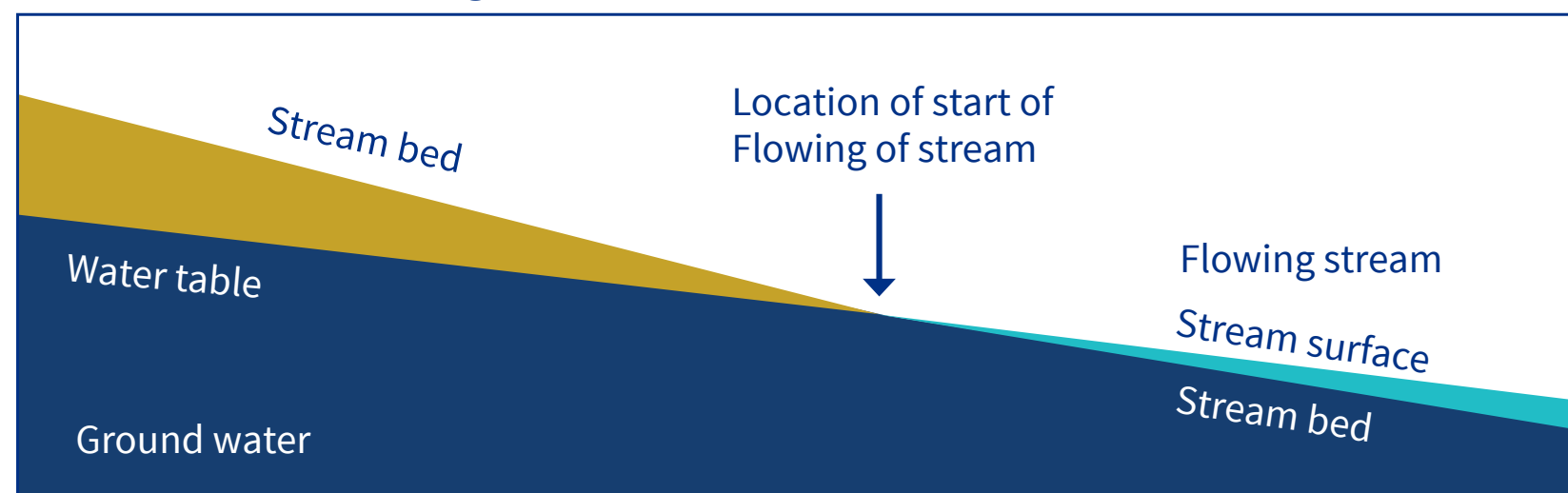
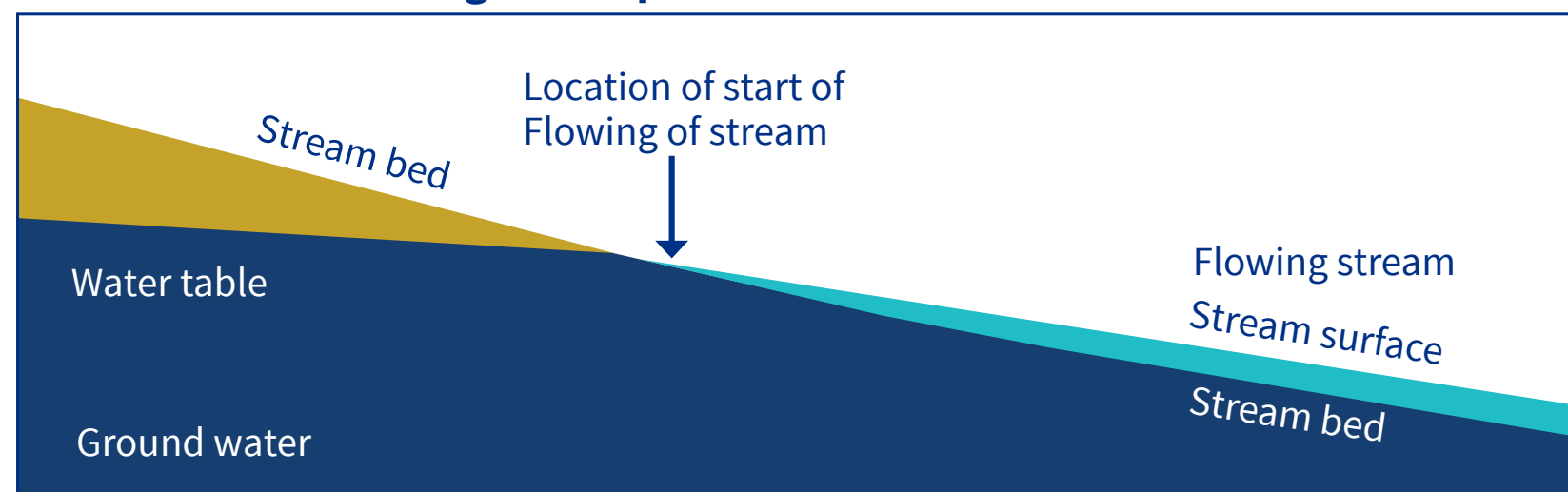


The River Chess in Chesham: where does the flow go?

Source of river has migrated downstream



Source of river has migrated upstream



The chalk rock beneath our feet is known as an aquifer as it can hold water in its structure. This water is called groundwater. The level of the groundwater rises and falls during the year in response to rainfall.

Chalk streams like the River Chess flow wherever the groundwater meets the surface of the land. They have intermittently flowing upper reaches, known as 'winterbournes' that flow after winter rains refill the aquifer, and dry up during the summer as the groundwater level declines.

When we have a dry winter the groundwater store does not refill very much and this can cause the river to dry up for longer and further down the valley than normal the following year.