Accelerated Misconduct Hearing

Regulation 63 – Notification of Outcome

Officer:	Former Police Constable 24767 John Pithouse
Date:	19th October 2026
Chair:	Debra Tedds

The Decisions of the Hearing

Allegation No.	Allegations (See Regulation 51 Notice)	Finding Proven / Not Proven	Outcome
	It is alleged on 3 April 2025, the former officer was driving a marked police vehicle in the company of another officer who was in the front passenger seat. Whilst responding to a Priority 1 incident, the former officer drove the police vehicle at speed over a humpback bridge on the approach to which their vision was obstructed due to the steep gradient of the bridge. As former officer Pithouse approached the bridge, his body-worn video recorded him to say “we might even get air on this bridge if I’m lucky”. Immediately after going over the bridge, the police vehicle collided into the rear of a vehicle which in turn collided with another vehicle. Injuries were suffered by the occupants of the other vehicles and all three vehicles were damaged. As a consequence of this collision, former officer Pithouse was prosecuted for dangerous driving. The former officer’s conduct has brought discredit on West Midlands Police and the wider police service and undermined public confidence in policing. The conduct is a breach of the Discreditable Conduct Standard of the Standards of Professional Behaviour and amounts to Gross Misconduct.		

The reasons for the decision as to Finding:

Former Officer Pithouse did not attend the hearing nor was he represented.
I was satisfied that Former Officer Pithouse had received proper notice of the hearing and therefore determined that it was appropriate to continue in his absence.

I have read the papers received as part of the bundle including the video evidence and considered what has been said.

As Chair, under the regulations, I am asked to approach this case in stages, which I have done so.

Police Conduct Regulations sets out that the person or persons conducting the misconduct proceedings must not find that the conduct of the officer concerned amounts to misconduct or gross misconduct unless:-

a) They are satisfied on the balance of probabilities that this is the case, or
b) The officer admits it is the case

I am required to establish the facts, whether those facts breach the standards of professional behaviour as outlined and if they do breach – whether they amount to misconduct, gross misconduct or neither.

The burden is on the Appropriate Authority to prove the allegations on the balance of probabilities.

The former officer has not provided a response and has not indicated whether he admits to breaching the standards of professional behaviour and therefore will assume that he does not make any admissions.

The appropriate authority relies upon a conviction, after Former Officer Pithouse entered a guilty plea, of driving a motor vehicle dangerously contrary to section 2 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 to the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 by Coventry Magistrates Court on the 9th September 2026.

Having given careful consideration to the evidence provided within the bundle, based on what I have heard and read, I find that the factual allegations against Former Officer Pithouse to be proven and breached the standards of professional behaviour – namely discreditable conduct.

In determining the seriousness of the breach of the professional standards of behaviour and having regard to the College of Policing Guidance on Outcomes and the definition of gross misconduct in Regulation 2 of the regulations in my view, these breaches of the standards of professional behaviour amount to gross misconduct - that is to say that is so serious that the officers dismissal would be justified.

The reasons for the decision as to Outcome:

In arriving at my decision I have carefully considered what the appropriate outcome is in this case and focused on the evidence within the bundle, the oral submissions made at the hearing and the officers record of service. The former officer has not provided any character evidence.

As a former officer the only outcome I can arrive at is either:

- Disciplinary action – the former officer would have been dismissed had they still been a serving member of the Force.

- No disciplinary action

In arriving at my decision, I have recognised the purpose of the police misconduct regime which is to maintain public confidence in and the reputation of the police service, uphold high standards in policing and to deter misconduct and protect the public. I have utilised the College of Policing Guidance on Outcomes to assist in deciding on the most appropriate outcome. This has included the three stages to determining the most appropriate action and assessing the seriousness of the proven conduct through culpability, harm, aggravating and mitigating factors before applying any personal mitigation.

Culpability

Culpability denotes the officer's blameworthiness or responsibility for their actions. The more culpable or blameworthy the behaviour in question, the more serious the misconduct and the more severe the likely outcome. Conduct that is intentional, deliberate, targeted or planned will generally be more culpable than conduct that has unintended consequences although the consequences of an officer's actions will be relevant to the harm caused.

Former Officer Pithouse's actions were deliberate and intentional and showed a level of recklessness towards members of the public, his passenger and his own safety.

The former officers conduct resulted in a conviction, after he entered a guilty plea, for dangerous driving whilst on duty responding to a priority incident.
It is unacceptable for police officers, who are responsible for enforcing the law to break the law themselves. Any conviction will be and is serious and in itself is likely to have an adverse impact on public confidence in Policing.
I find the level of culpability to be high.

Harm

Harm caused by an officer's actions can be considered in various ways.
Harm does not need to be suffered by a defined individual or group to undermine public confidence. Where an officer commits an act that would harm public confidence if the circumstances were known to the public, this can be taken into account.

Members of the public who were in motor vehicles which Former Officer Pithouse collided with received significant injuries as a result of the manner of his driving. Other members of the public witnessed the incident that followed. The impact on public trust and confidence seeing an officer behave in this way, against his training, particularly whilst on duty in a marked police vehicle, is significant and brings discredit onto himself, West Midlands Police and the wider service.

I find the level of harm to be high.

Aggravating Factors

Aggravating factors are those tending to worsen the circumstances of the case, in relation to either the officer's culpability or the harm caused.

I have sought to avoid double counting either within the list or with the factors already considered as part of my assessment.

Former Officer Pithouse should have known better. He had undertaken driver trainer and was a Standard Police driver having successfully completed his driving course in June 2024.

I have already made reference to the fact that I believe the conduct was deliberate and intentional which is supported by his comments made at the time to his colleague immediately prior to driving over the bridge.

Mitigating Factors
Mitigating factors are those tending to reduce the seriousness of the misconduct.
Former Officer Pithouse has not engaged in the misconduct process and has not provided any response under ther regulations. He did, however, during his initial interview, apologised and expressed some remorse as a result of his actions.

Personal Mitigation
The weight of personal mitigation will necessarily be limited, particularly where serious miscoduct has been proven. Nonetheless, personal mitigation is always relevant and should be considered.
Due to the former officer not providing any response or advancing any character evidence there is no personal mitigation provide for consideration.

Conclusion
I have decided that the only appropriate outcome to reflect the seriousness of the proven gross misconduct is to impose disciplinary action and therefore if Former Officer Pithouse was still serving then he would have been dismissed.

Reg 63(2) Right of Appeal:

You have a right of appeal against the outcome under the following circumstances: -

a) the finding or outcome was unreasonable;

b) there is evidence that could not reasonably have been considered at the original hearing which could have materially affected the finding or decision on disciplinary action; or

c) there was a breach of the procedures or other unfairness which could have materially affected the finding or decision on outcome.

Should you wish to appeal this must be done to the Police Appeals Tribunal by writing to the Police and Crime Commissioner, West Midlands Office for Policing and Crime **within ten working days** beginning with the day after receipt of this notice. Please note that the tribunal can increase any outcome imposed as well as reduce or overturn the decision of the chair. You have the right to be legally represented at the appeal hearing.

Decision on Publication:

Chair's Signature:	DJ Tedds	**Date:**	26/10/26