



Statement of community involvement

Courtyard Hotel, Oxford Dominus

December 2023

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1. Introduction

This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the consultation and engagement that Dominus has undertaken with local residents and other stakeholders on plans for the expansion of their Courtyard Hotel by Marriot in Oxford City Centre.

This document demonstrates how Dominus has met and exceeded pre-application consultation guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and Oxford City Council's SCI.

This SCI gives an overview of all consultation activity undertaken prior to the submission of the planning application alongside outlining how the plans have responded to feedback from the local community and other stakeholders.

Dominus is committed to ongoing engagement. It ensured the community was made aware of the proposals and had multiple avenues to find out more and share their feedback. It will continue to engage throughout the determination process and beyond.

This report has been prepared on behalf of Dominus by Meeting Place, a specialist in stakeholder engagement in relation to planning and development issues.

2. Consultation requirements

Community involvement is at the forefront of national planning policy and is noted in the revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021).

The revised NPPF highlights that early engagement has "*significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties*". It also indicates that good quality pre-application discussion "*enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community*".

Oxford City Council's Statement of Community Involvement 2021 outlines the council's expectations on how the local community should be involved during the pre-application process.

The SCI emphasises the council's desire to see all sections of the community shape new development proposals within the city and indicates that effective pre-application engagement and consultation is central to achieving this.

2.1 Our response to the consultation requirements

Dominus has sought to extend their hotel in a way that adds to the vibrancy of the area and in the interest of the local economy. It recognised the importance of involving the community and a wide range of other stakeholders so has provided multiple avenues for engagement.

In response to national and local guidance as well as Dominus' desire to create the right plans for the City of Oxford, activity included:

- Meetings and ongoing engagement with political and community representatives.
- Engagement with local charities, stakeholders and social organisations.
- Newsletter with an enclosed feedback form sent to local addresses.

- Dedicated website with an online version of the feedback form.
- Dedicated email address, freephone telephone number and freepost address.

These elements and the feedback received are detailed in the following sections.

3. What is proposed?

3.1 About Dominus

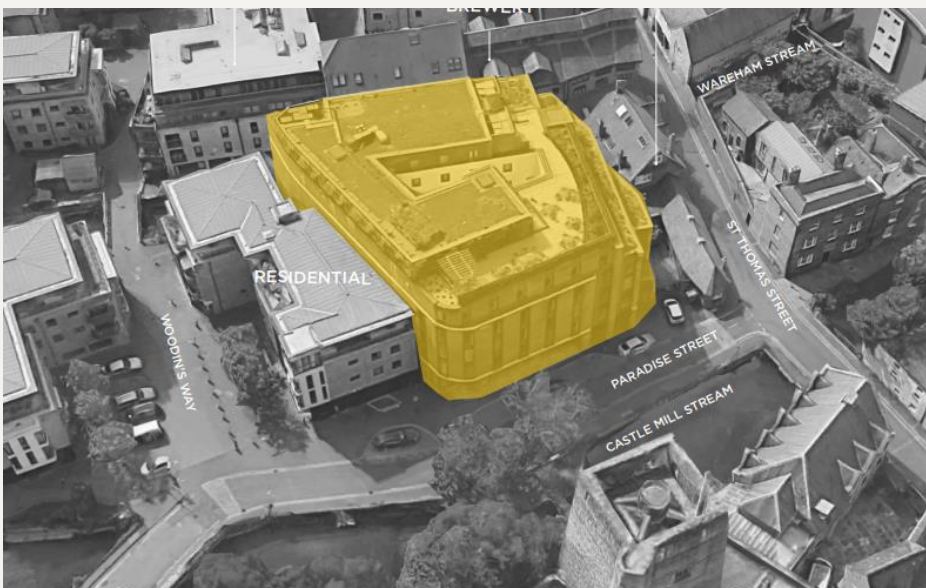
From modest origins decades ago, Dominus has grown into one of the UK's most dynamic family-owned business groups, including specialising in industry-leading hotels and student accommodation, to award-winning residential properties, regeneration projects and mixed-use schemes.

Dominus is an award-winning, forward-thinking UK real estate owner, developer and investor, fundamentally committed to a better built environment. The company builds social value by enhancing the world around us taking meaningful, tangible action in communities.

Working in collaboration nationwide, Dominus makes a daily difference at street level, with innovative partnerships and a progressive, long-term view of the future. Dominus currently operates five hotels under internationally recognised brands, including Courtyard Hotel by Marriot Oxford City Centre.

3.2 Site location

Courtyard Hotel by Marriot sits adjacent to the Castle Mill Stream along Paradise Street opposite Saint George's Tower in Oxford City centre.



3.3 Proposals

Dominus has worked hard to bring forward proposals that will bring employment and local investment to the city of Oxford in a way that is sustainable. Stakeholders were consulted on:

Expanding the hotel - which currently has 149 rooms in a five storey plus set back sixth storey brick building fronting Paradise Street - by an extra 14 rooms. These would be created by extending the rooftop, to continue the top storey over the full extent of the building and small-scale "infill" side extensions where the building currently steps.

4. Engagement

This section details Dominus' programme of engagement. The programme was discussed with Oxford City Council officers to ensure robustness.

Feedback forms were received from 22 people through the various channels available. A supportive email was received from Oxford Castle & Prison.

4.1 Stakeholder meetings

Early meetings were sought with political and community representatives to provide an update and understand their initial feedback. We engaged the following:

- The two ward councillors for Osney & St Thomas ward
 - > Cllr Susanna Pressel
 - > Cllr Lois Muddiman
- Oxford City Council's cabinet member for Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities & Cycling Champion
- Cllr Mary Clarkson, Chair of Oxford City Council Planning Committee
- Anneliese Dodds, Member of Parliament – Oxford East
- Oxford Preservation Trust *
- Oxford Civic Society *
- Oxford Castle and Prison
- Oxford Hub
- Aspire 20
- Oxfordshire Community Foundation
- Ashmolean
- Oxford Play House
- Museum of Oxford

We sent an email to all those listed above offering a meeting and have followed up with phone calls. Engagement was then ongoing with subsequent updates provided.

* Indicates organisations who accepted Dominus's meeting invitation.

4.2 Community newsletter

A community newsletter was posted via Royal Mail to 524 addresses in the immediate area (pictured below) on 26th September 2023. The distribution area was discussed and agreed with Cllr Susanna Pressel to ensure relevant households were consulted.

The newsletter provided information on the Courtyard Hotel from its location, the proposed changes, an indication of how the proposals could look, as well as the benefits it will bring. Feedback was encouraged through an enclosed feedback form, easily returnable in a freepost envelope also enclosed.

The newsletter pointed recipients to a dedicated project website. Freephone, email and freepost details were included for people to contact the team. A copy of the newsletter and feedback form are available at **Appendix 1**.



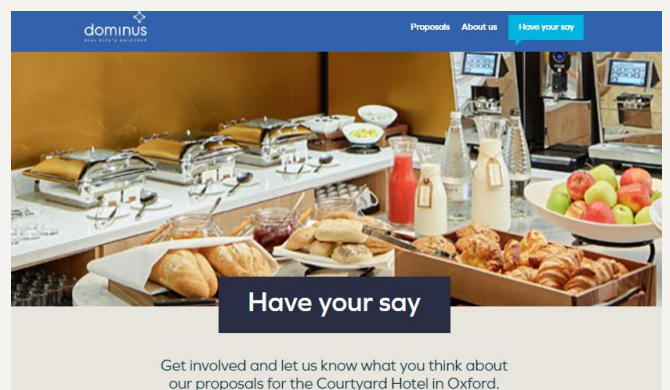
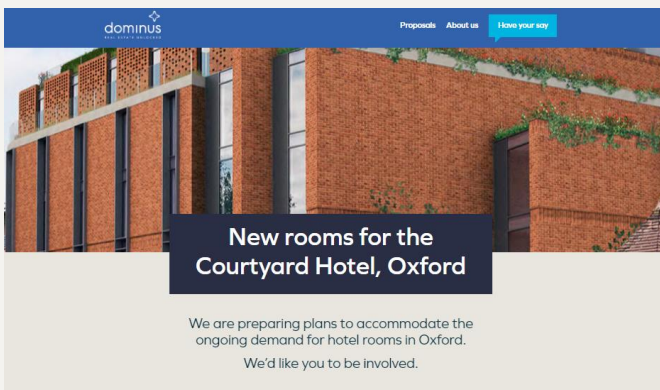
Newsletter distribution area to 524 addresses surrounding the site.

4.3 Project website

A dedicated project website, www.dominuscourtyardoxford.co.uk, was launched to act as an online hub of information on the proposals and to provide channels for feedback. A total of 25 people visited the website. Nobody completed the feedback form online (apart from tests to ensure it was working). As mentioned above, 22 hard copies of the feedback form were filled in and returned.

The website was launched to coincide with distribution of the community newsletter. It contained information on the Courtyard Hotel, where the site was, what the plans were and what the hotel could look like and the benefits it will bring. Freephone, email and freepost details were also available for people to contact the team.

The website was designed to be easy to navigate and engaging. An online version of the feedback form enclosed with the newsletter was available on the website which gave people an alternative way to engage.



We welcome your feedback

Thank you for visiting Dominus' website where we have set out our proposals for adding 14 rooms to Courtyard Hotel by Marriott Oxford City Centre. Please read our information, then [let us know your feedback](#).

Courtyard Hotel by Marriott Oxford City Centre is a globally recognised brand of hotels which also belongs to the Group.



We'd like to hear your thoughts on the proposals

We would like to know your thoughts on our proposals for the Courtyard Hotel in Oxford. Please take a moment to complete the survey below.

Do you think that Oxford would benefit from more space for tourists to stay within the city?

Yes No

4.4 Contact details

Ensuring people were able to get in touch with the team to ask any questions and make comments was vital. The freephone telephone number and freepost address provided opportunities for people unable to access the online channels to engage.

The number, 0800 148 8911, and email address, info@dominuscourtyardoxford.co.uk were staffed between 9.00am and 5.30pm from Monday to Friday. Both were answered and managed by a member of the Meeting Place team, as was the Meeting Place freepost address.

These contact details were promoted through all communications including the newsletter and website.

5. Feedback

This section summarises the feedback received through:

- Written feedback form
- Online feedback form
- Phone calls and meetings

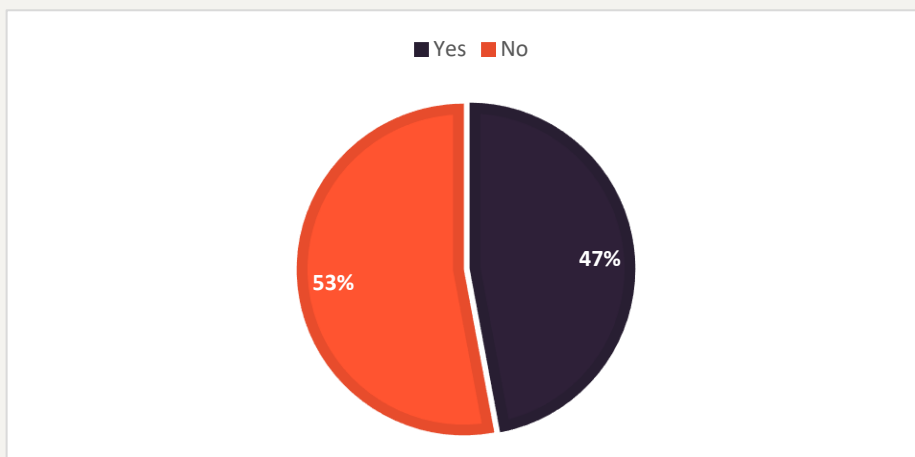
5.1 Feedback summary

Dominus provided residents with the opportunity to provide feedback through the form provided with the newsletter and online via the project website. In total the Applicant has received 22 completed feedback forms. Whilst Dominus had hoped for more feedback forms to be received, further feedback was provided via meetings with local stakeholders. The results are provided below. Not all respondents replied to every question.

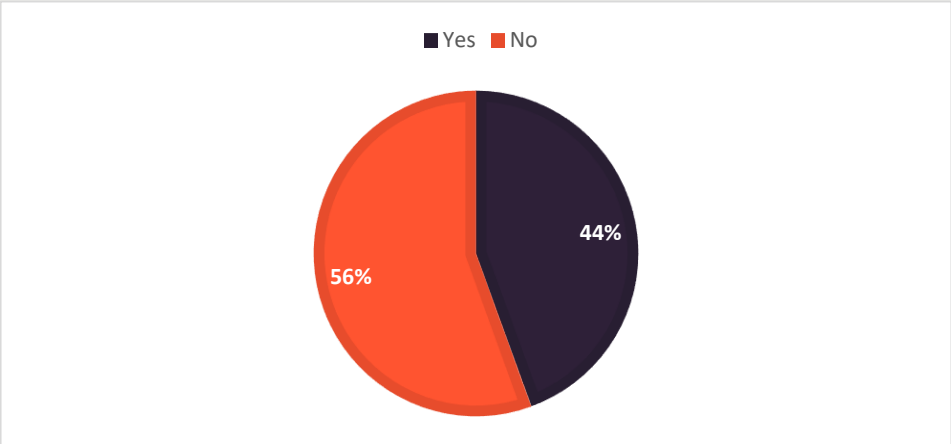
A summary of the key issues raised can be seen at **Section 6**.

5.2 Feedback form

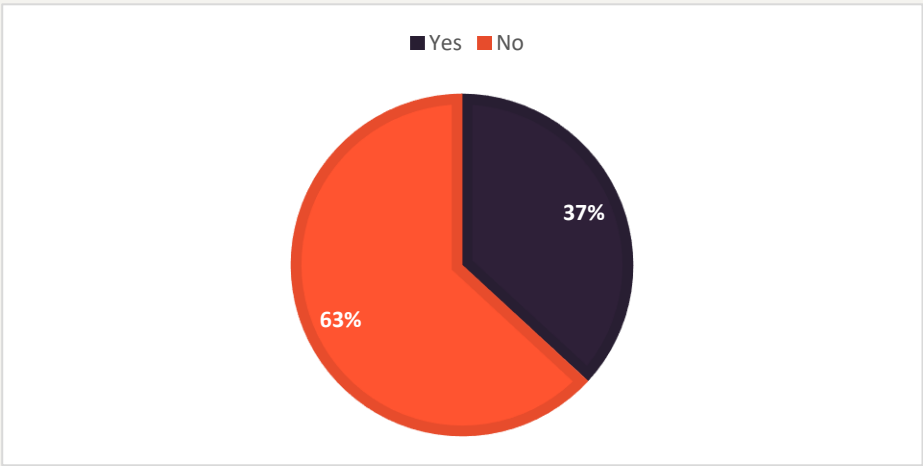
Do you think that Oxford would benefit from more space for tourists to stay within the city?



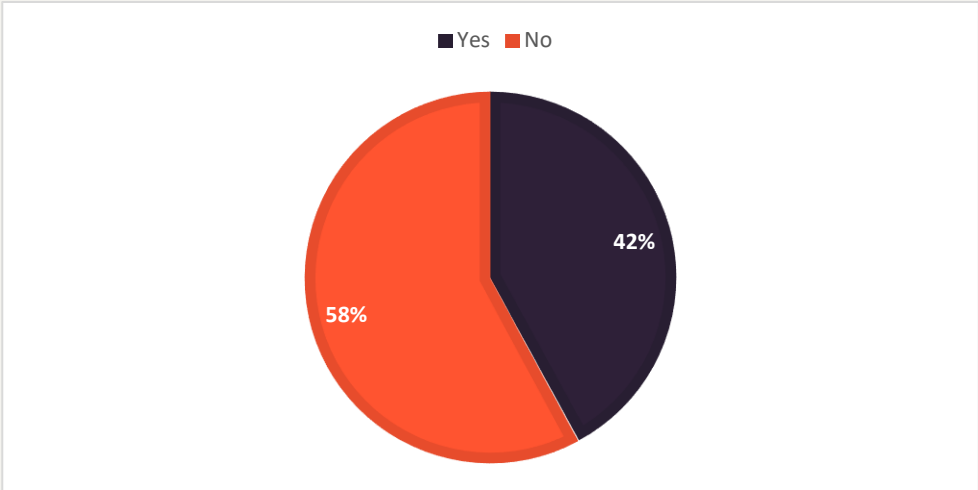
Do you support the expansion of hotels over more housing being used for Airbnb?



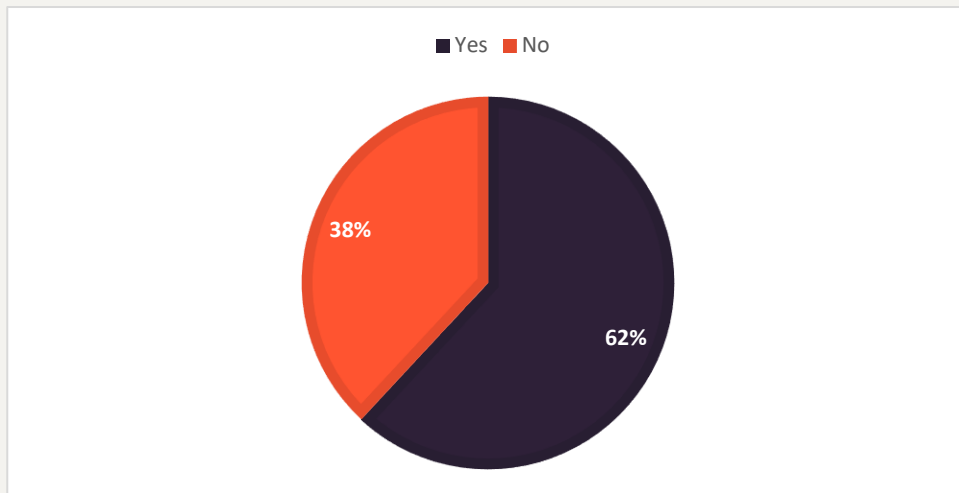
Have you or someone you know stayed in a hotel in Oxford in the last 3 months?



Do you believe that increasing the number of tourists / business trips to the city is important for the local economy?



Do you think it is important for a hotel to be close to local amenities and to be fully accessible?



5.3 Other feedback

All emails received to the project email address and freephone telephone number were responded to by the project team. The following supportive statement was received from Oxford Castle and Prison:

“Oxford Castle and Prison welcome the extension of Courtyard by Marriott Central as more room capacity will mean more visitors able to stay locally which helps boost the economy and increase footfall to Castle Quarter.”

5.4 Stakeholder engagement feedback

Oxford Civic Society

At the meeting with the Oxford Civic Society on 30 October, the representatives felt there were no strong valid reasons for opposing the proposals. They questioned whether the hotel would need to close during construction: no was the response. Dominus would be mitigating the impact of construction on guests and neighbours, closing one floor probably for three months.

Oxford Preservation Trust

On 20 November, Dominus met with Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT) representatives. The latter focussed on the need to consider views from locations around the hotel in order to consider their response.

The representatives stated that OPT had commented on the hotel’s original planning application. OPT had highlighted the sensitivity of the site and had voiced concerns about the height and massing of the proposals.

Having reviewed the alternative views provided by Dominus immediately after the 20 November meeting, OPT responded writing:

“We share similar concerns today for the proposed expansion of the hotel. Aspects such as the green roof and “stepped” down sections of the building were originally intended as ways to break up bulk and massing, and OPT would have serious concerns if these sections were infilled.”

“We understand that the applicant is intending to submit for a Christmas deadline, and we look forward to reviewing the full scheme then.”

6. Response to key issues

All feedback has been reviewed by the team. This section details how the plans have responded to several key issues that were raised with the team during the consultation.

The main changes made to the original proposals is the reduction from 14 to 9 rooms by the removal of filling in the stepping of the existing building.

Key theme	Dominus' response
Parking	As the expansion of the hotel will only see an extra 9 rooms this will not have a material effect on the parking requirements and as such the parking provision will remain unchanged.
Noise concerns in relation to guests of the hotel	The proposed extension to the existing hotel will not increase any noise or disturbance to existing residents. There will be no material impacts on nearby residents, the rooms are enclosed without balconies, and whilst not currently the cause of any disturbance, the closure of the roof terrace will remove any potential for any effect on the amenity of surrounding residents.
An increase of traffic	The modest addition of 9 hotel bedrooms will not have any additional material effect on highways matters. The access and highway safety will remain as per the current conditions. The traffic generation and pedestrian and cycle movements will also not be material effected by the additional people staying in these 9 rooms.
Blocking of sunlight	Advice has been provided on Daylight and Sunlight matters by GIA and this has had a key influence on the evolution of the proposed development scheme submitted. A full detailed technical analysis will be prepared as part of the submission; however, it is the opinion of the technical consultant that there will be no major effects on the surrounding properties.
The issue of a changed skyline.	An assessment has been undertaken which concluded that the proposals will not appear dominant in the skyline and will preserve views into and out of the city. In addition, the proposals are expected to preserve the setting and significance of heritage assets.
Construction noise and disruption	Noise and disruption will be minimised not only for neighbouring properties but also for guests of the hotel.
Concerns in relation to proposals to remove the green wall and to infill the “stepped” down sections of the building.	<p>The green wall has not thrived. Dominus is investigating installation of a sedum roof. Dominus has submitted a document to show that the plans meet policy requirements.</p> <p>The number of proposed rooms has been reduced to 9 from the 14 originally consulted upon. This has been achieved by the removal of the proposed rooms that would have infilled the existing stepping down.</p>

7. Conclusion

The small amount of feedback from residents in the area is indicative of the fact a lot of residents are tenants, there is a lot of churn, plus the proposals have not caused undue concern.

As stated previously, the main changes as a result of the consultation has been the reduction from 14 to 9 rooms and the removal of filling in the stepping down of the existing building.

Dominus is pleased that the Oxford Civic Society and Oxford Preservation Trust accepted the respective meeting offers to discuss their proposals. Dominus looks forward to continuing engagement throughout the planning process.

Appendix 1

September 2023

Courtyard Hotel, Oxford

Courtyard Hotel by Marriot Oxford City Centre is a globally recognised brand of hotel which sits adjacent to the Castle Mill Stream along Paradise Street opposite Saint George's Tower. It is a modern 4-star hotel which opened in 2019 which is operated by Dominus. The hotel currently has 149 rooms in a five storey plus set back sixth storey brick building fronting Paradise Street.

Due to the high demand for rooms, a proposal has been put forward which would see 14 extra rooms created by extending the rooftop, to continue the top storey over the full extent of the building and small-scale "infill" side extensions where the building currently steps.

Illustration of proposals

The key benefits of the proposal

Accommodating demand for hotel rooms in Oxford at the popular and successful Courtyard by Marriott Oxford City Centre.

Making the most of the hotel's city centre location to provide a great experience for business and leisure visitors, including international guests.

Providing economic benefits, including through increased guest spend and generating onsite and off-site employment in the local community.

The current hotel

Courtyard Hotel by Marriott

Current Economic Footprint of Hotel

A globally recognised brand of hotel situated in the city centre of Oxford catering for a range of business and leisure visitors from both the domestic and international markets. It currently comprises **149 room keys** and includes a lobby and dining facilities.

- 36 Jobs** Direct FTEs
- 18 Jobs** Indirect & induced FTEs
- £7.9m p.a.** Visitor spend
- £3m GVA** Direct and indirect impact p.a.
- 59 Jobs** FTEs supported by visitor spending
- £300k p.a.** in business rates revenue

Operational and Fiscal Impacts following Addition of 14 Room Keys (Net Change)

- 41 (+5) Jobs** On-Site FTEs
- 21 (+3) Jobs** Indirect & induced FTEs
- £8.7m (+£0.8m)** Visitor spend p.a.
- £3.5m (+£0.5m) GVA** Direct and indirect impact p.a.
- 65 (+6) Jobs** FTEs supported by visitor spending
- £330k p.a. (+£30k)** in business rates revenue

Local Drivers for Change

- Oxford city centre is a priority area highlighted in the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2036 and the Oxford Economic strategy
- Requirement for more overnight accommodation in Oxford to promote and facilitate longer visitor stays, as outlined in the City Centre Action Plan
- Support local retailers and amenities, particularly through relationships with local restaurants
- Within an area of significant visitor and business attractions and highly accessible

Expansion Construction Impacts (6 months)

- £2.7m** Construction investment
- 15 Jobs** (on and off-site)
- £0.9m** GVA impact

Wider Regeneration Benefits

- Supporting local job creation and retention
- Encouraging spend in local businesses
- Delivering social value through local initiatives
- Making the most efficient use of an existing hotel site to deliver local benefits

Benefiting Local Communities

Delivering social value by:

- Supporting Sobel House hospice
- Supporting Edge housing and sleeping rough initiatives.
- Local community centre use of hotel facilities for free

Who is Dominus?

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Get in touch

If you would like further information, please visit our website. Do let us know your views, either on the attached feedback form, or alternatively on the website below.

- Email: info@dominuscourtyardoxford.co.uk
- Freephone: 0800 148 8911

To find out more scan our QR code or visit www.dominuscourtyardoxford.co.uk