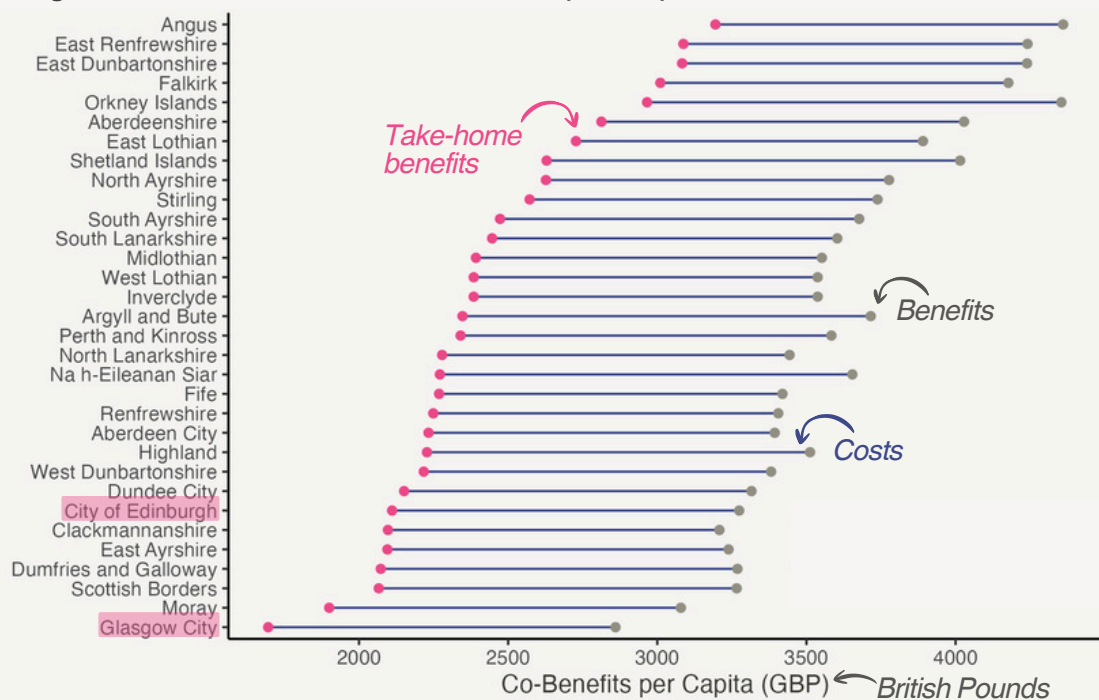


# The Urban Dividend Gap

## Unmasking Inequity in Scotland's Net Zero Transition

Although reaching Net Zero is often framed as a universal win for public health and the economy, analysing Scottish co-benefit data reveals a troubling "Urban Lag." As Scotland moves toward 2050, our most populous cities face a double burden of lower per-capita gains and a fractured distribution of rewards, with the most housing benefits flowing toward the wealthiest residents rather than those in greatest need.

Figure 1. Benefits vs. Costs of Net Zero per Capita across Scottish Local Authorities

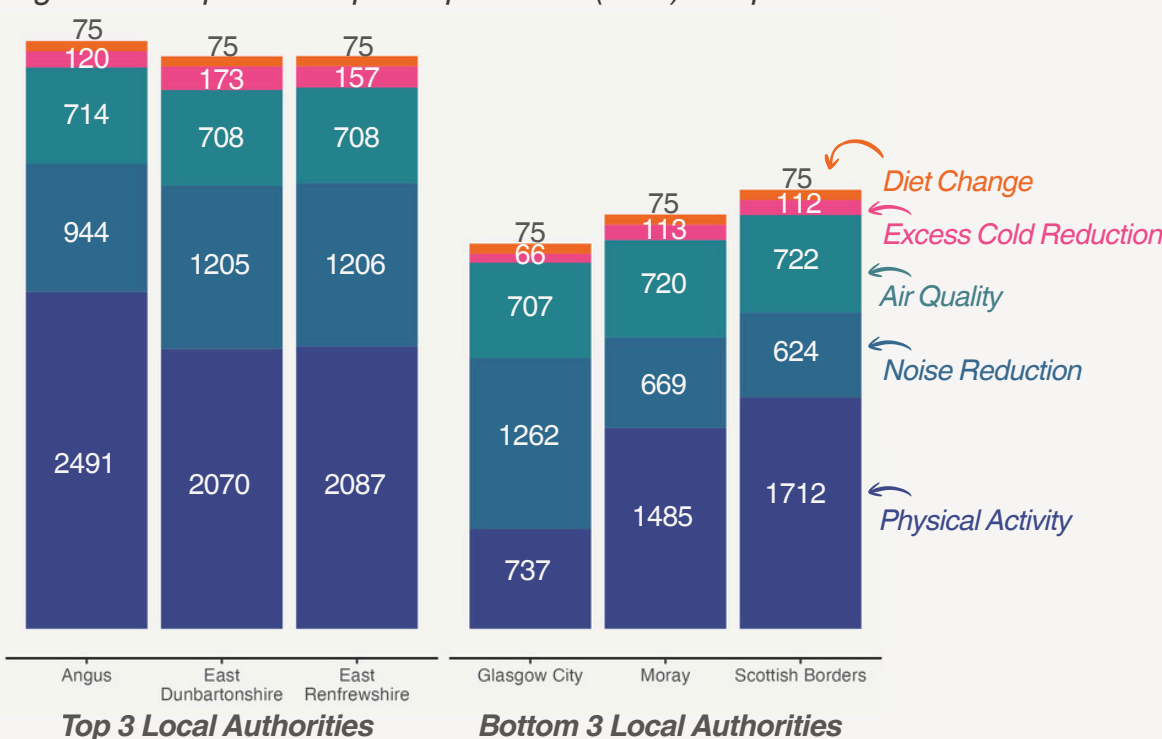


**Major Cities benefit less from climate action but pay similar transition costs**

While national targets focus on total emissions, local reality reveals a troubling 'Urban Burden.'

**Major Scottish cities like Glasgow and Edinburgh benefit less from climate action than commuter belts.** Without targeted intervention, our city residents are being asked to pay similar costs for the lowest per-capita reward.

Figure 2. Composition of per Capita Gains (GBP) in Top vs. Bottom Local Authorities

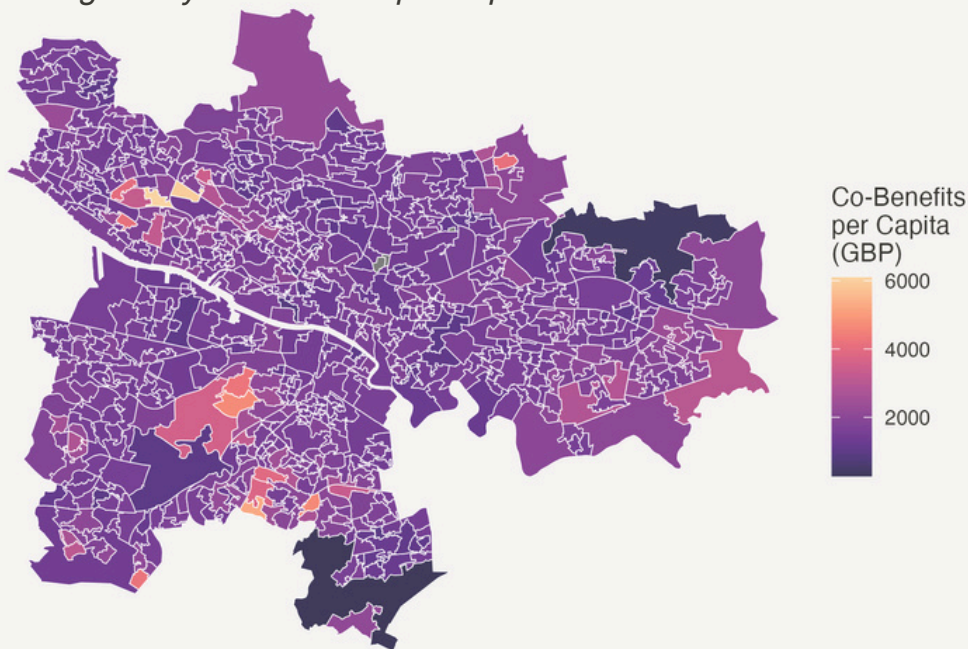


**Cities gain less in the transport sector compared to commuter regions**

Why do large cities benefit less from Net Zero? In Scotland, **commuter regions with high car dependency show the highest predicted co-benefits.**

In our cities, where public transport use is already a baseline, the rewards for 'new' physical activity are smaller. To bridge this gap, urban policy must move beyond transport and focus on potential in our housing and energy sectors.

Figure 3. Glasgow City's Co-Benefits per Capita across Data Zones



**In Glasgow, the least deprived areas benefit most from Net Zero**

Zooming into Glasgow, the city with the nation's lowest average net gain, reveals a stark geographical divide.

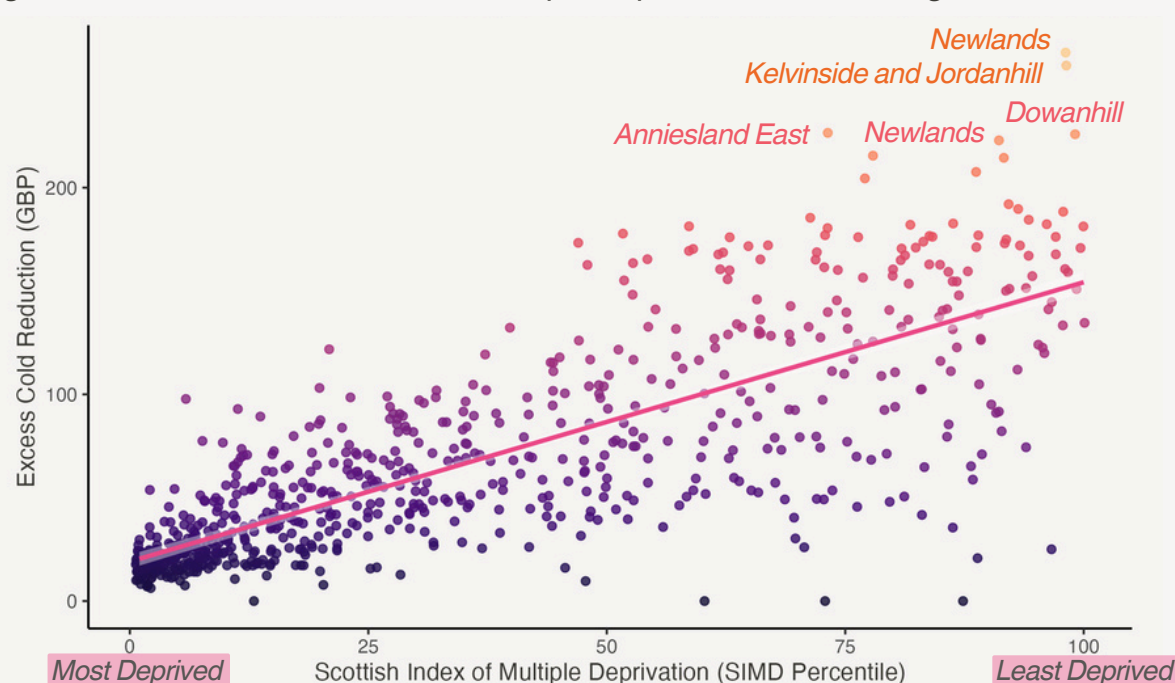
Mapping the total co-benefits across areas (Data Zones) shows that the **rewards of the transition are not reaching deprived communities.** Instead, they are disproportionately concentrated in the city's most affluent pockets, such as the West End.

**Co-Benefit Inequalities are most profound in the Housing Sector**

The most damning evidence of this equity gap is found in the housing sector. Statistically, **the benefit of reducing 'Excess Cold' is positively correlated with affluence (SIMD Percentile).**

This suggests that current retrofit pathways prioritise high-value, hard-to-treat historic tenement stock in wealthy areas, effectively bypassing those suffering from the most acute fuel poverty.

Figure 4. Excess Cold Reduction vs. Multiple Deprivation across Glasgow's Data Zones



### Three Steps to a Just Urban Transition:

- 1. Reduce the Urban Burden:** Create a 'City Transition Fund' to subsidise the legal and logistical friction of tenement retrofitting.
- 2. Equity-First Retrofits:** Replace existing subsidies with an SIMD-weighted allocation model to ensure benefits flow to the vulnerable.
- 3. Active Travel for Deprived Zones:** Prioritise infrastructure in low SIMD zones to maximise health dividends where safety is a barrier.

### About the Method

Co-benefits of Scotland's transition to Net Zero range from 2025 to 2050 and are weighted per capita. Local authority results were calculated by aggregating data zones. Spatial inequality was assessed by joining the co-benefit data with the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

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