

English translation of the Danish original. In the event of any discrepancy between the two versions, the Danish text shall prevail.

Bramming, August 31st 2026

Open Letter to Microsoft Concerning the Planned Data Center in Bramming

We understand that the local development plan (lokalplan) relating to Microsoft's proposal to establish a data center in Bramming is expected to enter public consultation soon.

As the proposals may have a considerable impact on the town of Bramming and on its future development, and as a lack of information may give rise to unease among the town's residents, we consider it appropriate to set out our position before Microsoft submits the project for the political consideration that will bring the local development plan to public consultation.

Based on the information currently available, we do not wish to see the data center sited immediately adjacent to Bramming. In our assessment the adverse effects are too great and the positive contribution to the town and to its development appears negligible. We also question whether the project, at this particular location, serves the interests of Microsoft or of society in general. In our view, part of being a good stakeholder in a local community is to listen to whether one's presence and one's contribution to that community are in fact welcome.

Background

In December 2025, Microsoft announced plans to establish three data centers across the municipalities of Varde and Esbjerg. The data center in Esbjerg Municipality (Esbjerg Kommune) is to be built on a site of approximately 115 hectares, directly adjoining the western boundary of the town of Bramming. According to the information available, the development comprises five buildings of 32 meters in height, 40 meters in width, and up to approximately 450 meters in length. The nearest homes, in Stejlgårdsparken, lie approximately 400 meters from the first data center building, and the construction period is expected to extend over ten years.

The development is consistent with Esbjerg Municipality's stated ambition to attract further data centers to the municipality — an ambition which has, among other things, led the municipality to designate substantial areas along the E20 freeway, a short distance from

Bramming, for land-intensive businesses of this kind, including in order to support and optimize such businesses' potential requirements for sector coupling.

Following the announcement, Microsoft has on several occasions invited residents of Bramming to public meetings and has engaged in dialogue with Bramming Lokalråd (the local council for Bramming and its surrounding area) and with the immediate neighbors of the site. At these meetings Microsoft has provided limited ongoing information on the progress of the planning work, together with a preliminary description of the anticipated scale of the site. That scale has been expanded on an ongoing basis — including a substantial increase in building height, which entails a significantly greater impact on the nearest neighbors.

Beyond the public meetings, Microsoft has contributed only limited information about the proposed development. Several residents have consequently felt uneasy about the project, and active citizens have in parallel submitted requests for access to public documents to obtain a clearer picture and thereby address that unease.

Microsoft states that, across the three sites, the development is expected to generate up to 500 permanent jobs once the data centers are fully built out. According to Microsoft, the construction period is expected to last approximately ten years. During construction, Microsoft will use international contractors with substantial specialist expertise in developing data center facilities of this type, as that expertise is not available locally. These contractors provide the necessary international workforce themselves, and the need for local support is therefore expected to be very limited.

Local Engagement with the Project in Bramming

As Bramming Lokalråd is the local democratic body for Bramming and its surrounding area, the Council has followed the process and Microsoft's plans with close interest in view of their implications for Bramming's short- and long-term development. The Council has for the time being taken a measured view of the project, awaiting further information so that a position could be formed on more than conjecture.

In parallel, a group of residents has taken the initiative to form a citizens' group, whose members have actively sought information through dialogue and through requests for access to public documents, among other means.

Recognizing that Bramming is strongest where there is a shared understanding and dialogue about the impact on the town, Bramming Lokalråd has sought to establish a cross-cutting collaboration in Bramming involving the relevant stakeholders. This has taken the form of a liaison group comprising the citizens' group referred to above, Bramming Handels-, Håndværker- og Industriforening (the town's trade, crafts and industry association) and

representatives of the nearest residents' associations. Where relevant, the liaison group also draws on other partnerships and expertise, such as Danmarks Naturfredningsforening (the Danish Society for Nature Conservation).

We must nonetheless acknowledge that the project is of a scale and complexity requiring resources and expertise that in many respects far exceed those available to us in Bramming. This gives rise to a markedly unequal relationship between Microsoft and the residents of Bramming.

We have maintained a constructive dialogue with the administration and elected representatives in Esbjerg Municipality, and we wish to acknowledge that we have met understanding and a willingness to engage. The administration's role as a planning authority does, however, limit its ability to provide us with independent advice in navigating the complexity of this extensive project.

It is at the same time a concern to us that projects of this nature have impacts extending well beyond the geographical boundaries of a single municipality. We therefore find it surprising that Microsoft has not to a greater degree sought to coordinate such projects across municipal boundaries but instead pursues them individually. This is a source of considerable puzzlement among residents of both Esbjerg and Varde municipalities.

The Project's Contribution to the Town of Bramming and to Esbjerg Municipality

Given the scale and complexity referred to above, we are not in a position, as a town, to examine technical matters in detail, to challenge them, or to undertake extensive analyses on our own. We can, however, observe that Microsoft's contribution to Bramming and the benefits to Bramming and to Esbjerg Municipality are negligible if the data center is established at the proposed location. Those benefits — for Esbjerg Municipality and for Microsoft alike — could be considerably strengthened were the project directed to an alternative location in Esbjerg Municipality set aside for land-intensive businesses, where sector coupling could be exploited to a far greater extent.

We have sought to take a measured view of what the project actually contributes to Bramming, and, on our present assessment, we find that contribution limited.

Surplus Heat

Microsoft communicates that the project will contribute to the local community. Such a contribution could arise through sector coupling, whereby Bramming Fjernvarme (the local district heating utility), for example, could purchase and take a marginal share of the surplus heat. However, Bramming Fjernvarme has only recently invested in a new plant, for which

Esbjerg Municipality has provided a loan guarantee of DKK 99.4 million. The incentive for Bramming Fjernvarme to fund the pipework and associated installations required to enable sector coupling therefore appears limited. Microsoft has stated that it will not fund such installations. There are no other geographically proximate opportunities for sector coupling through which the heat could be utilized.

The importance of such sector coupling, and of the contribution to society, is set out by Esbjerg Municipality together with Business Esbjerg in their consultation response of 3 July 2026 on the draft act amending the Danish Electricity Supply Act and the Act on the Promotion of Renewable Energy (“Høringssvar til forslag til lov om ændring af lov om elforsyning og lov om fremme af vedvarende energi”). That response states:

“Nyt stort elforbrug bør som udgangspunkt placeres tæt på produktionen af vedvarende energi, hvor belastningen af transmissionsnettet reduceres, mulighederne for sektorkobling styrkes, og den grønne energi udnyttes mest effektivt.”

“New large-scale electricity consumption should as a general rule be located close to the production of renewable energy, where the load on the transmission grid is reduced, the opportunities for sector coupling are strengthened, and the green energy is utilized most efficiently.” (unofficial translation)

As Microsoft’s data center is not to be located in the vicinity of any facility capable of taking these volumes of surplus heat — Bramming Fjernvarme could in theory take only a marginal fraction of the total — nor of any immediate opportunity for other forms of sector coupling, we are unable to see how this project will constitute a contribution either to Bramming or to society more broadly.

Community Life

In our ongoing dialogue with Microsoft, we have raised other means by which the company might contribute to the town’s community life and local projects, in the same way as other businesses in the town. Microsoft has, however, indicated that support can be provided only in the immediate vicinity of the data center site, or in connection with activities related to Microsoft’s technologies. Bramming will therefore not benefit from support for town development or for residents’ community life — support that might reasonably be expected should other, smaller businesses with local employees be established at the same location.

Contrary to Microsoft’s own statements, the town thus gains a neighbor concerned solely with what takes place within its own boundary and on its own site.

Employment

Bramming's development is strengthened when people choose to settle there, for instance because employment is available locally. As noted, Microsoft expects the development to provide up to 500 jobs across the three data center sites in Esbjerg and Varde municipalities, of which, according to Microsoft, perhaps as many as 150 jobs might be in Bramming. We are, however, highly skeptical of that estimate. When Apple established its data center in Foulum, figures of 10,000 jobs and 80 permanent positions were cited; Apple's facility today employs approximately 50 people. It is likewise well documented that a proportion of the positions created by facilities of this type are filled by specialists who travel to and from assignments, which does not support stable settlement or durable local development in Bramming.

Business Development

We also consider business development in Bramming to be adversely affected by the project. According to the information available, construction will be carried out by international contractors using their own workforce, and local craft and service businesses are therefore expected to be involved only to a very limited extent. At the same time, the project imposes restrictions on commercial land east of Highway 11 (hovedvej 11), markedly limiting the scope both for establishing new businesses in Bramming and for expanding the town's existing ones. It is precisely these businesses that employ local people and use local suppliers.

Economic Impact

We can find nothing in the available material to indicate that any overall assessment has been made of the project's impact on municipal finances. Nor, accordingly, can we see that the project will be of economic benefit to the town of Bramming or to Esbjerg Municipality. The limited number of jobs, unaccompanied by any knock-on local business development, provides no basis for increased settlement or tax revenue. On the contrary, we are concerned that taxpayers will be left not only with the effects of the data center, but also with the bill for, among other things, maintaining the infrastructure around it.

The Appearance of the Town

Finally, we must observe that the construction of these vast data center buildings will markedly and adversely alter the face of the town. The buildings will be highly visible from Highway 11 and from the railway, both of which are principal approaches to Bramming. Bramming's image may thus change from that of a town of green spaces, good footpath

networks and a rich community life in which everything is close at hand, to that of the town with the vast, greyish buildings of a kind that has no comparison elsewhere in Denmark.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the information currently available, we urge Microsoft to abandon the proposed location of the data center in Bramming. Microsoft and the project should instead make use of other areas — for example along the E20 freeway in Esbjerg Municipality — which have already been designated for purposes of this kind, where the project would not cause nuisance to the town or its residents, and where there are far better opportunities for sector coupling, to the benefit of society.

Should Microsoft choose to proceed with the project at the present location, it will do so on a basis that is markedly unequal as between Microsoft and the residents of Bramming, since the town, as noted, does not have the resources or expertise necessary to engage with a project of this magnitude.

We expect to receive, no later than 21 September 2026, a written account from Microsoft setting out how the matters raised above will be taken into consideration in the project, and why Microsoft has not addressed other established locations for land-intensive businesses in Esbjerg Municipality, where sector coupling could be strengthened and the impact on the environment, on families and on other residents could be markedly reduced.

We remain, of course, available for dialogue with the relevant parties within Microsoft.

Yours faithfully

Bramming Lokalråd

Bramming Handels- Håndværker- og Industriforening (Bramming HHI)

Kaj Lykke Golfklub

Citizens and neighbours to the datacenter site at Porsholtvej

Citizens and neighbours to the datacenter site at Stejlgårdsparken's landowner association's

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ABOUT THE SIGNATORIES

This letter is sent jointly by Bramming Lokalråd, Bramming Handels-, Håndværker- og Industriforening (HHI) and Kaj Lykke Golfklub. Together we represent the town's democratic body, its business community, and one of its largest membership associations.

Bramming Lokalråd

Bramming Lokalråd is the local democratic body for Bramming and its surrounding area, and forms part of Esbjerg Municipality's local democracy framework (nærdemokrati). The Council is politically independent and run by volunteers. Its role is to gather residents' views, strengthen cohesion in the local area, and ensure that local voices are heard in decisions affecting the town's development. The Council submits consultation responses in municipal planning processes, maintains an ongoing dialogue with the administration and elected representatives of Esbjerg Municipality, and acts as a coordinating link between residents, associations and public authorities. In the matter of the data center, the Council has initiated and leads the cross-cutting liaison group in Bramming.

Bramming Handels-, Håndværker- og Industriforening (HHI)

HHI is Bramming's business association, bringing together the town's retailers, craft businesses and industry. The association works to maintain and develop Bramming as a centre of retail and enterprise — including by attracting new shops and businesses, through joint marketing, and through the town's recurring events. HHI represents businesses that

employ local people, use local suppliers, and contribute to the town's tax base and community life.

Kaj Lykke Golfklub

Kaj Lykke Golfklub was founded in 1988 by local enthusiasts and opened its first nine holes in 1989. The club today has approximately 1,000 members of all ages and comprises an 18-hole course, a six-hole par-3 course, and practice and clubhouse facilities on Kirkebrovej, west of Bramming — in the immediate vicinity of the site on which the data centre is proposed. The club is run largely by volunteers and receives a significant number of visiting players each year from Denmark and abroad. It is named after the nobleman Kaj Lykke (c. 1625–1699), who spent his final years at the Bramminggård estate near Bramming.

Bramming

Bramming is a town of approximately 7,300 inhabitants in the eastern part of Esbjerg Municipality, some 19 km from both Esbjerg and Ribe. It grew up as a railway town around the junction between the Esbjerg–Lunderskov line and the line towards Tønder, and until the Danish local government reform of 2007 it was the seat of the former Bramming Municipality. Today, Bramming is the retail and service centre for a catchment area of approximately 10,000 people. The town is characterised by a locally rooted business community of retail, craft and industrial enterprises, a strong community life, short distances, and green spaces and footpath networks close to its residential quarters.