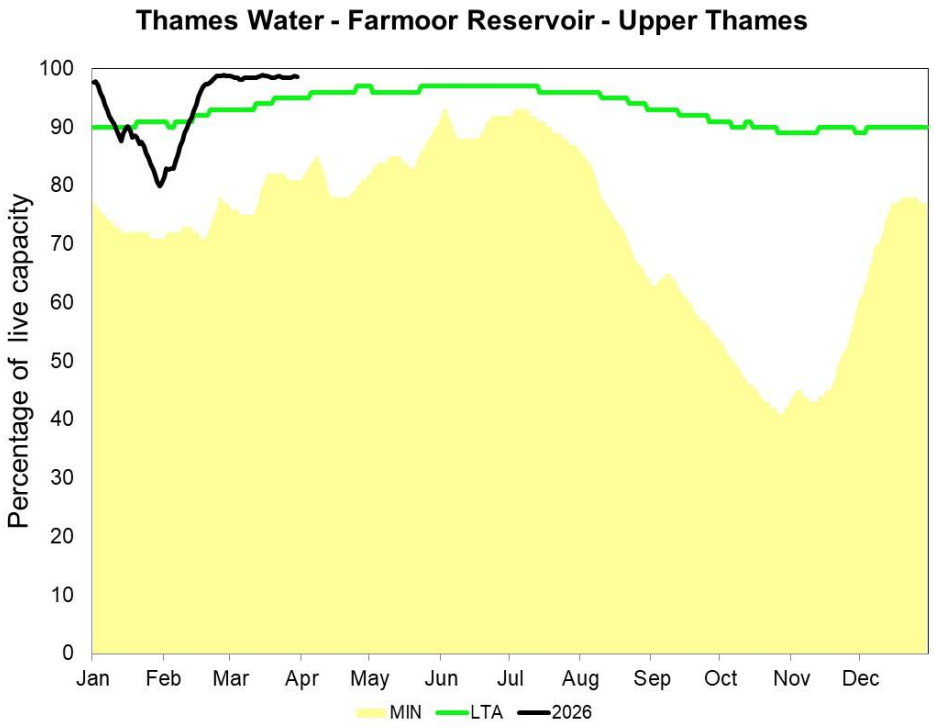


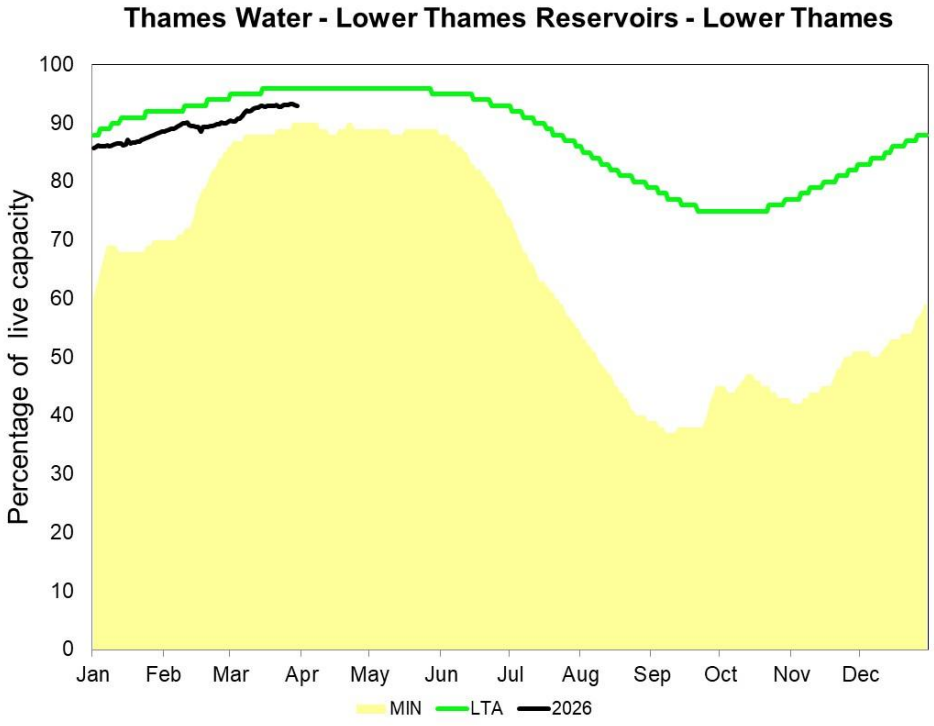


Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

7 Reservoir stocks

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

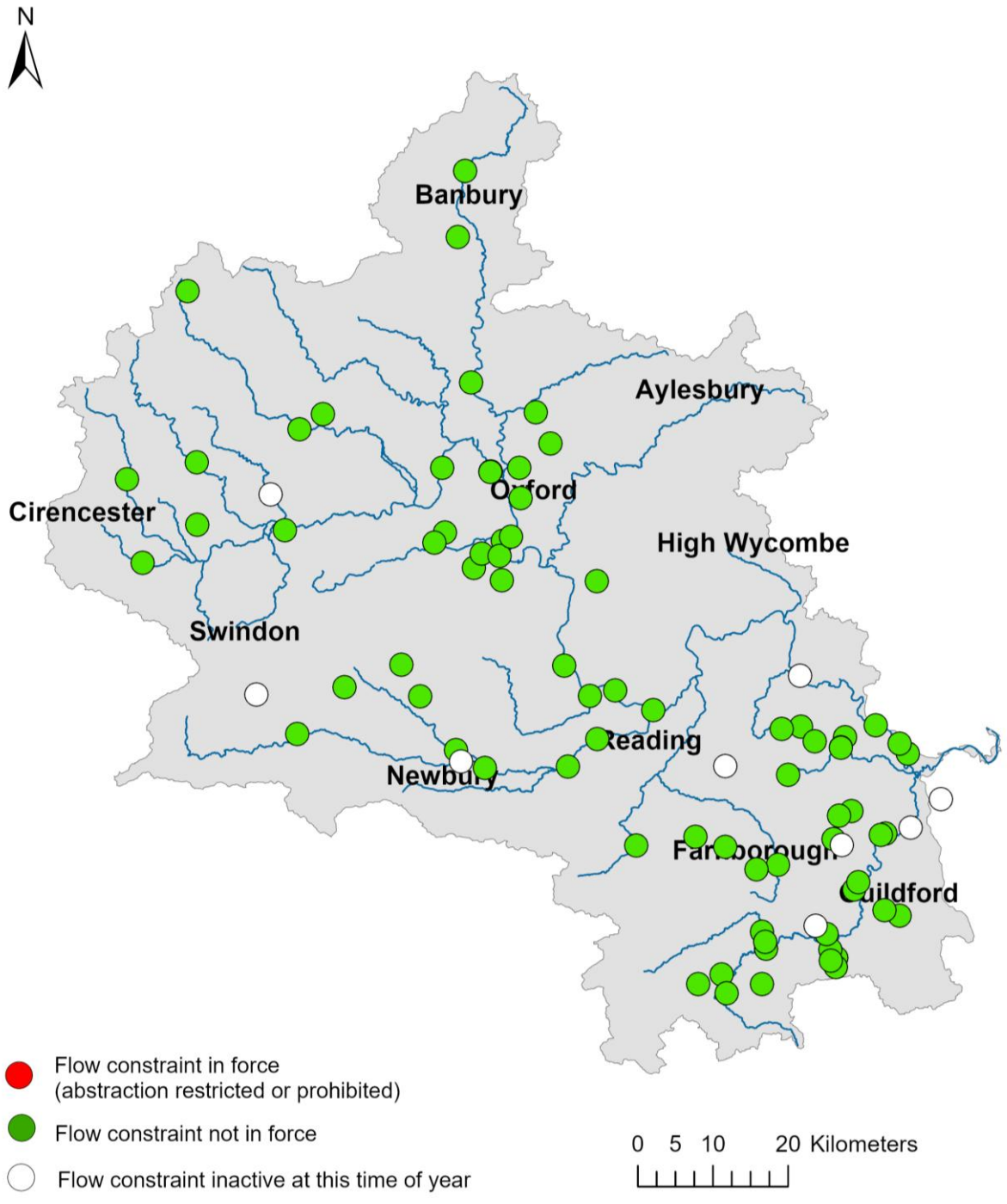




(Source: water companies).

8 Flow Constraints

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



8.2 Summary of flow constraints

Week ending	01/03/26	08/03/26	15/03/26	22/03/26	29/03/26
	0	0	0	0	0

9 Summary of rainfall, effective rainfall and soil moisture deficit

9.1 Rainfall and effective rainfall

Area	Rainfall (mm) 31 day Total	Rainfall (mm) March LTA	Rainfall (mm) % LTA	Effective Rainfall (mm) 31 day total	Effective Rainfall (mm) March LTA	Effective Rainfall (mm) % LTA
Cotswolds - West	29	58	50	5	28	18
Cotswolds - East	24	49	49	2	20	12
Berkshire Downs	34	54	63	10	25	42
Chilterns - West	31	48	66	10	19	51
North Downs - Hampshire	43	60	70	19	32	61
Wey - Greensand	38	57	67	16	29	54
Upper Thames	23	47	50	0	16	0
Cherwell	24	46	52	2	18	12
Thame	23	41	54	1	12	11
Loddon	32	46	69	10	17	59
Lower Wey	29	44	66	8	16	54
Ock	22	41	54	0	11	5
Enborne	34	51	66	11	22	52
Cut	31	41	74	9	12	74
Thames Area	**30**	**49**	**61**	**8**	**20**	**38**

HadUK rainfall data (Source: Met Office Crown copyright 2026)
EA effective rainfall data (Source: EA Soil Moisture Model)

9.2 Soil moisture deficit

Area	SMD (mm) Day 31	SMD (mm) LTA
Cotswolds - West	16	8
Cotswolds - East	18	9
Berkshire Downs	16	8
Chilterns - West	18	10
North Downs - Hampshire	16	8
Wey - Greensand	17	8
Upper Thames	19	10
Cherwell	18	9
Thame	19	11
Loddon	20	10
Lower Wey	20	11
Ock	20	15
Enborne	18	9
Cut	21	14
Thames Area	**18**	**10**

HadUK rainfall data (Source: Met Office Crown copyright 2026)
EA effective rainfall data (Source: EA Soil Moisture Model)

Winter rainfall and effective rainfall

Winter period: 01/10/2025 to 31/03/2026						
Area	Rainfall (mm) Total	Rainfall (mm) LTA	Rainfall (mm) % LTA	Effective Rainfall (mm) Total	Effective Rainfall (mm) LTA	Effective Rainfall (mm) % LTA
Cotswolds - West	668	473	141	433	299	145
Cotswolds - East	586	406	144	335	226	148
Berkshire Downs	606	452	134	348	240	145
Chilterns - West	504	415	122	245	199	123
North Downs - Hampshire	660	535	123	408	328	124
Wey - Greensand	660	514	128	405	310	131
Upper Thames	516	392	132	231	173	133
Cherwell	528	373	141	256	178	144
Thame	450	352	128	189	141	134
Loddon	489	405	121	210	181	116
Lower Wey	477	389	123	211	178	119
Ock	459	350	131	172	125	137
Enborne	548	445	123	295	230	128
Cut	434	361	120	149	129	116
Thames Area	**542**	**419**	**129**	**278**	**210**	**132**

HadUK rainfall data (Source: Met Office Crown copyright 2026)
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	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
Berkshire Downs	63	Normal	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal
Chilterns West	67	Normal	Notably high	Above normal	Normal
Cotswold East	50	Below Normal	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Above normal
Cotswold West	51	Below Normal	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Above normal
Cut	74	Normal	Exceptionally high	Above normal	Normal
Enborne	67	Normal	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Loddon	69	Normal	Exceptionally high	Above normal	Normal
Lower Wey	67	Normal	Exceptionally high	Above normal	Normal
North Downs - Hampshire	71	Normal	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Ock	54	Below Normal	Notably high	Notably high	Normal
Thame	55	Below Normal	Notably high	Notably high	Normal
Upper Cherwell	52	Below Normal	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal
Upper Thames	50	Below Normal	Notably high	Notably high	Normal
Wey - Greensand	68	Normal	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Above normal

11.2 River flows table

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

11.3 Groundwater table

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