

Political Balance Narrative – CPCA O&S Committee and A&G Committee.

The Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017 - Appointment of members

Audit Committees Part 4 14(1)

In appointing members to an audit committee, a combined authority must ensure that the members of the committee taken as a whole reflect so far as reasonably practicable the balance of political parties for the time being prevailing among members of the constituent councils when taken together.

The political proportionality of the Audit & Governance and Overview & Scrutiny Committees is based upon the total number of Councillors sitting at constituent authorities from political parties registered nationally with the Electoral Commission. Therefore, the total number of Councillors across the combined authority area disregards those elected as Independents. Following the elections in May 2021 this provides a total of 299 elected members (the total is 327 including Independents).

The total number of elected representatives across each of the constituent authorities are totalled by political party and a total percentage of representation is calculated (i.e. there are 139 Conservative members divided by the total of all members (299) to reach a proportionality of 46.49%). The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has 14 members in total; and Audit & Governance seven. The proportionality is then factored against the total membership to provide a seat allocation by political group.

Once this 'seat' allocation has been derived it is necessary to allocate the 'seats' against the constituent authorities. Where a political party has a majority of members on a constituent authority it follows that party would be allocated a 'seat' on the Committee. However, the political balance of the combined authority area has to be reflected and this requires an arithmetical call with regard to membership between constituent authorities.

The Audit & Governance Committee has a membership of seven, following the May 2021 elections the balance based upon proportionality would be three Conservative; two Labour; and two Liberal Democrat members. The allocation is then based upon the percentage of members from each political party at the individual constituent authorities. To reflect the political balance it is necessary to allocate seats based upon the percentage of elected members by constituent authority. Table 1, below shows the constituent authorities with most Conservative members to fill the allocation of three are: Fenland, Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire. The two Labour members should, therefore, be representatives of Cambridge City and Peterborough. The two Liberal Democrat members should, therefore, represent South Cambridgeshire and Cambridgeshire.

Clearly the table shows there is a greater percentage of Liberal Democrat members representing East Cambridgeshire than Cambridgeshire County Council. However, in order to reflect the political balance of the combined authority area, which has more members representing the Conservative Party it is necessary to favour the higher number of Conservatives representing East Cambridgeshire and allocate the Liberal Democrat 'seat' to Cambridgeshire (which has the third highest percentage of Liberal Democrats in the combined authority area).

Table 1

Constituent Authority	Conservative %age	Labour %age	Liberal Democrat %age	Others %age	A&G 'seat' allocation
Cambridgeshire	47.46	15.25	33.90	3.39	LIB DEM
Cambridge City	0.00	65.85	29.27	4.88	LAB
East Cambridgeshire	57.69	0.00	42.31	0.00	CON
Fenland	89.66	0.00	6.90	3.44	CON
Huntingdonshire*	75.00	7.50	17.50	0.00	CON
Peterborough	48.34	28.33	13.33	10.00	LAB
South Cambridgeshire	25.00	4.55	70.45	0.00	LIB DEM

*Huntingdonshire DC has one vacant ward

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Part 2 4(1)(a)

The combined authority must appoint such a number of members of each of the constituent councils to an overview and scrutiny committee, so that the members of the committee taken as a whole reflect so far as reasonably practicable the balance of political parties for the time being prevailing among members of the constituent councils when taken together.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has a membership of 14, following the May 2021 elections the balance based upon proportionality would be seven Conservative; three Labour; and four Liberal Democrat members. The allocation is then based upon the percentage of members from each political party at the individual constituent authorities. To reflect the political balance it is necessary to allocate seats based upon the percentage of elected members by constituent authority. Where one political party has two-thirds representation on a constituent authority that party has been allocated full representation (i.e. two seats) on the committee. Table 2, below shows the constituent authorities with most Conservative members to fill the allocation of seven are: Fenland (two members), Huntingdonshire (two members), East Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and the County Council. The three Labour members should, therefore, be representatives of Cambridge City (two members) and Peterborough. The four Liberal Democrat members should, therefore, represent South Cambridgeshire (two members), East Cambridgeshire, and the County Council.

Table 2

Constituent Authority	Conservative %age	Labour %age	Liberal Democrat %age	Others %age	O&S 'seat' allocation
Cambridgeshire	47.46	15.25	33.90	3.39	1 CON, 1 LIB DEM
Cambridge City	0.00	65.85	29.27	4.88	2 LAB
East Cambridgeshire	57.69	0.00	42.31	0.00	1 CON, 1 LIB DEM
Fenland	89.66	0.00	6.90	3.44	2 CON
Huntingdonshire*	75.00	7.50	17.50	0.00	2 CON
Peterborough	48.34	28.33	13.33	10.00	1 CON, 1 LAB
South Cambridgeshire	25.00	4.55	70.45	0.00	2 LIB DEM

*Huntingdonshire DC has one vacant ward