Rt Hon Stephen Crabb MP  
Secretary of State for Wales  
Gwydyr House  
Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2ER  

14 October 2014

Dear Stephen,

The Wales Office kindly provided the Committee with copies of the Office’s Annual Report and Accounts 2013-14. As you are aware, it is usual practice for select committees to write to Government departments following the publication of the Annual Report and Accounts, with specific queries about departments’ administration, finance and policies.

The Committee would appreciate it if the Wales Office could provide information on the following issues:

Resource budget

The Wales Office had a 15% underspend on its resource budget in 2013-14 (page 17).

- The Wales Office budget will reduce by one third over the course of this Parliament. Given this large reduction, how did the Wales Office still manage to underspend by 15% on its resource budget in 2013-14?

- If it is due to staff reductions, has this impacted on the delivery of objectives?

- Does this mean there is still scope for further budget cuts in the Wales Office?

Sick days

The average number of sick days in the Wales Office in 2013-14 was 12.9, an increase from 6.1 days last year. This is very high and there is no explanation given, for example if long-term sickness of one or two staff raised the average. Could the Wales Office provide further information on the high number of sick days in the department?

Administration costs

Table 3 on page 80 shows that there was a 28% reduction in “Other Administration costs” between 2012-13 and 2013-14 and sets out which areas those costs were made.
Could the Department provide some specific examples of how those administration cost savings were achieved?

I would be grateful for a response to these questions by **Tuesday 4 November**.

Yours sincerely,

David T.C. Davies MP  
Chair, Welsh Affairs Select Committee