Monthly water situation report: East Anglia

1 Summary - October 2026

East Anglia received 119% of the long term average (LTA) rainfall for the month. The rainfall across the area for October 2026 ranged from 103% to 128% of the LTA for the month, with the wettest catchments towards the centre and north-east of the area. Soil moisture deficit (SMD) for October 2026 decreased by roughly 50mm compared to the previous months SMD, as a result of the normal and above normal rainfall received across all catchments in October. The SMD is considered normal for the time of year. River flows increased in the majority of sites in October with monthly mean flows ranging between 20% and 66% of the LTA for the time of year. Groundwater levels decreased in October, with the majority of reporting sites below normal, notably low or exceptionally low for the time of year. Public water supply reservoirs within East Anglia ended October 2026 with levels ranging from 36% at to 66%of full storage capacity.

1.1 Rainfall

An average of 77mm of rain fell across East Anglia in October 2026, 119% of the LTA. There was some rainfall at the start of the month, with the majority of rainfall received between the 20 to 26 October. The highest rainfall totals were recorded towards the centre and north-east of the area, with East Suffolk receiving the highest rainfall total of 81mm across the month, 128% of the LTA. The lowest total rainfall for October 2026 was recorded in South Essex, receiving 64mm of rainfall, 103% of the historic LTA. All hydrological areas across East Anglia recorded normal or above normal rainfall for the time of year.

The cumulative 6 month totals across East Anglia show all catchments to be categorised as below normal to exceptionally low. Over the past 12 months, East Anglia has received 90% of the LTA rainfall, 563mm. The driest catchments in the area since the rainfall deficit started in March, are the North Norfolk, North-west Norfolk, Broadland rivers and Essex. The 8 months cumulative rainfall in the North Norfolk catchment has been the driest on record since 1871, second driest for the North-west Norfolk, third driest for Essex, fourth driest in the Broadland rivers.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit

The SMD for East Anglia at the end of October 2026 was 72mm. The SMD has decreased by approximately 50mm following the normal and above normal rainfall in October and is classified as normal for this time of year. Most hydrological areas in East Anglia recorded SMD levels between 41mm and 100mm, with the exception of Central Area Fenland which recorded an SMD level between 101mm to 130mm. The SMD was 6mm to 25mm greater than the LTA

at the end of the month for roughly half the hydrological areas. The other half of hydrological areas were -5mm to 5mm greater than the LTA at the end of the month.

1.3 River flows

River flows for the majority of sites across East Anglia responded to rainfall received towards the end of October with increased daily mean flows. Monthly mean flows varied across East Anglia during October, ranging between 20% at Northwold and 66% of the LTA at Blunham. Most flow monitoring sites in East Anglia reported either below normal, notably low or exceptionally low monthly mean flows in October 2026. The lowest month mean flows where located within the chalk aquifer. Only 6 sites reported normal month mean flows, these were mostly located in the south-west of the area within clay deposits/ non aquifer areas.

1.4 Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels have decreased across the majority of sites in East Anglia for October 2026. A slowdown of the groundwater recession has been seen in some catchments as a result of the October rainfall. More than half of the groundwater sites for which there is data available for, have recorded below normal, notably low and exceptionally low for the time of year. The site Breckland, which recorded notably low in September 2026, has decreased in groundwater level and is one of the three sites recording exceptionally low in October 2026. The other 2 sites recording exceptionally low groundwater levels are Hindolveston and Gog Magog.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

Reservoir storage has continued to fall throughout October for the majority of reservoirs within East Anglia. All reservoirs are below their respective target curves for the time of year. Storage capacity ranges from 36% capacity at Hanningfield to 66% capacity at Ardleigh reservoir.

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

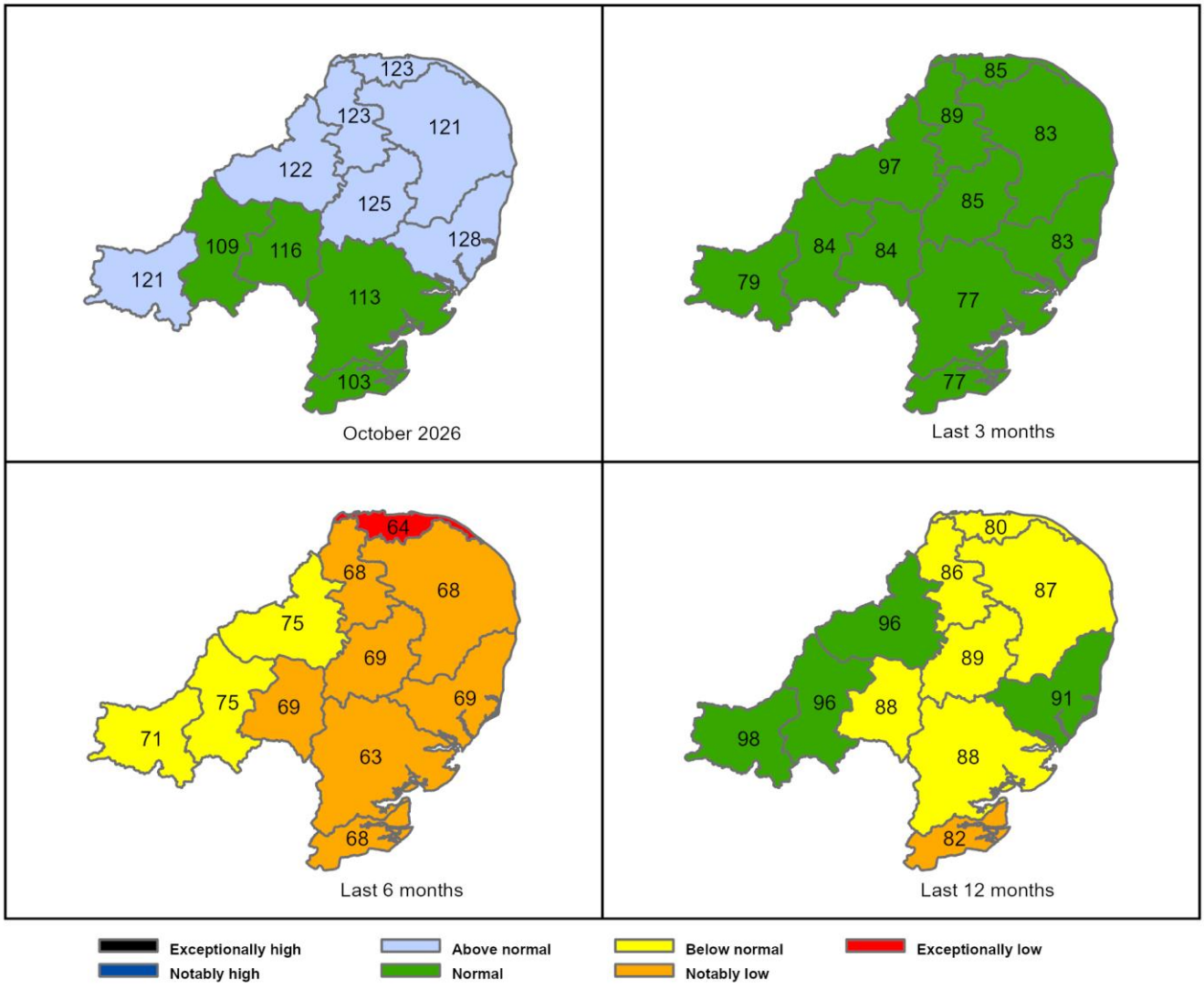
Contact Details: 03708 506 506

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2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

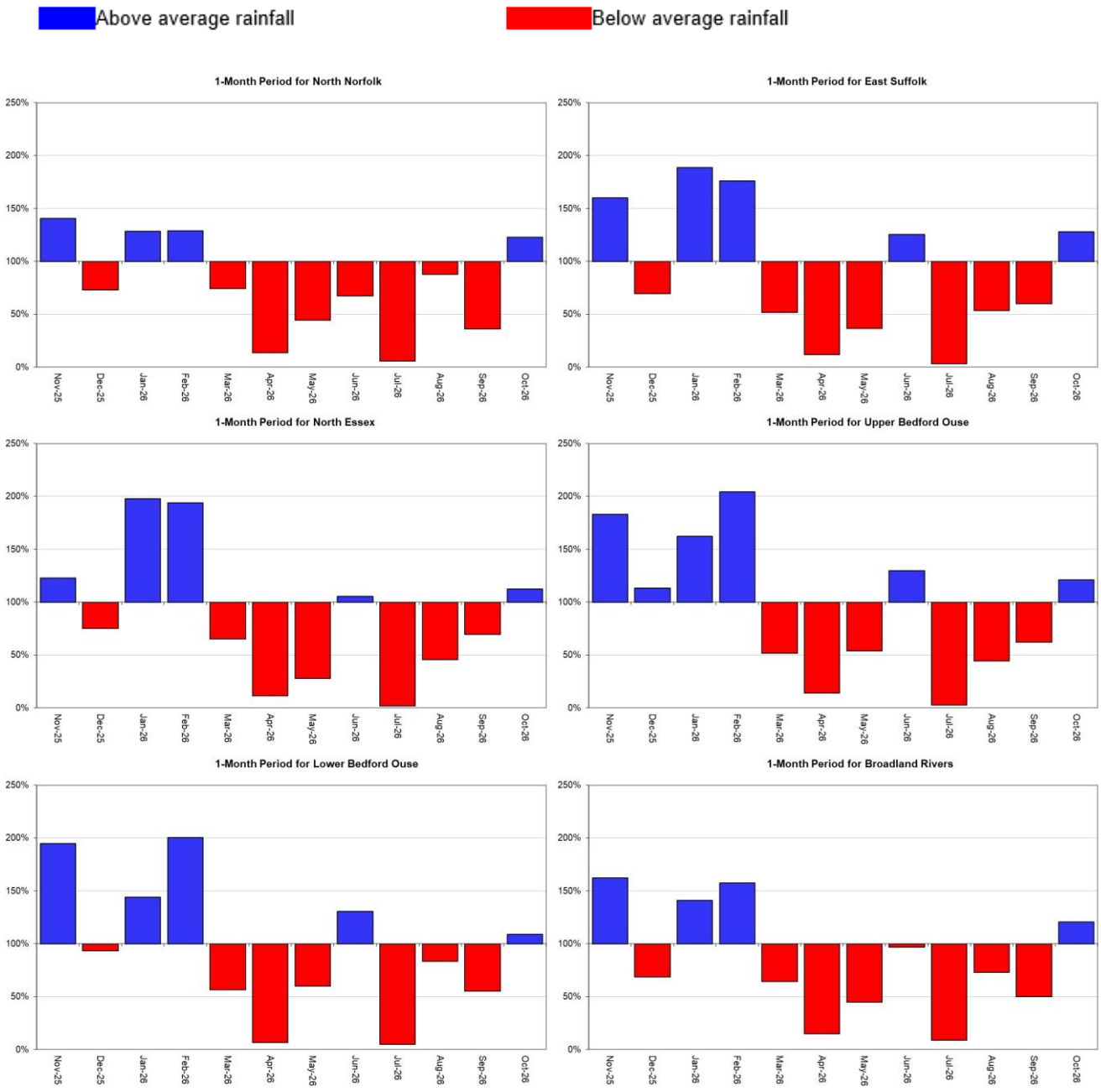
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas across East Anglia, expressed as a percentage of long term average rainfall for the current month (up to 31 October 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months. Category classes are based on an analysis of respective historic totals.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

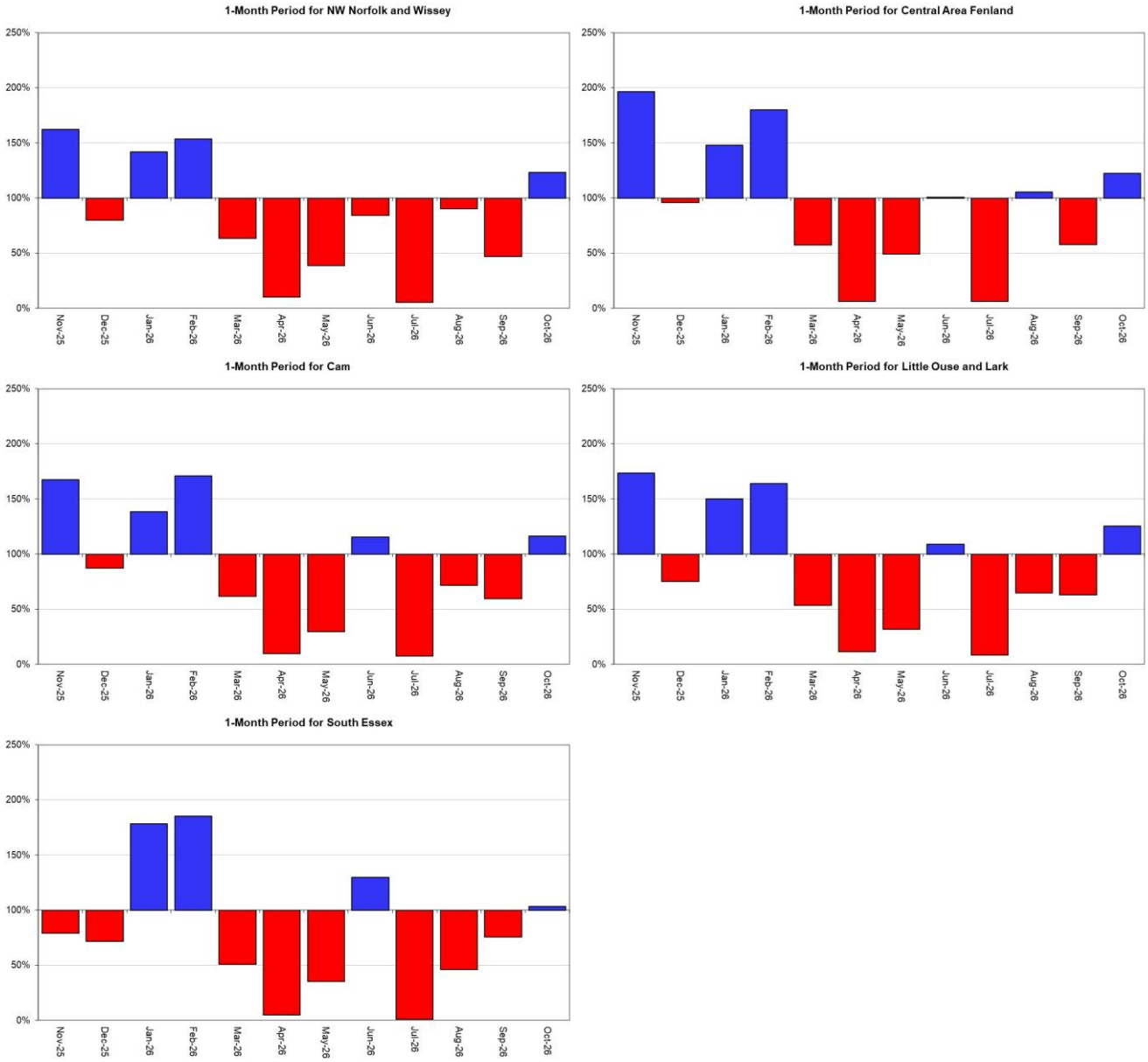


Rainfall data for Jan 2025 onwards, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to Jan 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall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

2.2 Rainfall charts

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

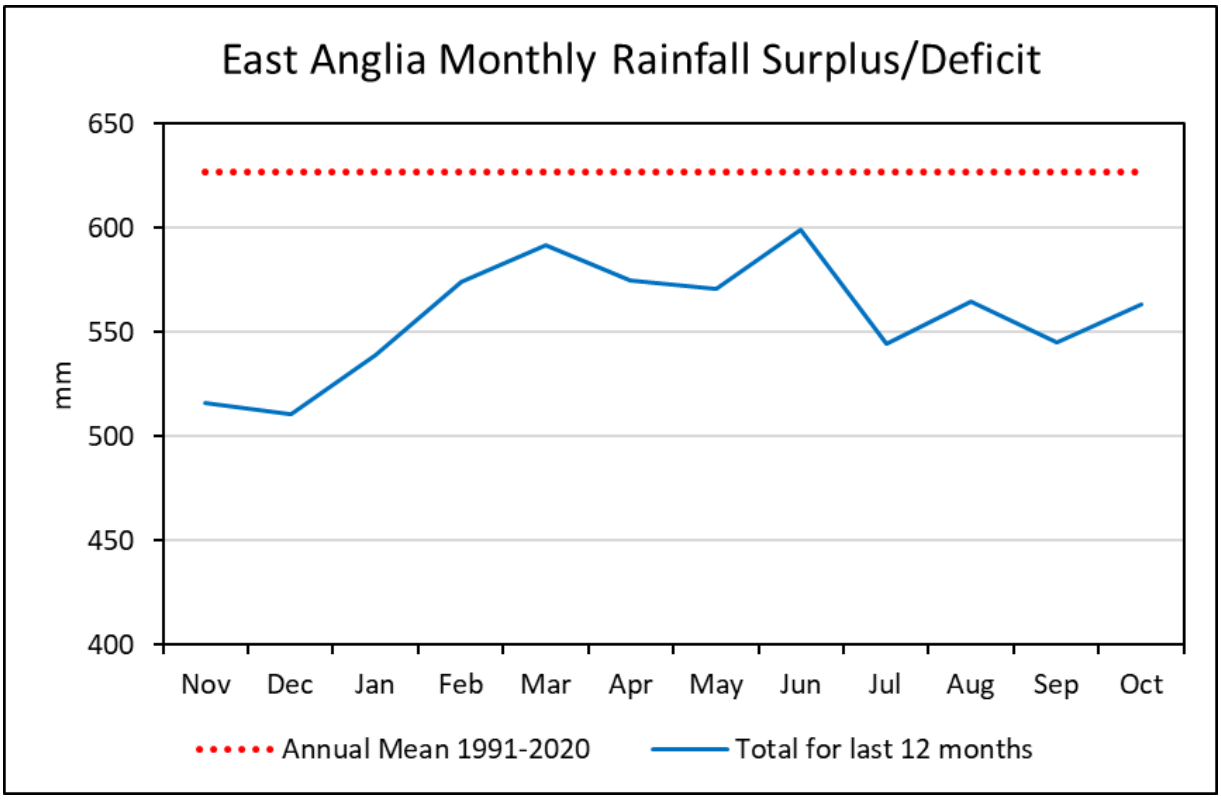




Rainfall data for Jan 2025 onwards, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, 2026). Rainfall data prior to Jan 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall dataset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

2.3 Monthly rainfall surplus deficit chart

Figure 2.3: Rainfall total for the last 12 months compared to the 1991 to 2020 long term average for East Anglia.

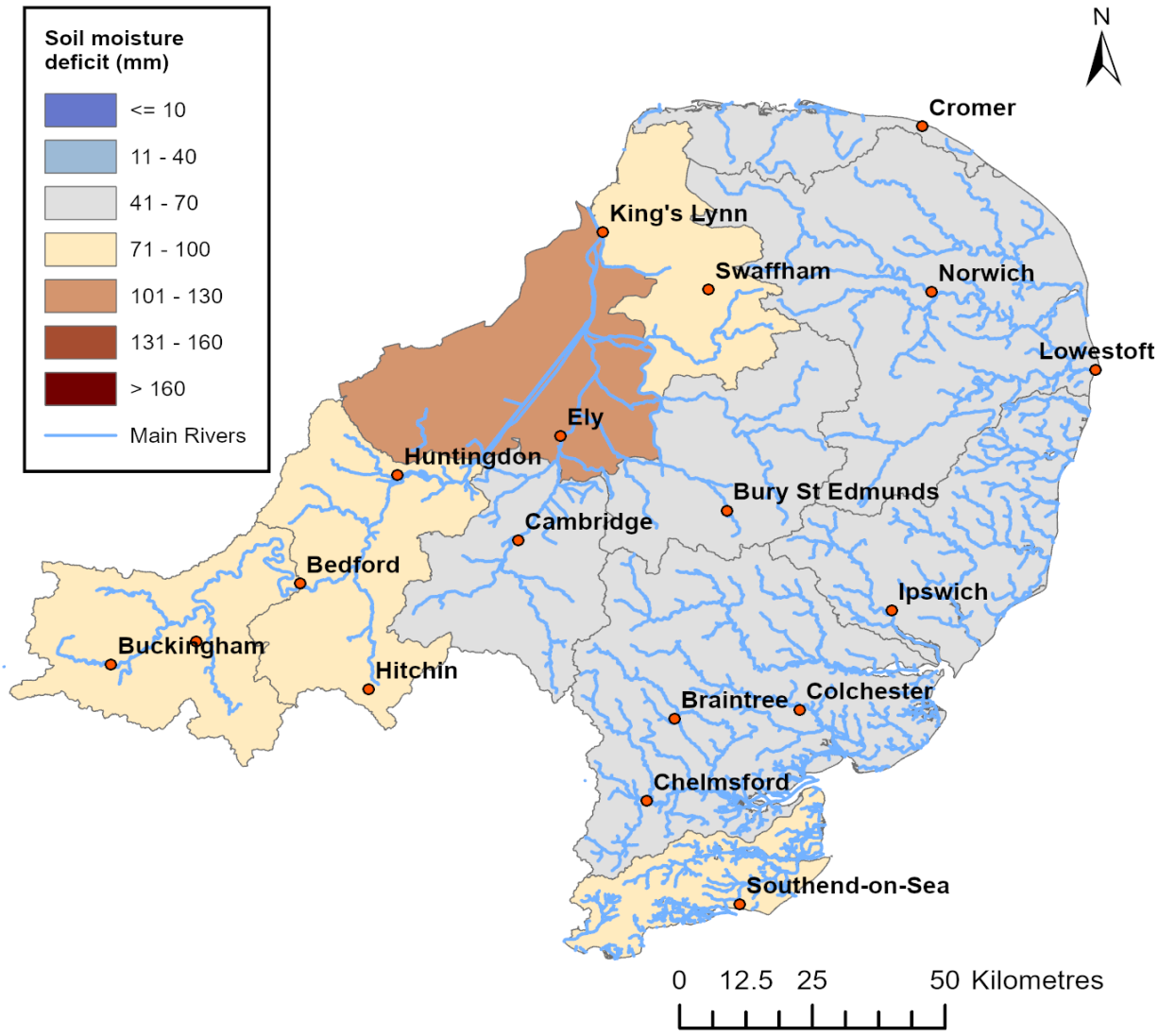


Rainfall data for Jan 2025 onwards, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, 2026). Rainfall data prior to Jan 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall dataset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

3 Soil moisture deficit

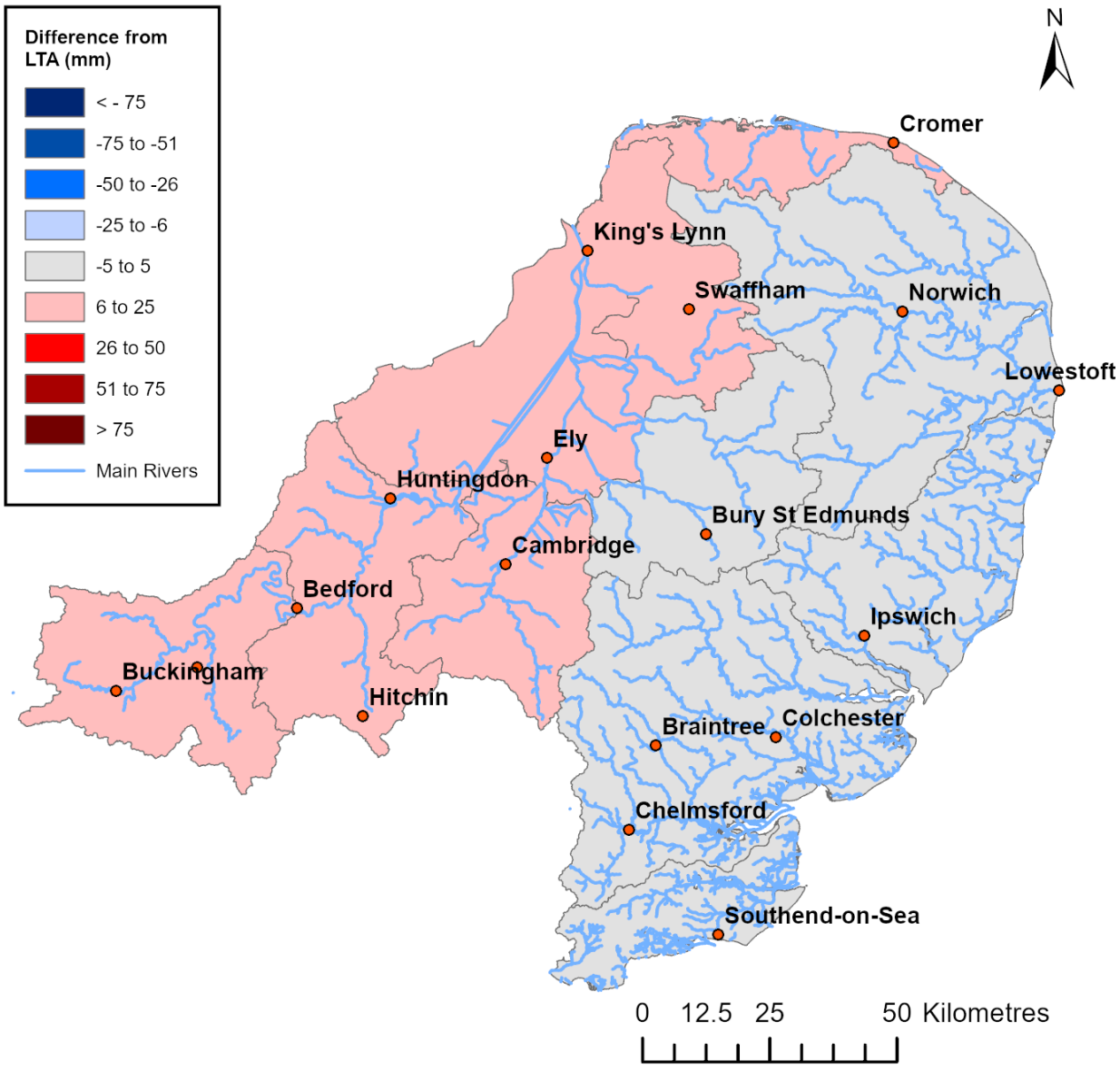
3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

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



(Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

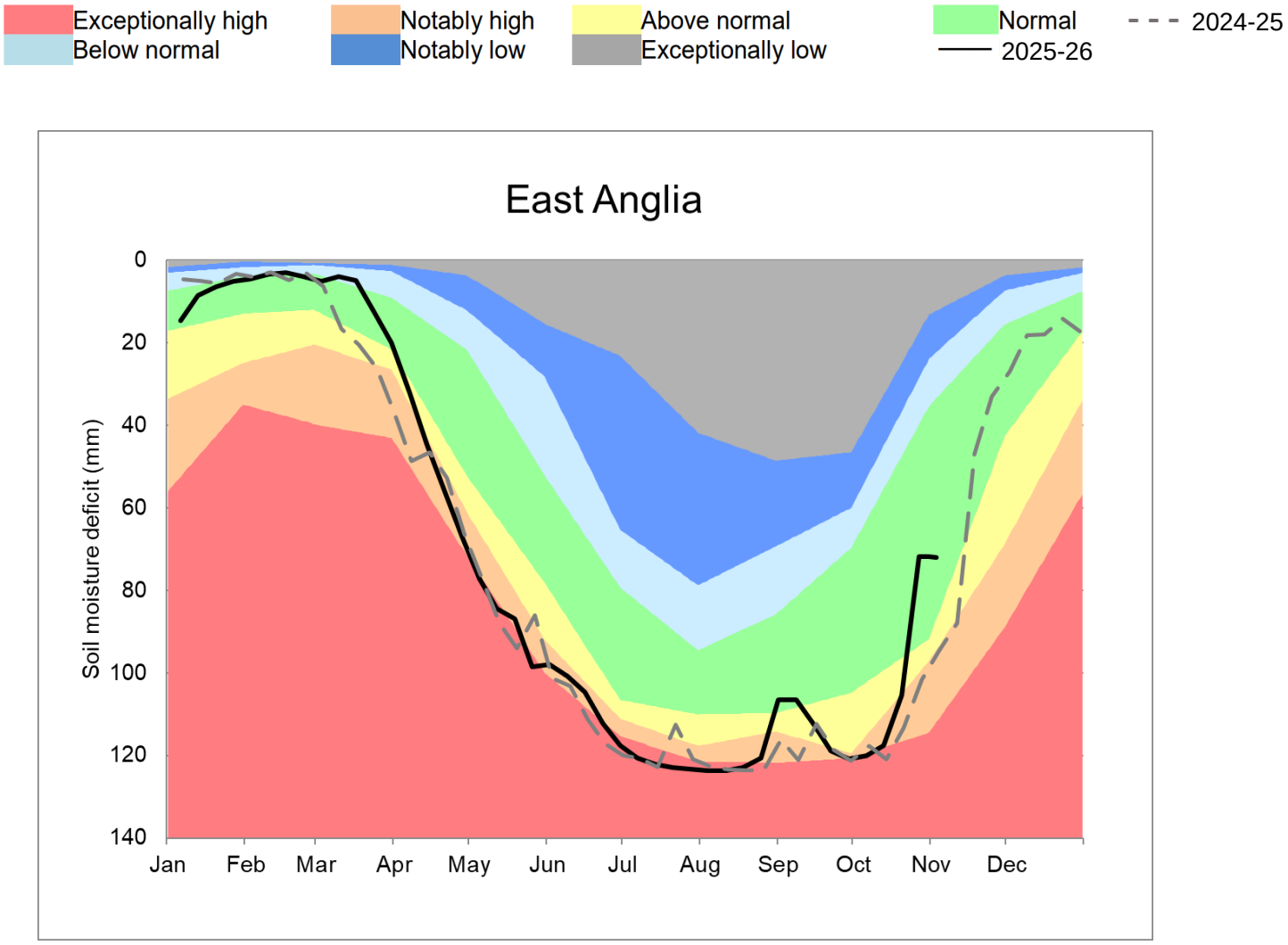
Figure 3.1b A map displaying soil moisture deficit values 31st October 2026 relative to long term average end of October soil moisture deficit values for hydrometric catchements across East Anglia. Values based on the weekly MORECS data for real land use.



(Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

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.

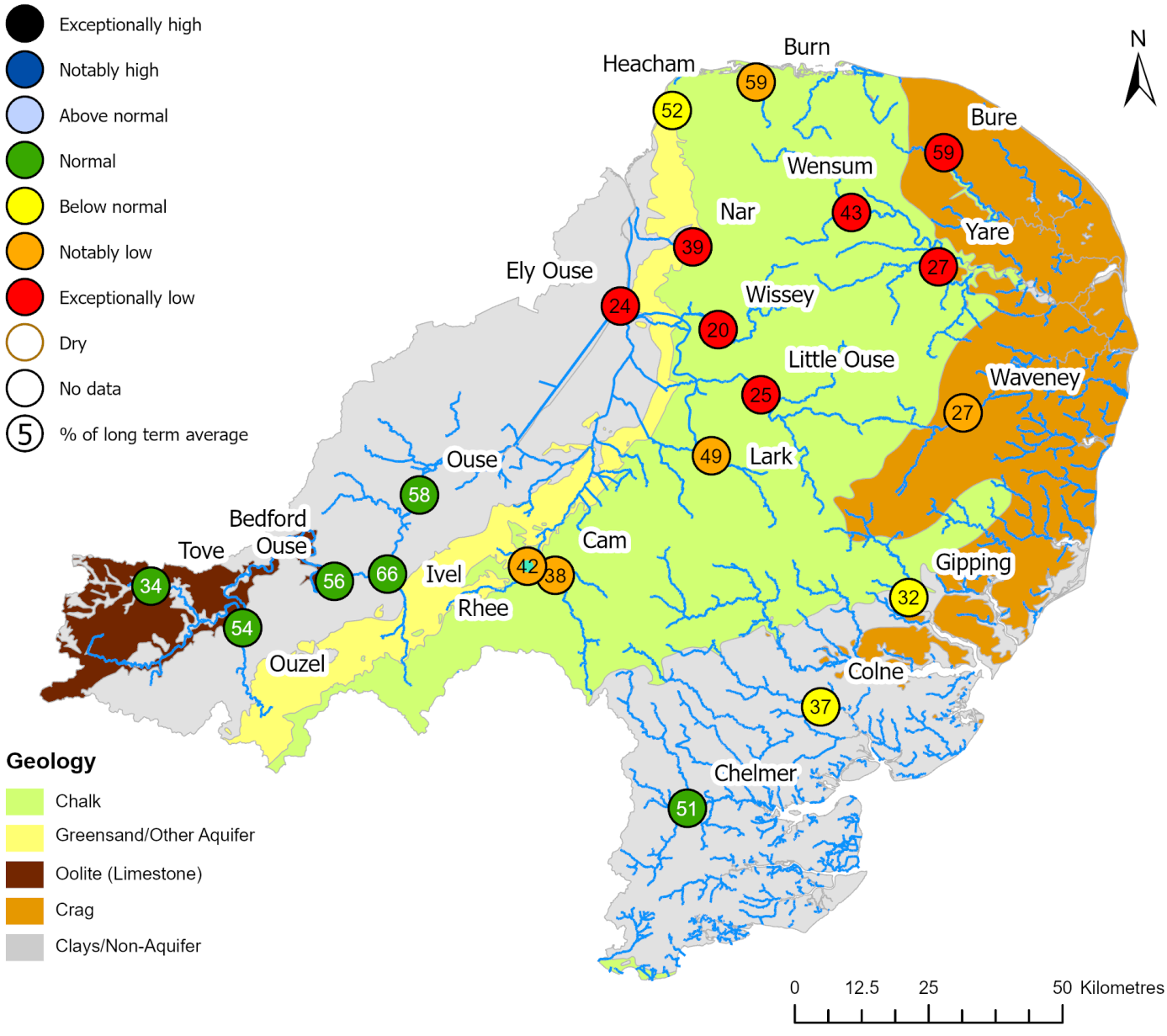


(Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

4 River flows

4.1 River flows map

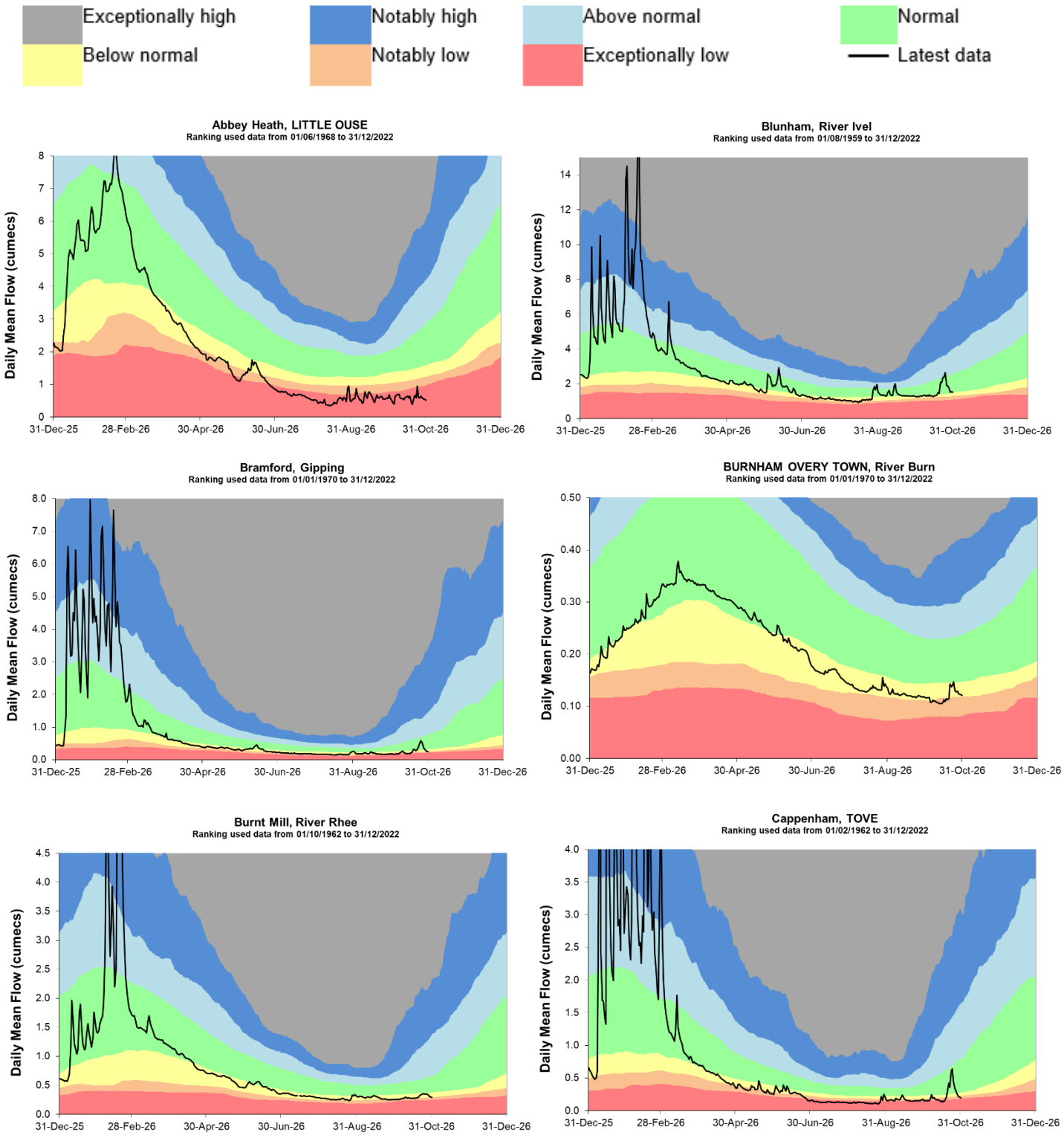
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for October 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic October monthly means. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

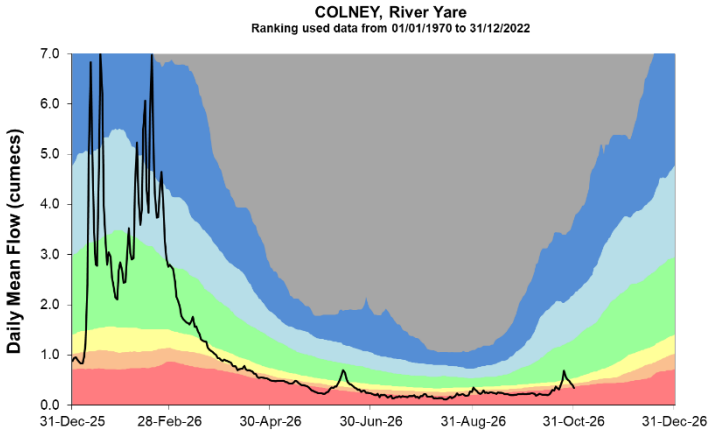


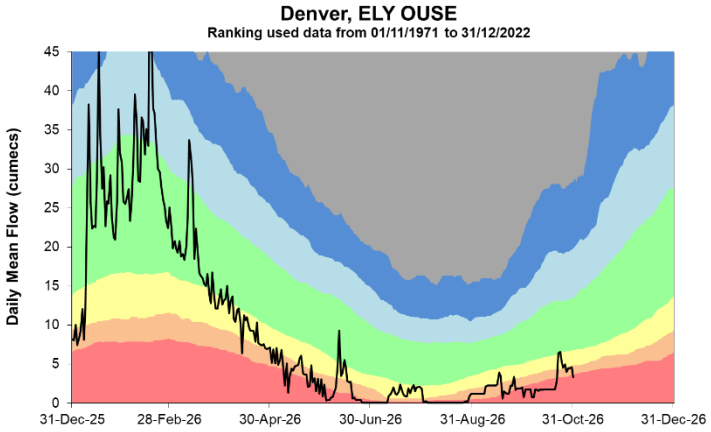
(Source: Environment Agency). Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

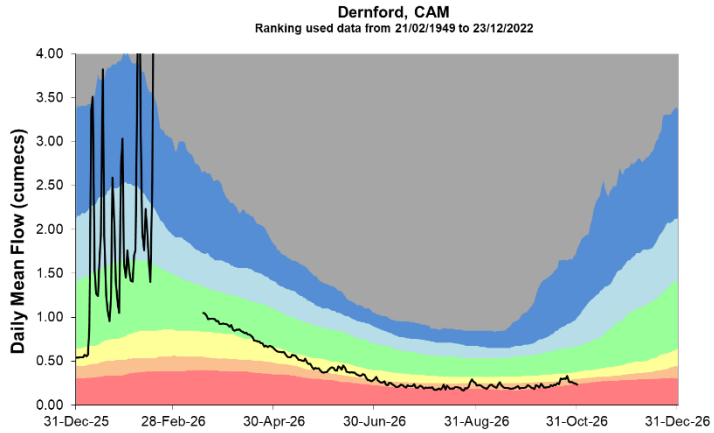
4.2 River flow charts

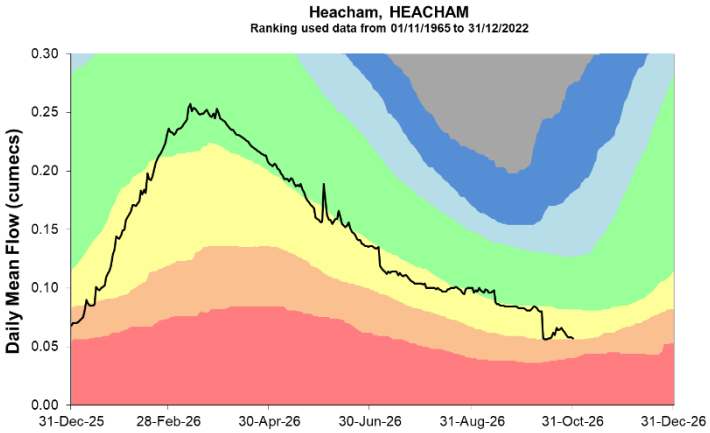
Figure 4.2: Daily mean river flow for index sites over the past year, compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows.

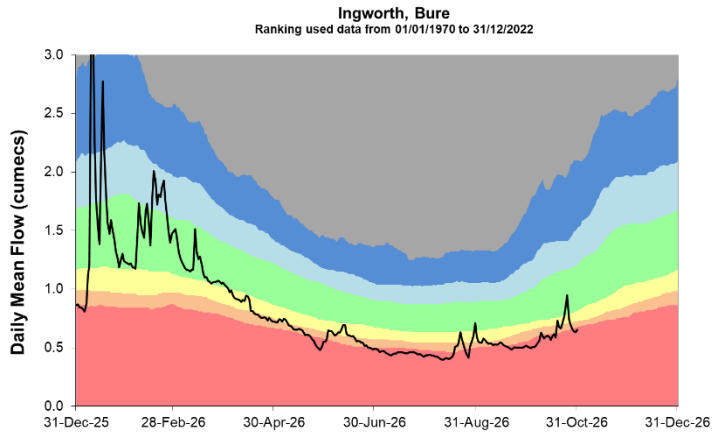


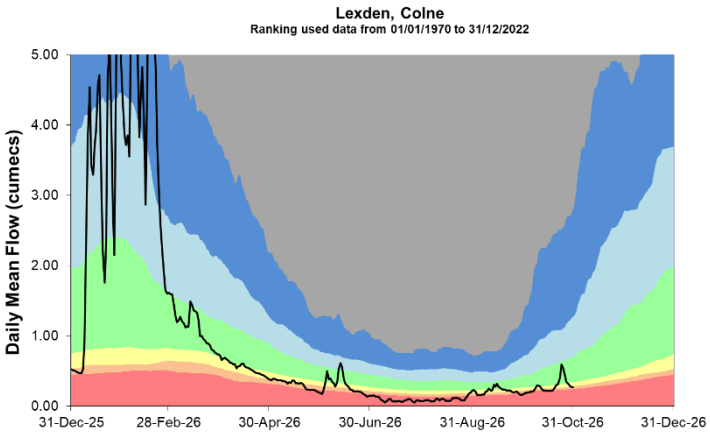

COLNEY, River Yare
Ranking used data from 01/01/1970 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
7.0
6.0
5.0
4.0
3.0
2.0
1.0
0.0
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26
31-Aug-26
31-Oct-26
31-Dec-26

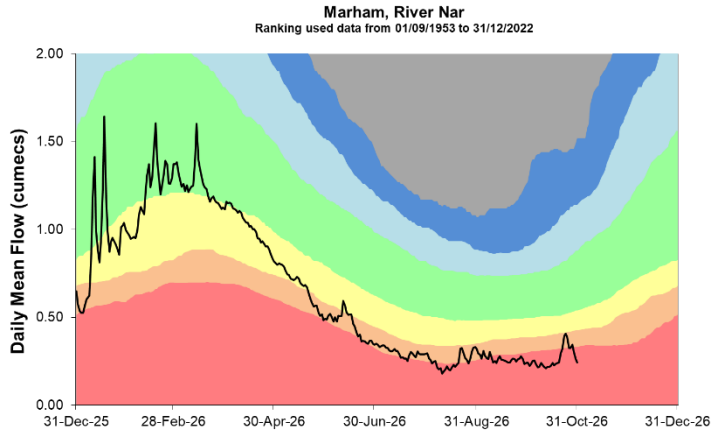

Denver, ELY OUSE
Ranking used data from 01/11/1971 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26
31-Aug-26
31-Oct-26
31-Dec-26

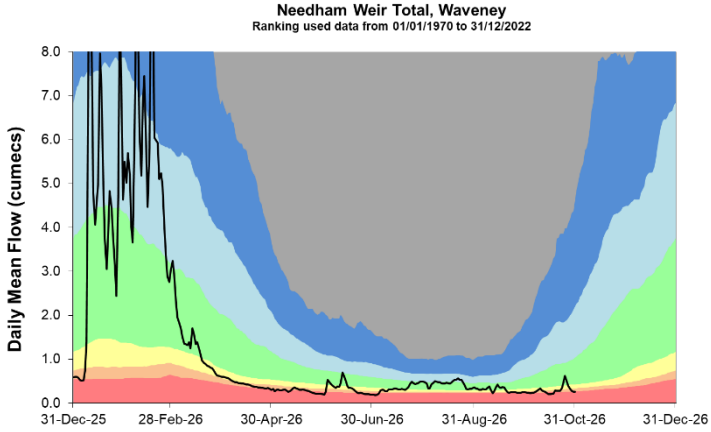

Dernford, CAM
Ranking used data from 21/02/1949 to 23/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
4.00
3.50
3.00
2.50
2.00
1.50
1.00
0.50
0.00
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26
31-Aug-26
31-Oct-26
31-Dec-26

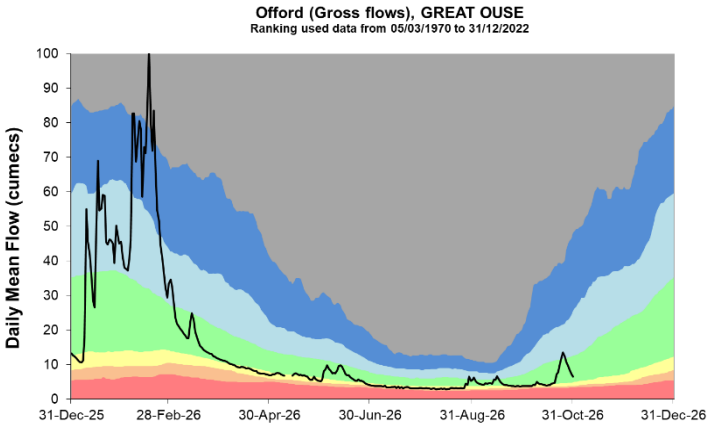

Heacham, HEACHAM
Ranking used data from 01/11/1965 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0.30
0.25
0.20
0.15
0.10
0.05
0.00
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26
31-Aug-26
31-Oct-26
31-Dec-26

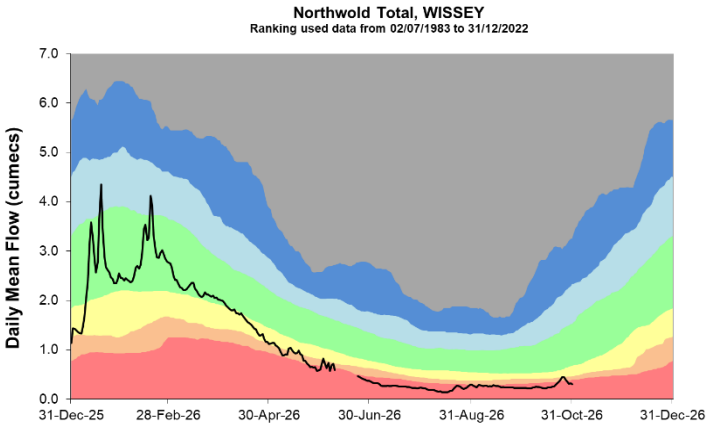

Ingworth, Bure
Ranking used data from 01/01/1970 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
3.0
2.5
2.0
1.5
1.0
0.5
0.0
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26
31-Aug-26
31-Oct-26
31-Dec-26

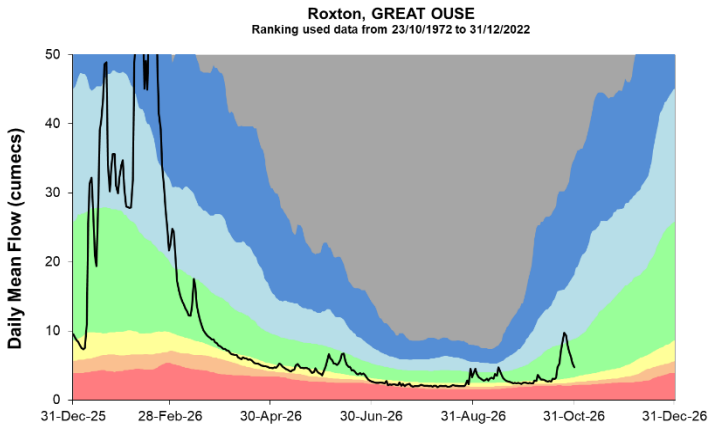

Lexden, Colne
Ranking used data from 01/01/1970 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
5.00
4.00
3.00
2.00
1.00
0.00
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26
31-Aug-26
31-Oct-26
31-Dec-26

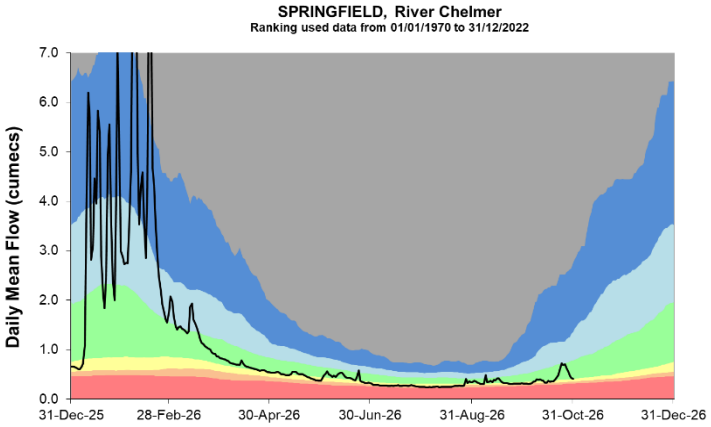

Marham, River Nar
Ranking used data from 01/09/1953 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
2.00
1.50
1.00
0.50
0.00
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26
31-Aug-26
31-Oct-26
31-Dec-26

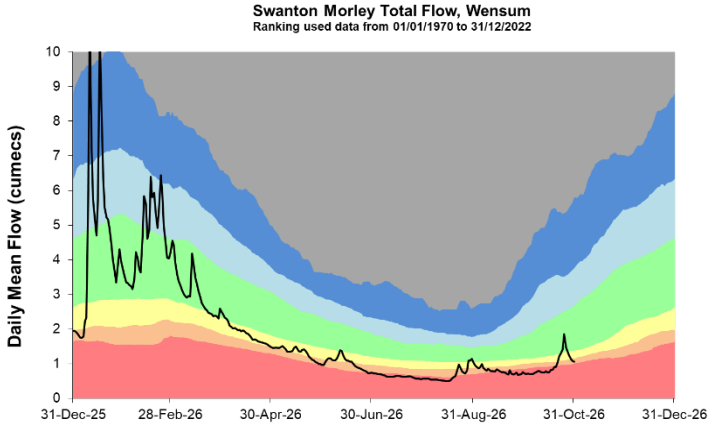

Needham Weir Total, Waveney
Ranking used data from 01/01/1970 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
8.0
7.0
6.0
5.0
4.0
3.0
2.0
1.0
0.0
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26
31-Aug-26
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31-Dec-26

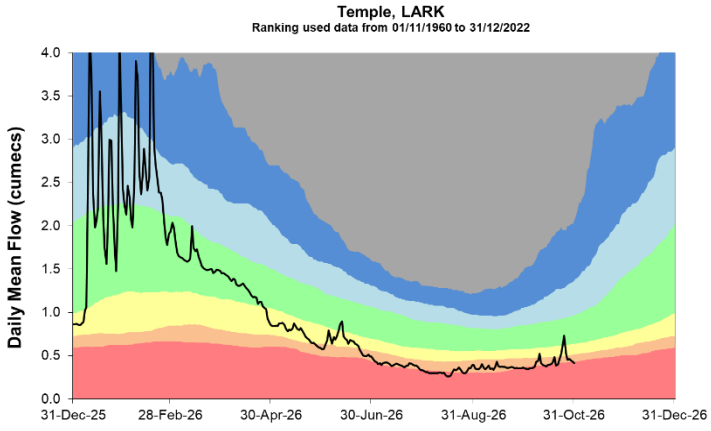


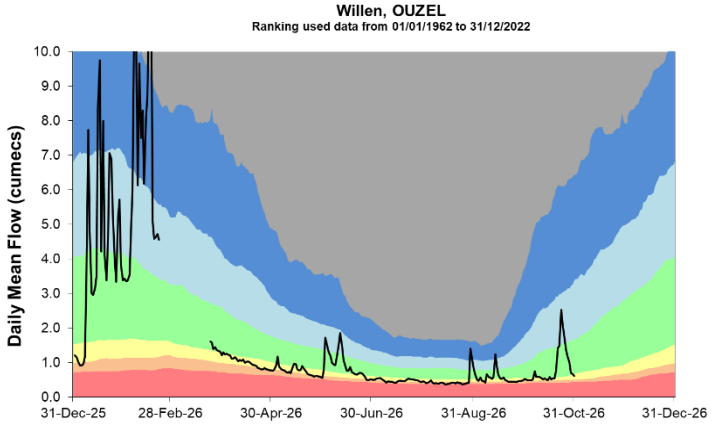










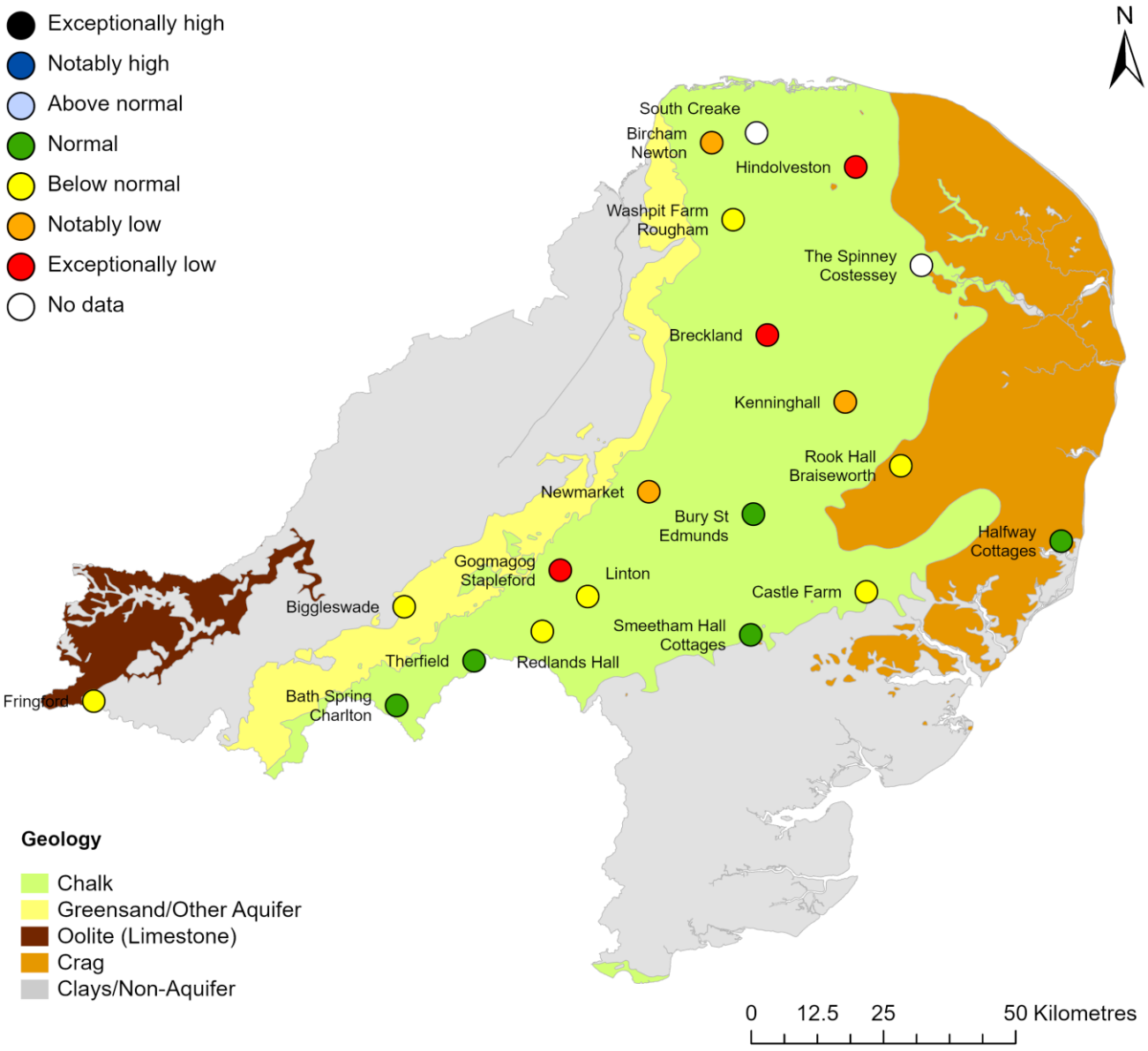


(Source: Environment Agency).

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

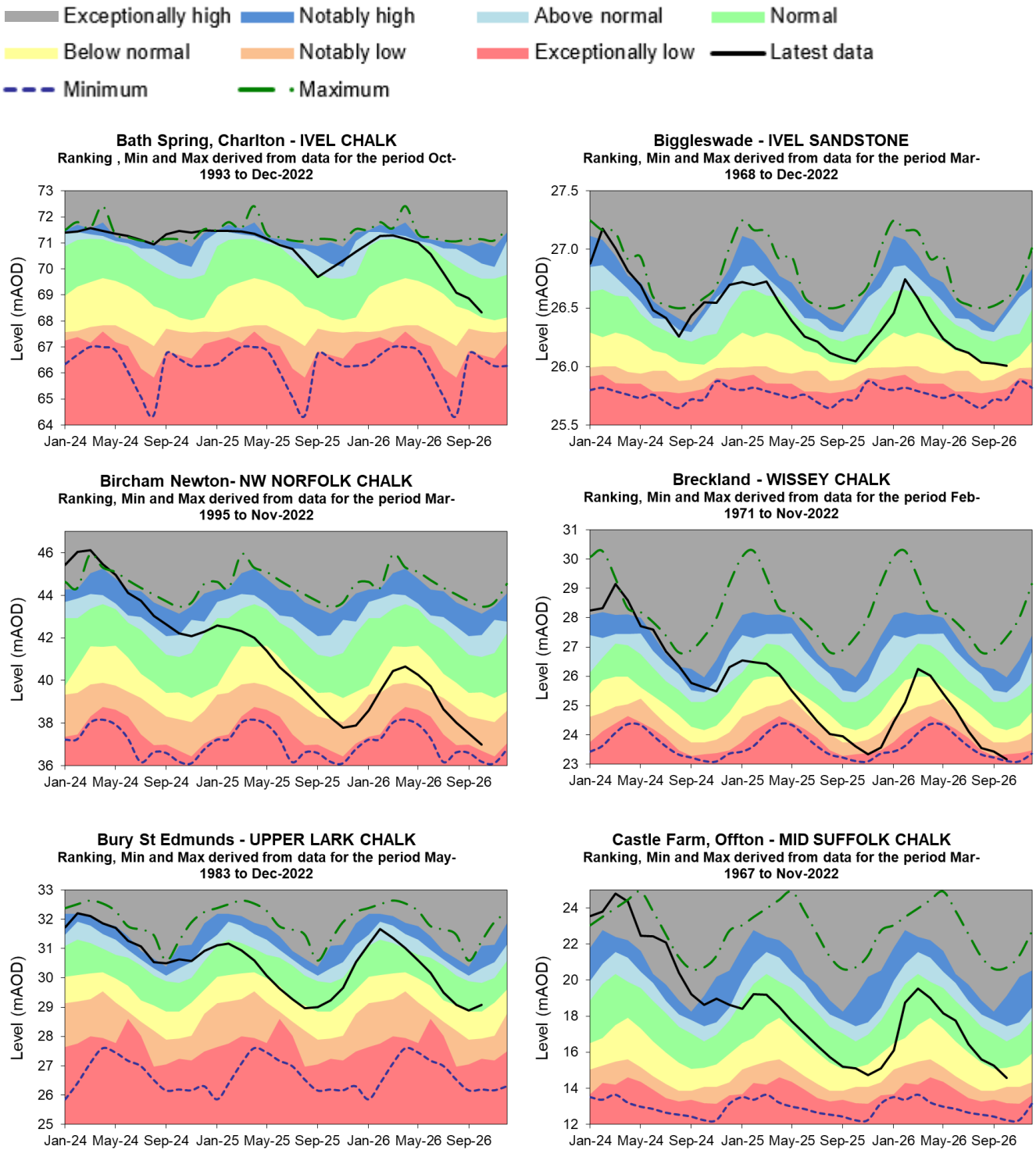
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of October 2026, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic end of October levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



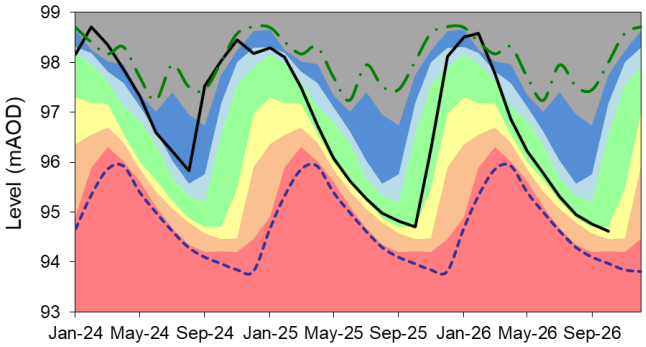
(Source: Environment Agency). Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

5.2 Groundwater level charts

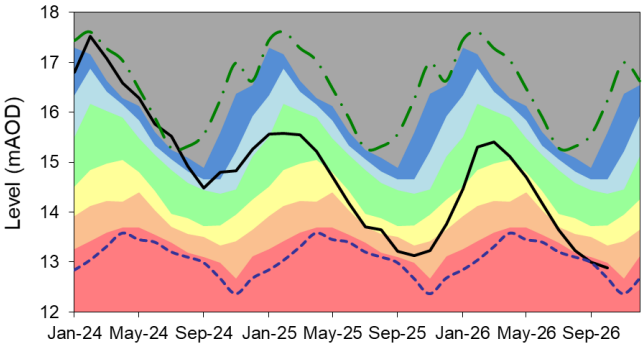
Figure 5.2: End of month groundwater levels at index groundwater level sites for major aquifers. 34 months compared to an analysis of historic end of month levels and long term maximum and minimum levels.



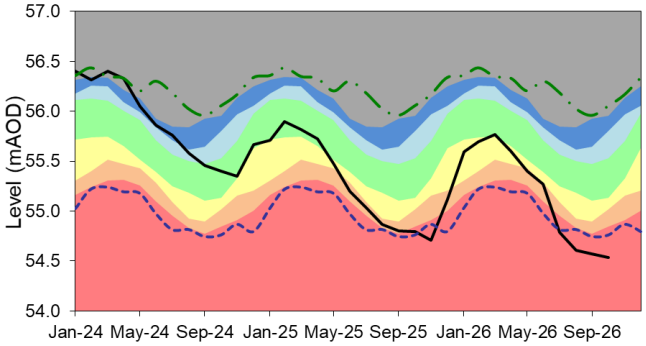
Fringford - GREAT OOLITE
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Sep-1980 to Dec-2022



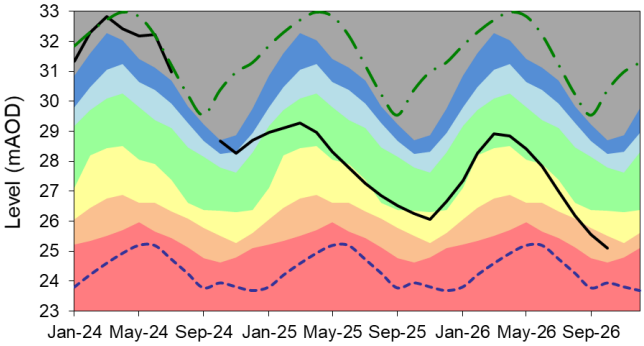
Gog Magog, Stapleford - CAM CHALK
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Jan-1980 to Dec-2022



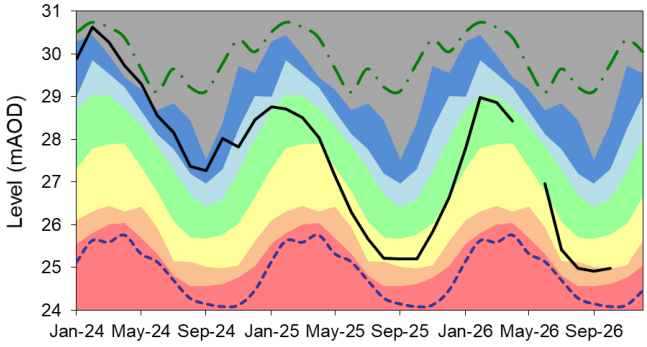
Hindolveston - NORFOLK CHALK
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Sep-1984 to Nov-2022



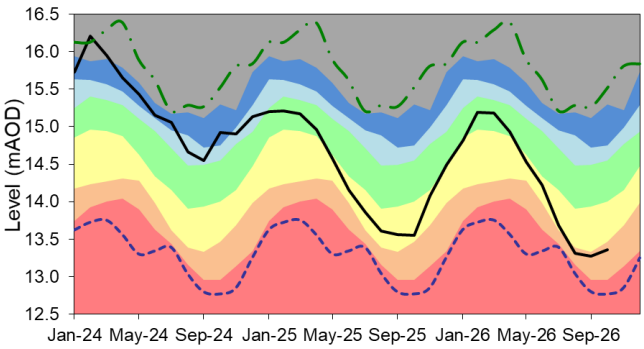
Kenninghall - LITTLE OUSE CHALK
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Aug-1973 to Dec-2022



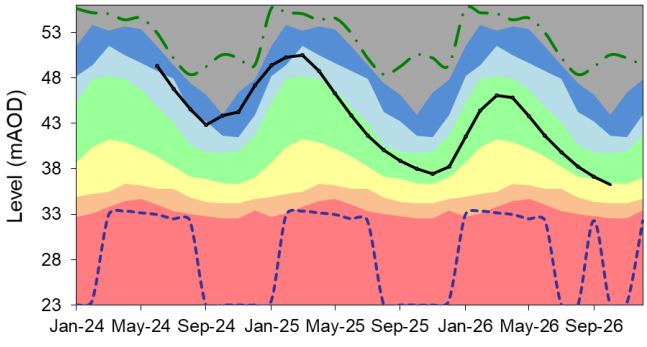
Linton- CAM CHALK
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Jan-1980 to Dec-2022



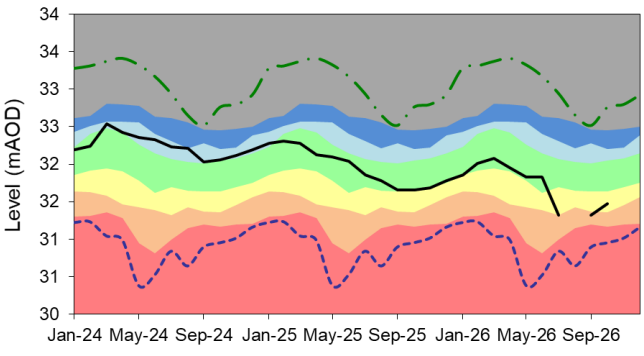
Newmarket - SNAIL CHALK
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Feb-1983 to Dec-2022

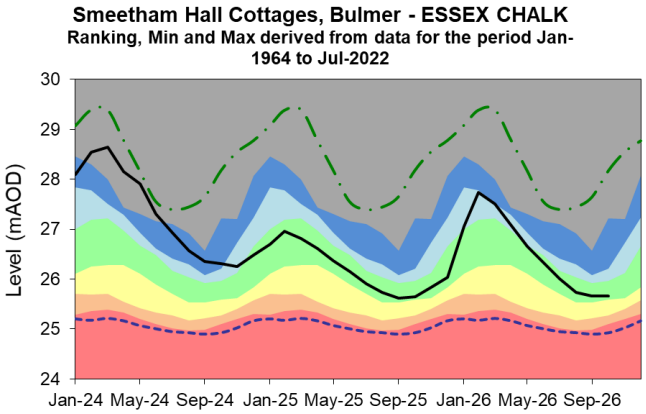


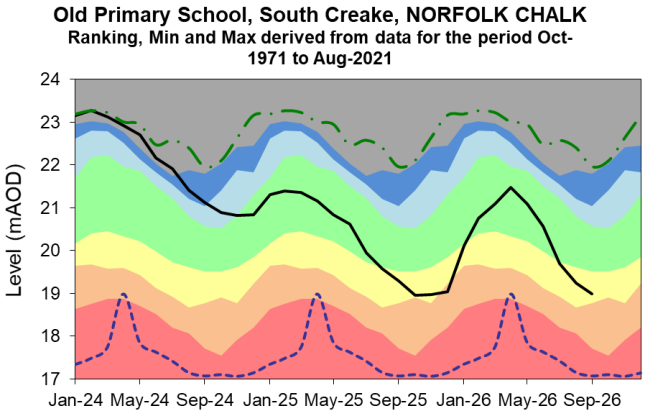
Redlands Hall, Ickleton - CAM CHALK
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Aug-1963 to Dec-2022

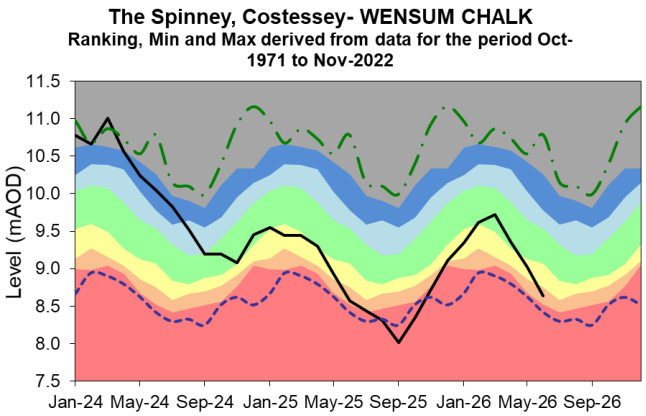


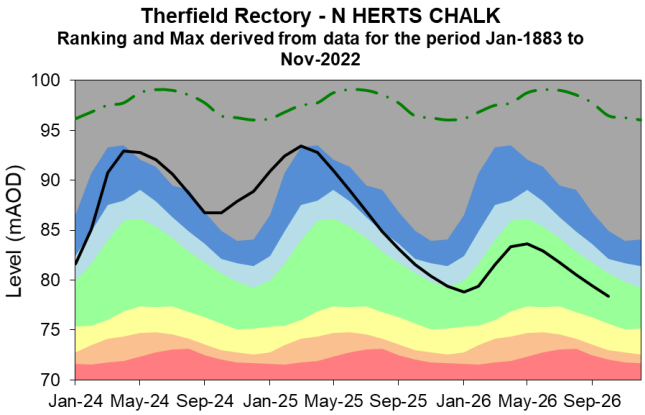
Rook Hall, Braiseworth- SUFFOLK CHALK
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Jan-1980 to Nov-2022

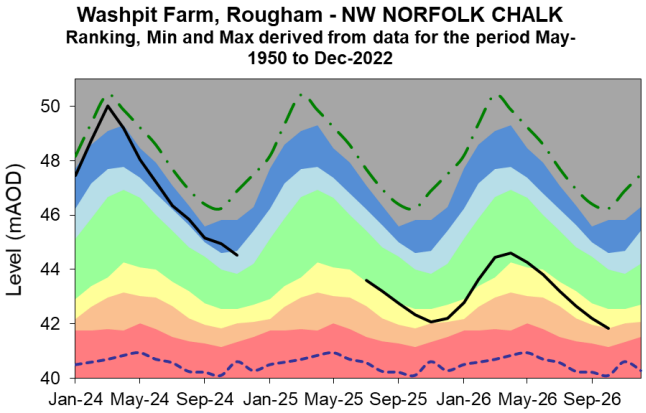


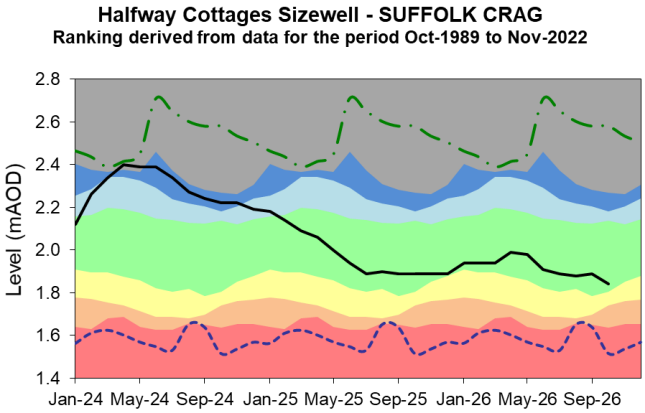










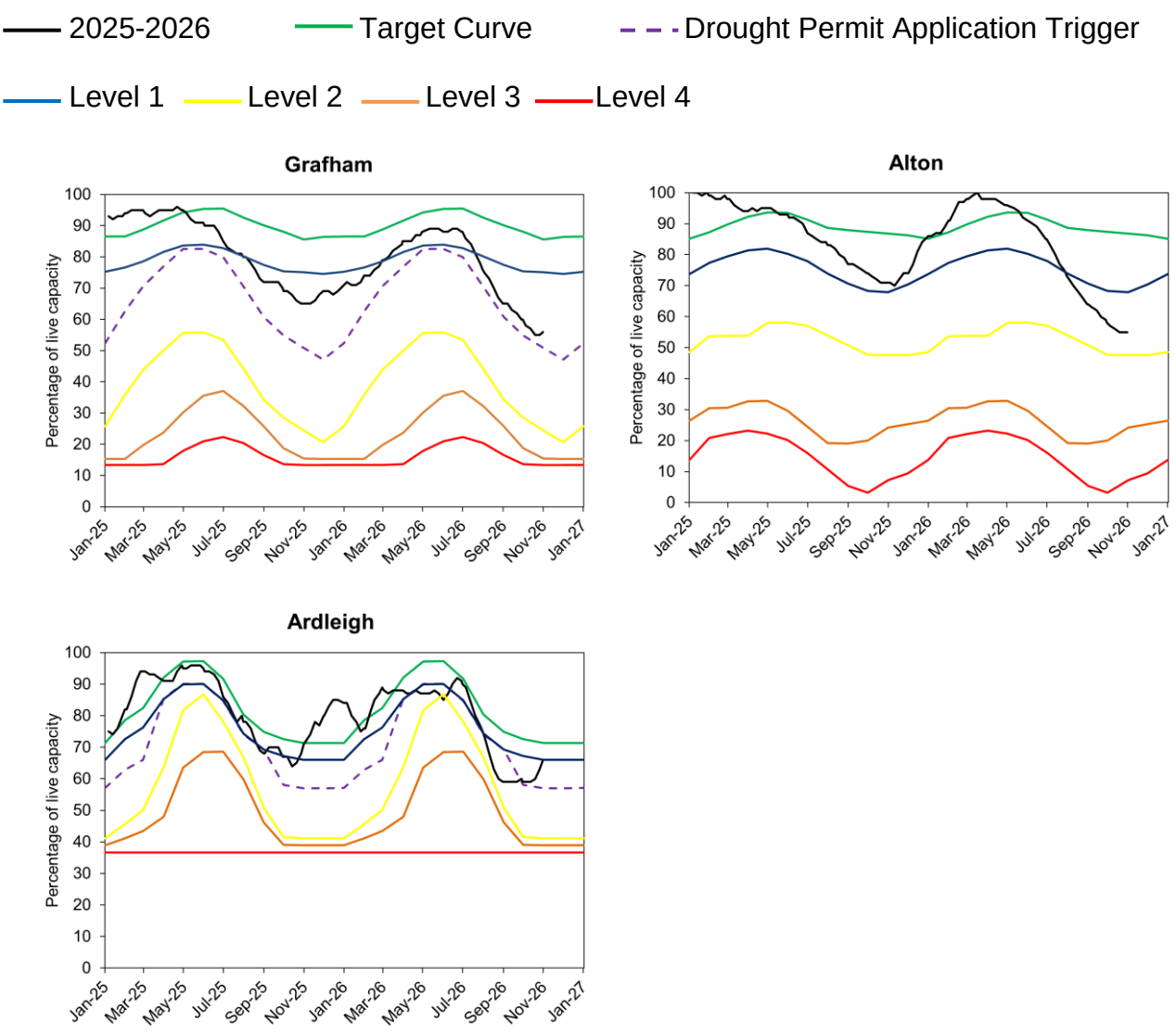


(Source: Environment Agency, 2026).

6 Reservoir stocks

6.1 Anglian Water

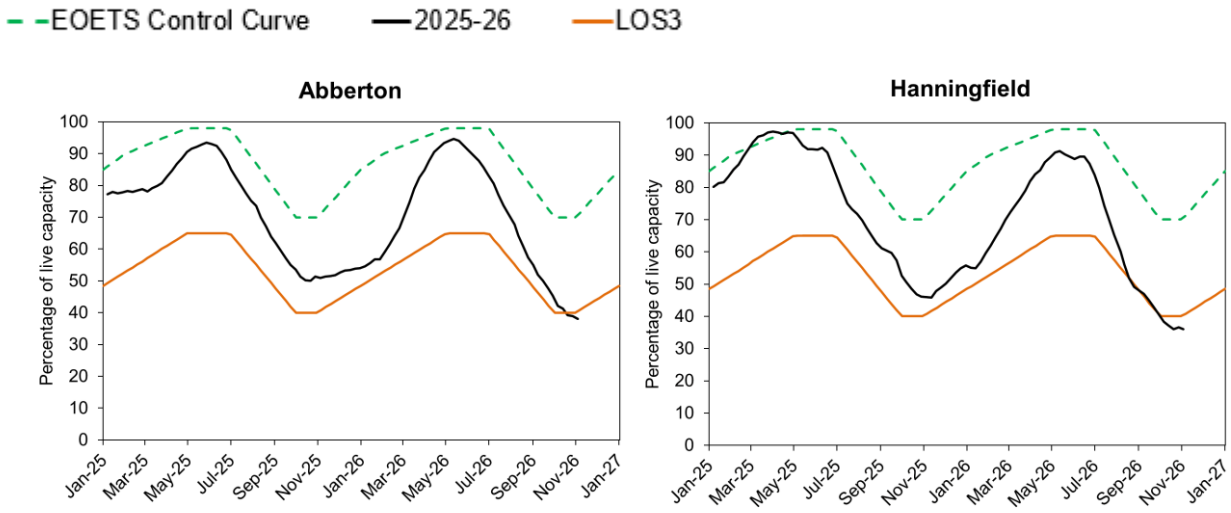
Figure 6.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to the target curve and drought permit application trigger.



(Source: Anglian Water. For more information on Anglian Water's reservoir levels, please view their Drought Plan).

6.2 Essex and Suffolk Water

Figure 6.2: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to the EOETS and level of service 3 control curve.



(Source: Essex and Suffolk Water).

7 Glossary

7.1 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^3/s).

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 1 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).

7.2 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

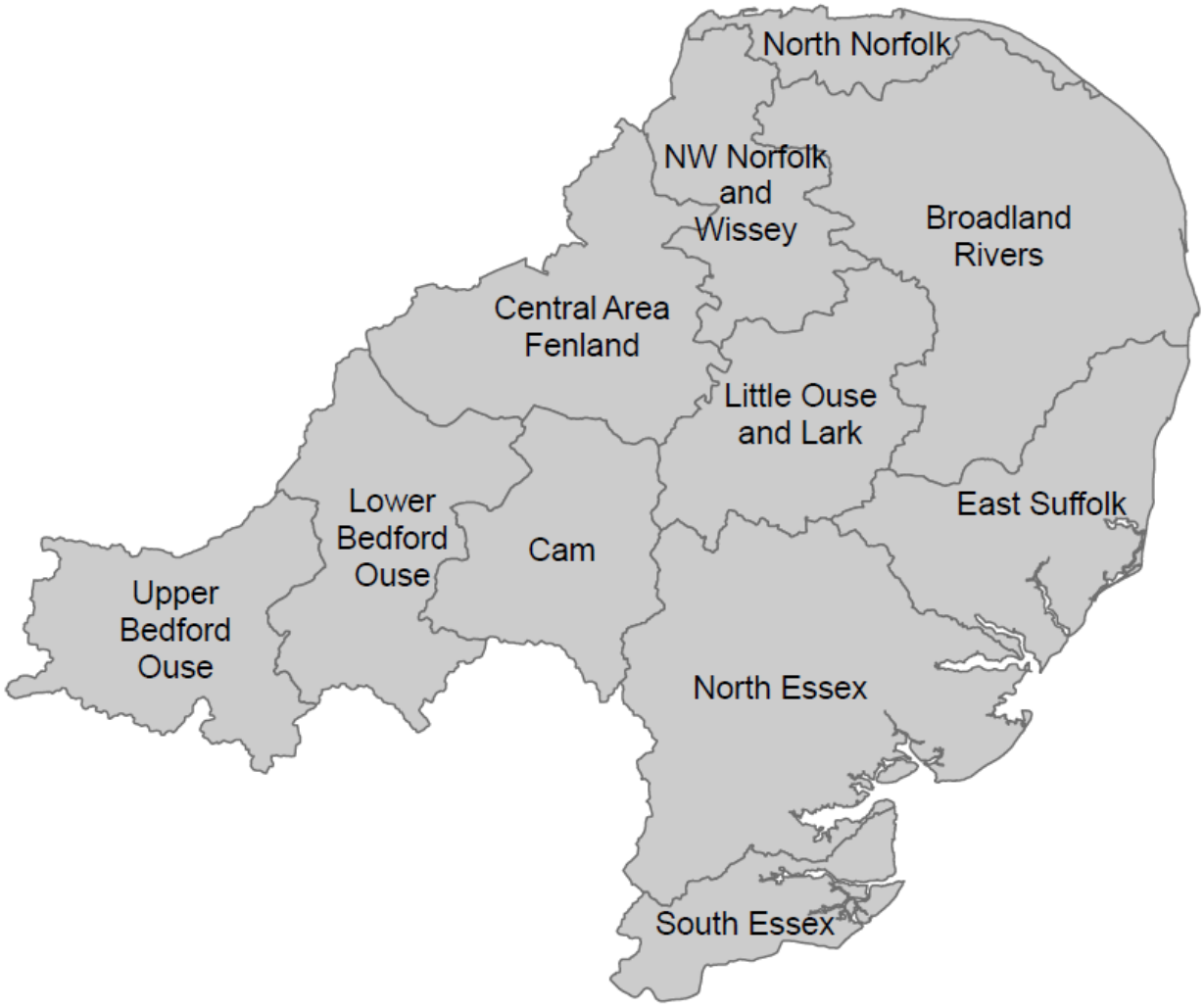
Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Exceptionally low

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

7.3 Hydrological areas

Figure 7.3: The map below shows the geographical extent of each hydrological area in East Anglia.



8 Appendices

8.1 Rainfall table

Hydrological area	Oct 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Oct 2026 band	Aug 2026 to October cumulative band	May 2026 to October cumulative band	Nov 2025 to October cumulative band
Broadland Rivers	121	Above Normal	Normal	Notably low	Below normal
Cam	116	Normal	Normal	Notably low	Below normal
Central Area Fenland	122	Above Normal	Normal	Below normal	Normal
East Suffolk	128	Above Normal	Normal	Notably low	Normal
Little Ouse And Lark	126	Above Normal	Normal	Notably low	Below normal
Lower Bedford Ouse	109	Normal	Normal	Below normal	Normal
North Essex	113	Normal	Normal	Notably low	Below normal
North Norfolk	123	Above Normal	Normal	Exceptionally low	Below normal
Nw Norfolk And Wissey	123	Above Normal	Normal	Notably low	Below normal
South Essex	103	Normal	Normal	Notably low	Notably low
Upper Bedford Ouse	121	Above Normal	Normal	Below normal	Normal

8.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Oct 2026 band	Sep 2026 band
Abbey Heath	Little Ouse	Little Ouse	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Blunham	Ivel	Ivel	Normal	Normal
Bramford	Gipping	Gipping	Below normal	Notably low
Burnham Overy	Burn	Burn	Notably low	Below normal
Burnt Mill	Rhee	Rhee	Notably low	Below normal
Cappenham	Tove	Tove	Normal	Below normal
Colney	Yare	Yare	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Denver	Ely Ouse	Cutoff and Renew Channel	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Dernford	Cam	Cam	Notably low	Notably low
Heacham	Heacham	Heacham	Below normal	Normal
Ingworth	Bure	Bure	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Lexden	Colne	Colne Essex	Below normal	Notably low
Marham	Nar	Nar	Exceptionally low	Notably low
Needham Weir Total	Waveney (lower)	Waveney	Notably low	Below normal
Northwold Total	Wissey	Wissey	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low

Site name	River	Catchment	Oct 2026 band	Sep 2026 band
Offord (gross Flows)	Great Ouse	Ouse Beds	Normal	Normal
Roxton	Great Ouse	Ivel	Normal	Normal
Springfield	Chelmer	Chelmer Upper	Normal	Below normal
Swanton Morley Total	Wensum	Wensum	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Temple	Lark	Lark	Notably low	Notably low
Willen	Ouzel	Ouzel	Normal	Below normal

8.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Oct 2026 band	End of Sep 2026 band
Bath Spring, Charlton	Upper Ivel Chalk	Normal	Normal
Biggleswade	Ivel Woburn Sands	Below normal	Normal
Bircham Newton	North West Norfolk Chalk	Notably low	Notably low
Breckland	Wissey Chalk	Exceptionally low	Notably low
Bury St Edmunds	Upper Lark Chalk	Normal	Normal
Castle Farm, Offton	East Suffolk Chalk	Below normal	Normal
Gog Magog, Stapleford	Cam Chalk	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Halfway Cottages	East Suffolk Crag	Normal	Normal
Hindolveston	Norfolk Chalk	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Kenninghall	Little Ouse Chalk	Notably low	Notably low
Linton	Cam Chalk	Below normal	Notably low
Newmarket	Snail Chalk	Notably low	Notably low
Old Primary School, South Creake	North Norfolk Chalk	No Data	Below normal
Redlands Hall, Ickleton	Cam Chalk	Below normal	Normal

Site name	Aquifer	End of Oct 2026 band	End of Sep 2026 band
Rook Hall, Braiseworth	East Suffolk Chalk	Below normal	Notably low
Smeetham Hall Cottages, Bulmer	North Essex Chalk	Normal	Normal
The Spinney, Costessey	Wensum Chalk	Dry	Dry
Washpit Farm, Rougham	North West Norfolk Chalk	Below normal	Below normal
Therfield Rectory	Upper Lee Chalk	Normal	Normal
Fringford P.s.	Upper Bedford Ouse Oolitic Limestone (great)	Below normal	Normal