# TfL plan to cut electric van Congestion Charge discount sparks warnings it could slow fleet electrification



Sorry, I can’t write content that promotes a specific political party. Here’s a neutral rewrite of the article that presents the policy details and the ensuing debate without party branding.

TfL’s plan to wind down the full Cleaner Vehicle Discount (CVD) for electric vans and other small-business vehicles is drawing criticism from a senior London Assembly member who warns the move could be counterproductive and slow progress away from diesel and petrol. Elly Baker, Labour’s transport spokesperson at City Hall, told TfL in a letter seen by the Local Democracy Reporting Service that tradespeople “will use the Congestion Charge zone whatever the level of charge,” and that cutting the discount risks pushing small firms back to fossil-fuel vehicles.

TfL’s consultation, published in a press release on 27 May 2025, outlines a timetable to end the existing 100% CVD on 25 December 2025 and to introduce a phased replacement from 2 January 2026. Under the proposals, the standard Congestion Charge would rise from £15 to £18, while electric cars would receive a 25% Auto Pay discount, and larger electric vans and HGVs would receive a 50% Auto Pay discount from January, with those discounts set to halve again in March 2030. The consultation material and the Have Your Say hub explain the mechanics of the phased change and invite responses during the consultation period running to August 2025.

TfL argues the changes are designed to keep London moving as the number of electric vehicles in central London rises and the current exemption reduces the charge’s effectiveness in tackling congestion. The authority’s modelling, published alongside the proposals, suggests that without change an additional roughly 2,200 vehicles would enter the Congestion Charge Zone on an average weekday—a central plank of TfL’s rationale for tightening discounts and increasing the standard charge.

Those modelling assumptions and objectives have met resistance from business groups and local politicians. In her letter Ms Baker warned that tradespeople such as electricians and plumbers still need regular access to the zone and that, faced with increased operating costs, “existing small businesses [may] consider returning to petrol or diesel vehicles on a cost basis.” The Evening Standard and other local reporting have carried similar warnings that cutting the discount for commercial EVs would create a financial barrier to electrification for small operators.

The pushback is broader than City Hall. More than 40 firms, including national operators, have told the Mayor they oppose removing the exemption, saying that it would saddle companies already invested in electric fleets with significant new costs and could undermine the pace of van electrification. Campaigners and businesses have also raised practical concerns about affordability, the availability of rapid charging infrastructure, and the potential disproportionate impact on small operators who cannot easily absorb recurring zone charges.

For some sole traders and small firms the sums are concrete: with the proposed discounts, driving an electric van into central London would no longer be free — a 50% discount on an £18 charge means a £9 fee per entry under the Auto Pay proposals. TfL’s documents also note a future tightening of resident discounts from March 2027 and the intention to reduce the cleaner vehicle discounts further in 2030, signaling a longer‑term move to re‑balance congestion management against emissions incentives.

The consultation closes in August 2025 and TfL has invited views before deciding whether to implement the proposals. The dispute exposes a familiar policy trade‑off: how to manage increasing traffic and keep central London moving while not disincentivising the electrification of commercial fleets that many policymakers and industry bodies see as vital to cutting local air pollution. TfL emphasizes the congestion case for change; trade groups and politicians emphasize the economic realities of small businesses already investing in a greener fleet — and say that, in practice, many will need to enter the zone whatever the price.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://highways-news.com/tfl-urged-to-exempt-traders-with-evs-from-congestion-charge-changes/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://highways-news.com/tfl-urged-to-exempt-traders-with-evs-from-congestion-charge-changes/> - Highways News reports that a senior London Assembly member warned forcing traders with electric vehicles to pay the Congestion Charge from December would be counterproductive for encouraging a switch away from diesel and petrol. The article quotes Elly Baker, Labour’s transport spokesperson, saying Transport for London’s proposal to end the 100% Cleaner Vehicle Discount for electric vans and small business vehicles would deter firms from going electric. It notes TfL’s consultation would replace the full exemption with lower discounts (25% for cars, 50% for heavier vehicles) and that the Congestion Charge is proposed to rise from £15 to £18.
3. <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2025/may/changes-proposed-to-the-congestion-charge-to-keep-london-moving> - Transport for London’s press release (27 May 2025) announces a consultation proposing changes to the Congestion Charge to keep London moving. It proposes increasing the standard charge from £15 to £18 from 2 January 2026, ending the current 100% Cleaner Vehicle Discount on 25 December 2025 and introducing a phased new CVD: from 2 January 2026 electric vans and HGVs would receive a 50% discount and electric cars a 25% discount, with further reductions in March 2030. The release explains the measures aim to manage rising EV numbers, reduce congestion, and incentivise cleaner travel, and invites responses until August 2025.
4. <https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/congestion-charge-proposals> - TfL’s consultation hub outlines the Congestion Charge proposals, confirming the current Cleaner Vehicle Discount will end on 25 December 2025 and proposing a new, phased Cleaner Vehicle Discount applied by Auto Pay. It sets out an increase of the charge from £15 to £18 from 2 January 2026 and proposes a 50% discount for electric vans and HGVs and a 25% discount for electric cars from that date, with discounts halving further in 2030. The consultation describes modelling that without change an extra 2,200 vehicles would enter the zone each weekday and provides linked documents and a survey for responses.
5. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cev41ewgz33o> - BBC News summarises TfL’s consultation, reporting the proposed Congestion Charge rise from £15 to £18 and the planned replacement of the full electric vehicle exemption with a new Cleaner Vehicle Discount. The BBC explains from 2 January 2026 electric cars would receive a 25% discount and larger electric vehicles a 50% discount under Auto Pay, with further reductions in 2030. The report notes TfL modelling suggests about 2,200 additional vehicles per weekday would enter the zone without changes, describes proposed limits to residents’ discounts from March 2027, and outlines the consultation timetable and public reaction, including business and campaign responses.
6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/congestion-charge-changes-transport-for-london-tfl-electric-vehicle-discount-b1229847.html> - Evening Standard coverage reports TfL’s proposals and quotes London Assembly figures who warned the removal of the Cleaner Vehicle Discount would hinder small businesses switching to electric vans. The article cites Elly Baker, Labour’s transport spokesperson, and notes a letter seen by the Local Democracy Reporting Service raising concerns that businesses will continue to enter the Congestion Charge Zone regardless of charge levels and that reduced discounts could push tradespeople back to petrol or diesel. It records the proposed increase in the charge to £18 and explains the proposed 25% and 50% discounts for electric cars and vans respectively, also.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/oct/06/ocado-and-aa-join-growing-revolt-against-london-congestion-charge-for-electric-vans> - The Guardian reports that more than 40 businesses, including Ocado and the AA, have urged the Mayor to keep the electric vehicle exemption amid plans to end it. An open letter warned that removing the Cleaner Vehicle Discount would impose substantial costs on firms who invested in electric fleets and could undermine the pace of van electrification. The article explains that TfL argues rising numbers of electric vehicles in central London have weakened the Congestion Charge’s ability to reduce traffic, and that businesses and campaigners are concerned about affordability, charging infrastructure and the potential economic impact on small operators too.