

Helinor: Power Before The Grid

● **Energy First Real Estate** | Kranløftet · 10th floor | 12:52–13:00 | 

Part of Don't Just Host It. Build It



Elling Helvig

Executive Chairman, Helinor

On-site fuel-cell power lets data centres grow without waiting for the grid

Elling Helvig opened with a meeting in Calgary, where developers of a large North American AI campus asked how many megawatts could be delivered and when, not when a grid connection would come. Citing Microsoft's figure of \$1.5bn spent every week on data centres, he argued that compute is the new oil field. In Europe a grid connection can take years, while North American developers bring their own power and plan generation alongside the site. Helinor's answer is cleaner on-site power with fuel cells, in two power blocks: a 2.5 MW prime block with gas fuel cells for continuous generation, and a 2 MW backup block with hydrogen fuel cells and zero on-site CO2 emissions. An initial 40 MW project is targeted for completion in early 2028, within a potential programme of up to 1 GW with BW Velora.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- In Europe a grid connection can take years; North American developers plan generation alongside the site.
- A credible power plan can be part of the property proposition from day one.
- For a large campus, up to \$150m in annual operating profit is at stake during delays.
- The speaker notes describe the hydrogen backup block as a development target, planned for 2028.
- Helinor sees SOFC and PEM fuel cells as its pathway to industrial scale.

\$1.5bn

spent every week on data centres, per Microsoft at ONS 2026