

Council Light Quick Start

Draft council documents with Claude, ChatGPT or Microsoft Copilot, in the right format and with every gap marked for you to fill.

Council Light turns your council's details and your project facts into a prompt. You paste that prompt into your AI, and it returns two Word-ready documents: a **Preparation document** that records sources, gaps and checks, and the **Final document** that goes to your reader. Council Light never sends your information anywhere; everything stays in your browser until you paste it.

Before you start: use your council's AI account

Paste into your council's enterprise or business AI account (Claude Team or Enterprise, ChatGPT Enterprise or Team, or Microsoft 365 Copilot), not a free personal one. Business tiers generally do not train on your inputs and give your council control over retention.

Before pasting anything sensitive, check three things with your IT or records team: whether inputs are used for training, how long they are kept, and where processing happens.

Which AI to use

AI	Rating	Method	How to keep the result
Claude	Tier 1: best for long documents	Two steps (recommended) or One prompt	Keep the Word file Claude creates
ChatGPT	Tier 1	Two steps (recommended) or One prompt	Keep the Word file if it starts at the document title; otherwise copy the reply
Microsoft Copilot M365 web chat or Desktop app	Tier 2: sections can run slightly short	Two steps only	Copy the reply by hand into Word. Never use the download link

These three were tested on all 10 document types. Other AI systems have not been tested with Council Light.

The workflow

1. **Enter your council baseline once** on the [1] **Voice Interview** tab: state, council name, your name and position, and the AI account you will paste into. Add the project context (current state, target outcome, conflict of interest declaration, constraints). You can type the fields, or copy the interview prompt and answer out loud.
2. **Add decisions and research** on the [2] **Decisions & Lookups** tab if you have them, such as a preferred option or your procurement threshold. This step is optional.
3. **Choose the document** on the [3] **Document Studio** tab: one of the 10 types, then answer its short set of questions. Anything you leave blank is marked [VERIFY] in the documents rather than guessed.
4. **Choose the method.** Leave **Two steps (recommended)** selected. It is the only method for Copilot and the default for everyone.
5. **Run the prompts** in your AI, following the section for your AI on page 3.
6. **Finish the Final document** before it goes anywhere: replace every [VERIFY], then sign off (page 4).

Running the two steps

1. Open your AI in a **new chat**. Council Light has an Open button for each AI beside the prompts.
2. Click **Copy Step 1 Prompt** and paste it. Check line 1 (see below), then send.
3. Save the reply as the **Preparation document**. Read its **Unresolved Items** list: these are the facts the Final will mark [VERIFY].
4. Back in Council Light, click **Copy Step 2 Prompt**. Paste it into the **same chat**, check line 1, then send.
5. Save the reply as the **Final document**.

Check line 1 before you send

Every prompt names itself on its first line, so you can see at a glance that you pasted the right one:

Prompt	Line 1 reads
Step 1	STEP 1 OF 2 - PREPARATION - Business Case
Step 2	STEP 2 OF 2 - FINAL - Business Case - paste in the same chat as step 1
One prompt	TWIN PROMPT - BOTH DOCUMENTS - Business Case - start a new chat

If line 1 names the wrong step or the wrong document, do not send it. Go back to Council Light and click the Copy button again. An old copy on the clipboard is the most common mistake.

What you get back

Document	What it is for	Who reads it
Preparation document	Your working record: run details, conflict of interest declaration, statutory anchors, decisions, source register, Unresolved Items , review findings and a quality sign-off with your name.	You, your manager and any auditor
Final document	The council document itself, in the sections your document type requires, written for the named reader. It contains no AI or process notes.	Councillors, the executive or the external reader named in the document

What [VERIFY] means

[VERIFY] marks a fact the AI was not given, such as a decision-maker, a section number or a date. It is written as a sentence, for example "The decision-maker for this matter is [VERIFY]." The AI never fills a gap with a guess. Replace each one with the real fact, or remove the sentence if it does not apply.

Figures you can rely on

For the Business Case, Council Light calculates the economic appraisal itself (NPV, benefit-cost ratio at three discount rates, breakeven and residual value) from your figures and your state's published discount rates. The AI writes about these numbers but does not calculate them. Check the inputs, and the figures follow.

Saving your work

Your answers are saved in this browser only. Use **Export Session File (.json)** to keep a copy or move to another computer, and **Import Session File** to restore it. **Clear Saved Data** removes everything from this device.

Using your AI

Claude Tier 1 · best for long documents	
Open	Your council's Claude account (Team or Enterprise). Start a new chat.
Method	Two steps is the default. One prompt also works and is about twice as fast, with a shorter Preparation document.
Keep	Claude creates each document as a Word file with real headings and tables. Download and keep those files.
Expect	The fullest documents of the three AIs, comfortably above every word budget, with more [VERIFY] markers because it marks gaps conservatively.

ChatGPT Tier 1	
Open	Your council's ChatGPT account (Enterprise or Team). Start a new chat.
Method	Two steps is the default. One prompt also works.
Keep	ChatGPT offers a Word file as well as the reply. Keep the file if it starts at the document title and has no "=====" or "SAVE AS" lines. If the file looks shorter than the reply, copy the reply into Word instead.
Expect	Clean structure and targeted [VERIFY] markers. Short document types such as the Council Report can land close to their word budget.

Microsoft Copilot (M365 web chat or Desktop app) Tier 2 · Two steps only	
Open	Microsoft 365 Copilot at m365.cloud.microsoft/chat, or the Copilot Desktop app. Both give the same results.
Before each run	1. Refresh the web page, or restart the Desktop app, then click New chat. Do this every time, especially when you run the same document again. 2. Click Copy Step 1 in Council Light immediately before you paste. Never reuse an old copy or a saved file. 3. Check line 1.
Method	Two steps only. Do not use One prompt with Copilot. Paste each prompt into the chat box; do not attach it as a file.
Keep	Select the whole reply and copy it into a blank Word document. Ignore download links: in testing they lost a third to half of the content. If Copilot shows "Coding and executing", wait for the reply and copy the text.
Between steps	After copying the Step 1 reply, click Copy Step 2 in Council Light before pasting. That replaces the reply on your clipboard with the right prompt.
Expect	Documents just above their word budgets, with a section occasionally a little short. That is accepted for Copilot.

Before the Final document goes anywhere

1. Replace every **[VERIFY]** with the real fact, or remove the sentence if it does not apply. Search the document for "[VERIFY]" to find them all.
2. Work through the Preparation document's **Unresolved Items**. Each one points to the Final section that needs it.
3. Check the **officer recommendation** (Council Report) matches your own wording exactly.
4. Check names, dates (DD/MM/YYYY), dollar figures and GST labels against your source documents.
5. Sign the Preparation document's **Quality & Human Verification Sign-Off**. The document is not accepted until the named officer signs it.
6. File both documents together. The Preparation document is your record of how the Final was made.

If something goes wrong

What you see	What to do
Line 1 names the wrong step or document	Do not send. Click the Copy button in Council Light again and re-paste.
Copilot says the prompt is too large	Start a new chat and try once more. If it refuses again, shorten your longest answers (project context and document questions) and copy Step 1 again.
Copilot talks about an earlier run or an earlier draft	Refresh or restart, start a new chat and begin again from Step 1. If it keeps happening, turn off Copilot memory for this work.
The reply is only a download link, or is much shorter than expected	Start a new chat and run the step again, pasting the prompt rather than attaching a file. Keep the full reply text.
Step 2 was run in a new chat by mistake	Run both steps again, with Step 2 pasted in the same chat as Step 1.
A heading is followed by only one line	Run that step again in a new chat. A section should be written out in full.
The Word file does not match the reply	Copy the reply into Word and use that instead of the file.

Good to know

The AI drafts; you are accountable. Council Light keeps the AI to your facts and marks every gap, but only you can confirm the document is right for your council.

The word budgets are guides for the AI, not targets for you. A complete section that is shorter than its budget is fine.

A short video walkthrough of this guide is planned.

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