Note of the 9th Meeting of the Life Sciences & Soft Materials Advisory Panel held on 12 January 2021

- STFC provided an update on the international facilities
  - The UK would not be a Founding Observer of the ELI ERIC
  - The upcoming long shutdowns for ISIS and ILL overlapped. There are opportunities to apply to other global facilities. The Panel suggested STFC could look at providing financial assistance to the community if they had to travel overseas to undertake their research.
  - European XFEL was changing its funding structure and the new model from 2024 would be based on national usage as well as shareholding

- The Panel Chair had attended a meeting between Science Board and the Advisory Panel Chairs on 4 November 2020. Science Board had committed to improving interactions with the advisory panels. The Panel felt it was important to raise the profile of the Panel amongst the community. It was suggested that the Panel could invite Science Board members familiar with the facilities to Advisory Panel meetings to increase interaction between the Panel and Science Board

- STFC’s Strategy, Planning and Communications Directorate gave an update covering:
  - UKRI governance
  - the Spending Review
  - STFC strategy development, including the draft Light Sources Strategy on which the Panel had been consulted
  - Infrastructure prioritisation

- Prof. James Naismith gave a presentation to the Panel on the work of the Rosalind Franklin Institute, followed by a discussion with the Panel.

- The Panel discussed the impact of Covid-19 on science and experiments at the large facilities. Issues raised included the limitations of remote access, access to data and the impact on early career researchers, students and beamline staff.