Monthly water situation report: Thames Area

1 Summary - October 2026

Thames area received 101mm rainfall in October, 126% of the long term average (LTA). Rainfall was above normal for October in the majority of hydrological areas, largely due to contributions from Storm Austen and Storm Boelo. However, over the last 6 months, Thames area received just 71% of LTA rainfall. Soil moisture deficits (SMDs) decreased in October due to the month's rainfall, but soils remained twice as dry as expected for the time of year. Monthly mean river flows increased slightly in response to rainfall and over half of our indicator sites recorded normal flows in October. Monthly mean river flows on the River Thames at Windsor and Kingston remained notably low, whilst flows on the River Coln at Bibury were exceptionally low. Groundwater levels ranged from exceptionally low to exceptionally high, with 6 of 10 sites lower than normal for the time of year. Recharge was observed in 3 groundwater sites. Farmoor reservoir and the Lower Thames reservoirs storage increased because of the rain, but remained below the LTA for the end of October. Thames area remained in drought status, having entered drought in July.

1.1 Rainfall

Thames area received 101mm of rainfall in October, 126% of the LTA. Storm Austen and Storm Boelo contributed 71mm of this rainfall between the 18 and 24 October. Rainfall was above normal across most of the area, with higher rainfall totals in the north and east. In the south west of the area, the Loddon, Enborne and North Downs Hampshire hydrological areas received normal rainfall for the time of year. However, Thames area received only 71% of LTA rainfall for the last 6 months and the area remains in drought status.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

SMDs decreased from the end of September to the end of October. They were still high for the time of year, double the LTA for the end of October, indicating that soils were still considerably drier than expected. Effective rainfall was received in 6 of our 14 hydrological areas.

1.3 River flows

The rainfall at the end of the month improved monthly mean flows at 6 of our key indicator sites since September. Monthly mean flows were normal at 7 sites, compared to 4 in September. Indicator sites on the River Thames were notably low at Windsor and Kingston and below normal at Kingston (naturalised). The River Kennet at Calcot moved from exceptionally low in September to notably low in October and the River Coln at Bibury remained with exceptionally low flows, the third lowest monthly mean October flow at Bibury on record. The West Berkshire Groundwater Scheme continued to operate throughout

October. This supplements the flows in the River Thames and increases water available for abstraction in the lower Thames during drought.

1.4 Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels continued to decline at all but 3 of our indicator sites in October. At the end of the month, just 4 of 10 indicator sites remained normal or above for the time of year. Groundwater levels in the Lower Greensand aquifers continued to be relatively resilient, with The Flashes increasing to exceptionally high levels for October. In the chalk, levels remained in the same banding as last month: Long Sutton and Rockley were below normal and notably low respectfully, and Gibbet Cottages and Stonor Estate were normal for the time of year. In the oolite aquifers, two indicator sites showed a drop in banding from September: Jackaments Bottom dropped from notably low to exceptionally low and Fringford from normal to below normal. Conversely, levels at Ampney Crucis in the great oolite responded to recent rainfall and increased from notably low to below normal. Some recharge was also observed at Marcham (Corallian) and The Flashes (Lower Greensand – Folkestone).

1.5 Reservoir stocks

Reservoir storage continued to decline in October, but increased slightly in response to the rainfall at the end of the month. Farmoor Reservoir ended October at 74% of capacity, up from 69% at the end of September. This is 15% below the LTA storage for the end of October. The Lower Thames Reservoirs had 51.9% of capacity at the end of October, a decrease from 53.1% at the end of September. This was an improvement from mid-month but still 24% lower than the LTA for the end of October.

1.6 Environmental impact

At the end of October, 11 abstraction licences were having their flows constrained to protect the environment, a decrease from 51 licences at the end of September. Two flood alerts were issued during October in Thames area.

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

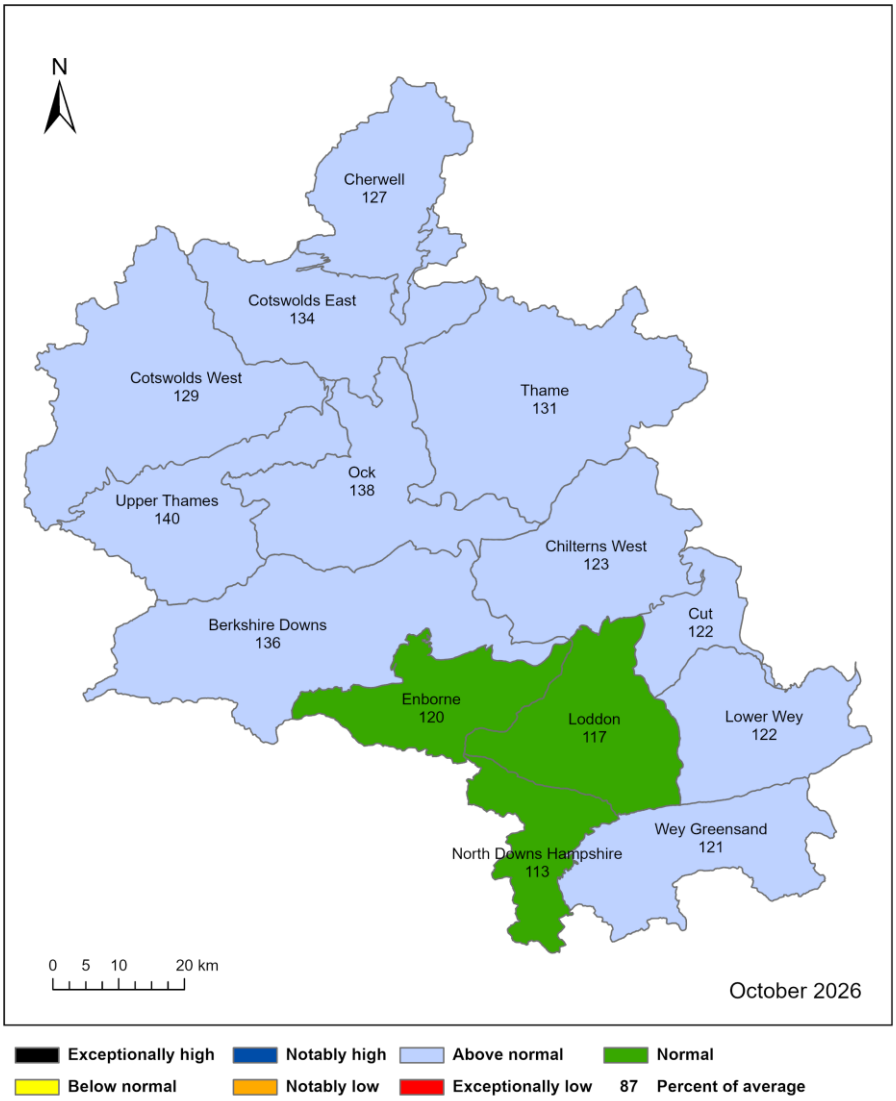
Contact Details: 030708 506 506

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2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

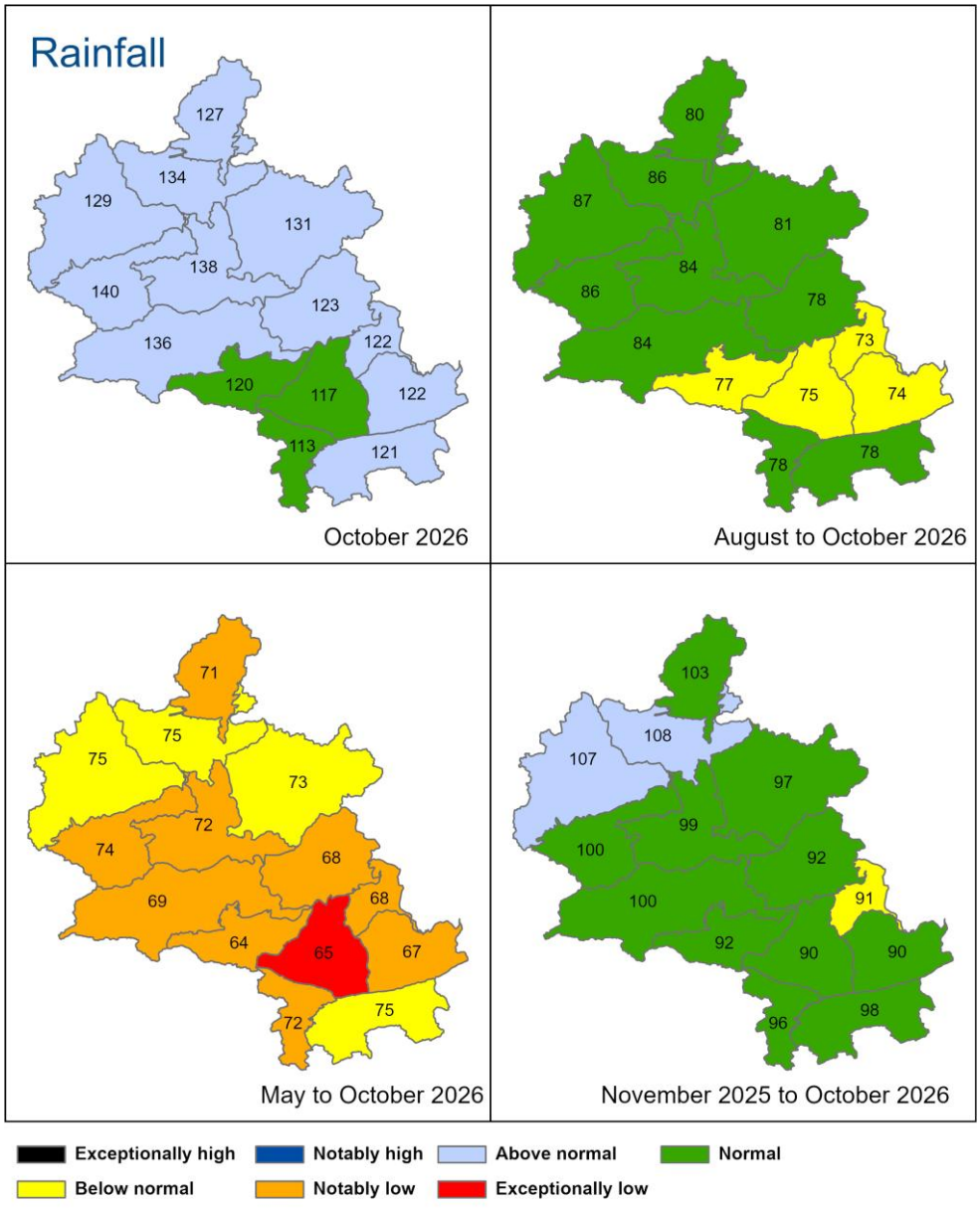
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 31 October 2026), classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



Rainfall data for 2025, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, 100024198, 2026). Rainfall data prior to 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)

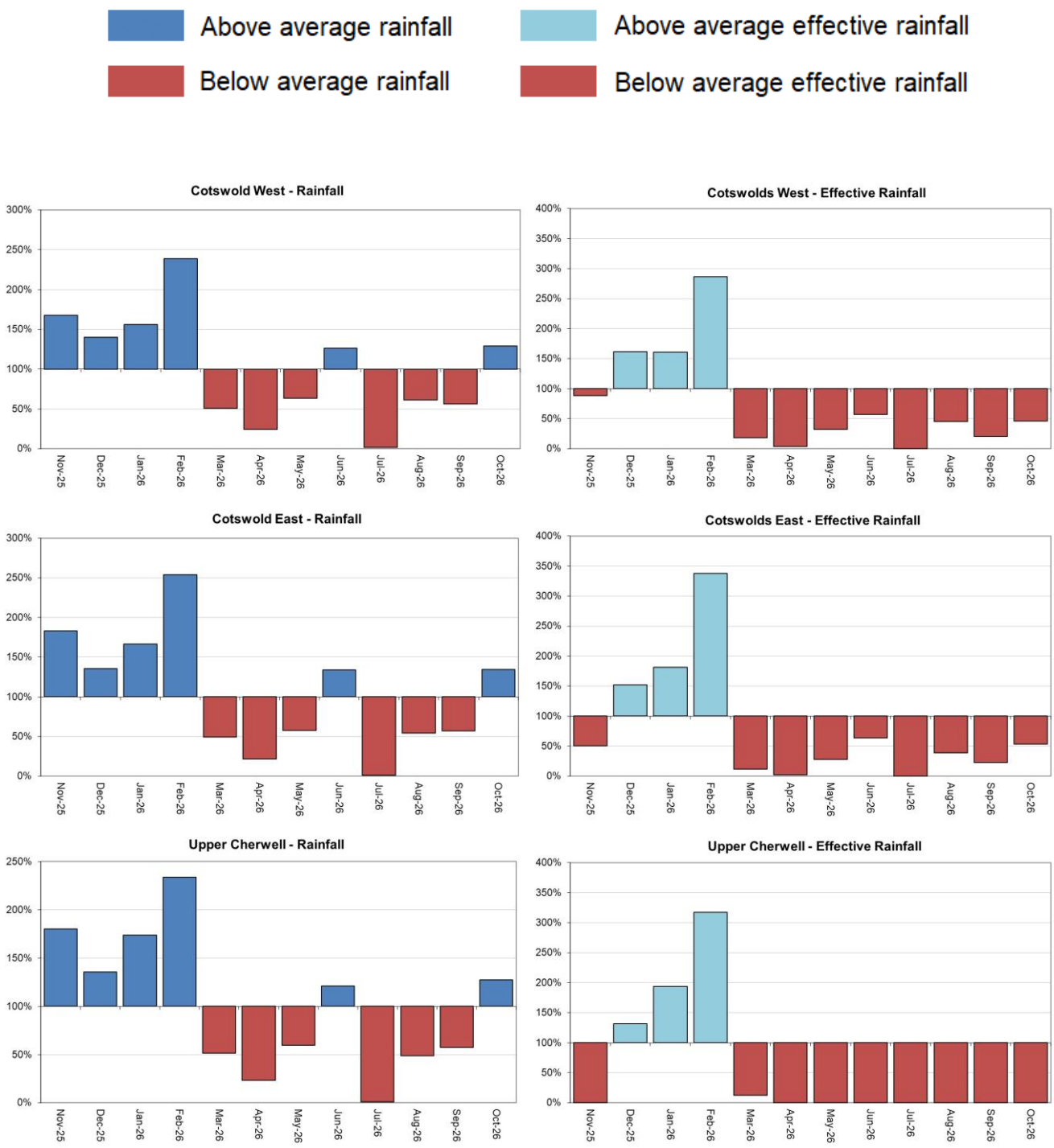
Figure 2.2: Total rainfall for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 31 October 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

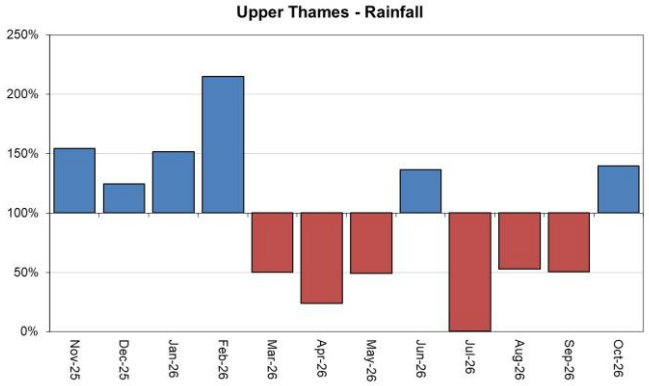


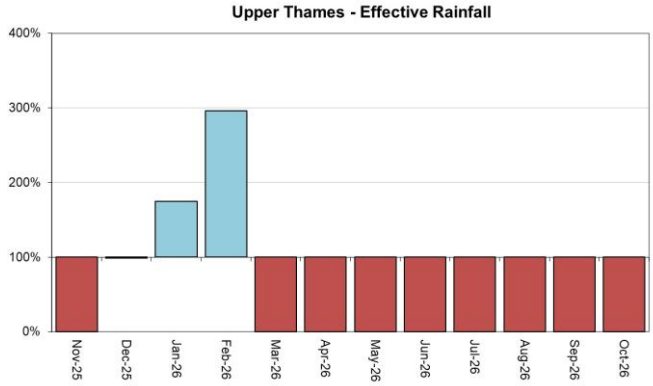
HadUK data based on the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). Provisional data based on Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. Crown copyright. All rights reserved.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

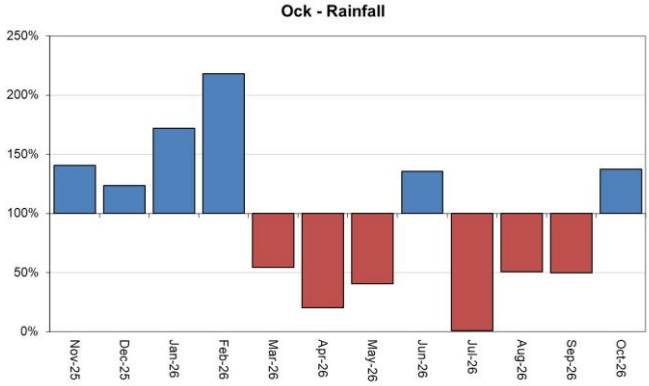
2.3 Rainfall charts

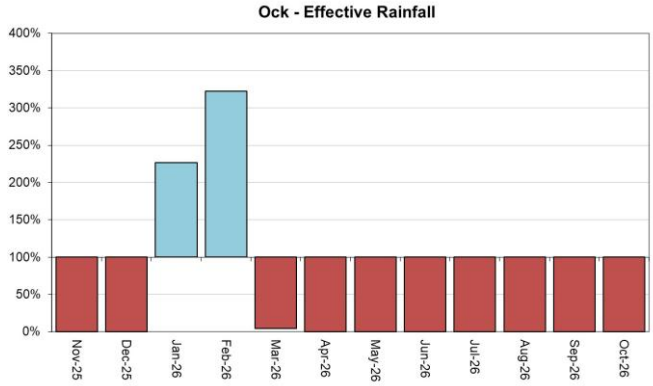
Figure 2.3: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for each hydrological area.

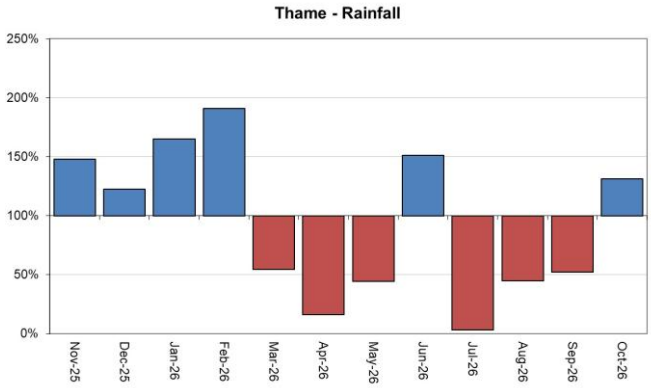


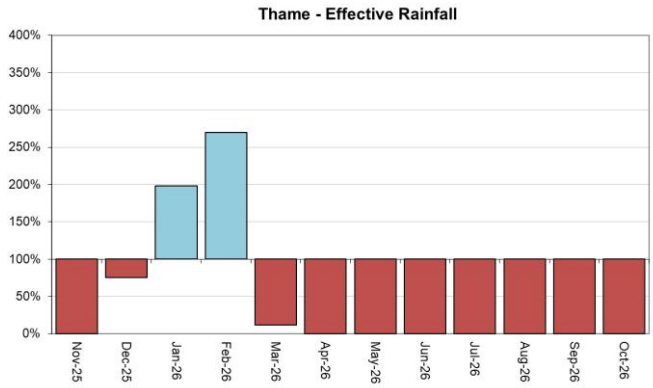

Upper Thames - Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26

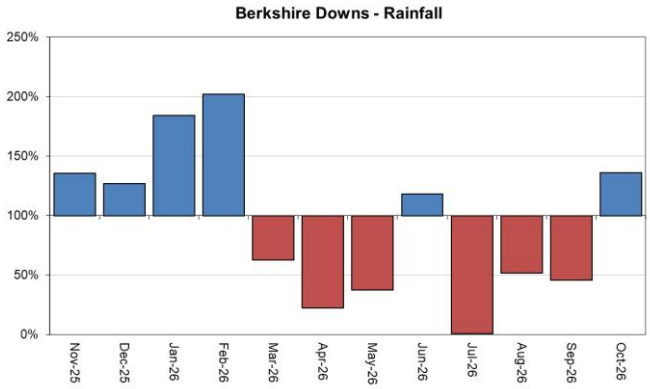

Upper Thames - Effective Rainfall
400%
300%
200%
100%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26

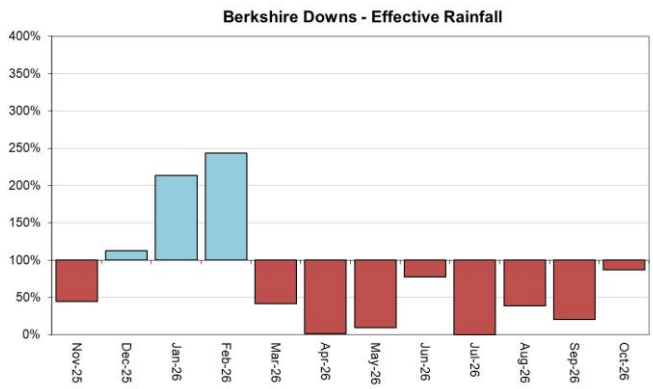

Ock - Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26

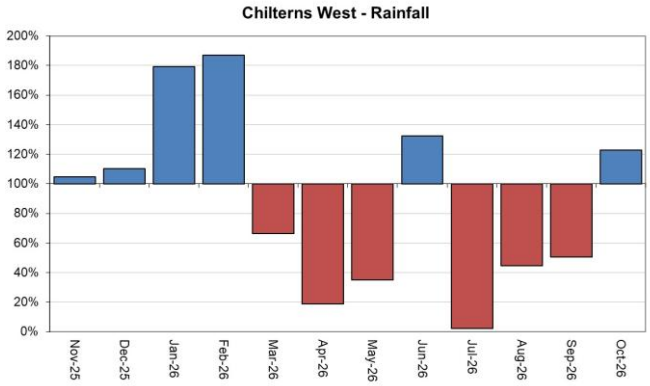

Ock - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26

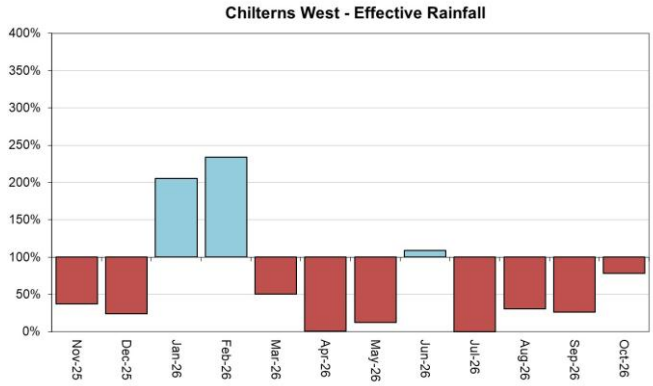

Thame - Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26

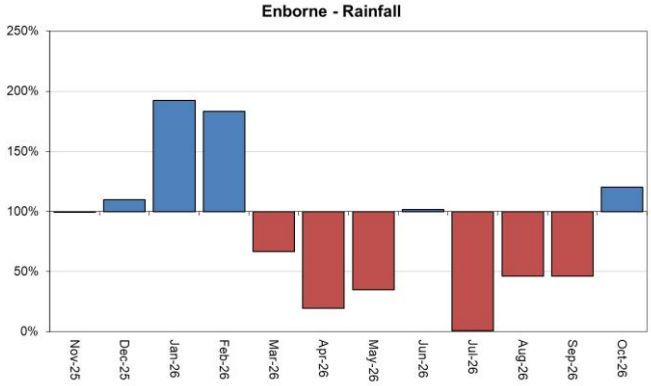

Thame - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26

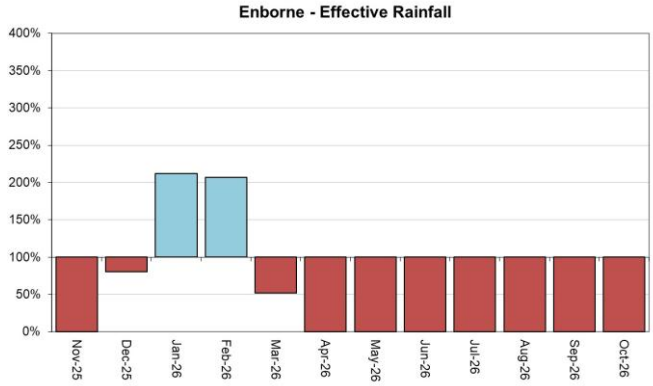

Berkshire Downs - Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26

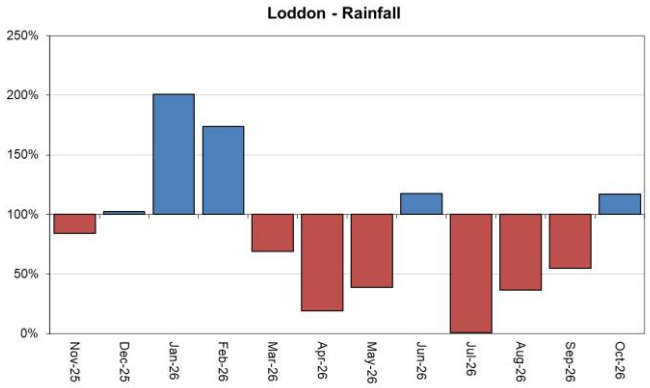

Berkshire Downs - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26

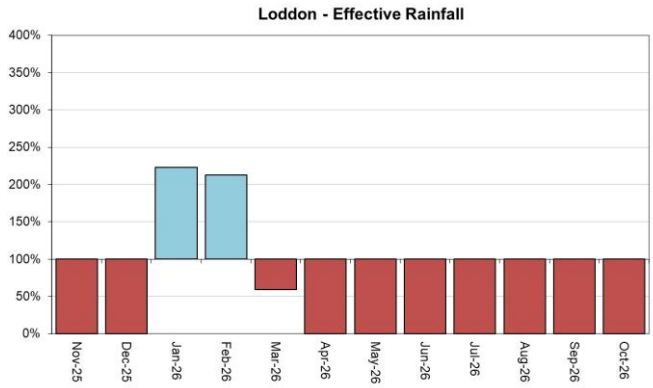

Chilterns West - Rainfall
200%
180%
160%
140%
120%
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26

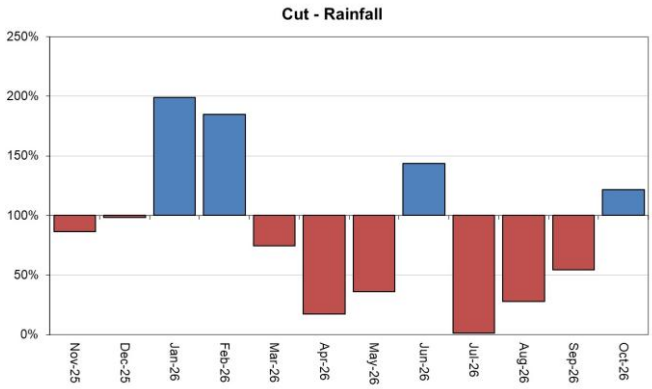

Chilterns West - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26

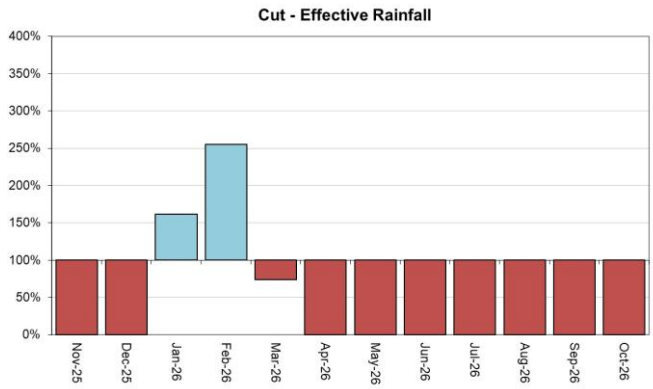

Enborne - Rainfall
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26

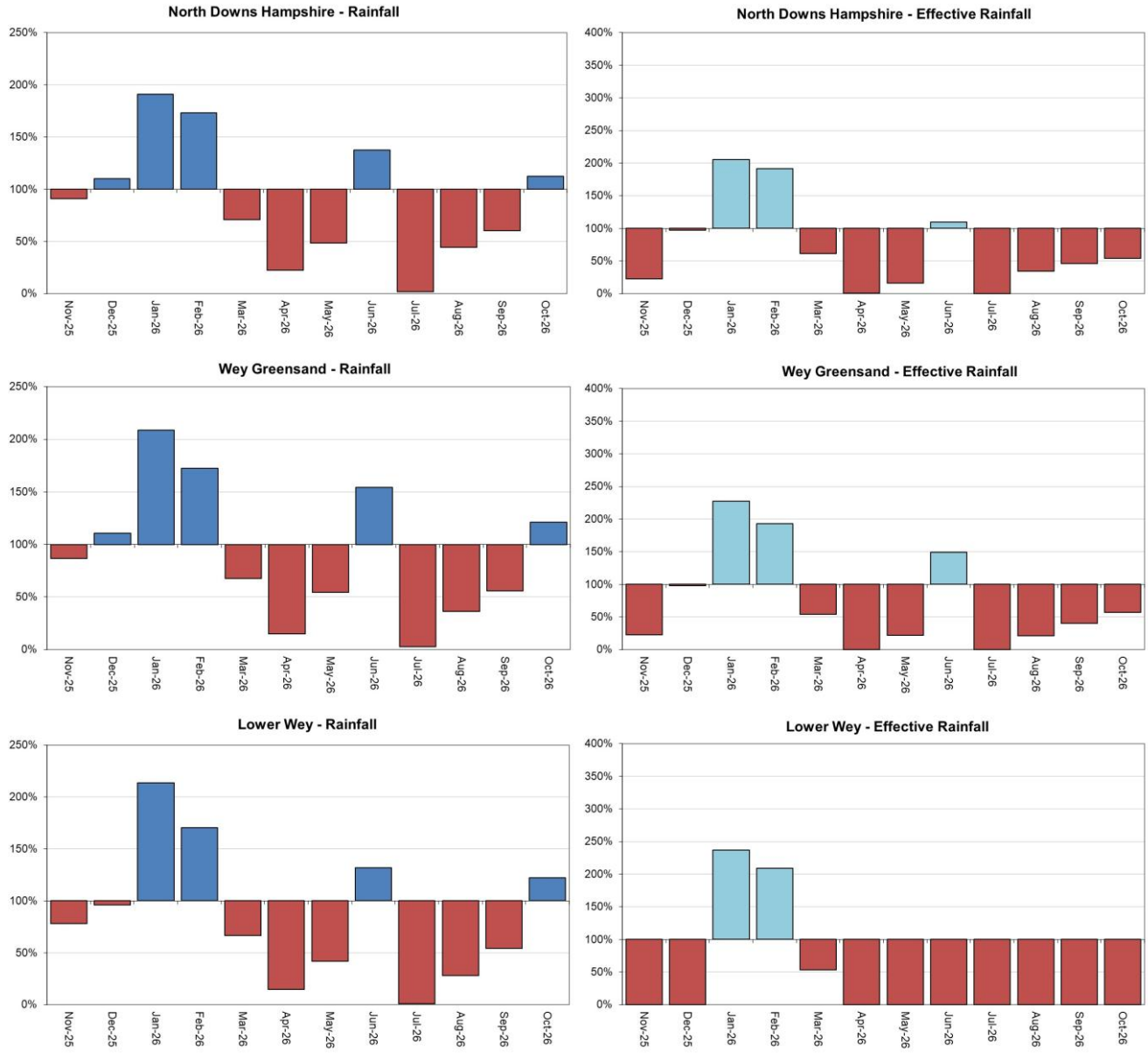

Enborne - Effective Rainfall
400%
350%
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26


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


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


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


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



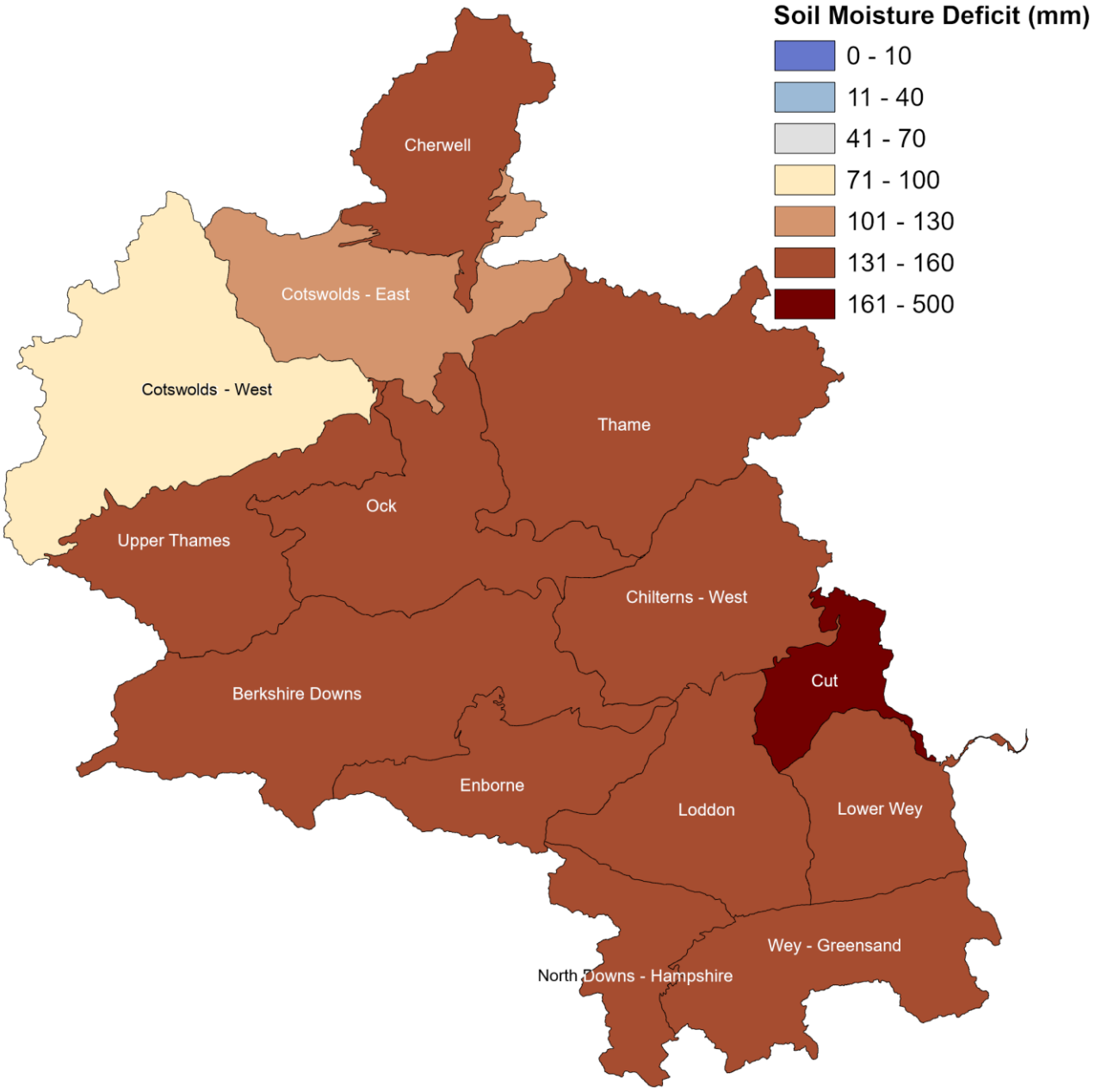
HadUK rainfall data. (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

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 October 2026. Shows the areal soil moisture deficit estimates in millimetres.

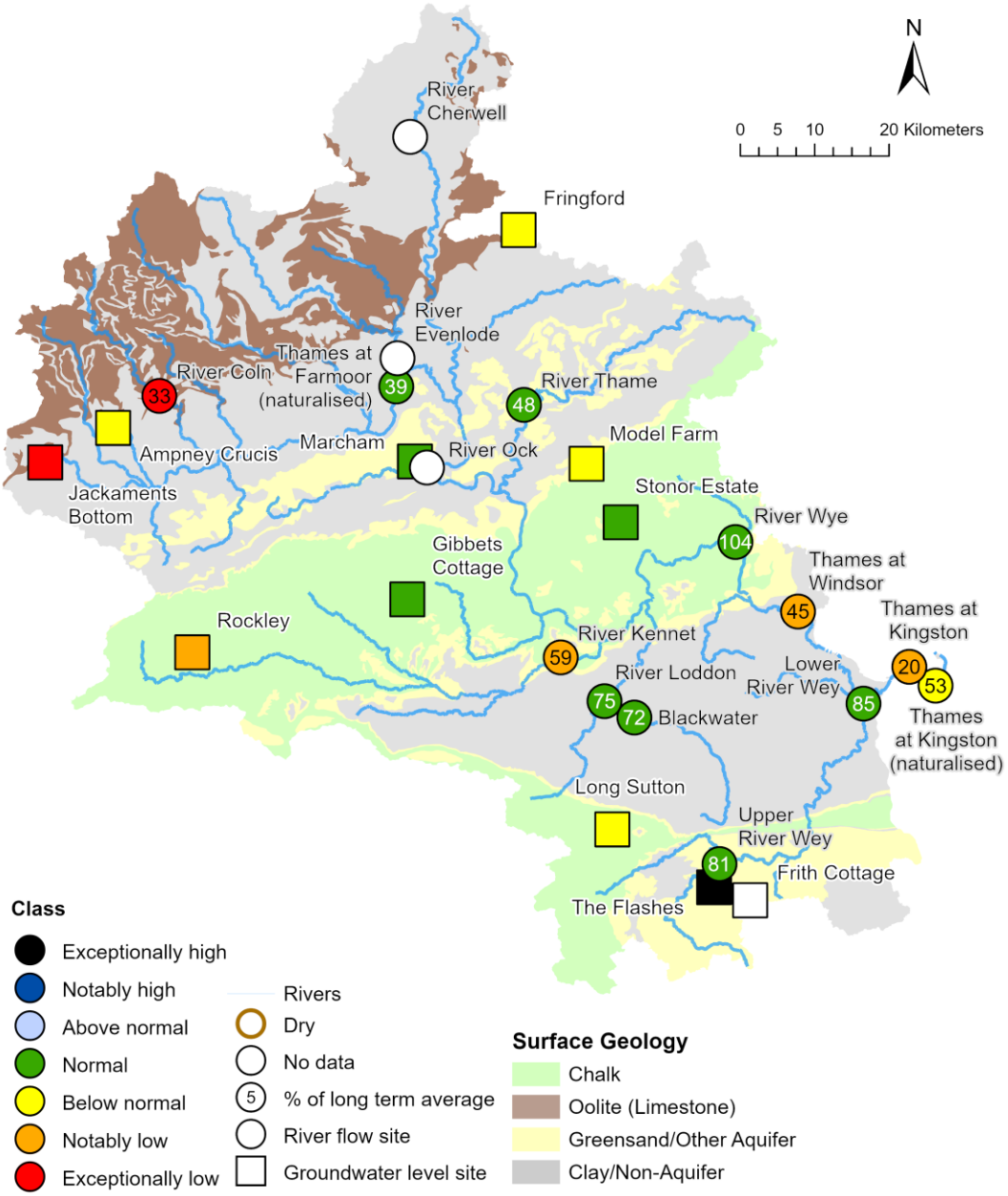


(Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2026.

4 River Flow and Groundwater Status

4.1 River flow and groundwater level map

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

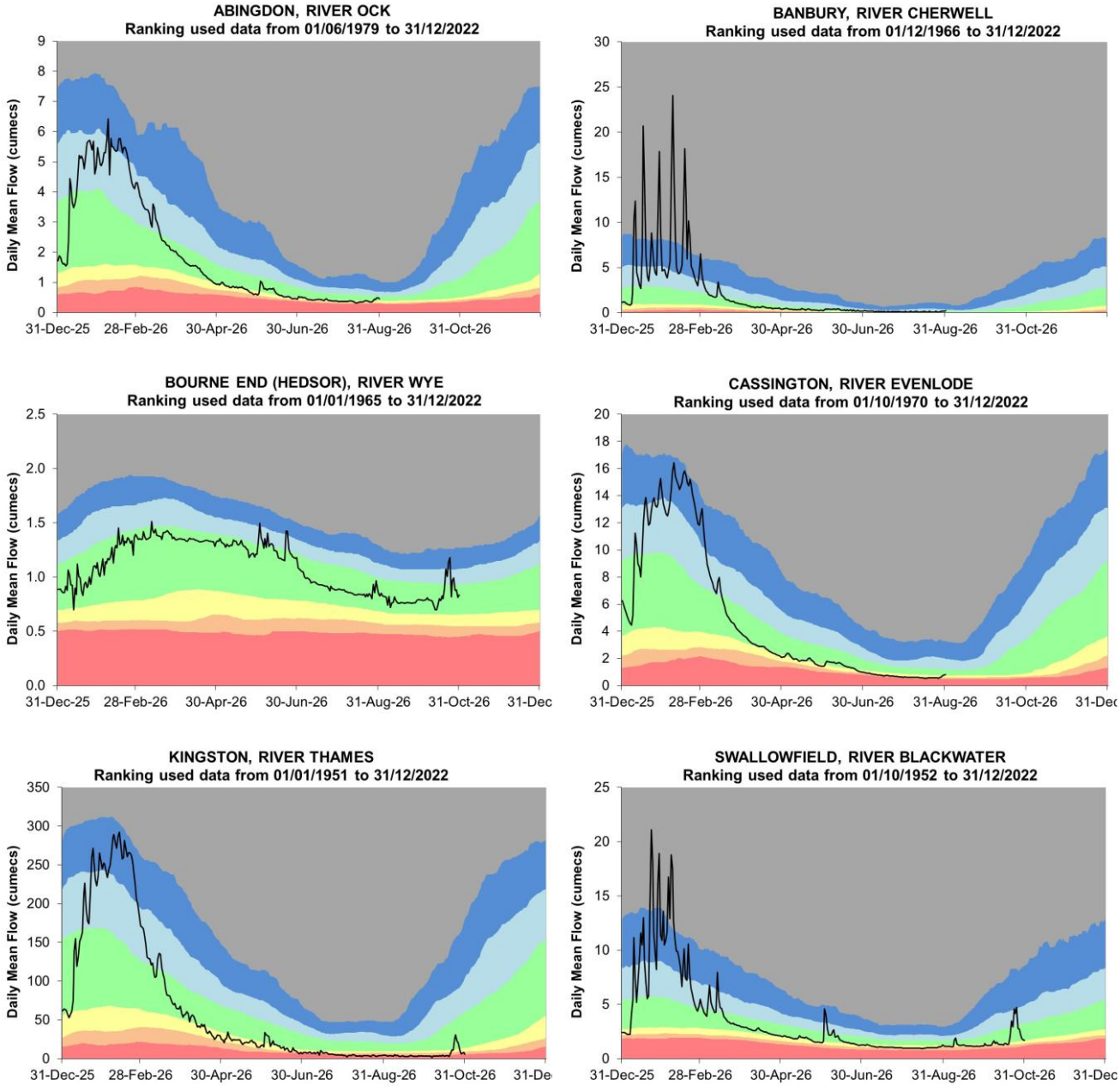


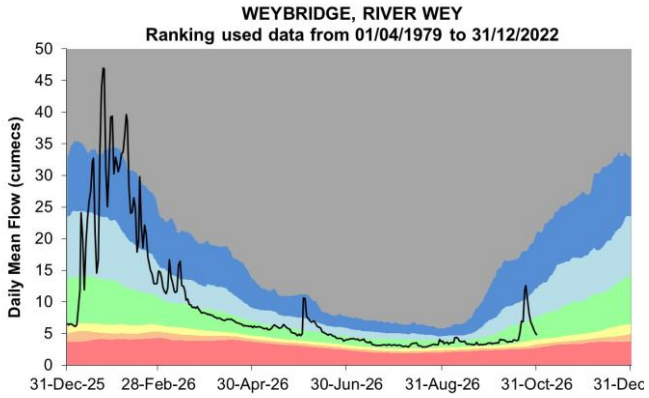
(Source: Environment Agency). Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2026.

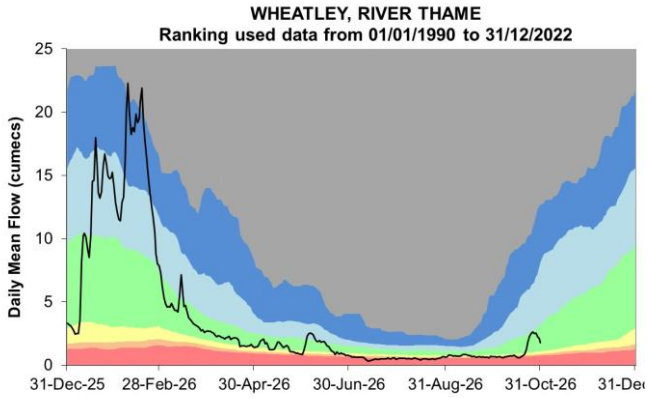
5 River flows

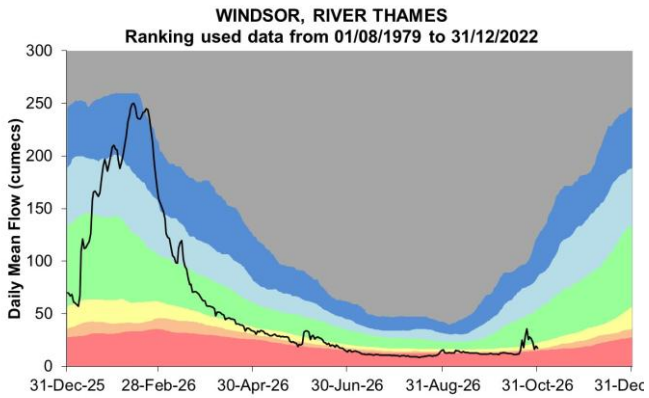
5.1 River flow charts

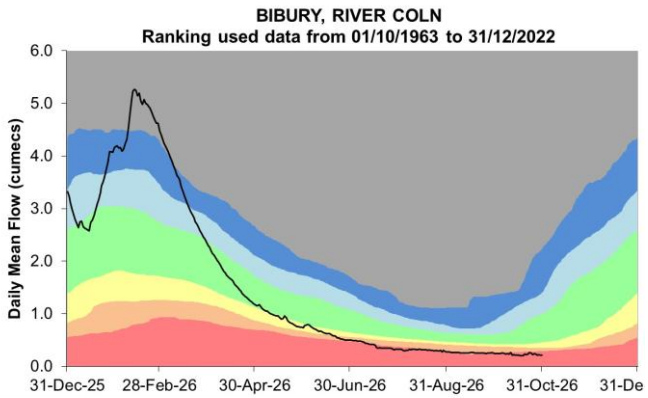
Figure 5.1: Daily mean river flows for indicator sites compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows.

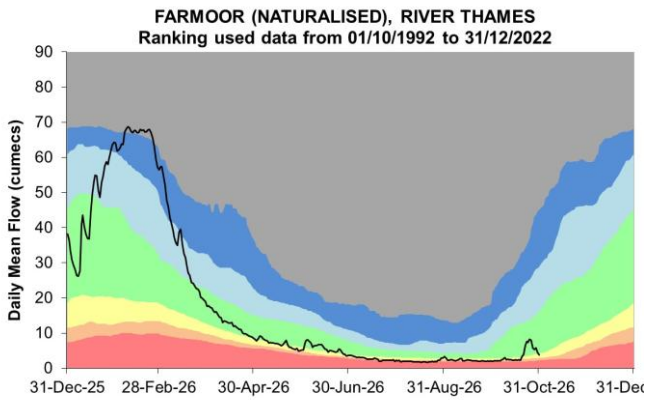


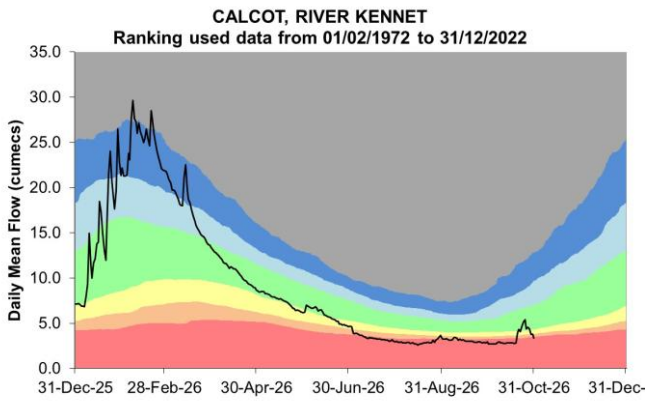

WEYBRIDGE, RIVER WEY
Ranking used data from 01/04/1979 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
50
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26
31-Aug-26
31-Oct-26
31-Dec

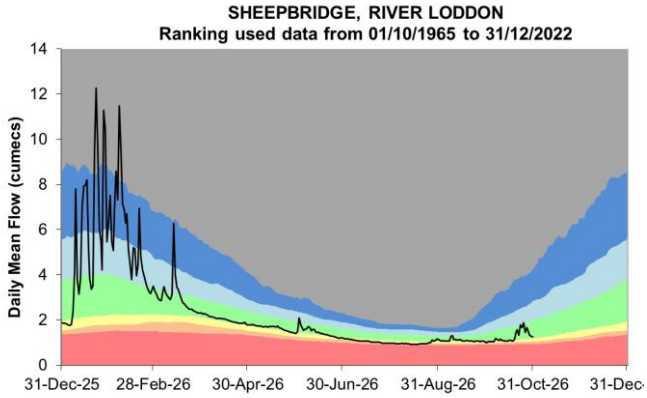

WHEATLEY, RIVER THAME
Ranking used data from 01/01/1990 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0
5
10
15
20
25
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26
31-Aug-26
31-Oct-26
31-Dec

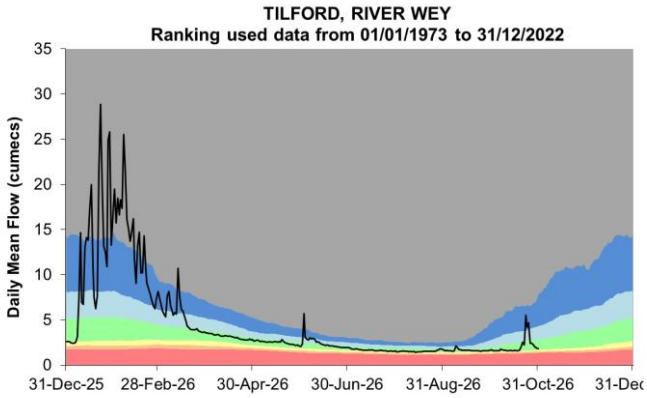

WINDSOR, RIVER THAMES
Ranking used data from 01/08/1979 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0
50
100
150
200
250
300
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26
31-Aug-26
31-Oct-26
31-Dec

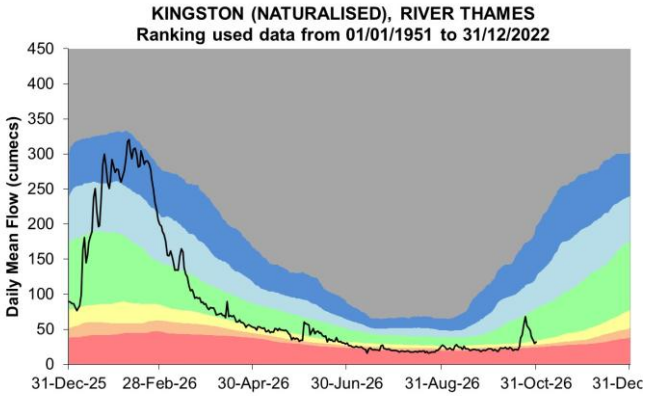

BIBURY, RIVER COLN
Ranking used data from 01/10/1963 to 31/12/2022
Daily Mean Flow (cumecs)
0.0
1.0
2.0
3.0
4.0
5.0
6.0
31-Dec-25
28-Feb-26
30-Apr-26
30-Jun-26
31-Aug-26
31-Oct-26
31-De


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


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







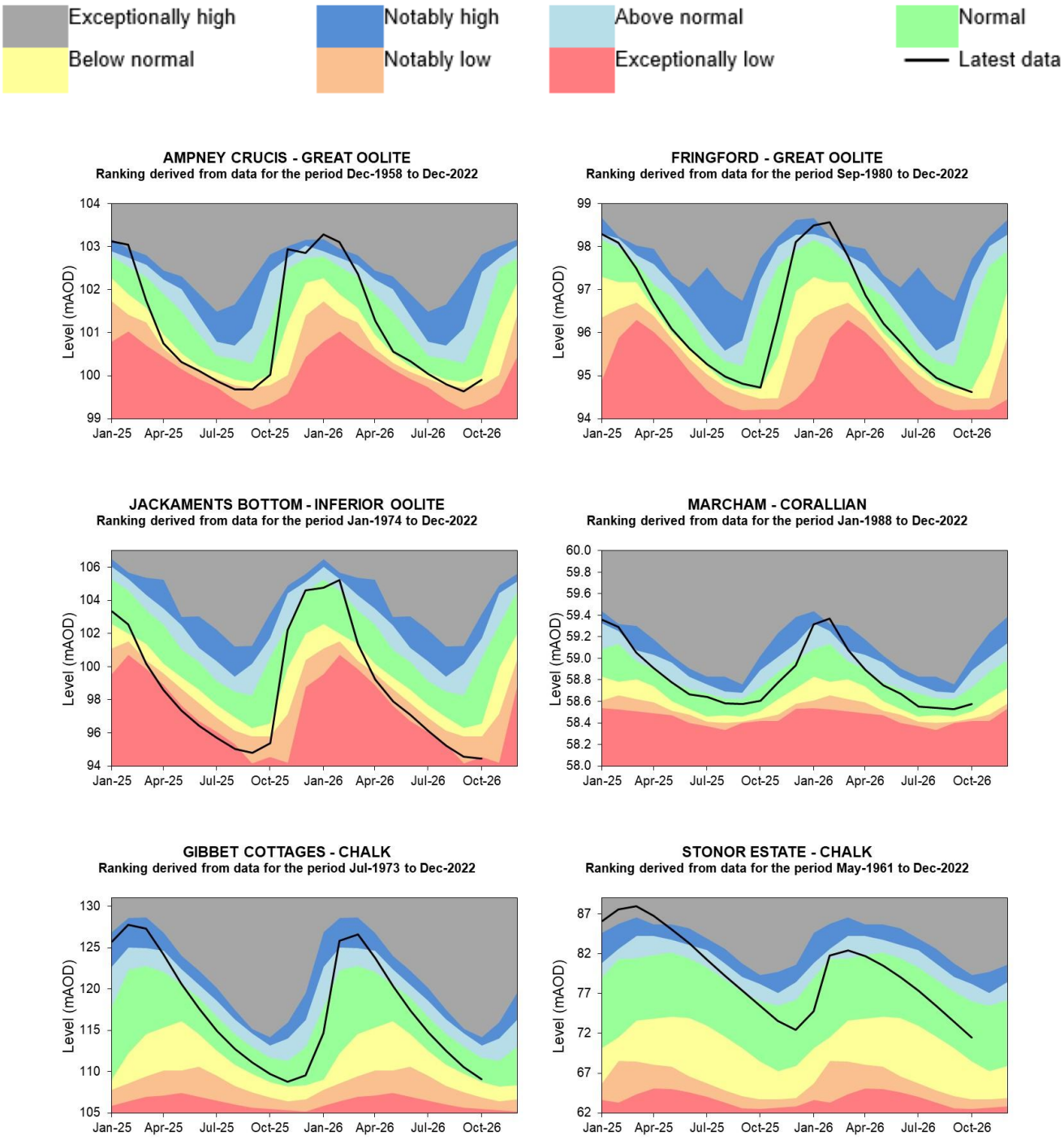
Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

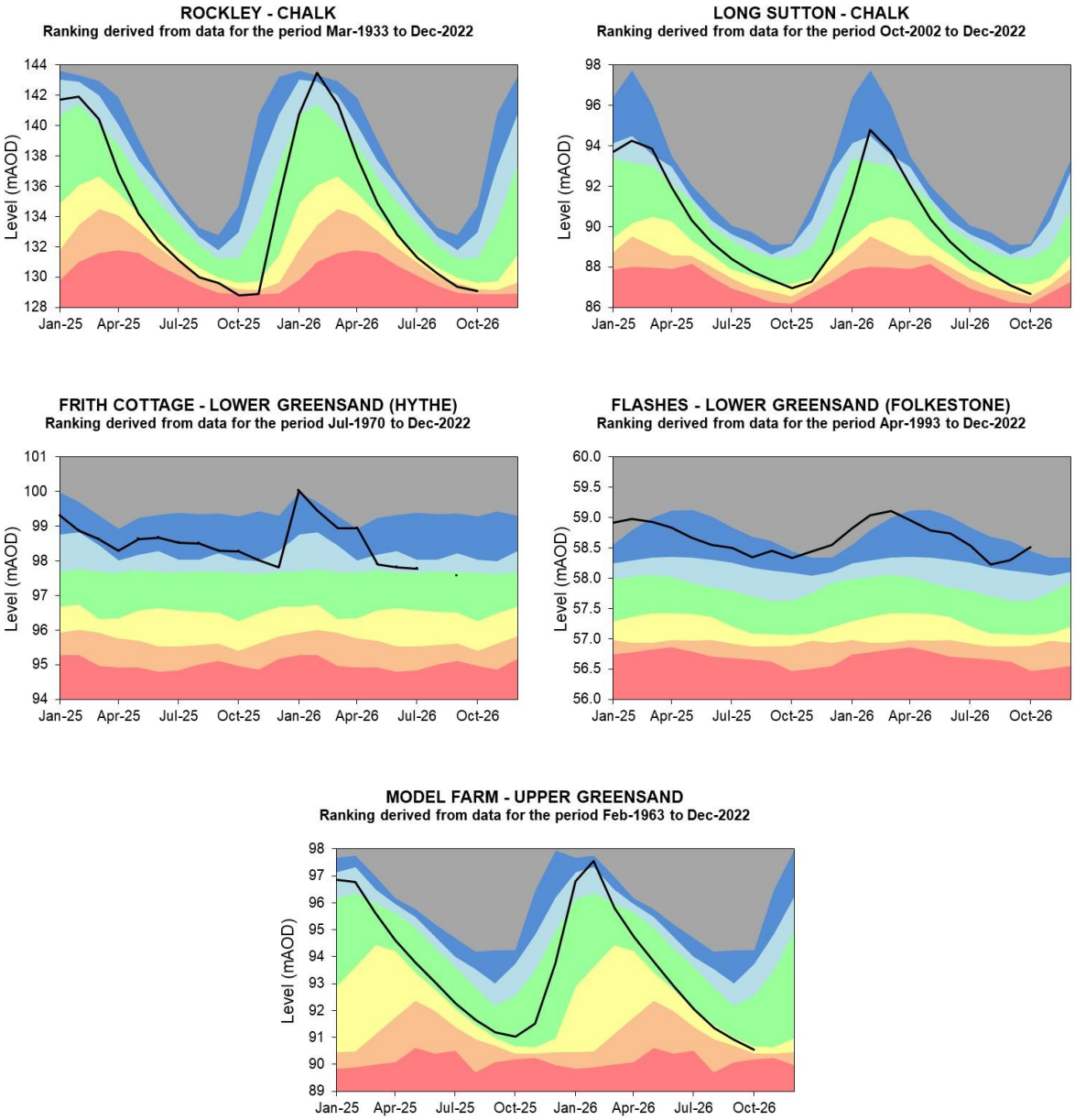
Note: October 2026 flow data for the River Ock at Abingdon, the River Cherwell at Banbury and the River Evenlode at Cassington have been omitted due to excessive weed growth affecting the reliability of flow measurements.

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.



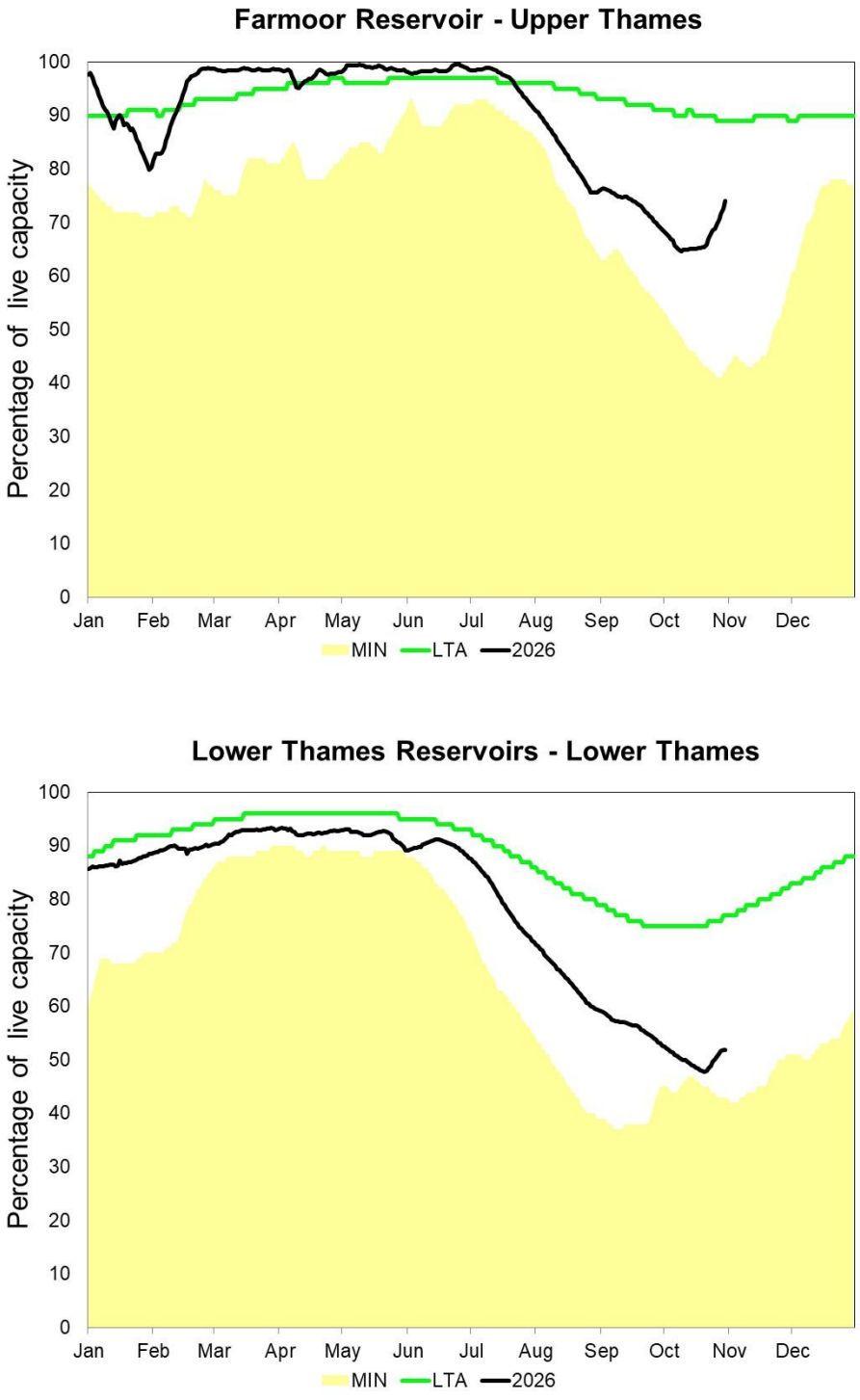


Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

Note: October 2026 groundwater level data for Frith Cottage (Lower Greensand – Hythe) was not available.

7 Reservoir stocks

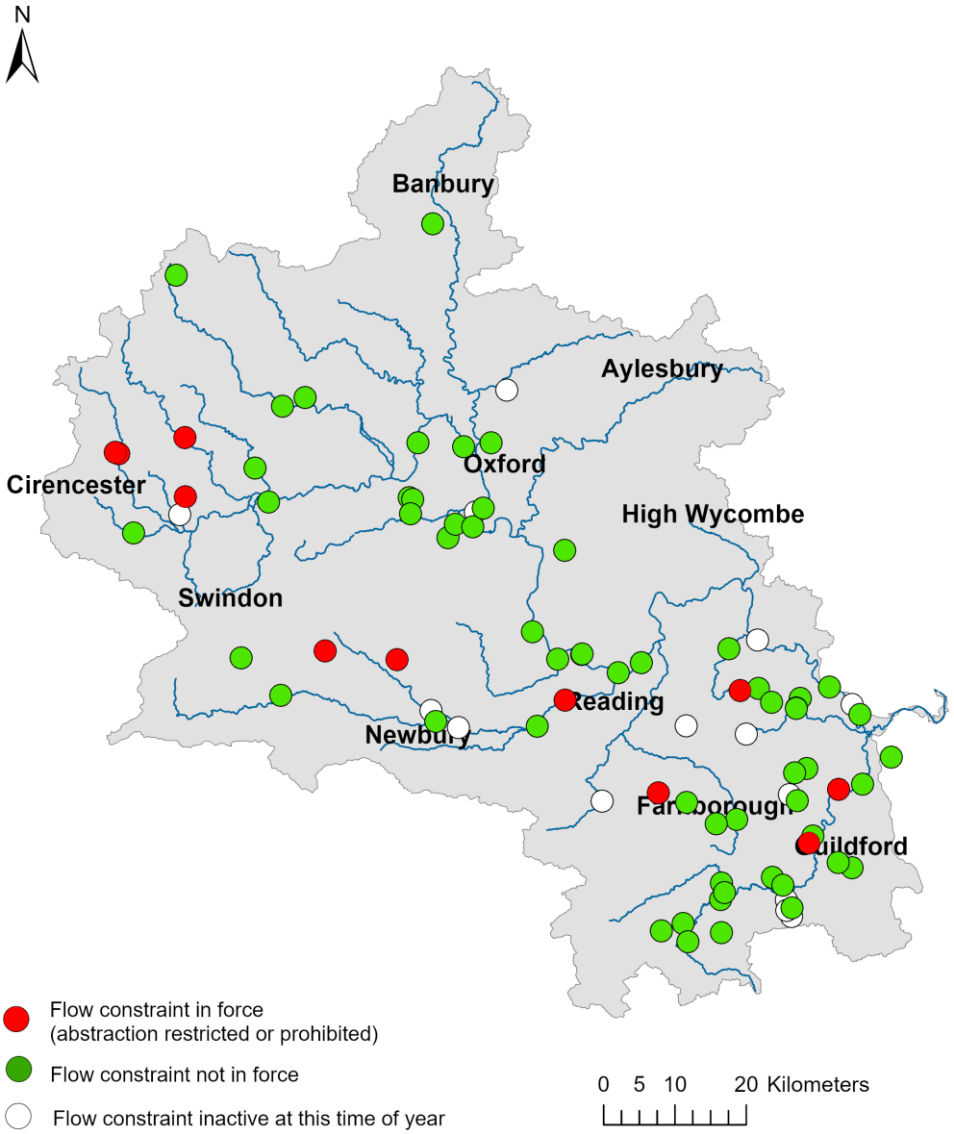
Figure 7.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to minimum and average stocks.



Source: Thames Water.

8 Flow Constraints

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



8.2 Summary of flow constraints

Week ending	04/10/26	11/10/26	18/10/26	25/10/26
Number of constraints active	50	46	48	11

9 Summary of rainfall, effective rainfall and soil moisture deficit

9.1 Rainfall and effective rainfall

Hydrological Area	Rainfall (mm) October Total	Rainfall (mm) October LTA	Rainfall (mm) % LTA	Effective rainfall (mm) October total	Effective rainfall (mm) October LTA	Effective rainfall (mm) % LTA
Cotswolds - West	114	88	129	14	31	46
Cotswolds - East	105	78	134	13	25	53
Berkshire Downs	116	85	137	15	17	87
Chilterns - West	99	80	123	13	16	78
North Downs - Hampshire	112	99	112	14	26	54
Wey - Greensand	117	97	121	15	26	57
Upper Thames	103	74	139	0	7	0
Cherwell	94	74	127	0	11	0
Thame	93	70	132	0	7	0
Loddon	92	79	117	0	7	0
Lower Wey	93	76	122	0	10	0
Ock	95	69	137	0	4	0
Enborne	100	84	119	0	11	0
Cut	86	71	121	0	5	0
Thames Area	**101**	**80**	**126**	**6**	**15**	**41**

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

9.2 Soil moisture deficit

Hydrological Area	SMD (mm) End October	SMD (mm) End October LTA
Cotswolds - West	93	41
Cotswolds - East	106	49
Berkshire Downs	136	75
Chilterns - West	150	80
North Downs - Hampshire	136	62
Wey - Greensand	130	64
Upper Thames	132	77
Cherwell	129	62
Thame	143	77
Loddon	156	78
Lower Wey	146	73
Ock	148	87
Enborne	146	69
Cut	161	91
Thames Area	**136**	**70**

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

9.3 Winter rainfall and effective rainfall

Winter period: 01/10/2026 to 31/10/2026 Hydrological Area	Rainfall (mm) Total	Rainfall (mm) LTA	Rainfall (mm) % LTA	Effective rainfall (mm) Total	Effective rainfall (mm) LTA	Effective rainfall (mm) % LTA
Cotswolds - West	114	88	129	14	31	46
Cotswolds - East	105	78	134	13	25	53
Berkshire Downs	116	85	137	15	17	88
Chilterns - West	99	80	123	13	16	78
North Downs - Hampshire	112	99	112	14	26	54
Wey - Greensand	117	97	121	15	26	57
Upper Thames	103	74	139	0	7	0
Cherwell	94	74	127	0	11	0
Thame	93	70	132	0	7	0
Loddon	92	79	117	0	7	0
Lower Wey	93	76	122	0	10	0
Ock	95	69	137	0	4	0
Enborne	100	84	119	0	11	0
Cut	86	71	121	0	5	0
Thames Area	**101**	**80**	**126**	**6**	**15**	**41**

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

10 Glossary

10.1 Terminology

Aquifer

A geological formation able to store and transmit water.

Areal average rainfall

The estimated average depth of rainfall over a defined area. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Artesian

The condition where the groundwater level is above ground surface but is prevented from rising to this level by an overlying continuous low permeability layer, such as clay.

Artesian borehole

Borehole where the level of groundwater is above the top of the borehole and groundwater flows out of the borehole when unsealed.

Cumecs

Cubic metres per second (m^3s^{-1}).

Effective rainfall

The rainfall available to percolate into the soil or produce river flow. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Flood alert and flood warning

Three levels of warnings may be issued by the Environment Agency. Flood alerts indicate flooding is possible. Flood warnings indicate flooding is expected. Severe flood warnings indicate severe flooding.

Groundwater

The water found in an aquifer.

Long term average (LTA)

The arithmetic mean calculated from the historic record, usually based on the period 1991 to 2020. However, the period used may vary by parameter being reported on (see figure captions for details).

mAOD

Metres above ordnance datum (mean sea level at Newlyn Cornwall).

MORECS

Met Office Rainfall and Evaporation Calculation System. Met Office service providing real time calculation of evapotranspiration, soil moisture deficit and effective rainfall on a 40 by 40 km grid.

Naturalised flow

River flow with the impacts of artificial influences removed. Artificial influences may include abstractions, discharges, transfers, augmentation and impoundments.

NCIC

National Climate Information Centre. NCIC area monthly rainfall totals are derived using the Met Office 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).

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	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
Berkshire Downs	136	Above Normal	Normal	Notably low	Normal
Chilterns West	123	Above Normal	Normal	Notably low	Normal
Cotswold East	135	Above Normal	Normal	Below normal	Above normal
Cotswold West	129	Above Normal	Normal	Below normal	Above normal
Cut	122	Above Normal	Below normal	Notably low	Below normal
Enborne	120	Normal	Below normal	Notably low	Normal
Loddon	117	Normal	Below normal	Exceptionally low	Normal
Lower Wey	122	Above Normal	Below normal	Notably low	Normal
North Downs Hampshire	113	Normal	Normal	Notably low	Normal
Ock	138	Above Normal	Normal	Notably low	Normal

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
Thame	132	Above Normal	Normal	Below normal	Normal
Upper Cherwell	127	Above Normal	Normal	Notably low	Normal
Upper Thames	140	Above Normal	Normal	Notably low	Normal
Wey Greensand	121	Above Normal	Normal	Below normal	Normal

11.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Oct 2026 band	Sep 2026 band
Abingdon	River Ock	Ock	-	-
Banbury	River Cherwell	Cherwell Upper	-	-
Bibury	River Coln	Coln	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Bourne End (Hedsor)	River Wye	Wye Bucks	Normal	Normal
Calcot	River Kennet	Kennet	Notably low	Exceptionally low
Cassington	River Evenlode	Evenlode	-	-
Farmoor (naturalised)	River Thames	Thames	Normal	Notably low
Kingston	River Thames	Thames North Bank	Notably low	Exceptionally low
Sheepbridge	River Loddon	Loddon	Normal	Normal
Swallowfield	River Blackwater	Loddon	Normal	Notably low
Tilford	River Wey	Wey Addlestone Bourne	Normal	Normal
Weybridge	River Wey	Wey Addlestone Bourne	Normal	Normal
Wheatley	River Thame	Thame	Normal	Notably low
Windsor	River Thames	Thames	Notably low	Exceptionally low

Site name	River	Catchment	Oct 2026 band	Sep 2026 band
Kingston (naturalised)	River Thames	Thames	Below normal	Notably low

11.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Oct 2026 band	End of Sep 2026 band
Ampney Crucis OBH	Burford Oolitic Limestone (great)	Below normal	Notably low
Frith Cottage	Godalming Lower Greensand	-	Normal
Gibbet Cottages OBH	Berkshire Downs Chalk	Normal	Normal
Jackaments Bottom OBH	Burford Oolitic Limestone (inferior)	Exceptionally low	Notably low
Long Sutton	North Downs Chalk	Below normal	Below normal
Marcham OBH	Shrivenham Corallian	Normal	Normal
Model Farm	Chiltern Upper Greensand	Below normal	Below normal
Rockley OBH	Berkshire Downs Chalk	Notably low	Notably low
Stonor Estate	South-west Chilterns Chalk	Normal	Normal

Site name	Aquifer	End of Oct 2026 band	End of Sep 2026 band
The Flashes OBH	Godalming Lower Greensand	Exceptionally high	Notably high
Fringford P.S.	Upper Bedford Ouse Oolitic Limestone (great)	Below normal	Normal