**Evidence submitted by GroundsWell Research Consortium** [**www.groundswelluk.org**](https://www.groundswelluk.org)
 Date: 14 October 2025

**To:** The Public Bill Committee on the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

**Re: Support for amendment to the definition of “General Health Determinants” in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill**

On behalf of the **GroundsWell Research Consortium**, we write to express our strong support for the amendment proposed by the **Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission** to expand the definition of “General Health Determinants” in subsection 5 of Section 43 of the Bill.

Our consortium brings together researchers, communities, and policymakers across the UK to generate and apply evidence on how **urban green and blue spaces (e.g.** parks, trees, waterways), function as **key preventative assets** in tackling **non-communicable diseases (NCDs)** such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, depression, and anxiety.

We believe that broadening the Bill’s definition of health determinants is essential for three reasons:

* **It reflects modern evidence on the spatial and environmental drivers of health inequalities.** Urban green and blue spaces are proven to reduce the burden of NCDs by enabling active living, reducing exposure to pollution and heat, and improving mental wellbeing. A narrow or outdated definition of health determinants risks overlooking these critical, evidence-based factors.
* **It aligns with the UK’s policy commitments on prevention, climate resilience, and place-based health.** Recognising the role of green and blue infrastructure in public health aligns the Bill with national frameworks such as the *Prevention Green Paper*, the *Climate Change Act*, and the *Levelling Up* and *Health Disparities* agendas.
* **It empowers Combined Authorities to deliver integrated, locally led health improvement.** Including environmental and spatial determinants explicitly in legislation would provide the clarity and mandate necessary to create healthier, more equitable urban environments; where access to quality green and blue space is seen not as a luxury, but as a public health necessity. Currently they often fall “through the cracks” due to being excluded from specific policy.

Supporting this evidence-led amendment will strengthen the Bill without altering its intent. It will:

* Equip local leaders with the tools to act on modern determinants of health, including environmental quality and equitable access to nature.
* Encourage place-based prevention strategies that target both physical and mental health outcomes.
* Foster stronger community engagement and ownership of local environments, proven pathways to improved social connection, resilience, and wellbeing.

If the Bill is to truly reduce inequalities and improve wellbeing, it must encompass the full range of factors that shape health. Recognising urban green and blue spaces as **core determinants** of population health represents a vital step toward sustainable prevention of NCDs and the creation of fairer, healthier communities across England.

**Yours sincerely,**

*The GroundsWell Research Consortium*