IN THE MATTER OF THE POLICE (CONDUCT) REGULATIONS 2020

IN RELATION TO PC 1111 BETHANY HEMSTOCK

WRITTEN DECISION OF ACC ANDY WALKER

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1. This is my determination in the accelerated misconduct proceedings relating to the now former police constable Bethany Hemstock, who has tendered her resignation and whose last working day was 7th October 2026.

2. The appropriate authority was represented today by Detective Superintendent Dickinson. The officer was not in attendance and has served no response to the allegations. I am satisfied that she has had an opportunity to attend and to respond to the allegations, and has elected not to do so. The hearing was therefore conducted in her absence.

3. The allegation is set out in the Regulation 51 notice, that on 7th August PC Hemstock was convicted on her own guilty plea to misconduct in a public office between 31st October 2024 and 12th December 2024. It is alleged that this conduct amounts to a breach of the standard of professional conduct of discreditable conduct, and amounts to a gross misconduct.

4. My task, at this first stage is to:
    a. first, determining the facts, based upon what is admitted by the officer or proven on the balance of probabilities;
    b. second, determining whether on the basis of those facts the officer has breached the Standards of Professional Behaviour alleged;
    c. third, deciding whether the breaches found amount to gross misconduct or not.

5. The fourth (dependent on the findings under (b) and (c) above), deciding what the outcome should be, is considered at stage 2.

6. Depending on those findings at 'Stage One' of proceedings, if the conduct is found to constitute gross misconduct, the outcomes available to me are:

    a. To impose disciplinary action, that is, make a finding that the officer concerned would have been dismissed if the officer had not ceased to be a member of a police force, or,
    b. Take no action.

7. I remind myself of the three-fold purpose of misconduct proceedings:
    a. to maintain public confidence in, and the reputation of, the police service,
    b. to uphold high standards in policing and to deter misconduct, and
    c. to protect the public.

8. These proceedings are not punitive, but are "centrally concerned with the reputation and standing of the profession" (Guidance on Outcomes, 2.7).

Facts

9. I have taken into account the Investigating Officer's Report and read all the relevant documents. I remind myself that it is the AA's case to prove the facts alleged on the balance of probabilities but note that in this case the facts alleged are accepted by the officer, and that they amount to gross misconduct.

10. I find the following facts as proven:

    a. On 31st October 2024, a witness statement was completed in the name of a "Mr Billy [last name redacted]", relating to a shop theft taking place at Heron Foods, Shannon Road on 13th October 2024. In respect of this investigation, it is recorded that PC Hemstock obtained details of this offence over the phone from one of the shop workers while in company with PC Hodgins, however, they did not visit the store due to other operational demands. They later attended the store and collected CCTV in respect of the offence. The suspect was later convicted on 27th February 2025 on his own plea.

    b. In advance of the hearing in February, "Billy" was contacted as a witness and shown the statement. However, the "Billy" referred to was actually "Billie", a woman, who denied this statement contained her recollections of events, or her signature. Her personal contact details and date of birth were recorded accurately on the rear of the statement and there was no other staff member of that name at the store.

    c. Also completed on 31st October 2024 was a second witness statement, on this occasion penned in the name of the store manager at Heron Foods, Greenwich Avenue. This was in relation to a shop theft at this store, for which the same suspect was convicted on his own plea on 27th February 2025.

    d. It is recorded that this witness confirms that she did in fact provide details about this shop theft, and that on 31st October at 9:19AM PC Hemstock sent an email in which the wording of the statement content is shared with the witness. However, this witness confirms that the signature attached to the bottom of this witness statement is not her own.

e. Lastly, a witness statement relating to a shop left at Boyles, Hessle Road, was started on 21th December 2024 and completed 12th December 2024. In this case no prosecution followed on public interest grounds. The witness in this case also recalled email correspondence with PC Hemstock, but again said that he had not signed the witness statement bearing his name.

f. PC Hemstock was interviewed twice in respect of these signatures. First, on 11th August 2025, she accepted in respect of the first incident that "that the statement is not the words or signature of Billie and states this was a mistake on her part". On 27th January 2026, after further investigations had been done, she again accepted that she had signed the statement of "Billy" herself, and further that she had signed the signatures on the other two statements identified.

g. It is a matter of record that on 7th August 2026, PC Hemstock pleaded guilty to three counts, among them the offence of misconduct in a public office between 31st October 2024 and 12th December 2024. Her sentence date was set for 14th September 2026 (though it is understood that this date was adjourned).

Breach

11. Those facts being found, I move to assess whether those facts constitute a breach of the professional standards, specifically discreditable conduct.

12. It is widely and correctly accepted that breaking the law is incompatible with the duties and expectations placed on the police. Misconduct in a public office is among the most serious offences that an officer can commit, as it cuts at the root of the trust and confidence the public places in the police, and the public would not expect officers to act in such a way where they are tasked with upholding the law. Conduct of this sort could seriously undermine public confidence in the police if it were known to them.

13. In my determination, I am satisfied that the standard of discreditable conduct is breached.

Seriousness

14. I remind myself of the definition of gross misconduct as prescribed by Regulation 2: "a breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour that is so serious as to justify dismissal".

15. Taking the staged approach prescribed by the guidance on outcomes:

a. Culpability: these were intentional and deliberate acts and the wrongness of them would have been obvious to the officer. Forging any part of a witness statement clearly has a high risk of foreseeable harm, as a prosecution could either be undermined or a personal wrongfully convicted on the basis of the act. I also note that it is, of course, unacceptable for police officers, who are responsible for enforcing the law, to break the law themselves. Offences involving dishonesty, which I find this case involves, are of particular concern, as such offending involves a fundamental breach of the public's trust in police officers and inevitably brings the profession into disrepute. This dishonesty was conducted as part of the officer's duties. All of these point to higher culpability.

b. Harm: There was a high risk of direct harm to the public during this course of conduct, given the complications such conduct can cause to the administration of justice . There is a high risk of reputational harm, should the public become aware that an officer has broken the law falsifying signatures and witness evidence, a serious offence. The harm is this case is therefore high.

c. Aggravating factors. I note from the Guidance on Outcomes the following features: regular, repeated or sustained behaviour over a period of time, and multiple victims (those whose signatures had been forged).

d. Mitigating factors: at this stage this serves to reduce the officer's culpability. Personal mitigation is not considered at this stage. There are no such factors in this case.

16. Overall, having assessed the seriousness of the officer's conduct, and noting her admissions, I find that it constitutes gross misconduct.

17. I then separately considered the appropriate outcome.

Outcome

18. Having now heard submissions on outcome, have considered the officer's antecedents and references, and I am ready to deliver my findings on outcome.

19. I remind myself again of the purpose of these proceedings set out at paragraph 2.3 of the Guidance on Outcome.

20. My findings as to severity (i.e. in relation to culpability, harm, aggravating factors, and mitigating factors) remain as above.

21. No personal mitigation is advanced by the officer. I note that she claims stress and a high-workload in her interviews, but to the extent that this could amount to mitigation, I also note

the limitations of such mitigation within misconduct proceedings, per the decision in R (on the application of Williams) v Police Appeals Tribunal and in Bolton v Law Society.

22. I have considered all the factors in this case and I find that the appropriate outcome in this case would have been dismissal had the officer still be serving.

23. I have specifically considered firstly whether no action would be appropriate in this case. I am of the view that it is not. This was serious criminal conduct. Members of the public would lose significant trust and confidence in the police if any other finding were made. The reputation of the police would be significantly damaged if any other sanction was imposed.

24. The only appropriate outcome for this case is dismissal without notice.

25. The Officer will accordingly be placed on the Barred List.