Monthly water situation report: Thames Area

1 Summary - April 2026

Thames area received 11mm of rainfall in April, just 20% of the long term average (LTA) and the 10th driest April on record. Soil moisture deficits (SMD) increased to 69mm, compared to the LTA of 28mm. Effective rainfall was negligible across Thames area. River flows are being sustained by high winter rainfall, however a third of indicator sites were below normal. Groundwater levels decreased at all sites, which is to be expected, the majority were normal for the time of year. Farmoor reservoir was above average while the Lower Thames reservoirs were below average for the time of year. In April, 1 groundwater flood alert remained in place.

1.1 Rainfall

Thames area received 11mm of rainfall in April, which was 20% of the LTA. All areal rainfall units recorded notably low levels of rainfall, apart from Thame, which was exceptionally low. There were a total of 13 dry days in April, and only 2, 12 and 15 April, that had over 2mm of rain. It was the 10th driest April on record.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

For the second month in a row, drier weather has increased SMD across Thames area and ended the month on 69mm, which is higher than the LTA of 28mm. There was also negligible effective rainfall.

1.3 River flows

Monthly mean flows decreased at all our indicator sites. Two-thirds of our sites were normal for the time of year, however, one-third, were below normal. The Thames at Kingston was below normal with 58% of its LTA flow. River flows are being supported due to exceptionally high rainfall over winter, however the current dry weather has started to reduce flows.

1.4 Groundwater levels

At the end of the month, groundwater levels declined at all of our indicator sites, which is to be expected as the annual recharge season has ended and the annual recession is taking place across the area. The majority of indicator sites are normal for the time of year. Jackaments Bottom in the Inferior Oolite recorded notably low. This aquifer has low storage capacity and high permeability which cause water levels to fall rapidly during periods of low rainfall. Gibbet Cottages (Berkshire Downs Chalk) was above normal. The Flashes in the Lower Greensand (Folkestone) was notably high, having declined gradually from exceptionally high levels at the end of March. Levels in the Lower Greensand (Folkestone) typically decline slowly as the aquifer has high storage capacity.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

Reservoir stocks in Farmoor again decreased slightly from 98.6% to 98.1%, while the Lower Thames reservoirs decreased from 93% to 92.8%. Farmoor reservoir was above average while the Lower Thames reservoirs were below average for the time of year.

1.6 Environmental impact

In April there was 1 groundwater flood alert remaining in Thames area. At the end of April, 3 abstraction licences were constrained in the area to protect water resources.

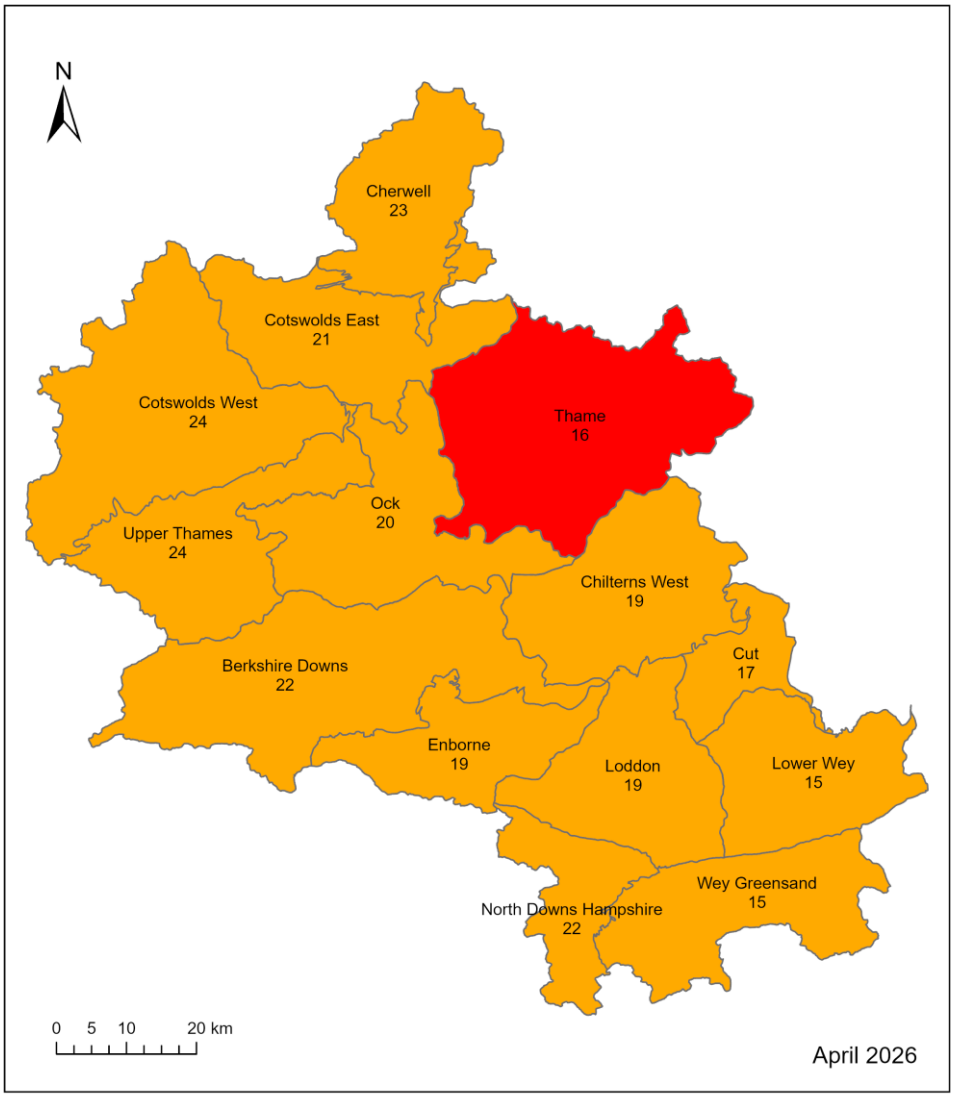
Author: Thames Area Groundwater Resources and Hydrology, enquiriesWT@environment-agency.gov.uk

Contact Details: 030708 506 506

2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

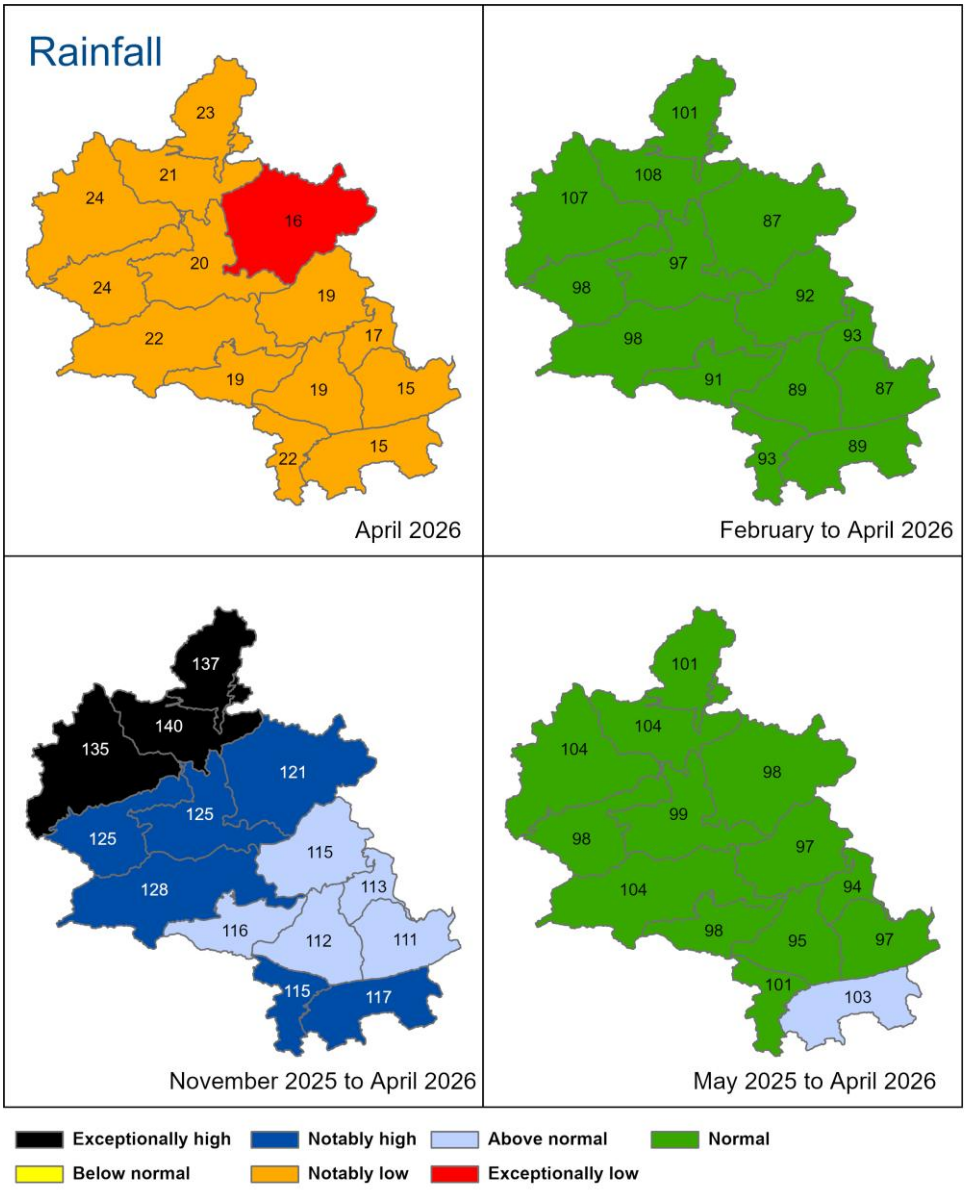
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 30 April 2026), classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



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)

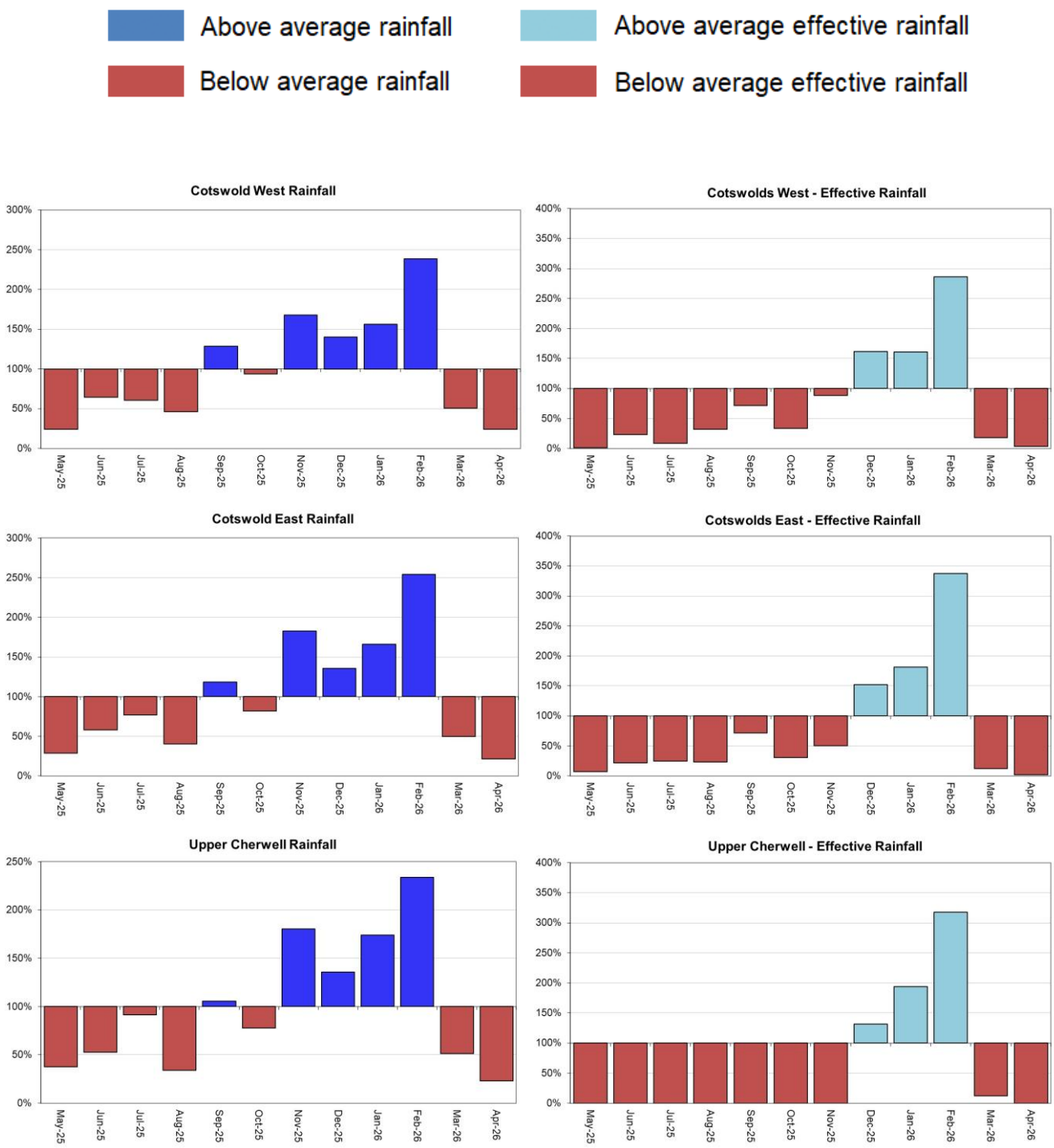
Figure 2.2: Total rainfall for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 30 April 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



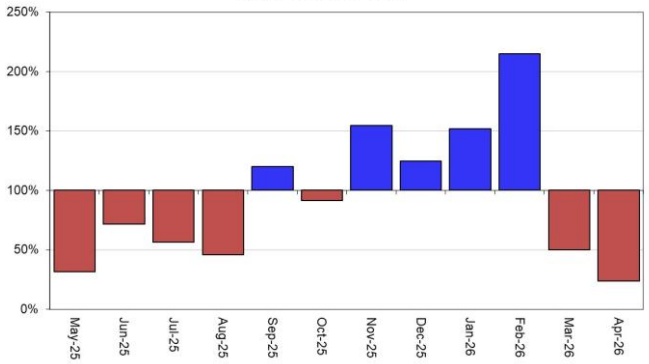
HadUK data based on the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges (Source: Met Office). Provisional data based on Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency).

2.3 Rainfall charts

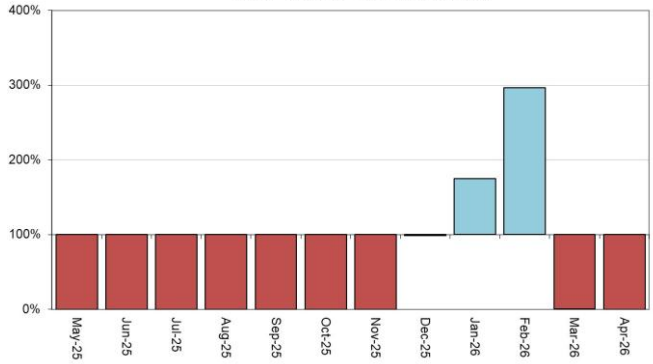
Figure 2.3: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for each areal unit.



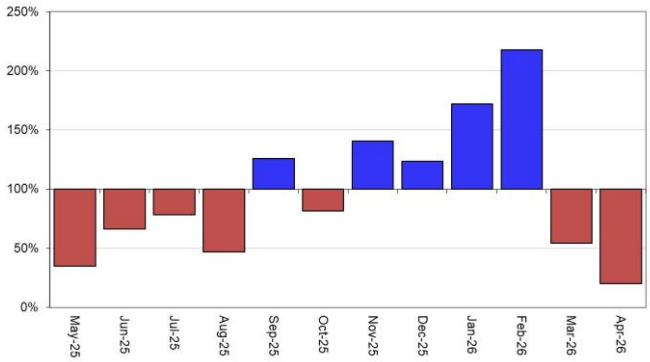
Upper Thames Rainfall



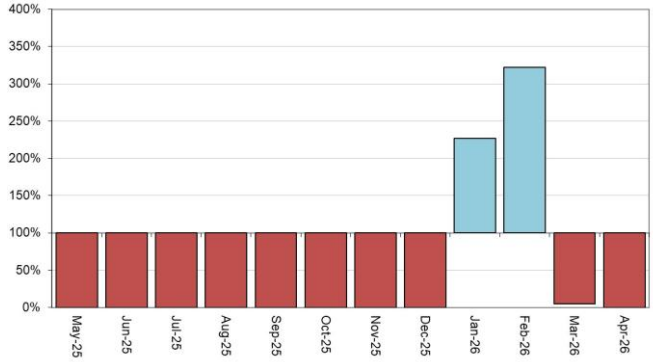
Upper Thames - Effective Rainfall



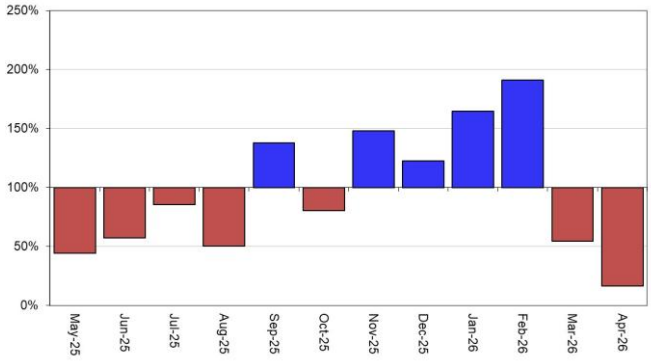
Ock Rainfall



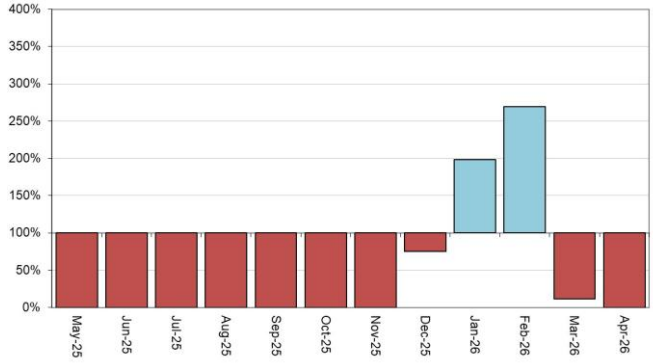
Ock - Effective Rainfall



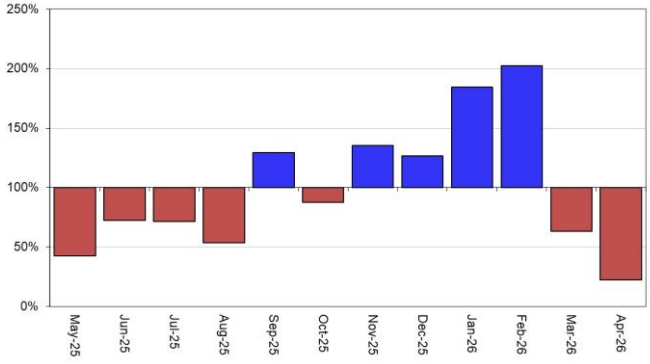
Thame Rainfall



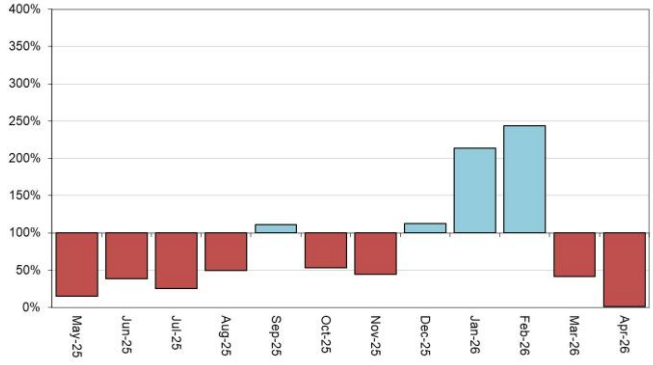
Thame - Effective Rainfall

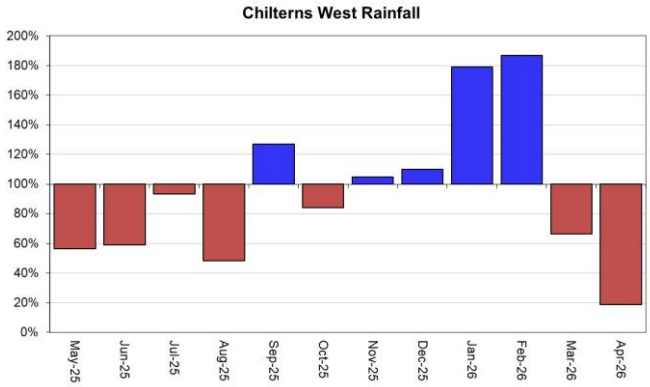


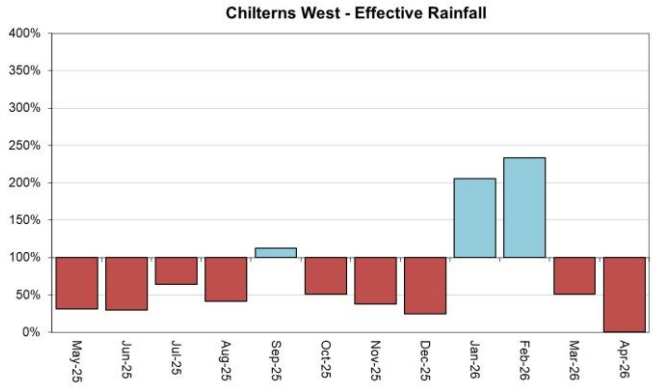
Berkshire Downs Rainfall

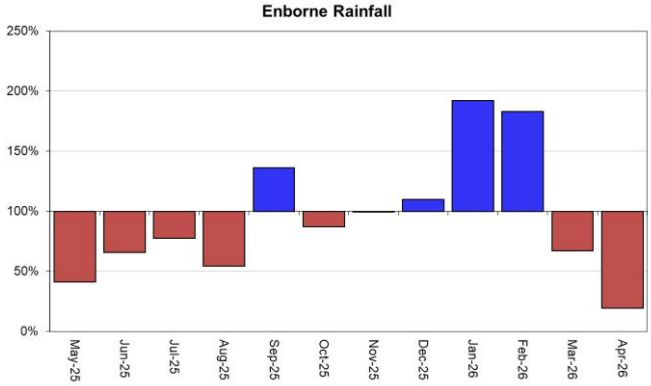


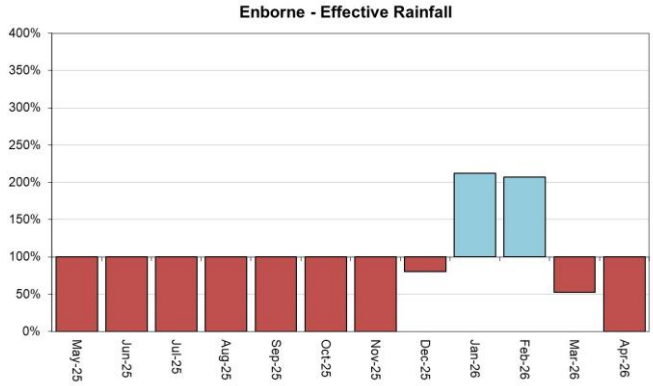
Berkshire Downs - Effective Rainfall

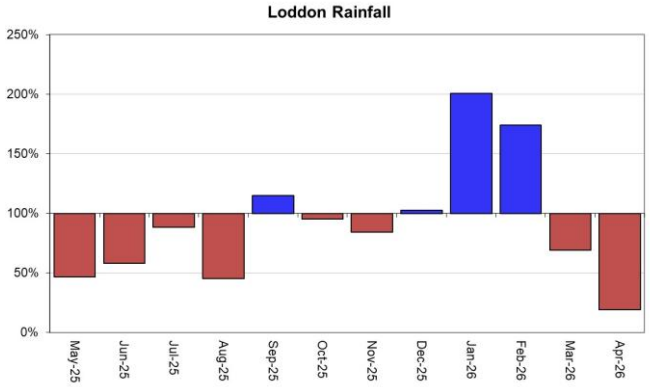


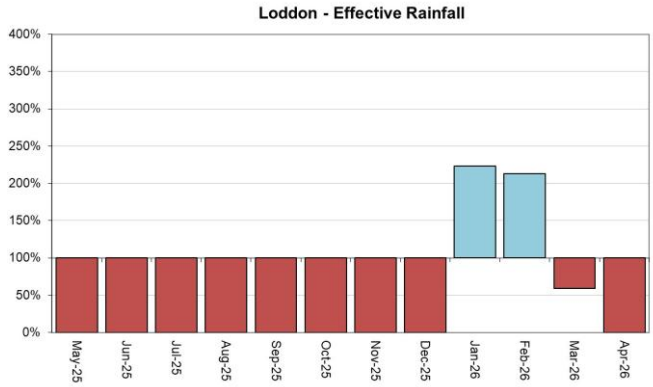

Chilterns West Rainfall
200%
180%
160%
140%
120%
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26

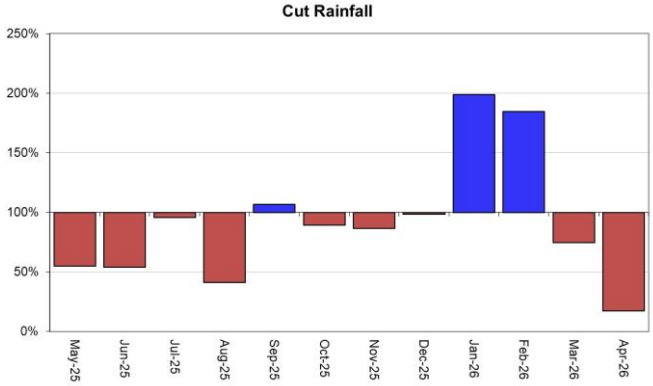

Chilterns West - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26

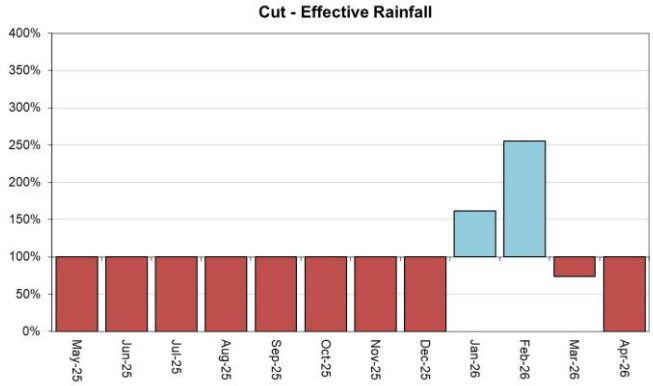

Enborne Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26

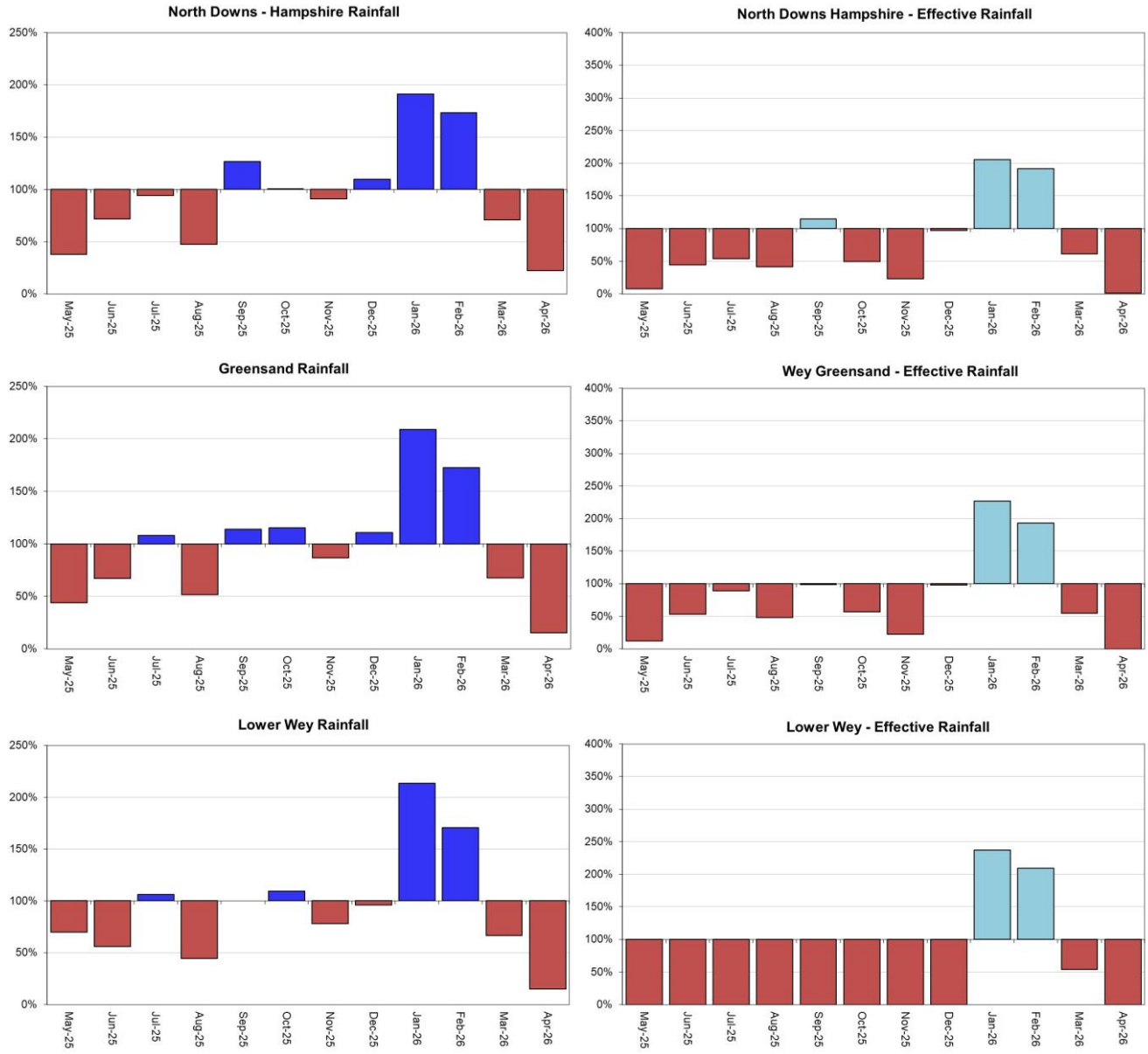

Enborne - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26


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


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


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


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



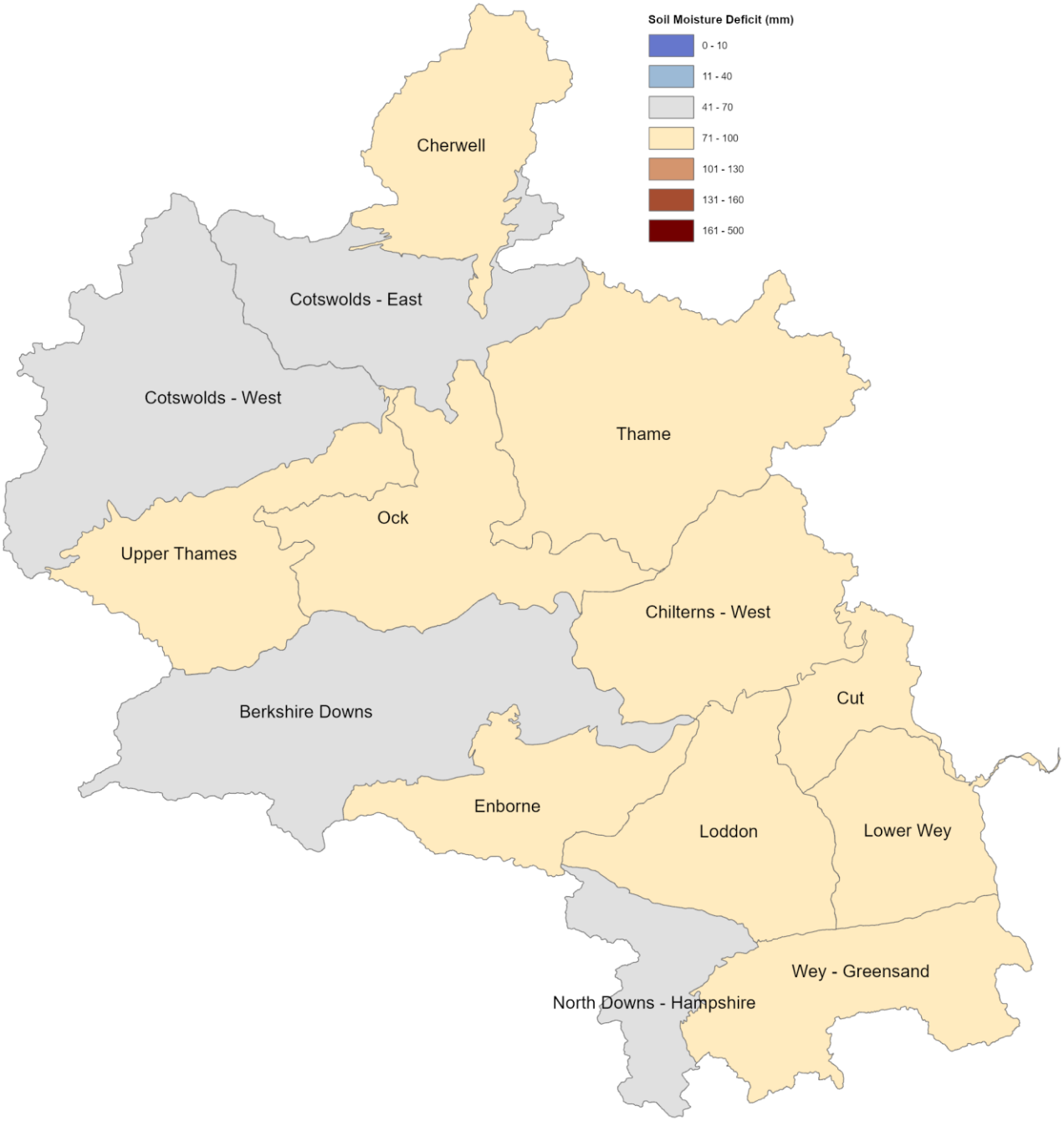
HadUK rainfall data. (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

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 30 April 2026. Shows the areal SMD estimate in millimetres.

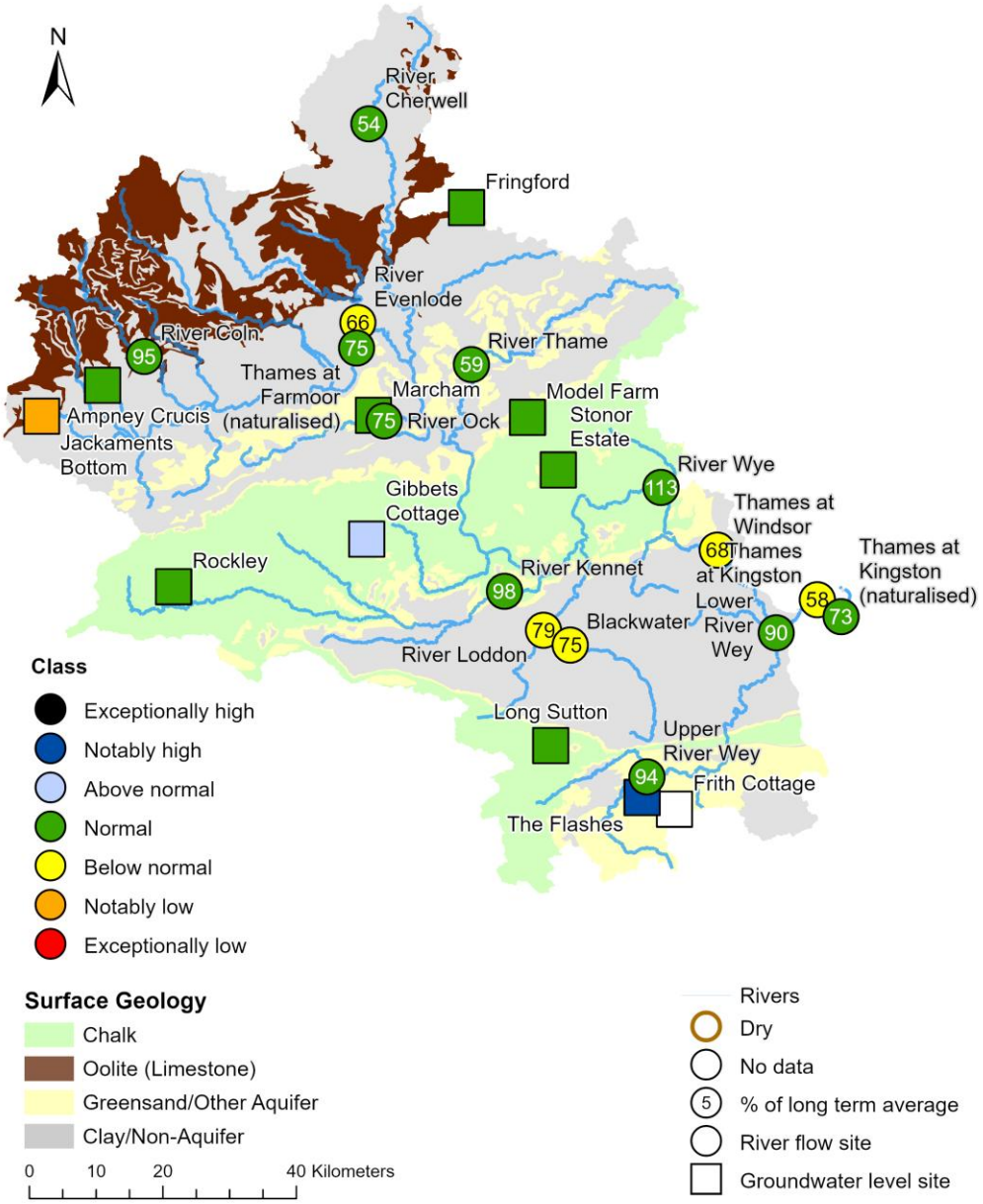


(Source: Environment Agency). © Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright and Database Rights 2026 – AC0000807064.

4 River Flow and Groundwater Status

4.1 River flow and groundwater level map

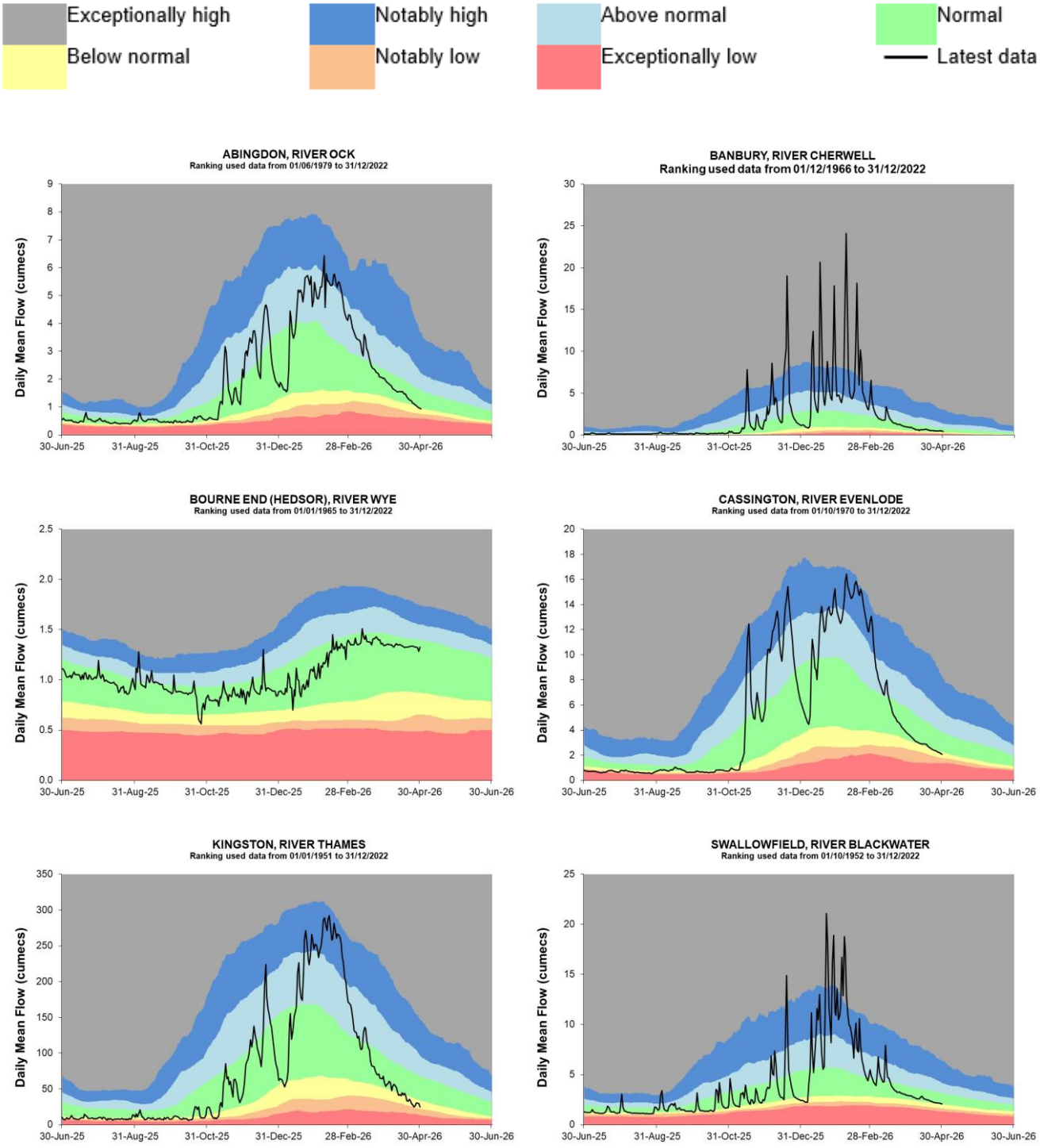
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites and end of month groundwater levels for indicator sites for April 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic April means.

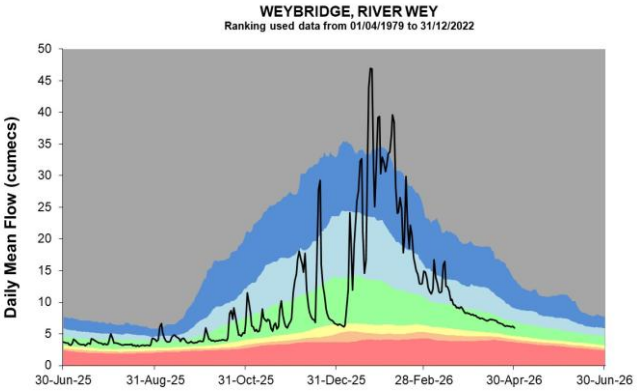


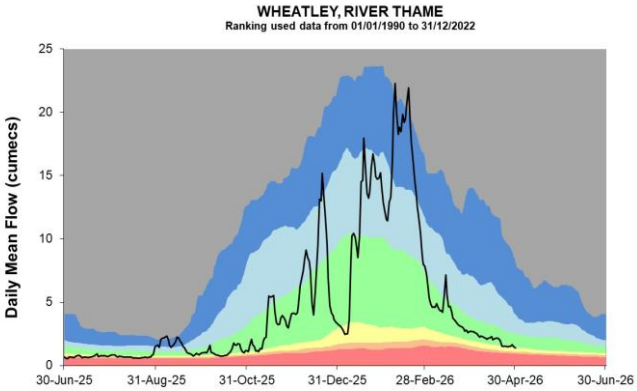
5 River flows

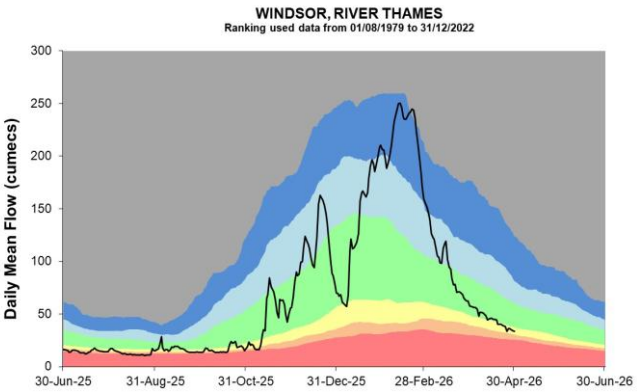
5.1 River flow charts

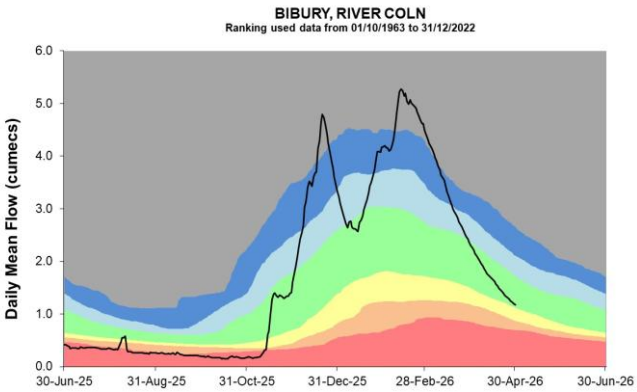
Figure 5.1: Daily mean river flows for indicator sites compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows, and long term maximum and minimum flows.

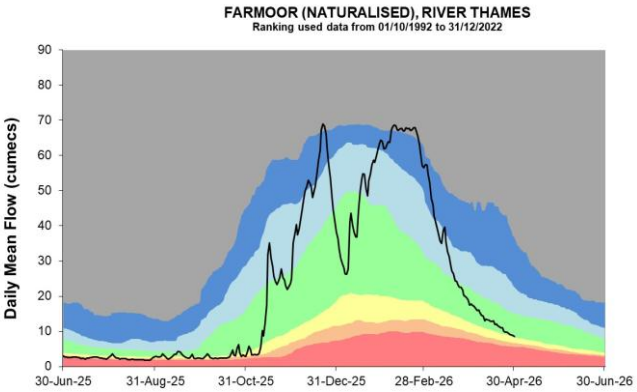


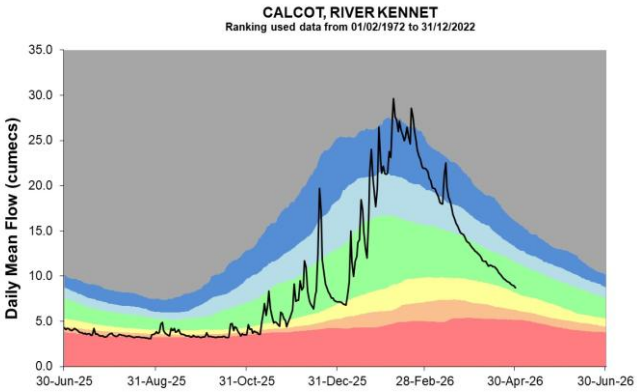

WEYBRIDGE, RIVER WEY
Ranking used data from 01/04/1979 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
50
30-Jun-25
31-Aug-25
31-Oct-25
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26

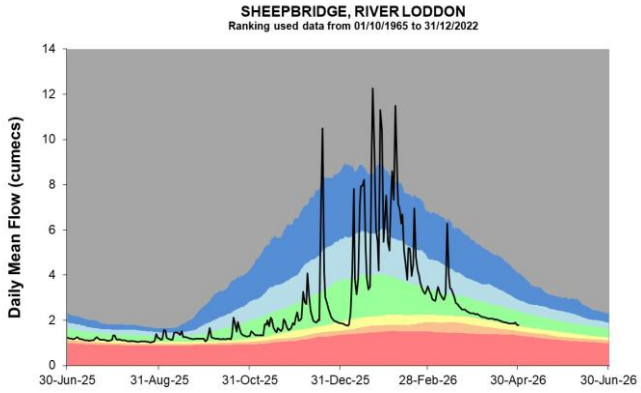

WHEATLEY, RIVER THAME
Ranking used data from 01/01/1990 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0
5
10
15
20
25
30-Jun-25
31-Aug-25
31-Oct-25
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26

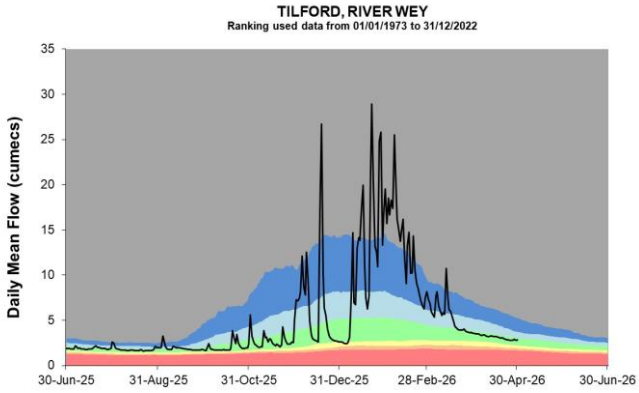

WINDSOR, RIVER THAMES
Ranking used data from 01/08/1979 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0
50
100
150
200
250
300
30-Jun-25
31-Aug-25
31-Oct-25
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26

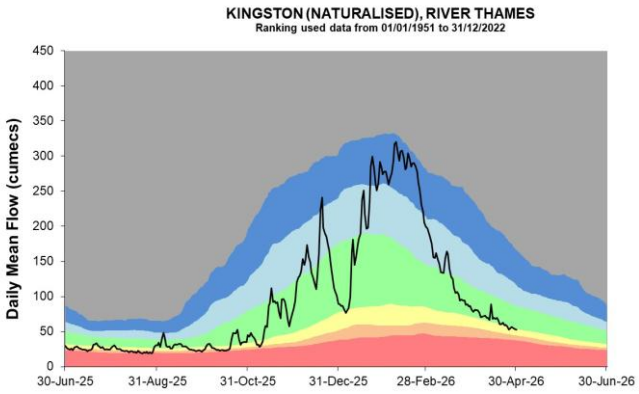

BIBURY, RIVER COLN
Ranking used data from 01/10/1963 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0.0
1.0
2.0
3.0
4.0
5.0
6.0
30-Jun-25
31-Aug-25
31-Oct-25
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26


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
30-Jun-25
31-Aug-25
31-Oct-25
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-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
30-Jun-25
31-Aug-25
31-Oct-25
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26





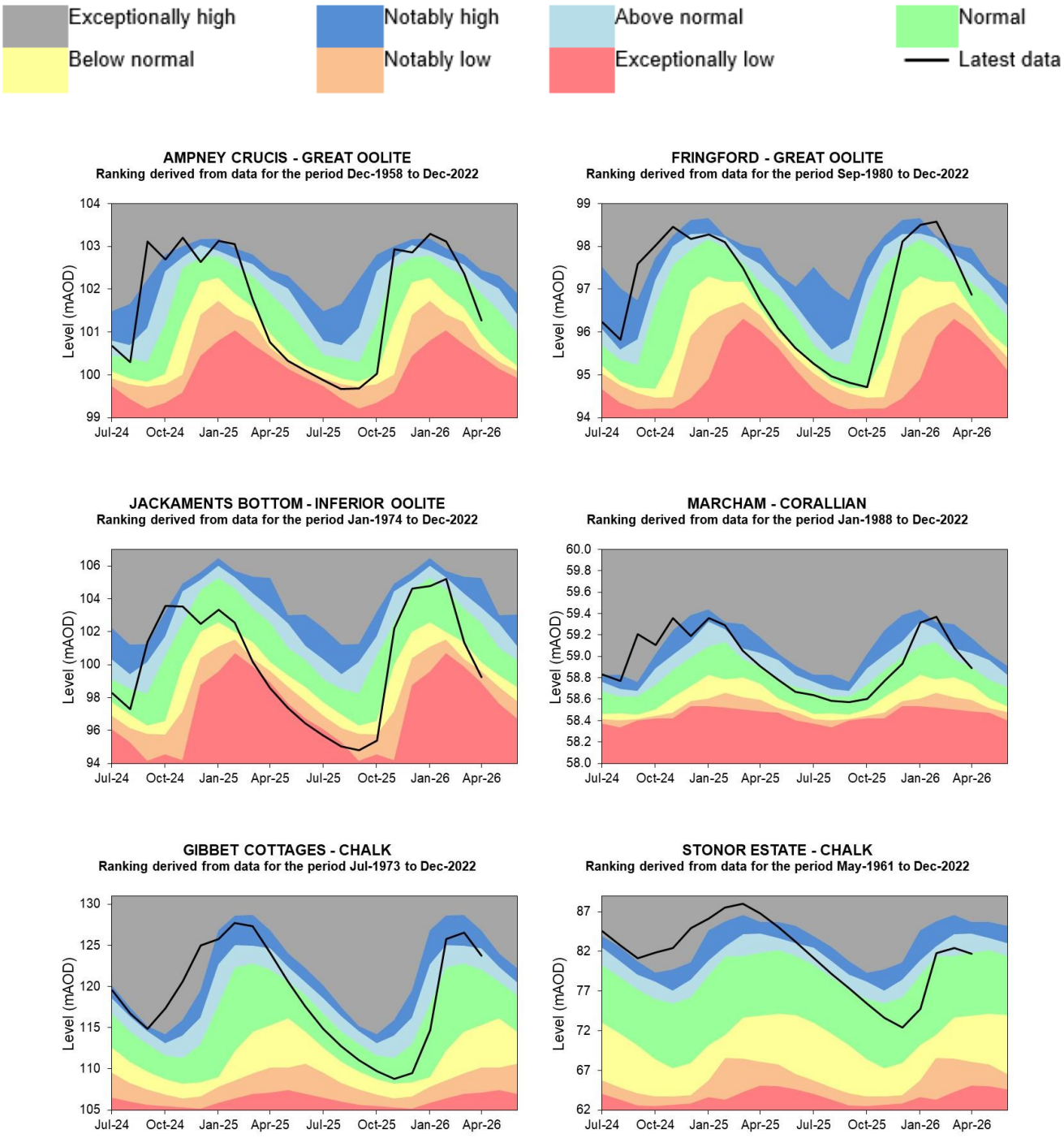


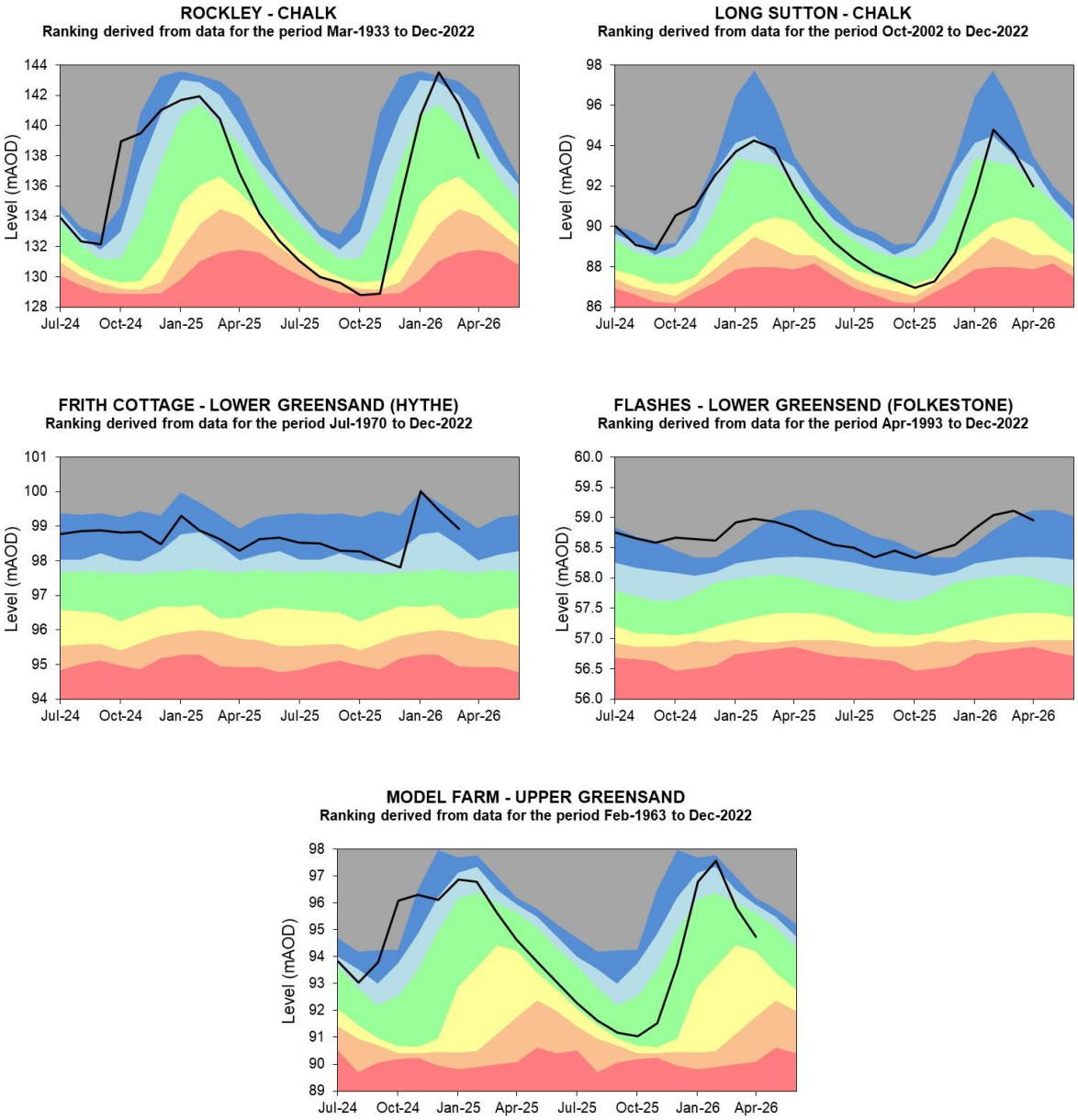
Source: Environment Agency.

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.



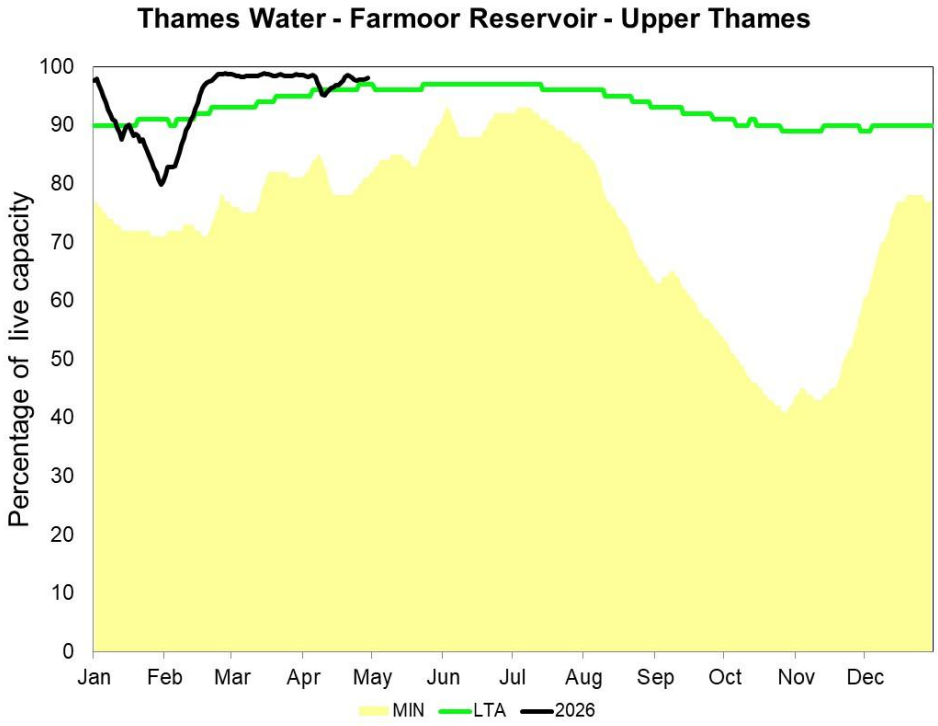


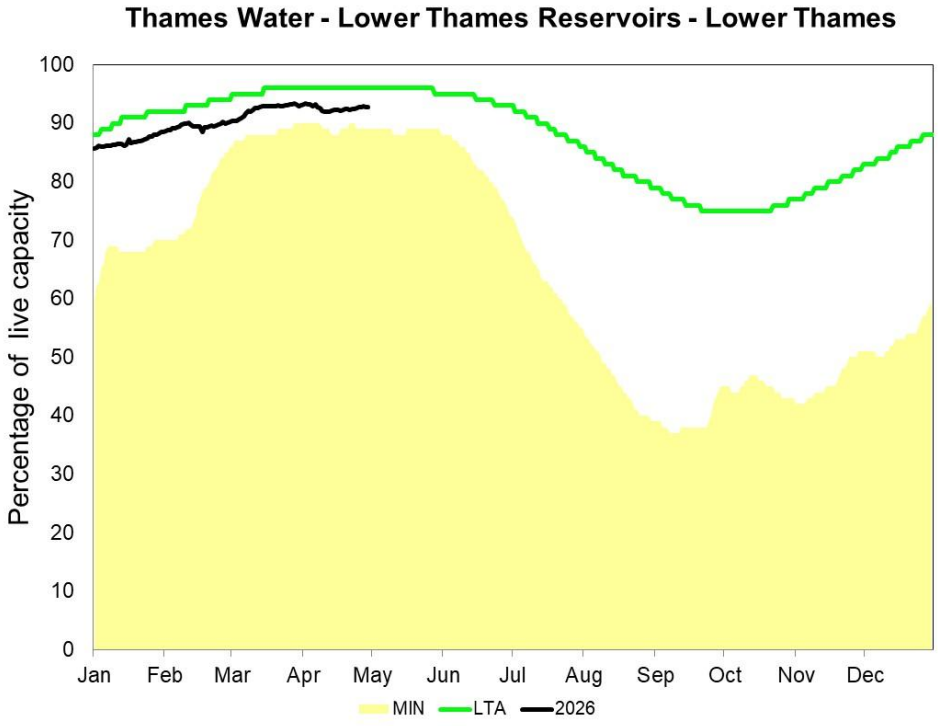
Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

No data available for Frith Cottage

7 Reservoir stocks

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

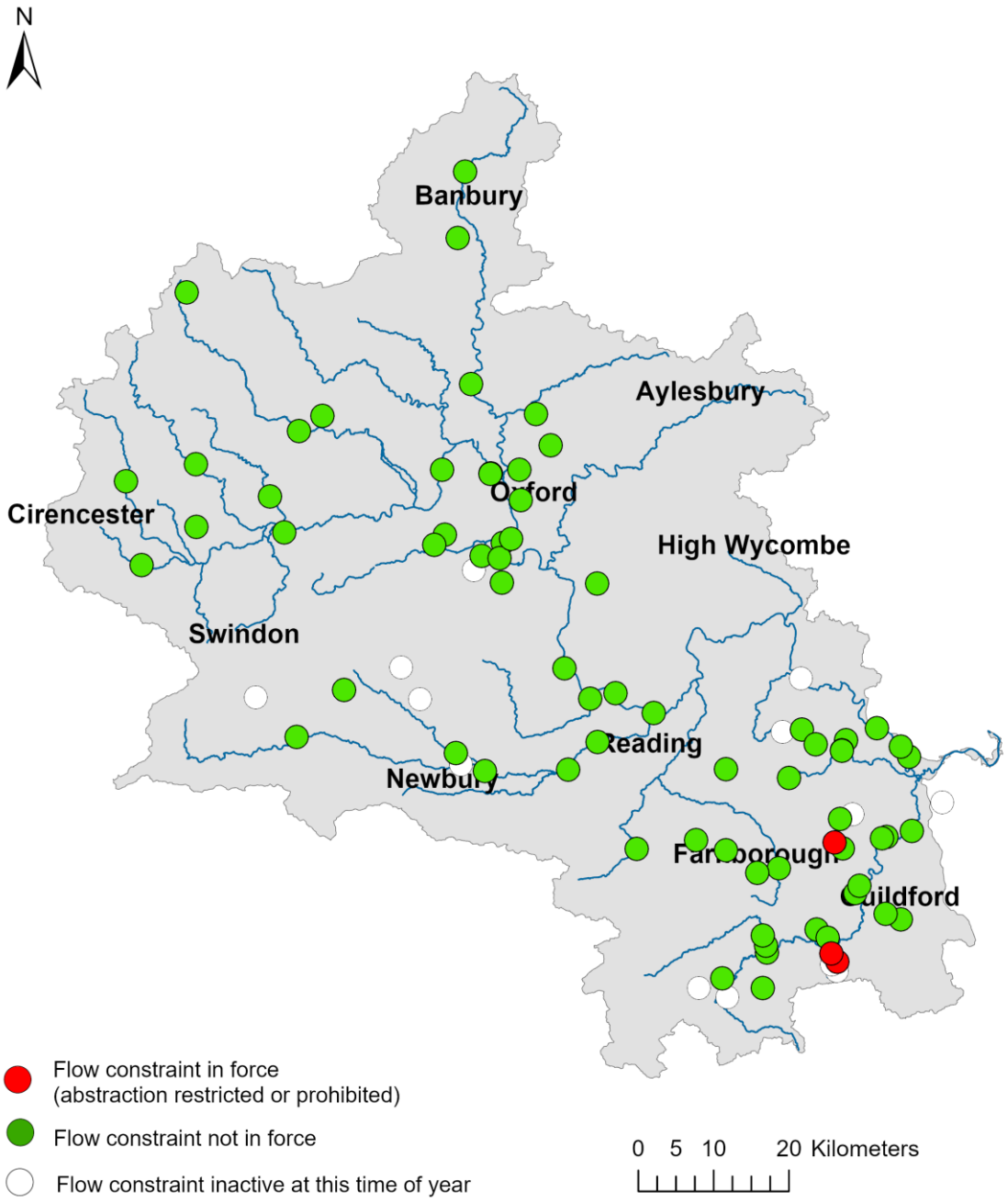




(Source: water companies).

8 Flow Constraints

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



8.2 Summary of flow constraints

Week ending	05/04/26	12/04/26	19/04/26	26/04/26
	0	0	2	3

9 Summary of rainfall, effective rainfall and soil moisture deficit

9.1 Rainfall and effective rainfall

Area	Rainfall (mm) 30 day Total	Rainfall (mm) April LTA	Rainfall (mm) % LTA	Effective Rainfall (mm) 30 day total	Effective Rainfall (mm) April LTA	Effective Rainfall (mm) % LTA
Cotswolds - West	14	59	24	1	18	4
Cotswolds - East	11	54	21	0	16	2
Berkshire Downs	13	59	22	0	17	1
Chilterns - West	10	54	18	0	14	1
North Downs - Hampshire	14	62	22	0	21	1
Wey - Greensand	9	59	15	0	19	0
Upper Thames	12	50	24	0	9	0
Cherwell	12	52	23	0	12	0
Thame	8	48	16	0	8	0
Loddon	10	51	19	0	9	0
Lower Wey	7	48	15	0	8	0
Ock	10	48	20	0	7	0
Enborne	11	57	19	0	14	0
Cut	8	47	17	0	6	0
Thames Area	**11**	**54**	**20**	**0**	**13**	**1**

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 30	SMD (mm) LTA
Cotswolds - West	41	19
Cotswolds - East	43	21
Berkshire Downs	69	27
Chilterns - West	73	29
North Downs - Hampshire	68	26
Wey - Greensand	72	26
Upper Thames	74	29
Cherwell	70	26
Thame	76	29
Loddon	76	30
Lower Wey	76	30
Ock	76	33
Enborne	73	27
Cut	77	35
Thames Area	**69**	**28**

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

9.3 Summer rainfall and effective rainfall

Summer period: 01/04/2026 to 30/04/2026						
Area	Rainfall (mm) Total	Rainfall (mm) LTA	Rainfall (mm) % LTA	Effective Rainfall (mm) Total	Effective Rainfall (mm) LTA	Effective Rainfall (mm) % LTA
Cotswolds - West	14	59	24	1	18	4
Cotswolds - East	11	54	21	0	16	2
Berkshire Downs	13	59	22	0	17	1
Chilterns - West	10	54	18	0	14	1
North Downs - Hampshire	14	62	22	0	21	1
Wey - Greensand	9	59	15	0	19	0
Upper Thames	12	50	24	0	9	0
Cherwell	12	52	23	0	12	0
Thame	8	48	16	0	8	0
Loddon	10	51	19	0	9	0
Lower Wey	7	48	15	0	8	0
Ock	10	48	20	0	7	0
Enborne	11	57	19	0	14	0
Cut	8	47	17	0	6	0
Thames Area	**11**	**54**	**20**	**0**	**13**	**1**

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	Apr 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Apr 2026 band	Feb 2026 to April cumulative band	Nov 2025 to April cumulative band	May 2025 to April cumulative band
Berkshire Downs	22	Notably Low	Normal	Notably high	Normal
Chilterns West	19	Notably Low	Normal	Above normal	Normal
Cotswold East	21	Notably Low	Normal	Exceptionally high	Normal
Cotswold West	24	Notably Low	Normal	Exceptionally high	Normal
Cut	17	Notably Low	Normal	Above normal	Normal
Enborne	19	Notably Low	Normal	Above normal	Normal
Loddon	19	Notably Low	Normal	Above normal	Normal
Lower Wey	15	Notably Low	Normal	Above normal	Normal
North Downs - Hampshire	22	Notably Low	Normal	Notably high	Normal
Ock	20	Notably Low	Normal	Notably high	Normal
Thame	16	Exceptionally Low	Normal	Notably high	Normal
Upper Cherwell	23	Notably Low	Normal	Exceptionally high	Normal
Upper Thames	24	Notably Low	Normal	Notably high	Normal
Wey - Greensand	15	Notably Low	Normal	Notably high	Above normal

11.2 River flows table

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

11.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Apr 2026 band	End of Mar 2026 band
Ampney Crucis OBH	Burford Oolitic Limestone (great)	Normal	Above normal
Frith Cottage	Godalming Lower Greensand	No data	Notably high
Gibbet Cottages OBH	Berkshire Downs Chalk	Above normal	Notably high
Jackaments Bottom OBH	Burford Oolitic Limestone (inferior)	Notably low	Below normal
Long Sutton	North Downs Chalk	Normal	Notably high
Marcham OBH	Shrivenham Corallian	Normal	Notably high
Model Farm	Chiltern Upper Greensand	Normal	Normal
Rockley OBH	Berkshire Downs Chalk	Normal	Above normal
Stonor Estate	South-west Chilterns Chalk	Normal	Above normal
The Flashes OBH	Godalming Lower Greensand	Notably high	Exceptionally high
Fringford P.S.	Upper Bedford Ouse Oolitic Limestone (great)	Normal	Above normal