

## Privy Council Order, 16 January 1726

### Document Identification

This is a **Privy Council Order** (also called an Order in Council), dated **16 January 1726**, issued at the Court of St. James's. The Public Record Office reference stamp reads **PC 1/4/27**, with a secondary reference of **86356**. The "27/1 Eng" notation in the upper right indicates it is an English-language document filed under that classification.

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### Transcription

*At the Court at St. James's the 16th day of January 1726*

**Present** *The Kings most Excell: Majesty in Council*

*Upon reading this day at the Board the humble Representation of the States of his Majesty's Island of Jersey concerning the Setting the Value of the English and French Coins in that Island — It is Ordered by his Majesty in Council, that the said Representation (a copy whereof is hereunto annexed) Be, and it is hereby Referred to the Right Honorable the Lords of the Committee for the Affairs of Jersey and Guernsey to Consider the same, and Report their Opinion thereupon to his Majesty at this Board.*

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### Historical Context

#### The Channel Islands and the Crown

The Channel Islands (Jersey and Guernsey) occupied a unique constitutional position — they were **not part of England or Great Britain proper**, but were Crown dependencies with their own laws, courts, and assemblies (the States). Matters affecting them were handled through a dedicated **Privy Council committee**, the *Lords of the Committee for the Affairs of Jersey and Guernsey*, reflecting their semi-autonomous status.

## The Currency Problem

The document concerns the **valuation of English and French coins** circulating in Jersey. This was a persistent and genuinely complex problem:

- Jersey's geographic proximity to France and its trading relationships meant **both English sterling and French livre-based coins** circulated simultaneously.
- There was no uniform official rate at which French coins were to be accepted, leading to **commercial confusion, disputes, and potential exploitation**.
- The States of Jersey (the island's representative assembly) had submitted a *humble Representation* — a formal petition — asking the Crown to intervene and **set fixed exchange values**.

This reflects the broader 18th-century challenge of managing **bimetallic and multi-national currency systems** before centralised banking and fixed exchange mechanisms existed.

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## Procedural Significance

The document perfectly illustrates the **standard Privy Council referral mechanism**:

1. A petition or representation is received and **read at the Board** (the full Council, in the King's presence).
2. Rather than deciding immediately, the Council **refers the matter to a specialist committee** — here, the Jersey and Guernsey Committee.
3. The committee is directed to **consider and report back** with their opinion.
4. Only then would a substantive Order in Council be issued.

This was efficient governance: the full Council (chaired by the King) handled high volumes of business by delegating detailed examination to standing committees.

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## Dating Note

The date **16 January 1726** requires clarification. At this time, England still used the **Old Style calendar** in which the new year began on **25 March**. Under the modern (New Style / Gregorian) calendar, this document dates to **16 January 1727**. The year 1726 was standard usage at the time of writing.

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## Significance

This is a routine but historically valuable administrative document showing:

- The **working relationship** between the Crown-in-Council and its Channel Island dependencies
- The **practical economic challenges** of currency management in the early 18th century
- The **bureaucratic process** of the Georgian Privy Council, which handled everything from colonial governance to local monetary policy