



Groundwater Impacted System Management Plan

Bicester, Langford Brook

July 2021



It's everyone's water

Version control

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Introduction

This document sets out Thames Water's approach to the management of groundwater infiltration in sewerage systems where the influence of groundwater infiltration is viewed as significant likely leading to the sewerage system, on occasions, to become overwhelmed.

All sewerage systems combined and separate will experience some groundwater infiltration¹ and a nominal allowance in design will be made for this. However, in some catchments the impact of groundwater infiltration can be considerable leading to impacts on service during periods of high groundwater, typically during the winter.

Groundwater can enter the sewerage system through the pipes and manholes, this may occur at a defect (crack, hole, displaced joint) or on a normal joint on the sewer or in the manhole. A key point to note is that where infiltration occurs it is not necessarily an indicator that the sewer is in poor structural state simply that jointing techniques used are not completely watertight.

Ingress of groundwater is not limited to the public system that Thames Water owns and maintains but potentially the private drains, manholes and sewers that connect to our system.

Preventing and reducing the impact of groundwater infiltration is predominately achieved through the lining of sewers and

sealing of manholes. This entails the application of a synthetic liner within the pipe that creates a contiguous membrane for the length of the pipe or possibly section if the source of ingress can be narrowed down. For manholes it will typically entail sealing in a similar manner.

To line all sewers and manholes within most catchments would be prohibitively expensive to do so. Our approach to date has been centred on a 'find and fix' basis which has involved monitoring and investigating the networks in periods of high groundwater to identify sources of ingress and fix as we find them. This approach is constrained for the reason that investigations are typically limited to periods of high groundwater and when high groundwater occurs there are limited windows of time in which investigations can be successfully undertaken before flows either subside or the system is fully surcharged meaning CCTV surveys are not possible². Once sections of sewers have been lined, it will be a case of waiting until high groundwater levels reoccur to assess the effectiveness of the work undertaken, which may not be the subsequent winter but several years later.

It is recognised that the find and fix approach to date lacks a degree of certainty of resolution and for this reason Thames Water in 2020 undertook a different approach for long term management of groundwater, which is covered within this

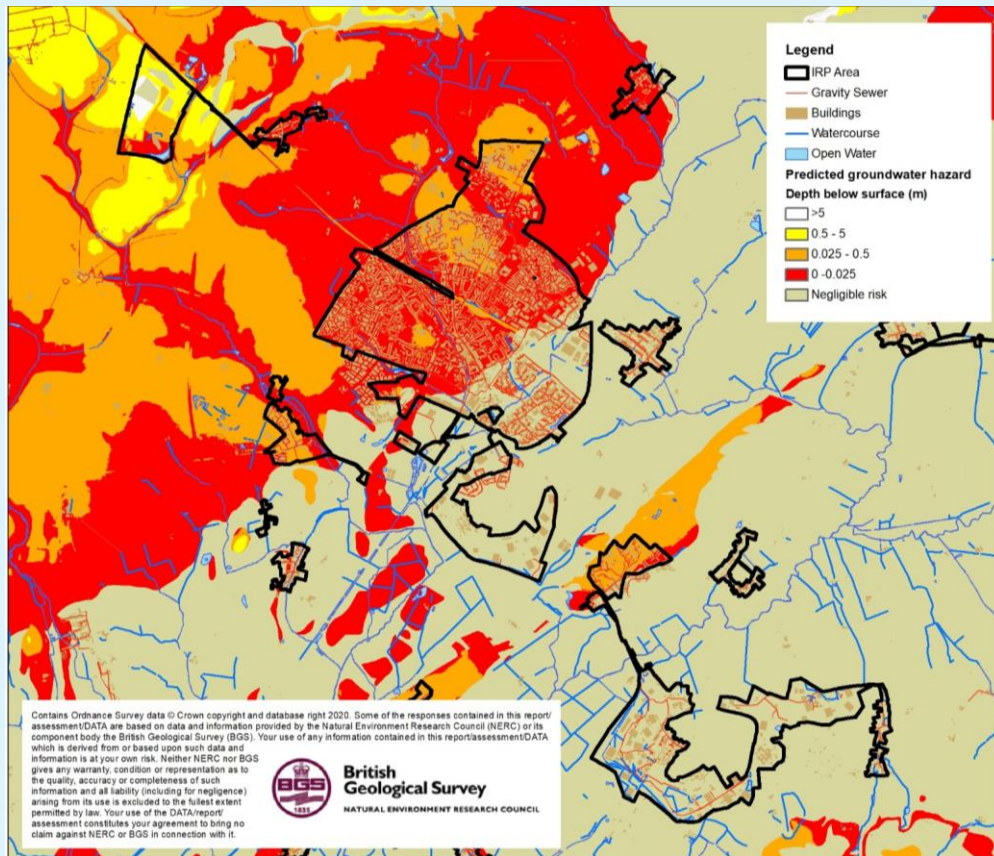
¹ Sewers for Adoption makes an allowance for 10% of peak wastewater flow to allow for unaccounted flows such as groundwater infiltration.

² On occasions it is possible to over-pump between manholes to isolate sections of sewer to survey, this is not always feasible when the flows involved are simply too great to over-pump or the location prohibits this approach.

document under the plan section. These plans require significant investment which Thames Water will seek to secure through the price review process as service enhancement. In the meantime, we will continue to investigate sources of infiltration when it occurs and where feasible, undertake the work through our capital maintenance budgets. We refer to these as 'minor works' opportunities i.e. where we have high degree of certainty of reducing point sources of infiltration and can do so with reasonable costs and time.

The structure of this document has been created with input from the Environment Agency. Sections covered in this document include our 'Outline Plan' with timescales, Mitigation i.e. how we intend to manage the risk until our plan is fully implemented and when we will publish future updates on progress against this plan.

Brief description of Bicester catchment



1.0 – Bicester catchment

Bicester is located in the Cherwell district of northeastern Oxfordshire, England, approximately 10 miles north-east of Oxford. Bicester serves a population equivalent³ of 58,913 with a predominantly separate sewerage network totaling some 368 km in length excluding private drains and sewers. The extent of the catchment is shown in Figure 1.0 above.

Problem characterisation

Groundwater has potential to enter our sewers when levels are high and a positive head above the soffit of the sewer is created. Significant groundwater ingress can impact sewer capacity and increase the risk of flooding. There's a strong link between rising river levels and rising groundwater levels, particularly adjacent to the River Ray, and the drainage issues some of our customers have experienced, including sewer flooding and restricted use of their toilets and bathrooms.

³ Population equivalent based on unit per capita loading (PE), in waste-water treatment is the number expressing the ratio of the sum of the pollution load produced during 24 hours by industrial facilities and services to the individual pollution load in household sewage produced by one person in the same time.

Additionally, prolonged and heavy rainfall and raised groundwater levels have overwhelmed the sewer system causing problems at the local pumping stations.

The sewerage system is identified on the public sewer records as being a partially separate foul system, rather than a combined system. We believe that significant volumes of surface water runoff from surrounding saturated fields and built-up land have entered the foul sewerage network during recent wet winters, causing the network to become overloaded and surcharge (mainly through submerged manholes).

The historical surveys we have carried out have detected that there is some evidence of unwanted flows in the foul sewer network when groundwater levels are high, and surface water inundation from highways, public spaces and properties and fluvial flooding from local watercourses. Surface water misconnections (i.e. down pipes from roofs into the sewer network) are also suspected to be a contributing factor, hence further analysis is required to determine the extent to which this has contributed to sewer flooding. The previous studies have identified areas of Bucknell, Wendlebury, and Launton as particularly prone to groundwater infiltration, however CCTV surveys currently ongoing will improve our understanding.

A limited number of our sewerage systems include for overflows, these structures are there to protect against sewer flooding as a result of rainfall or equipment failure where appropriate. Discharges from these structures should not be impacted by excessive infiltration as detailed by the EA Regulatory Position Statement on groundwater impacted sewerage systems. The use of storm sewage overflows is accepted by our regulators, subject to conditions

We believe it is likely that groundwater infiltration in the Bicester catchment is the most probable cause of incidences where the network and the Sewage Treatment Works (STW) has not been able to cope with all incoming flows, triggering problems to homes and at the STW in terms of spills to the environment. The root causes of sewer surcharges require all stakeholders responsible for drainage in the catchment to resolve them together.

Our permit conditions for Bicester STW state:

“The discharge shall only occur when and only for as long as the flow passed forward is equal to or greater than the overflow setting indicated due to rainfall and/or snow melt.” and “Off-line storm storage must be fully utilised before a discharge occurs. It shall only fill when the flow passed forward is equal to or greater than the overflow setting indicated due to rainfall and/or snow melt and shall be emptied and its contents returned to the continuation flow as soon as reasonably practicable.”

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 places a responsibility on Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs), to manage flood risk from surface and groundwater, plus a duty on all Risk Management Authorities (RMAs), to cooperate regarding flood risk. In our role as an RMA, Thames Water will work with Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council and the Environment Agency to ensure that a collaborative approach can be developed to address the problems.

Thames Water also has a statutory obligation to comply with environmental legislation. The Water Framework

Directive establishes a strategic approach to managing the water environment, which the Environment Agency achieves through River Basin Management Plans and setting environmental objectives for groundwater and surface water. The environment is also protected from adverse effects of discharges of urban wastewater through the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, which requires us to improve and extend the sewerage system according to section 94 of the Water Industry Act (1991).

Anticipated unavoidable discharges

Within recent years there have been unavoidable sewage escapes in the network as a result of surcharging man-holes causing pollution.

We anticipate that this situation may continue until such time we are able to implement a long-term solution.

No mitigation in the form of temporary overflows has been undertaken in the system.

General outline plan & timescale

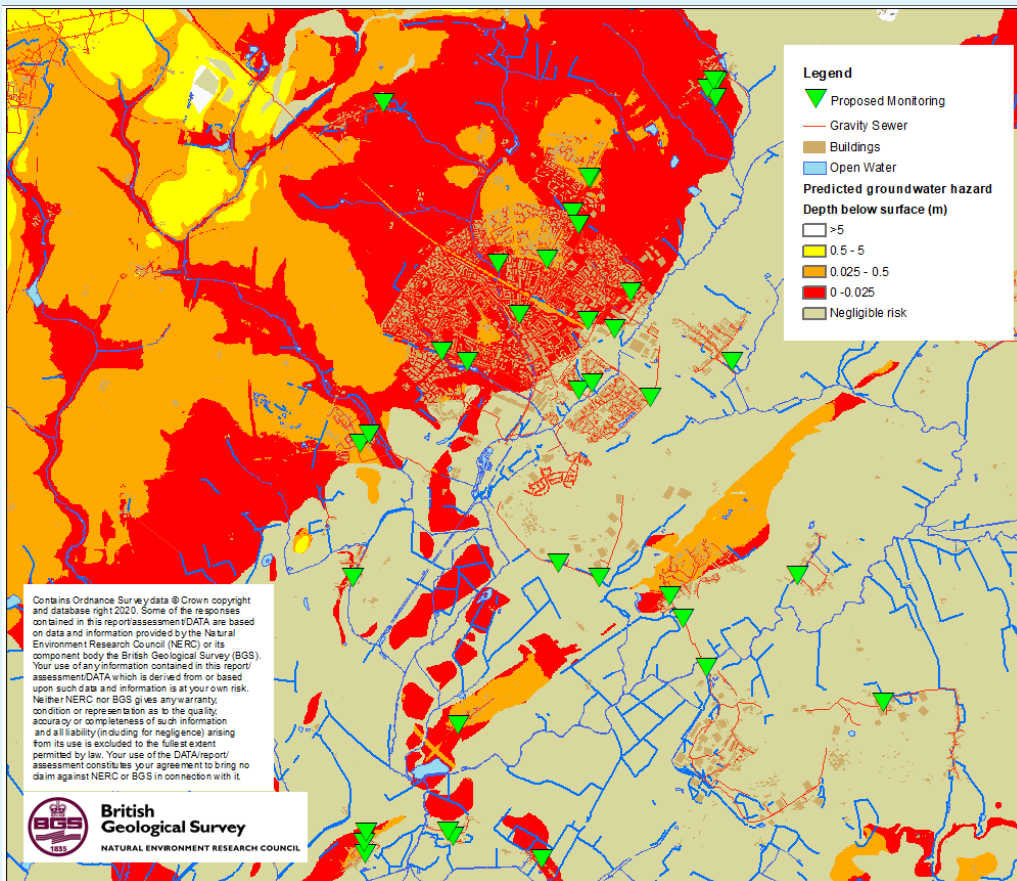


Figure 2.0 – Bicester monitoring plan area and infiltration zones

Key to bringing the impact of groundwater infiltration under control is an enhanced monitoring regime. We have identified zones and areas over which telemetered depth monitoring will be installed. Figure 2.0 presents a plan of currently proposed installation locations.

Complimenting the flow [at the treatment works] and depth measurement [in the sewer network] we will use pumping station run time data, rainfall data, river level data, and groundwater level data to create a full picture of movement and source of flows around the catchment.

Zones of Groundwater Risk

We engaged with JBA Consulting to develop plans for Bicester that identify zones of groundwater risk, see Figure 2.0. These zones are modelled areas where the groundwater has been determined to be above the sewer and hence pose a potential risk for groundwater ingress.

The sewer depth monitors referred to earlier will be sited in and around these zones to verify and calibrate the risk in each of the zones.

If following the proposal to the sealing in part or wholly⁴ of the high risk zones, should it be required, the system is found to be still experiencing excessive infiltration we would then look to potentially seal 'private' laterals and/or drains along with starting to seal the medium to low risk zones.

This document sets out an unconstrained approach to resolving the impact of groundwater infiltration within the system. Investment to address infiltration will be assessed and prioritised against other drivers e.g. STW upgrades, both in the catchment and across the region at each price review.

With this plan we remain committed to minimising the impact of groundwater on the sewerage system in Bicester.

Our general medium to long term plan is therefore to apply a hierarchy to sealing the sewer as follows:

Activity	When	Description
Model Zones	2020/21	JBA have been engaged to undertake modelling activities to identify the areas (zones) to be targeted for sealing in the 56 systems identified as being impacted by infiltration in the Thames Water region.
Install monitors	2021-2023	Monitoring plans are being developed to help calibrate and validate the zones. Each year completeness / coverage monitors will be reviewed and added to / or modified as necessary.
Calibrate zones	Refined each year	Following each winter, we intend to review the data from the monitors and if necessary, redefine the zones.
Look & Lift	Each winter	The look & lift surveys have two purposes, firstly to compliment the monitoring and secondly to identify 'quick fixes' that we would address through our normal capital maintenance.
CCTV	2020-2023	Required to confirm sewer condition and provide information to assist with costing any sewer lining.

⁴ Decision of extent of sealing will be based on outcomes of works undertaken to date, result of monitoring and successful submission of our plans for investment.

Activity	When	Description
Minor works	2020-2023	As mentioned, if we detect minor works being required, we will look to resolve these as and when we find them.
PR24 / Price Review	2023/24	Ideally through monitoring and on-going investigations work towards managing the infiltration risk, in AMP7, will be successful. However, in the absence of evidence justifying the need not to undertake sealing of the high-risk zone this is to be included as part of PR24 investment plan. This work will be subject to Cost Benefit Analysis and Best Technical Knowledge Not Entailing Excessive Cost (BTKNEEC assessments).
High risk zone sealing	2025-30	Sealing of high-risk zone undertaken subject to need being demonstrated.

Bicester Infiltration Management Plan

As detailed above the impact of infiltration is experienced in the network and at the STW.

Our approach to the resolution of infiltration impacting the Bicester sewerage system is outlined below.

High level approach statement

For Bicester our approach to tackling infiltration will be undertaken as follows:

1. We will investigate the network with a view to identifying sources of ingress of infiltration that are cost effective⁵ to address. To investigate the network, we have:
 - Undertaken a desktop analysis to determine infiltration high to low risk zones (October 2020);
 - Undertaken sample CCTV in the high to low risk zones to assess the general asset health of the sewers and manholes (ongoing).

To investigate the network, we will:

- Install monitoring to back up the analysis and to aide focusing of locations for identification of infiltration (2021 to 2023). Each year we will assess the completeness of monitoring and if required add to or modify the current locations.

We will also review results of Winter 2019/20 and 2020/21 with historic data to build up evidence to support interventions in the network (Autumn).

2. Where interventions can be undertaken as part of normal sewer maintenance activities these will be communicated and progressed.
3. If significant investment is identified as being required, then this will need to be considered in terms of relative need compared to other systems being investigated for infiltration reduction. However, where viable opportunities are identified these will be included in our AMP9 (2030-35) programme of investment. Significant investment needs may need to be included in our future investment planning cycles.

⁵ Assessment of cost effectiveness is based on assessment of the ratio of the cost of a solution to the monetised benefit gained from implementing the solution i.e. reduction in flood/pollution risk and/or reduced operating costs.

Investigations

As mentioned above JBA Consulting have been supporting by undertaking an exercise involving assessing groundwater elevation data to determine which areas of the network are potentially below the groundwater table during high groundwater periods.

Site investigations, undertaken by Dene-Tech and our Customer Field Services (Thames Water Operations) have included 'look & lift' surveys, CCTV and where necessary dye tracing to confirm connectivity.

A table of the work undertaken is included in the appendix to this report.

Monitoring

Sewer Depth Monitors will be installed in the catchment in between 2021 and 2023. These devices are telemetered and provide real time data on the level of flow in the sewer.

The purpose of these units is to act as alerts for high groundwater impact in the sewer, calibration of the zones of infiltration risk and to demonstrate benefit gained from work undertaken to reduce infiltration. They will also provide evidence in the future of further need to manage the impact of infiltration.

Mitigation

On occasions to avoid flooding of properties or to manage the risk of damage to the environment we may undertake tankering from (manholes) points on the network, make use of pumps to manage flows or deploy settlement tanks to part treat sewage before release to the environment.

With regard to Bicester we do not envisage needing to undertake mitigation work within the network.

Updates

Work on the Groundwater infiltration management plan will continue, and we will aim to provide updates annually by the end of October each year.

Appendix

Groundwater infiltration potential analysis

The sewer network classified by the groundwater infiltration risk zones. The lengths of sewers within these zones are presented in the table below.

Risk category	Description	Length (km)	Percentage
High	Predicted groundwater extreme >1m above pipe invert	83.20	56.8
Medium	Predicted groundwater extreme 0-1m above pipe invert	4.18	2.9
Low	Predicted groundwater extreme 0-1m below pipe invert	10.99	7.5
Very Low	Predicted groundwater extreme >1m below pipe invert	48.12	32.8
Total		146.48 ⁶	100.0

In addition, the table below presents the surface water flood risk classification for manholes within the catchment.

Manholes by Surface Water Inundation Risk Category

Risk category	Description	Number	Percentage
High	Inundation risk in 3.3% AEP fluvial or pluvial event	307	5.8
Medium	Inundation risk in 1% AEP fluvial or pluvial event	302	5.7
Low	Inundation risk in 0.1% AEP fluvial or pluvial event	890	16.8
Very Low	All other manholes	3796	71.7
Total		5295	100.0

14 ⁶Total of sewer length is for length of mapped sewers only and will not include unmapped S105a transferred sewers in all cases.

Investigations & remedial work undertaken since 2019/20 and future plans

At the time of writing we are currently on site undertaking lift and look and CCTV surveys in the Bicester system. A summary of findings will be provided in the next update of this report.

Glossary of terms

AEP – Annual Exceedance Potential

AMP – Asset Management Plan

CCTV – Closed Circuit Television

EA - Environment Agency

IRP – Infiltration Reduction Plans

MH – Manhole

STW – Sewage Treatment Works

WINEP – Water Industry National Environment Programme

Addendum – Annual Update 2022

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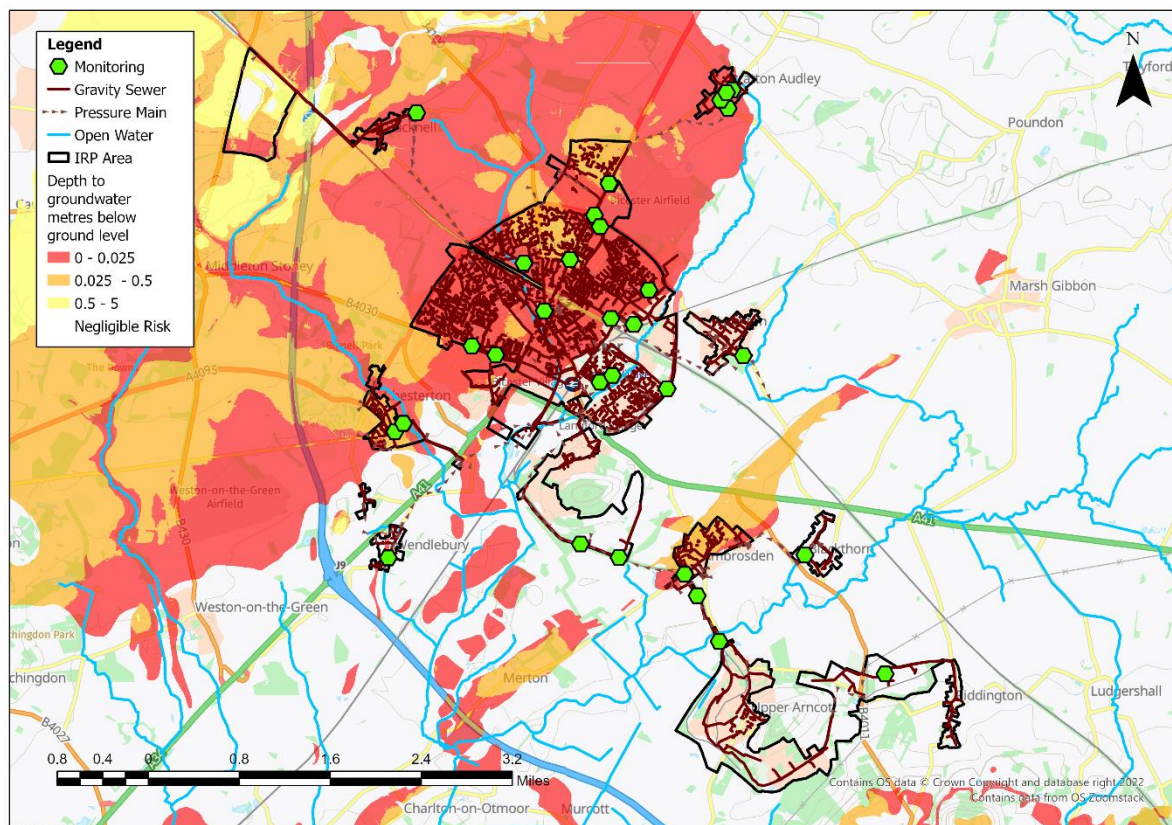
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Overview

This addendum to the Bicester Groundwater Impacted System Management Plan 2021 (GISMP) provides an update on performance/work undertaken in the Hydrological Year October 2021 to September 2022. The key points covered include:

- Hydrological conditions
- How the sewerage system has performed over this period
- Mitigation / remedial measures progressed over the last year and being planned
- Summary and plan for 2022/23

Figure 1 – Bicester Monitoring Plan



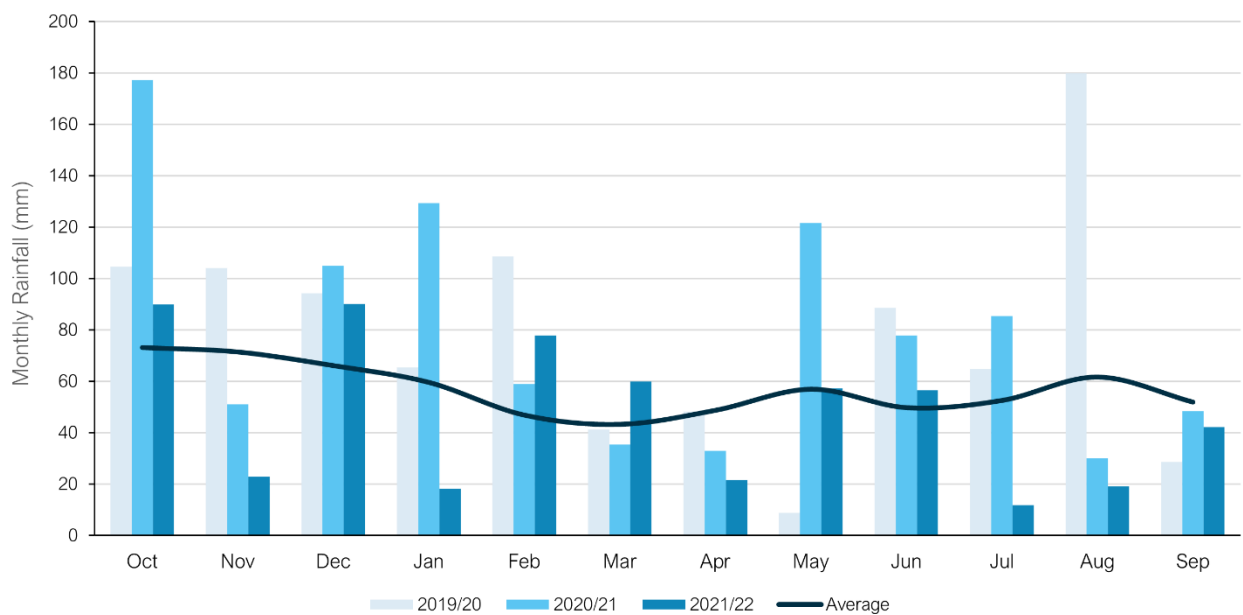
Hydrological Review – 2021-2022

This section summarises the hydrological conditions within the Bicester catchment within the period under investigation and provides comparison against previous year’s performance to put the annual performance into context. The hydrological review has been undertaken based on the Hydrological Year which runs October 1st to September 30th.

Catchment Rainfall

Representative Radar rainfall has been used to generate monthly data at catchment level for comparison with average data generated by local Met Office Weather Station Records. Figure 2 presents the comparison of this data for the last three hydrological years to support longer term trends within the local system.

Figure 2 – Monthly Rainfall Performance



Average Values taken from Met Office Weather Station at Oxford based on the period 1991-2020

The total rainfall for the 2021/22 hydrological year is 15% below the annual average total. Total rainfall values are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3 –Total Rainfall Based on Hydrological Year

Average (mm)	2019/20 (mm)	2020/21 (mm)	2021/22 (mm)
682	937	953	576

Groundwater / Local River Level

The Bicester catchment is situated in the Cotswolds East and Thame water resources area. The extended Bicester catchment is situated across a number of different rock types within its base geology; however the predominant rock type is sedimentary bedrock within the Cornbrash Limestone and Peterborough Mudstone formations. Part of the catchment, within the White Limestone Formation, is part of a principal aquifer.

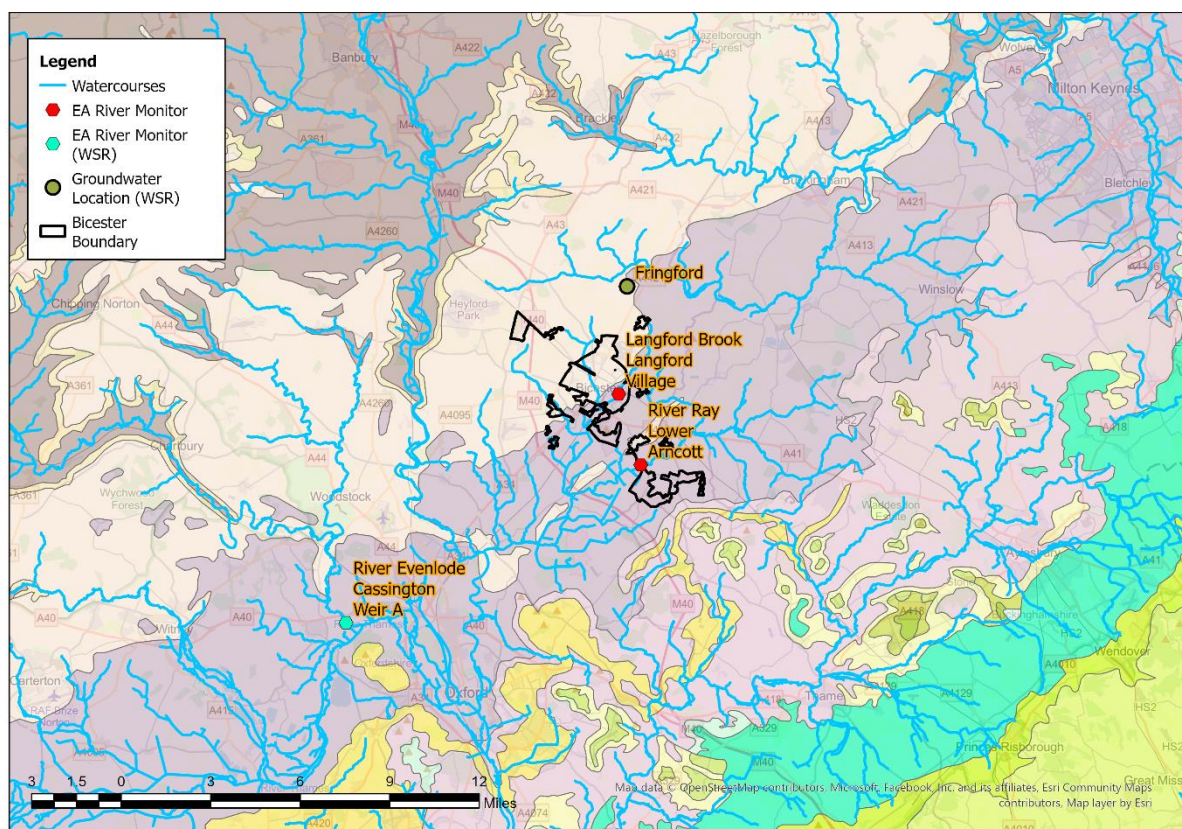
The Environment Agency has gauging stations on local watercourses measuring stage and observation boreholes measuring groundwater levels locally to the catchment which can be used to provide indicative local groundwater performance.

From previous investigations we have identified the following sites are good indicators of groundwater levels within the catchment.

- River Ray, Lower Arncott.
- Langford Brook, Langford Village.

These sites are illustrated in the figure below, alongside the closest groundwater reference station and closest gauging station from the Water Situation Report.

Figure 4 – Local Monitoring Stations



The following figures represent the last three hydrological years of level information at the indicator sites to build a picture of the relative conditions prevalent in the current year. It is presented against both the daily total rainfall values for the catchment and a rolling 15 day total rainfall.

Figure 5A – River Ray, Lower Arccott

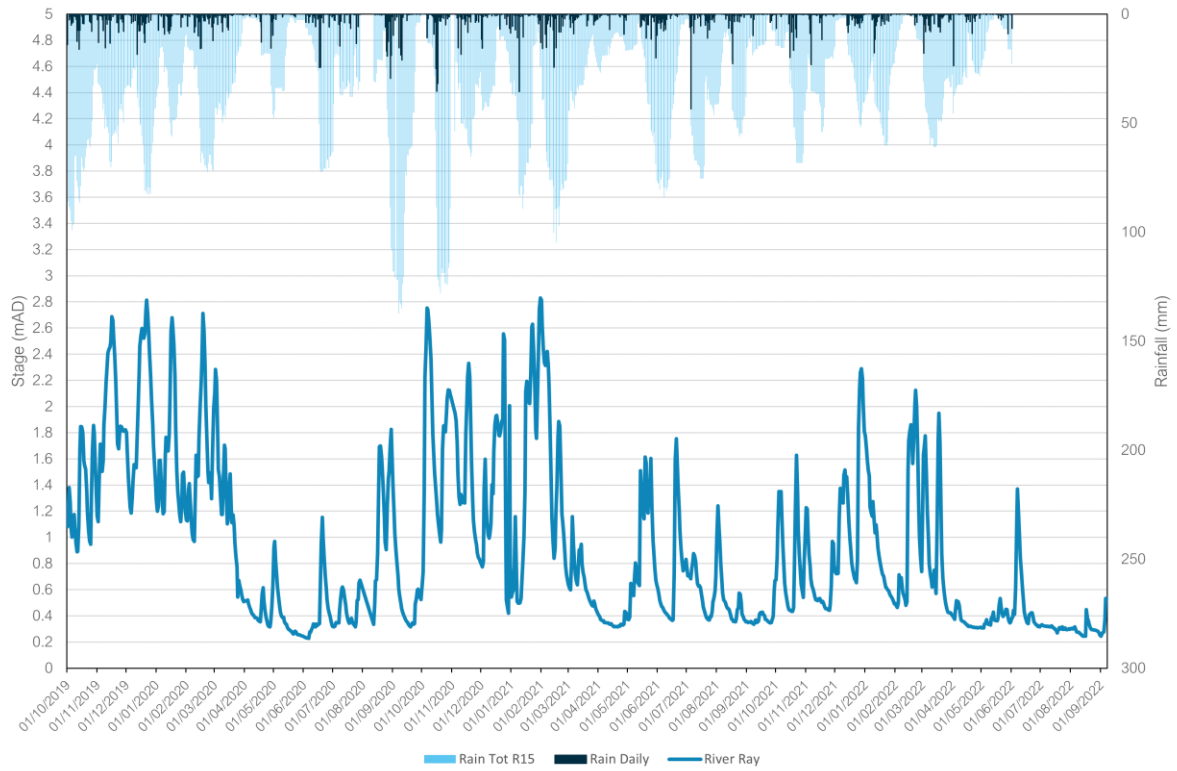
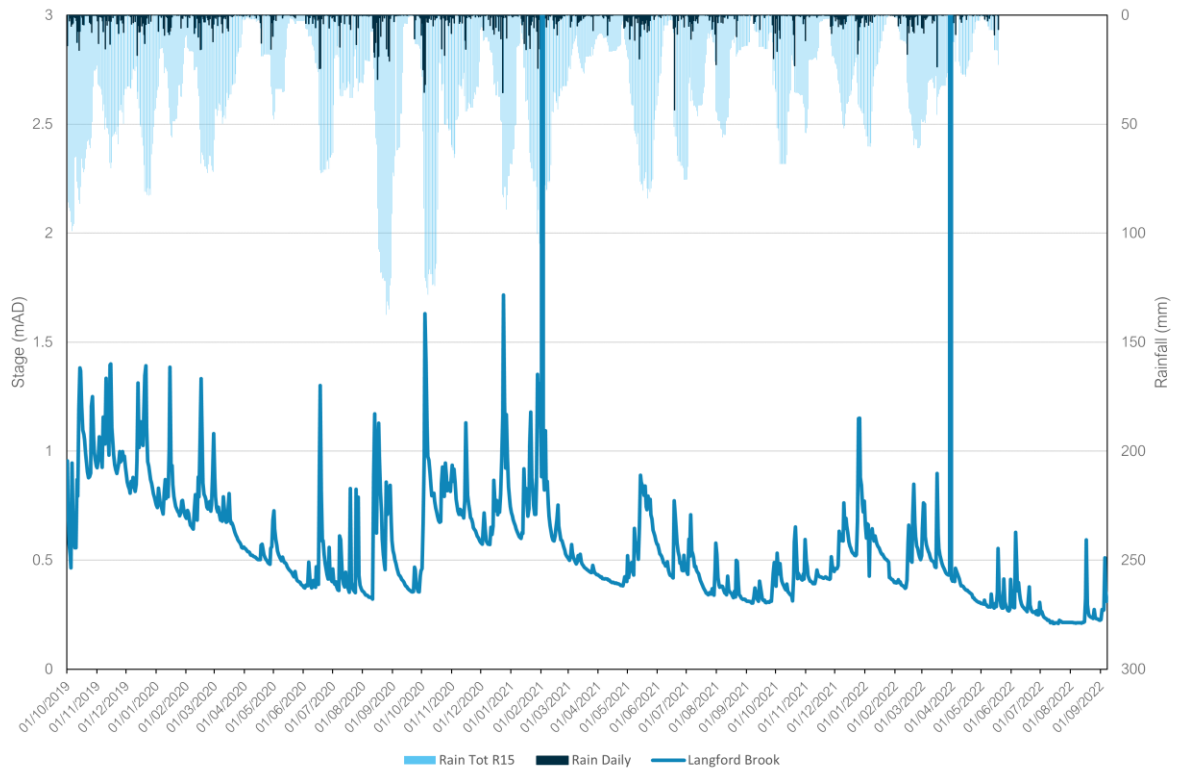
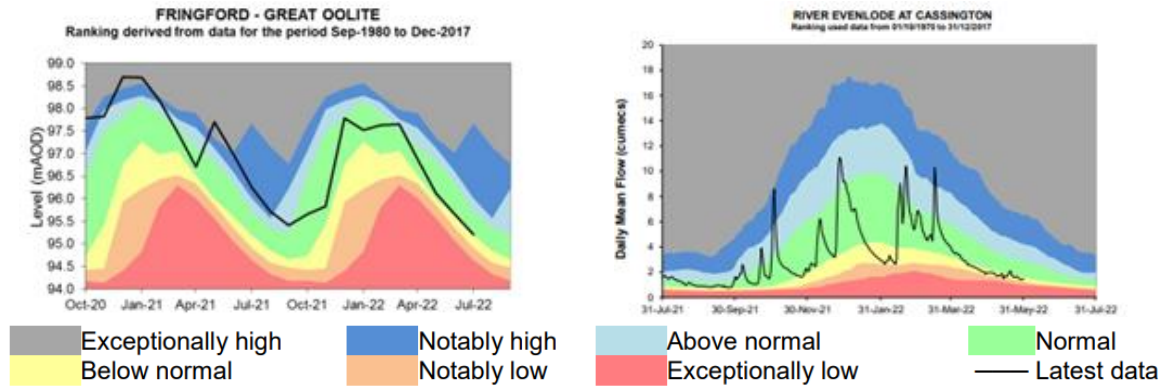


Figure 5B – Langford Brook, Langford Village



In addition to these specific stations, the wider groundwater context is illustrated in the Water Situation Report for Cotswolds East and Thame . The nearest groundwater reference station is Fringford. This site shows lower overall groundwater than the previous year. This can be seen in the figure below alongside the river indicator Cassington on the River Evenlode.

Figure 6 – Water Situation Report



Extract from - [Water Situation Report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Network Performance

Within the Bicester catchment there is one site detailed within the Environment Agency Consents Database which has an Event Duration Monitor (EDM) fitted.

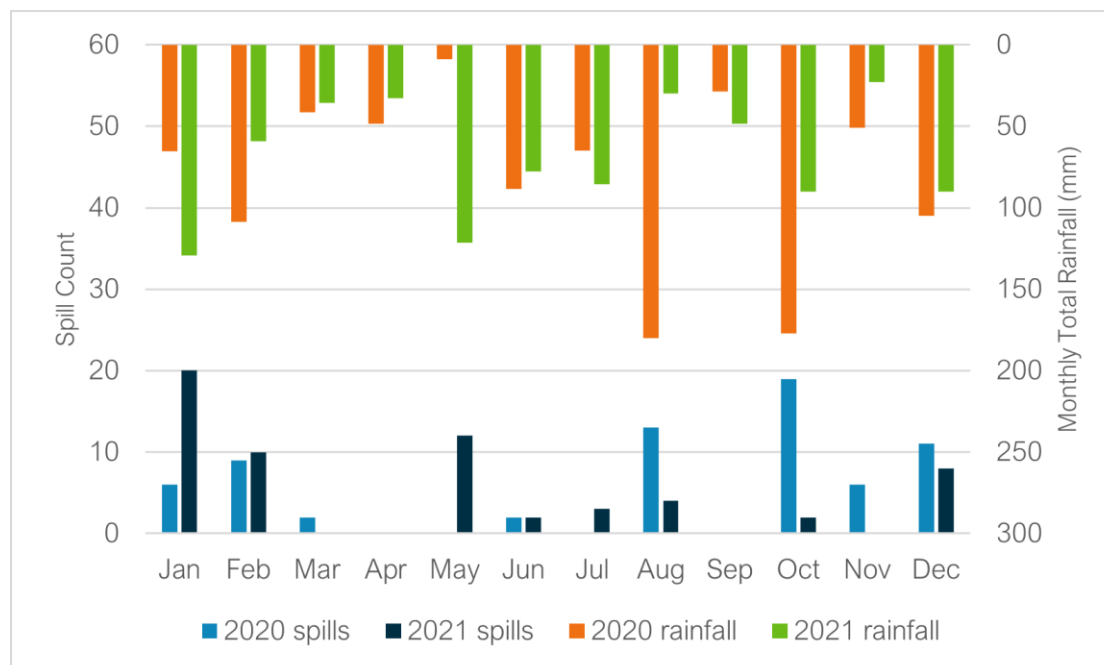
Table 7 below details the last 2 years performance of overflows within the catchment.

Table 7 – Event Duration Monitoring

Overflow	2020		2021	
	Spills	Duration (hours)	Spills	Duration (hours)
Bicester STW	68	1236.22	61	555.78

A critical part of the assessment of EDM performance and its relation to groundwater inundation is to review the month-on-month spill performance, against previous years and the monthly total rainfall values to give context to the performance. Note a spill frequency of 68 is stated for 2020, which is lower than the published spill count of 117. The data has been corrected and the revised spill count of 68 will be included in the re-submission to the EA. Similarly, a spill frequency of 61 is stated for 2021 which is slightly lower than the published spill count of 63. The revised spill count of 61 will be included in the re-submission to the EA. The EDM for Bicester was only operational 87% of the time in 2021, which may account for some variation in frequency numbers. Figure 8 below presents the EDM performance trend and rainfall for recent years.

Figure 8 – EDM Monthly Performance



The trend in spill performance across the two recorded years does show variation in spills, although these spills occur throughout all seasons in the 2020-2021 time period. Therefore, there will need to be a further review of the potential relationship between rainfall, elevated groundwater levels and spill frequency in the 2022/2023 hydrological year.

Investigations & Interventions

This section details the activities that have been undertaken within the catchment within the Hydrological Year 2021-22.

Monitor Installations

The sewer depth monitor (SDM) programme supports long term groundwater understanding within GISMP catchments. Currently, there are a total of 22 monitors installed within the Bicester catchment. There are currently 9 further monitor installs planned.

The data from these will be cross-referenced with other long-term records (where available) within the catchment.

Remediation Works Undertaken this Hydrological Year

Table 9 below provides a summary of the investigations and remediation works undertaken or planned within the Bicester catchment in the 2021-22 Hydrological Year.

Table 9 – Works Undertaken in the 2021/22 Hydrological Year

Investigation/ remediation type	Number/ length undertaken
CCTV survey	402 metres
Look and lift survey	1 manhole
Sewer lining	58 metres
Patch lining	N/A
Manhole sealing	N/A
Manhole sealing plates	N/A
Manhole covers and frames replaced	9 covers/ frames replaced

Although the seasonal trends in groundwater have been low in comparison with previous years and the SDM installations are generally not showing significant groundwater presence, targeted surveys and appropriate remedial action have been undertaken where groundwater levels have allowed.

Summary

Rainfall in the Bicester catchment over the 2021/22 hydrological year has been below average, with groundwater levels in the aquifer beneath Bicester not reaching the levels seen in previous years. Historical review does not suggest a clear relationship between groundwater and spills. The 2022/23 performance will be reviewed to confirm this.

Lift and look and CCTV surveys will continue throughout the remaining wet winter with the aim of finding further priority locations for remediation and investigating/justifying the need for future larger scale lining as part of our Price Review (PR) process if required.

Addendum - Annual Update 2023

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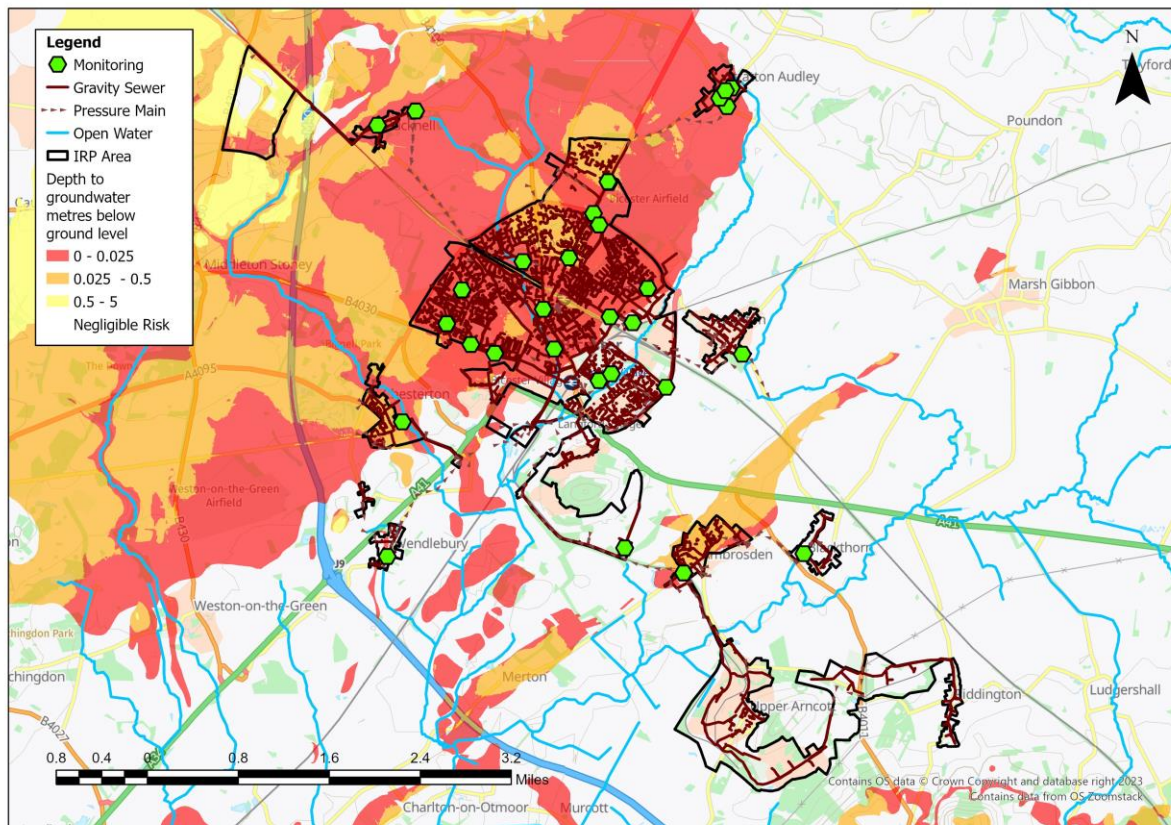
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Overview

This addendum to the Bicester Groundwater Impacted System Management Plan 2021 (GISMP) provides an update on works undertaken in the Hydrological Year October 2022 to September 2023. The key points covered include:

- Hydrological conditions
- Performance of the sewerage system
- Mitigation / remedial measures progressed over the last year and those being planned
- Summary and plan for 2023/24

Figure 1 – Bicester Monitoring Plan



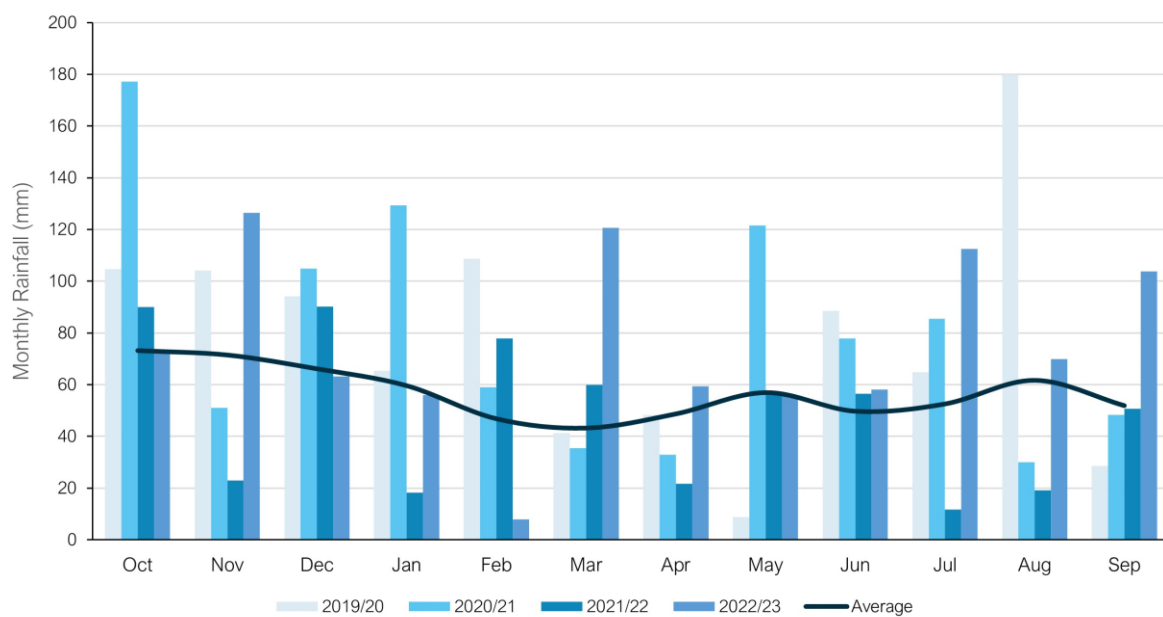
Hydrological Review – 2022-2023

This section summarises the hydrological conditions across the Bicester catchment within the period under investigation and provides comparison against previous year’s performance to put the annual performance into context. The hydrological review has been undertaken based on the Hydrological Year which runs October 1st to September 30th.

Catchment Rainfall

Representative Radar rainfall has been used to generate monthly data at catchment level for comparison with average data generated by local Met Office Weather Station Records. Figure 2 presents the comparison of this data for the last four hydrological years to support longer term trends within the local system.

Figure 2 – Monthly Rainfall Performance



Average Values taken from Met Office Weather Station at Oxford based on the period 1991-2020

The total rainfall for the 2022/23 hydrological year is 33% above the annual average total. Total rainfall values are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3 –Total Rainfall Based on Hydrological Year

Average (mm)	2019/20 (mm)	2020/21 (mm)	2021/22 (mm)	2022/23 (mm)
682	937	953	576	906

Groundwater / Local River Level

The Bicester catchment is situated in the Cotswolds East and Thame water resources area. The extended Bicester catchment is situated across a number of different rock types within its base geology; however the predominant rock type is sedimentary bedrock within the Cornbrash Limestone and Peterborough Mudstone formations. Part of the catchment, within the White Limestone Formation, is part of a principal aquifer.

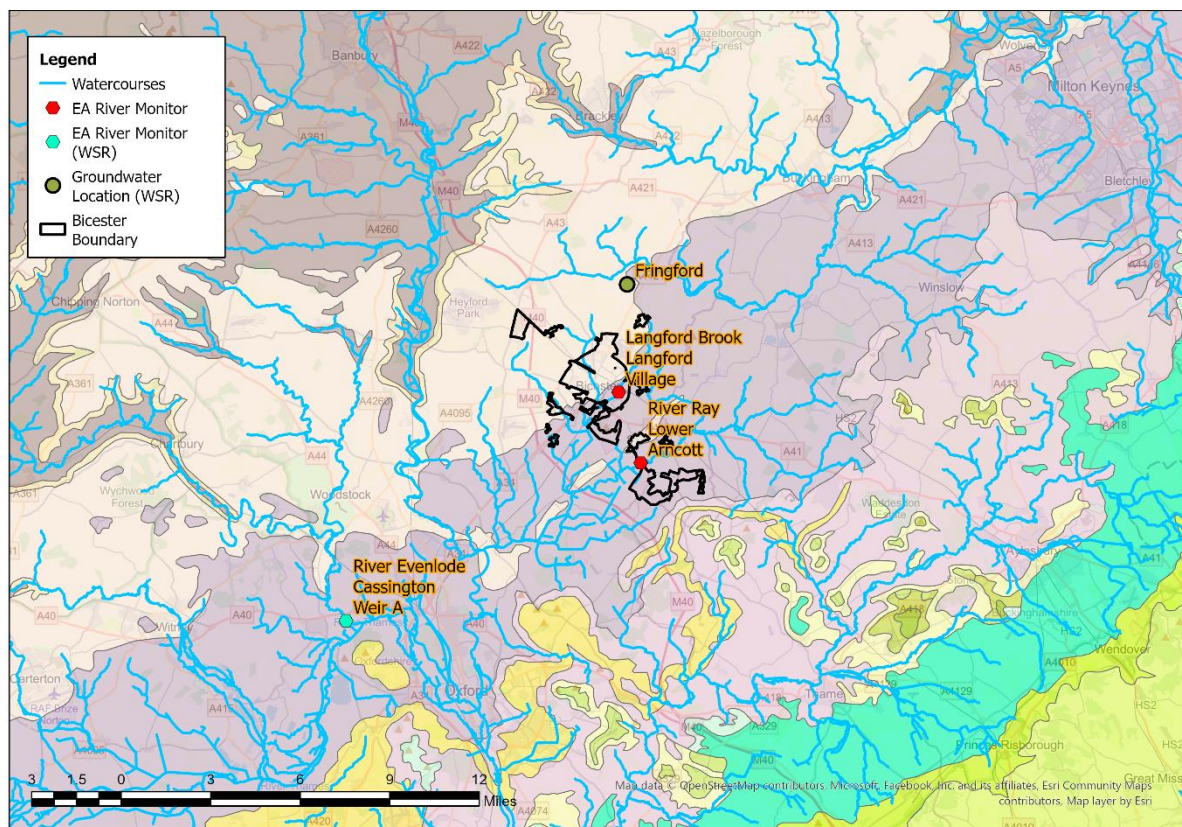
The Environment Agency has gauging stations on local watercourses measuring stage, and observation boreholes (OBH) measuring groundwater levels locally to the catchment which can be used to provide indicative local groundwater performance.

From previous investigations we have identified the following sites as good indicators of groundwater levels within the catchment.

- River Ray, Lower Arncott.
- Langford Brook, Langford Village.

These sites are illustrated in the figure below, alongside the closest groundwater reference station and closest gauging station from the Water Situation Report.

Figure 4 – Local Monitoring Stations



The following figures represent the last three hydrological years of level information at the indicator sites to build a picture of the relative conditions prevalent in the current year. It is presented against both the daily total rainfall values for the catchment and a rolling 15 day total rainfall.

Figure 5A – River Ray, Lower Arccott

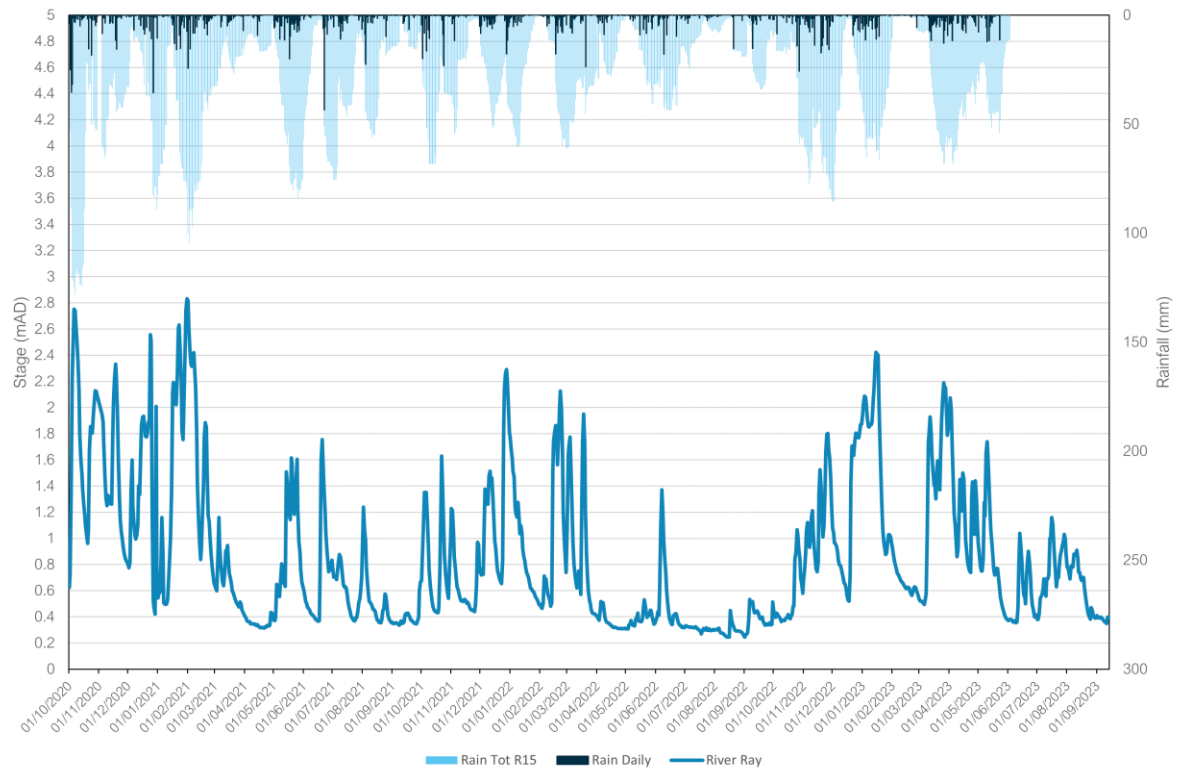
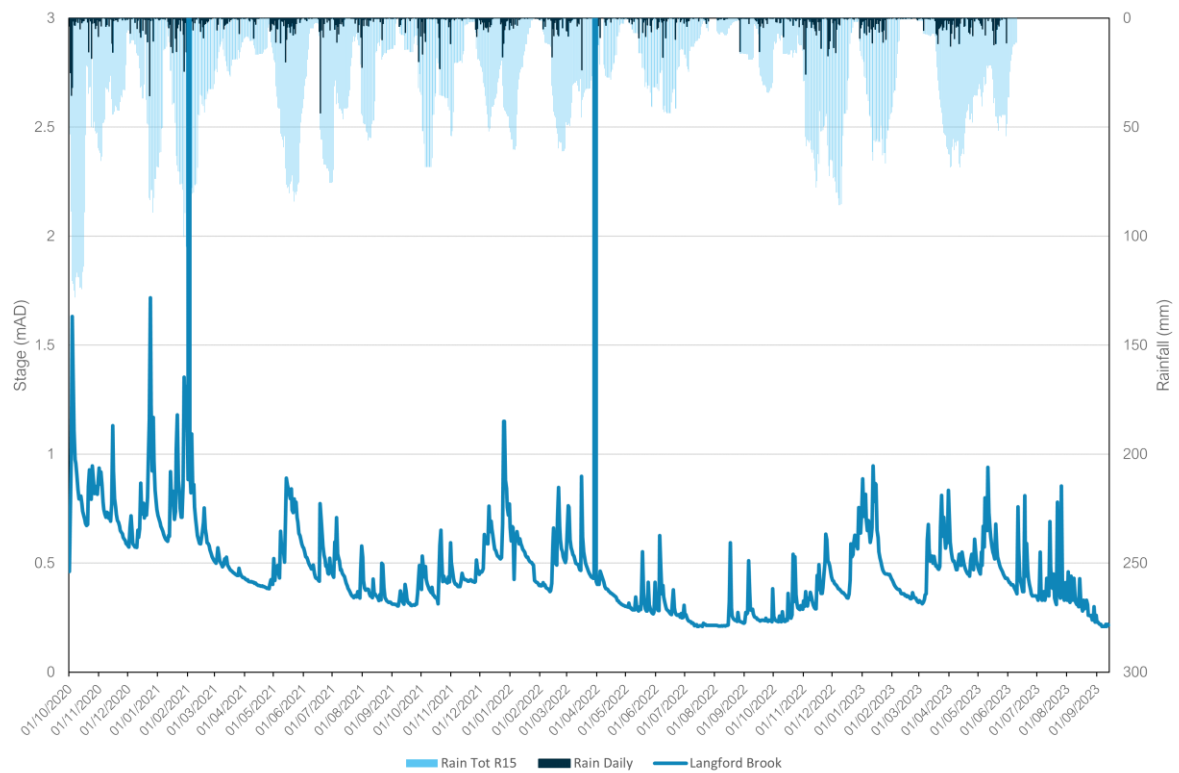
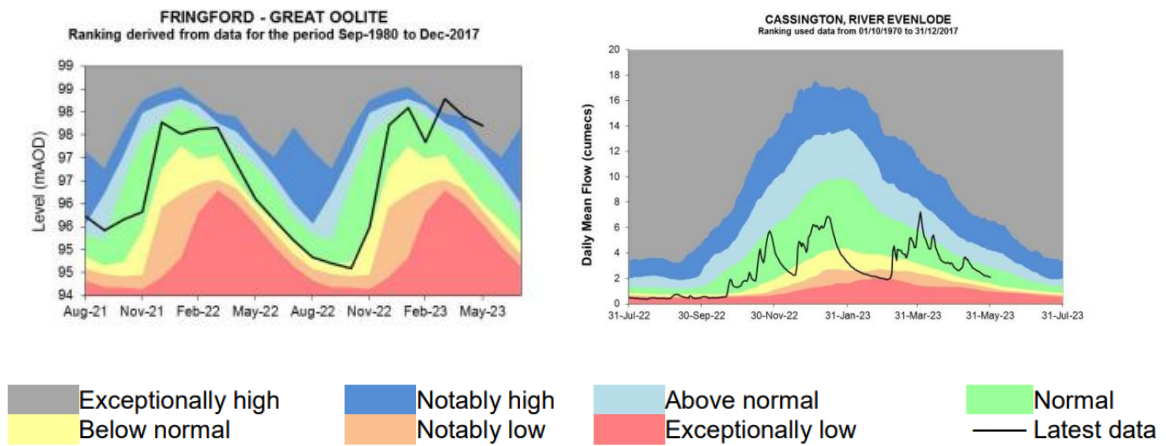


Figure 5B – Langford Brook, Langford Village



In addition to these specific stations, the wider groundwater context is illustrated in the Water Situation Report for Cotswolds East and Thame. The nearest groundwater reference station is Fringford. This site shows groundwater levels generally at normal or around below normal levels throughout 2022. Groundwater levels have been observed at normal, above normal, notably high, and exceptionally high levels in 2023. This can be seen in the figure below alongside the river indicator located at Cassington on the River Evenlode.

Figure 6 – Water Situation Report



Extract from - [Water Situation Report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Network Performance

Within the Bicester catchment there is one site detailed within the Environment Agency Consents Database which has an Event Duration Monitor (EDM) fitted.

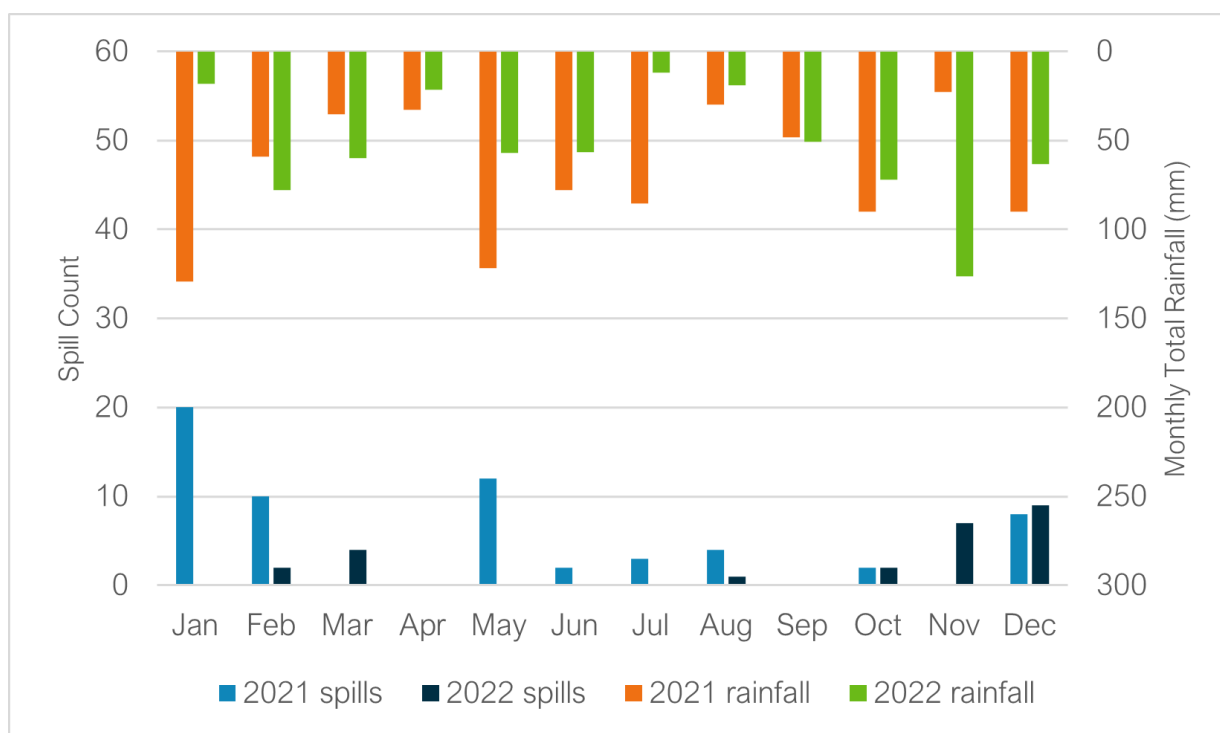
Table 7 below details the last 2 years performance of overflows within the catchment.

Table 7 – Event Duration Monitoring

Overflow	2021		2022	
	Spills	Duration (hours)	Spills	Duration (hours)
Bicester STW	61	555.78	25	226.28

A critical part of the assessment of EDM performance and its relation to groundwater infiltration, is to review the month-on-month spill performance against previous years and the monthly total rainfall values to give context to the performance. Note, that the spill count of 61 reported for 2021 is slightly lower than the value of 63 contained in the Annual Return. The spill count has been revised/revalidated, and the value of 61 is the post-validation value. Note also, the EDM was only operational for 87% of the time in 2021, which may have impacted the recorded spill count. Figure 8 below presents the EDM performance trend and rainfall for recent years.

Figure 8 – EDM Monthly Performance



The data suggests a wider relationship between rainfall, elevated groundwater levels, and spill frequency. Despite a higher rainfall total in February 2022, significantly more spills were recorded at Bicester STW in February 2021. The indicator site data shown in Figure 5, suggests groundwater levels in the catchment were higher in February 2021. The occurrence of spills during the summer months, also suggests spills occurring at Bicester STW during prolonged or intense rainfall events, outside of periods of significantly elevated groundwater levels.

Investigations & Interventions

This section details the activities that have been undertaken within the catchment within the Hydrological Year 2022-23.

Monitor Installations

The sewer depth monitor (SDM) programme supports long term groundwater understanding within GISMP catchments. Currently, there are a total of 30 monitors installed within the Bicester catchment. There are currently no further monitor installs planned.

The data from these will be cross-referenced with other long-term records (where available) within the catchment.

Remediation Works Undertaken this Hydrological Year

Table 9 below provides a summary of the investigations and remediation works undertaken or planned within the Bicester catchment in the 2022-23 Hydrological Year, as well as works undertaken in the 2021-22 Hydrological Year.

Table 9 – Works Undertaken in the 2022/23 Hydrological Year & in the 2021/22 Hydrological Year

Investigation/ remediation type	Number/ length undertaken 21/22	Number/ length undertaken 22/23
CCTV survey	402 metres	148 metres
Look and lift survey	1 survey	7 surveys
Sewer lining	58 metres	N/A
Patch lining	N/A	N/A
Manhole sealing	N/A	1 manhole
Manhole sealing plates	N/A	N/A
Manhole covers and frames replaced	9 covers/ frames replaced	N/A

Bicester STW has also been upgraded at a cost of more than £8 million. This scheme provided increased treatment capacity, reducing the need for untreated discharges to the environment. The scheme was completed in 2022.

Summary

Indicator site data suggests groundwater levels in the Bicester catchment were generally lower in 2022 than in 2021, with EDM data indicative of the role of groundwater infiltration on spills in the catchment. This hydrological year, indicator site data suggests groundwater levels have generally been higher than the previous hydrological year, and EDM data for 2023 will be analysed once available to continue to examine the relationship between groundwater levels and overflow spills in the catchment.

Lift and look and CCTV surveys will be undertaken in remaining wet winter periods if conditions allow. The aim of this is to find further priority locations for remediation and investigating/justifying the need for future larger scale lining as part of our Price Review (PR) process if required.

Addendum - Annual Update 2024

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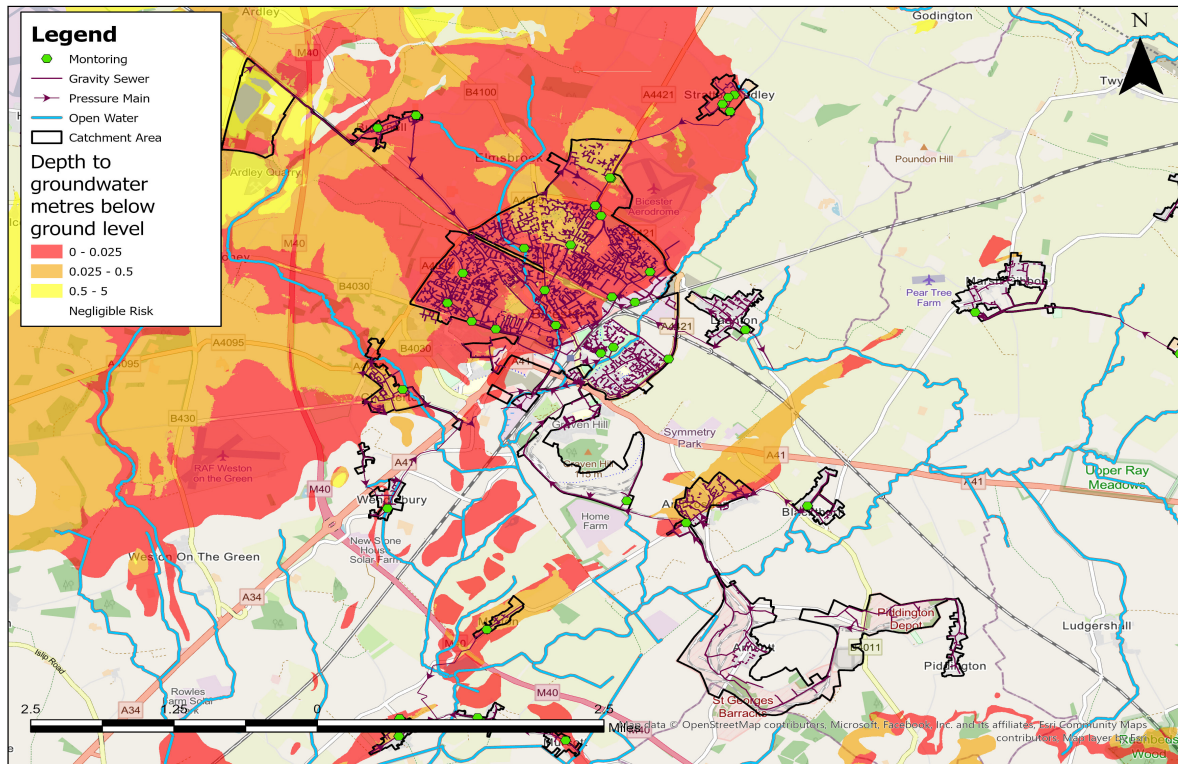
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Overview

This addendum to the Bicester Groundwater Impacted System Management Plan 2021 (GISMP) provides an update on performance/work undertaken in the Hydrological Year October 2023 to September 2024. The key points covered include:

- Hydrological conditions
- Performance of the sewerage system
- Mitigation / remedial measures progressed over the last year and those being planned
- Summary and plan for 2024/25

Figure 1 – Bicester Monitoring Plan



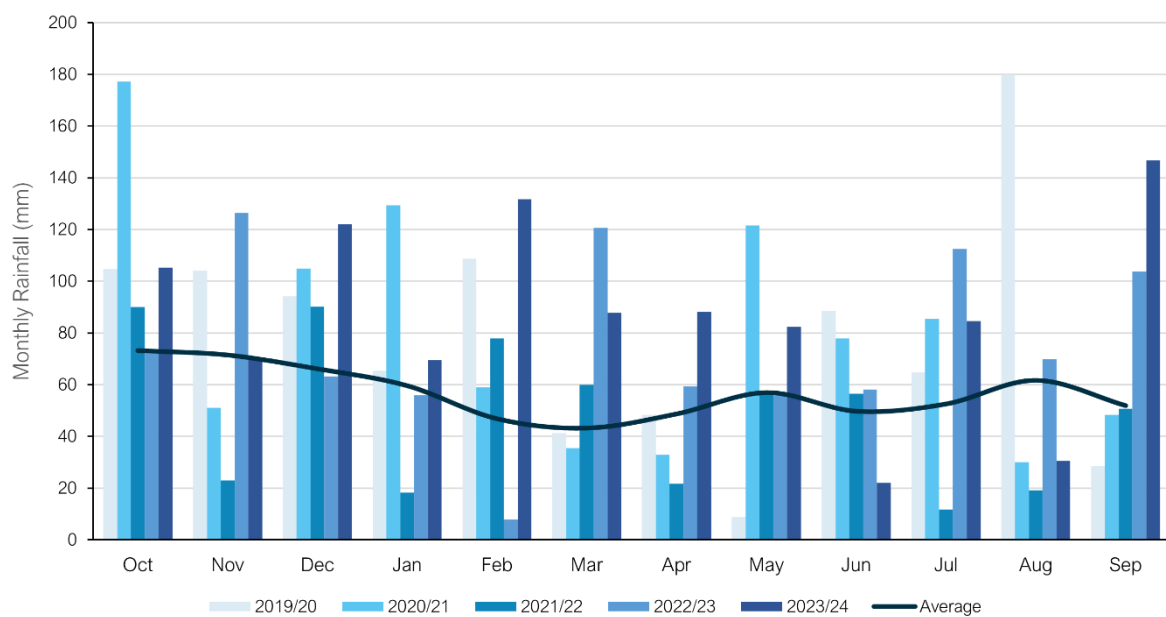
Hydrological Review – 2023-2024

This section summarises the hydrological conditions across the Bicester catchment within the period under investigation and provides comparison against previous year’s performance to put the annual performance into context. The hydrological review has been undertaken based on the Hydrological Year which runs October 1st to September 30th.

Catchment Rainfall

Representative Radar rainfall has been used to generate monthly data at catchment level for comparison with average data generated by local Met Office Weather Station Records. Figure 2 presents the comparison of this data for the last five hydrological years to support longer term trends within the local system.

Figure 2 – Monthly Rainfall Data



Average Values taken from Met Office Weather Station at Oxford based on the period 1991-2020

The total rainfall for the 2023/24 hydrological year is 53% above the annual average total. Total rainfall values are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Total Rainfall Based on Hydrological Year

Average (mm)	2019/20 (mm)	2020/21 (mm)	2021/22 (mm)	2022/23 (mm)	2023/24 (mm)
682	937	953	576	906	1041

Groundwater / Local River Level

The Bicester catchment is situated in the Cotswolds East and Thame water resources area. The extended Bicester catchment is situated across a number of different rock types within its base geology; however, the predominant rock type is sedimentary bedrock within the Cornbrash Limestone and Peterborough Mudstone formations. Part of the catchment, within the White Limestone Formation, is part of a principal aquifer.

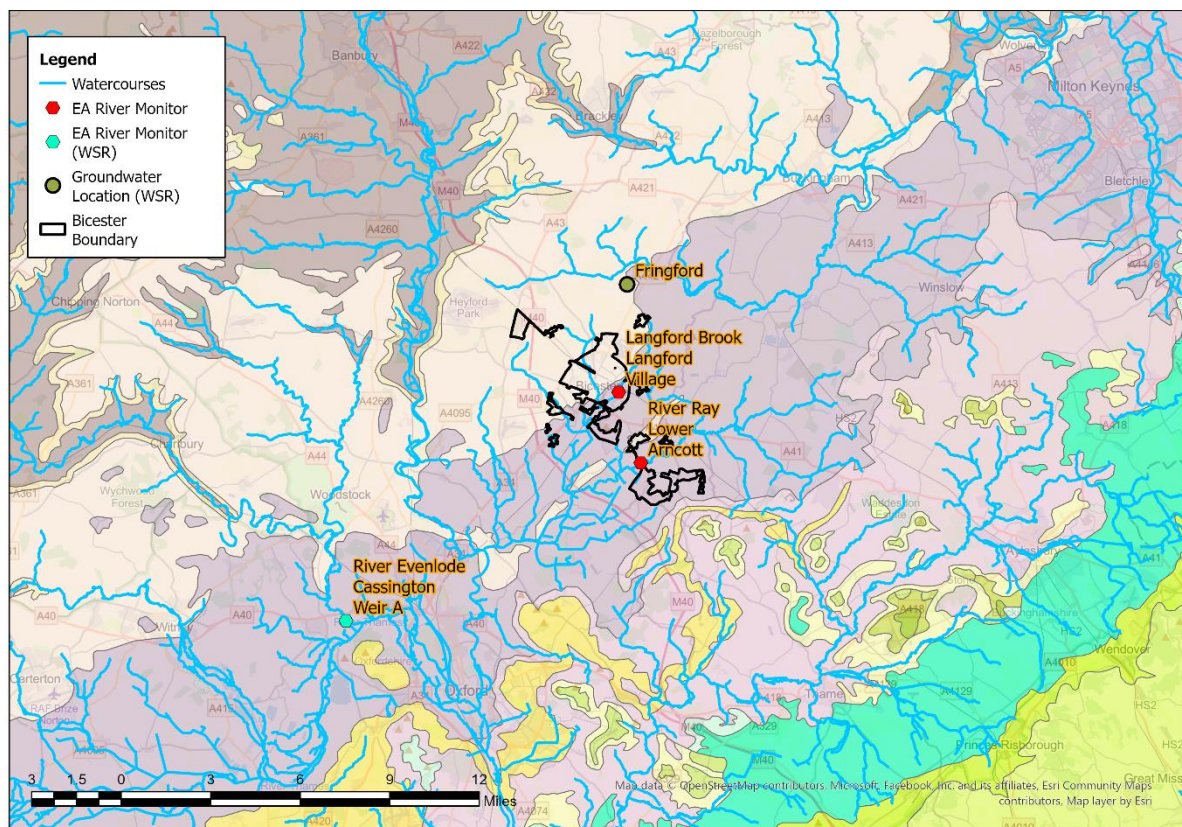
The Environment Agency has gauging stations on local watercourses measuring stage, and observation boreholes (OBH) measuring groundwater levels locally to the catchment which can be used to provide indicative local groundwater performance.

From previous investigations we have identified the following sites as good indicators of groundwater levels within the catchment.

- River Ray, Lower Arncott.
- Langford Brook, Langford Village.

These sites are illustrated in Figure 4, alongside the closest groundwater reference station and closest gauging station from the Water Situation Report.

Figure 4 – Local Monitoring Stations



Figures 5A-5B represent the last three hydrological years of level information at the indicator sites to build a picture of the relative conditions prevalent in the current year. It is presented against both the daily total rainfall values for the catchment and a rolling 15 day total rainfall.

Figure 5A – River Ray, Lower Arccott

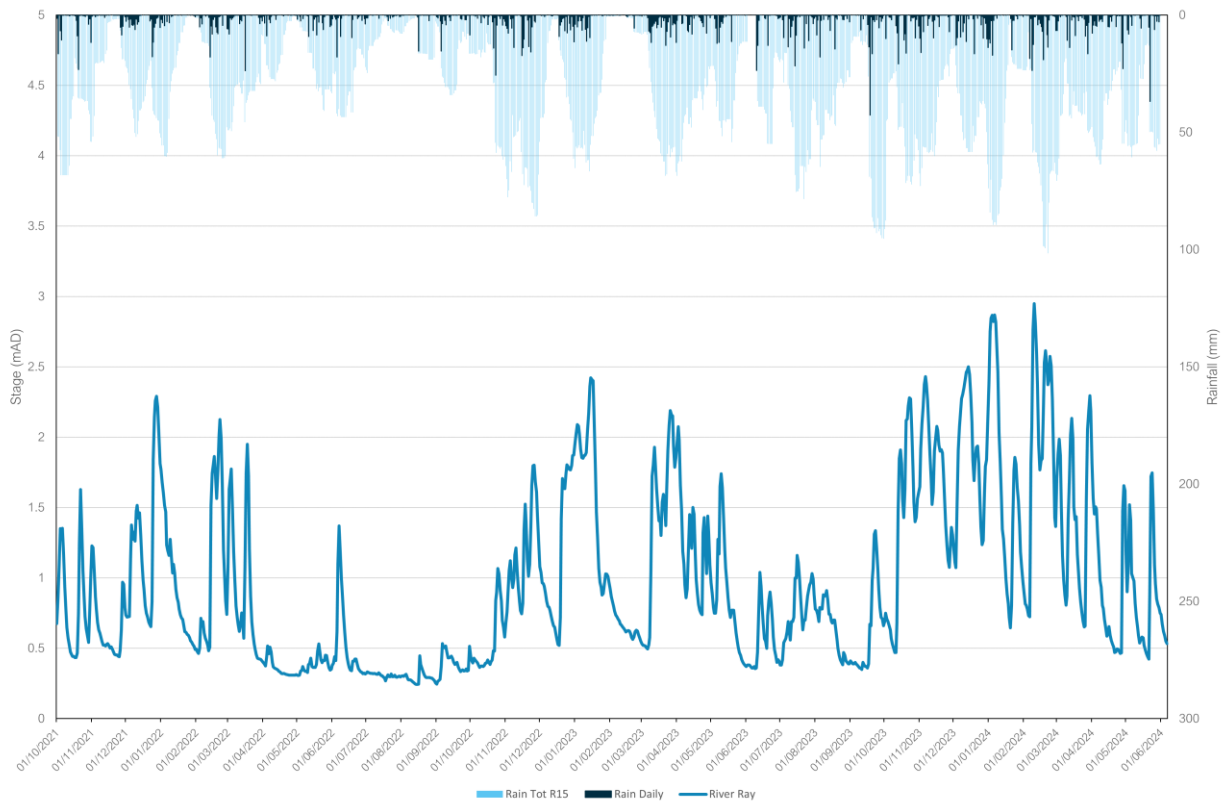
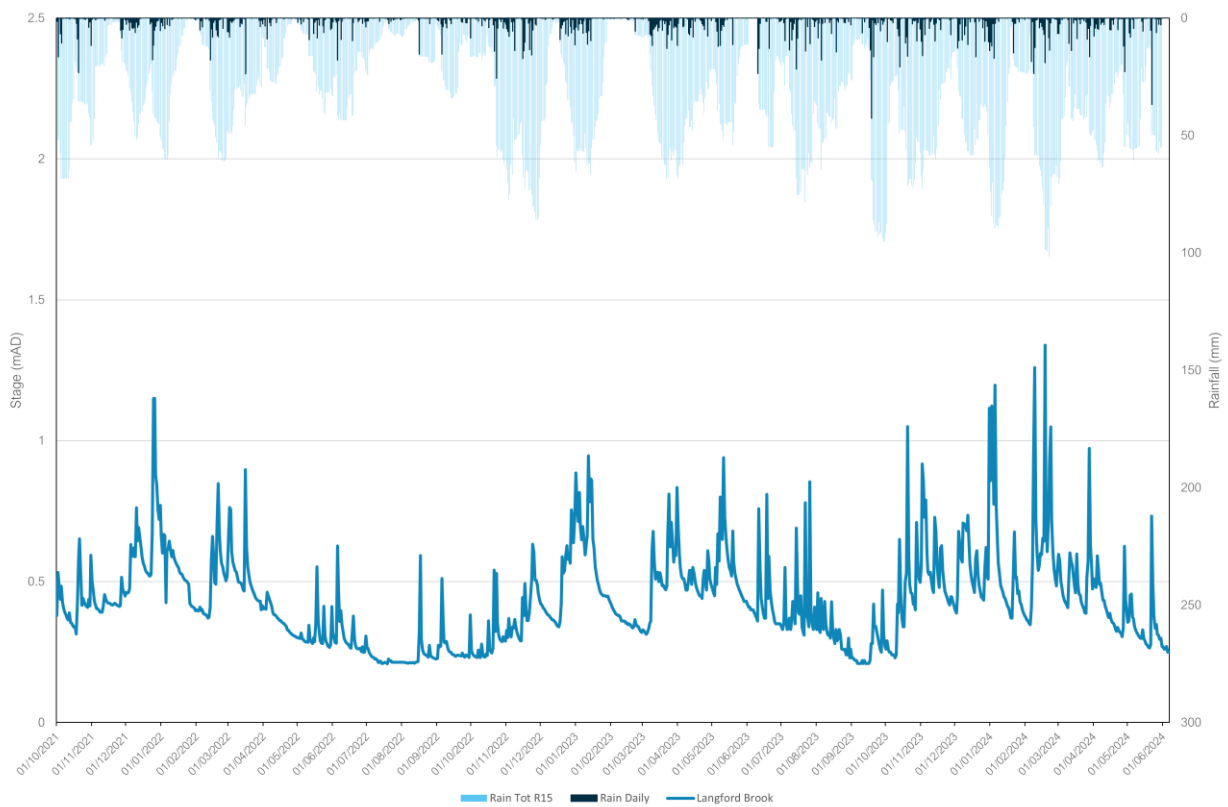
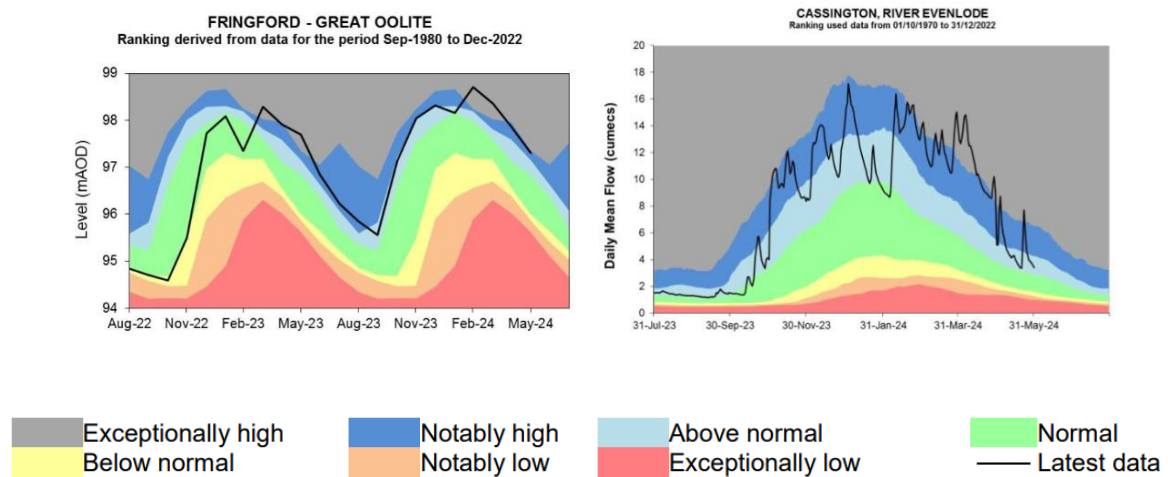


Figure 5B – Langford Brook, Langford Village



In addition to these specific stations, the wider groundwater context is illustrated in the Water Situation Report for Cotswolds East and Thame. The nearest groundwater reference station is Fringford. This site shows groundwater levels have been observed at above normal and notably high levels for most of the current hydrological year, reaching exceptionally high levels in early spring 2024. This can be seen in Figure 6 alongside the river indicator located at Cassington on the River Evenlode.

Figure 6 – Water Situation Report



Extract from - [Water Situation Report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Network Performance

Within the Bicester catchment there is one site detailed within the Environment Agency Consents Database which has an Event Duration Monitor (EDM) fitted.

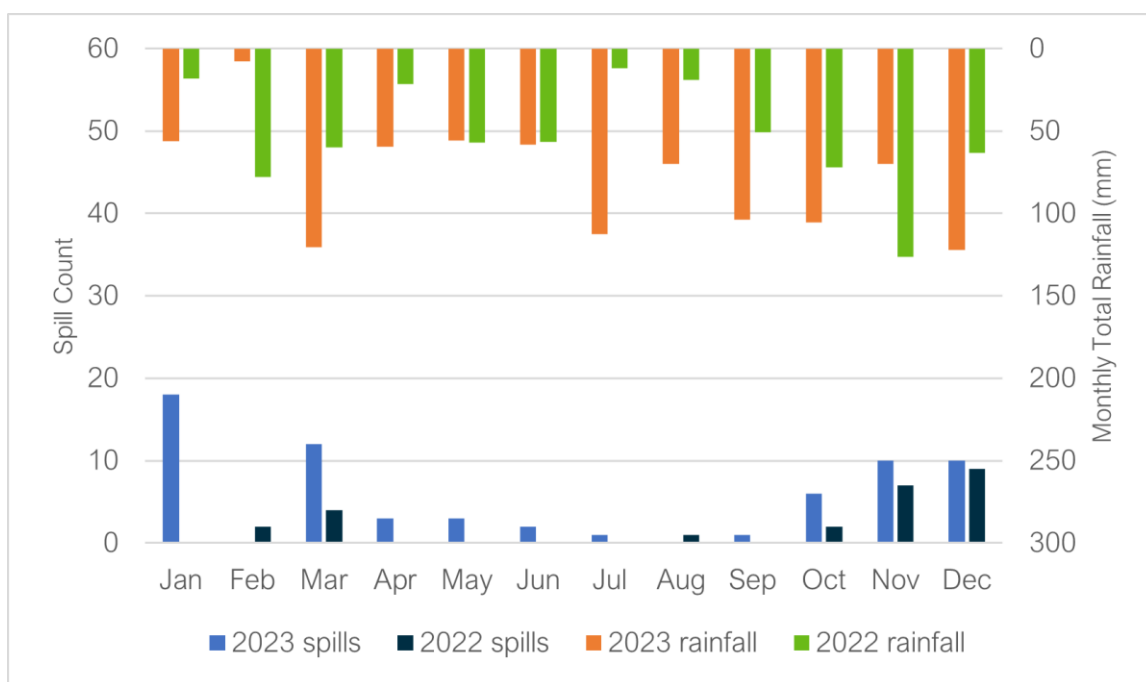
Table 7 below details the last 2 years performance of overflows within the catchment.

Table 7 – Event Duration Monitoring

Overflow	2022		2023	
	Spills	Duration (hours)	Spills	Duration (hours)
Bicester STW	25	226.28	66	839.25

A critical part of the assessment of EDM performance and its relation to groundwater infiltration, is to review the month-on-month spill performance against previous years and the monthly total rainfall values to give context to the performance. Figure 8 below presents the EDM performance trend and rainfall for recent years.

Figure 8 – EDM Monthly Performance



A significantly higher number of spills occurred in the catchment in 2023 compared to 2022. The data is indicative of a wider relationship between rainfall, elevated groundwater levels and spill frequency in the catchment. For example, no spills were recorded at Bicester STW in January 2022, compared to 18 in January 2023. The indicator site data shown in Figure 5, suggests groundwater levels in the catchment were higher in January 2023. A higher number of spills were also recorded at Bicester STW in the late spring/ summer 2023 period, compared to the same period in 2022. Figure 6 indicates that groundwater levels in the catchment were notably/ exceptionally high during spring and summer 2023, with the indicator site data shown in Figure 5 suggesting groundwater levels in the catchment were generally lower in summer 2022.

Investigations & Interventions

This section details the activities that have been undertaken within the catchment within the Hydrological Year 2023-24.

Monitor Installations

The sewer depth monitor (SDM) programme supports long term groundwater understanding within GISMP catchments. Currently, there are a total of 30 monitors installed within the Bicester catchment. There are currently no further monitor installs planned.

The data from these will be cross-referenced with other long-term records (where available) within the catchment.

Remediation Works Undertaken this Hydrological Year

Table 9 below provides a summary of the investigations and remediation works undertaken or planned within the Bicester catchment in the 2023-24 Hydrological Year, as well as works undertaken in the previous two hydrological years.

Table 9 – Works Undertaken in the 2023/24, 2022/23 & 2021/22 Hydrological Year

Investigation/ remediation type	Number/ length undertaken 21/22	Number/ length undertaken 22/23	Number/ length undertaken 23/24
CCTV survey	402 metres	148 metres	500 metres
Look and lift survey	1 manhole	7 surveys	4 surveys
Sewer lining	58 metres	N/A	N/A
Patch lining	N/A	N/A	N/A
Manhole sealing	N/A	1 manhole	N/A
Manhole sealing plates	N/A	N/A	N/A
Manhole covers and frames replaced	9 covers/ frames replaced	N/A	N/A

During the 2023/4 Hydrological Year, tankering was required in the catchment. A total of 29 days of flow management was undertaken across two locations: Straton Audley and Blackthorn Road (Arcott).

Bicester STW has also been upgraded at a cost of more than £8 million. This scheme provided increased treatment capacity, reducing the need for untreated discharges to the environment. The scheme was completed in 2022.

The catchment is expected to meet all government targets for storm overflows by 2030 – 2035.

Summary

Indicator site data suggests that groundwater levels in the Bicester catchment have generally been higher in the 2023/24 Hydrological Year (October 2023 – September 2024) than in the previous hydrological year. The EDM data for 2023 is indicative of the role of groundwater infiltration on spills in the catchment. The impact of higher groundwater levels in 2024, will be assessed using 2024 EDM data, once this is available. This will further improve understanding of the relationship between groundwater levels and spills in the catchment.

Lift and look and CCTV surveys will be undertaken in remaining wet winter periods if conditions allow and subject to funding and available capacity. The aim of this is to find further priority locations for remediation and investigating/justifying the need for future larger scale lining as part of our Price Review (PR) process if required.



It's everyone's water

