GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE

In the matter of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 and

(Former Officer A)

Decision of Sir Stephen Watson, Chief Constable

16th October 2026

Preliminary matters

1. I have today conducted an accelerated misconduct hearing at Unit A, GMP Force Headquarters, and have given consideration to various breaches of the standards of professional behaviour as pertain to former officer A. Former officer A retired on the 15th October 2026.

2. Former officer A was not in attendance nor was he otherwise represented. There has also been no regulation 54 response from former officer A.

3. I have determined that the allegations are proven in respect of breaches of the standards of professional behaviour which relate to Discreditable Conduct; and Orders and Instructions. I have determined that the proven breaches are sufficiently serious to justify dismissal thus I have found that they constitute gross misconduct.

4. In coming to a determination as to the most appropriate outcome, I have taken cognisance of the submissions of the appropriate authority as contained within the bundle of evidence submitted to me prior to this hearing, with elements of the same being amplified in invited verbal submissions by the representative of the appropriate authority, Ms Atkin a barrister at law.

Outcome

5. In considering the appropriate disciplinary action to be imposed, I received written and verbal submissions from the AA that the appropriate disciplinary outcome in this matter, had the former officer not retired, would have been dismissal without notice and the placing of their name onto the College of Policing's Barred List.

6. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, I have had regard to the relevant provisions of the College of Policing's Guidance on Outcomes in Misconduct Proceedings. It is very powerfully the case that the principal objective in the conduct of these hearings must be to preserve public confidence in the police service.

7. At the forefront of my mind has been the purpose of misconduct proceedings, these are expressly set out in the College of Policing's Guidance.

8. My approach has been to "adopt" the "3 stage approach" referred to in the College of Policing's Guidance:

9. I have assessed the seriousness of the conduct. It is a matter of fact that former officer A, during a period of time between 11th June 2019 and 28th June 2022 had been in contact with 5 phone numbers attributed to adult sex workers [ASW] using his GMP-issued mobile device on 12 occasions. Each number has been matched to an advertisement for an ASW. No lawful policing purpose has been identified for any of the contact between the former officer and the ASW's. All communication with ASW's occurred whilst the former officer was off duty.

10. I consider that the former officer's culpability must be regarded as high. His conduct was persistent, repeated and occurred over a protracted period of time. The former officer knew or ought to have known that his conduct was reprehensible, and morally indefensible, and contrary to the standards and values of the Force.

11. With regard to the aggravating factors set out in the College of Policing's Guidance, I have already pointed to the fact that the misconduct was deliberate and unforced. By definition, the breach clearly implies a significant deviation from that properly expected of a well conducted officer. The conduct proven amounts to multiple breaches of the standards of professional behaviour over a period of time. Accordingly, I

consider the fact that multiple breaches have occurred to constitute an additional aggravating factor.

12. In respect of harm, I refer to the potential harm to the reputation and standing of the service. If the full facts of this case were to be fully understood by the general public, I consider that it would be inevitable that the former officer's conduct and actions would bring the profession into disrepute and damage the trust that the public have a right to expect of their police. In calibrating a sense of the public perception of this type of conduct; it would be wrong to deny the cumulative impact of similar cases which have, and continue, to cause widespread concern as to the standards of conduct amongst police officers more generally.

13. This matter also engages a particular harm in that it is well known, particularly amongst experienced police officers, that adult sex workers are frequently vulnerable people; with complex needs who are often exploited by criminal third parties. That the former officer wilfully engaged in such contact, ran the obvious risk of perpetuating the vulnerability of their contacts. Self-evidently, the police are here to safeguard vulnerable people not to add to the misery of their existence.

14. With regard to mitigating circumstances, as set out in the College of Policing's Guidance, I have taken into account the former officer's record of service. Not least because the former officer has failed to advance any response to this hearing; and in giving consideration to the evidence presented, I am unable to discover any mitigation in this matter whatsoever.

15. I reiterate the point that the core purpose of these proceedings is to sustain public confidence in the police. As articulated above, there is no doubt that the facts of this case have the grave potential to substantially diminish public confidence. The actions of the former officer need to be viewed, in the context of holding the trusted and powerful office of constable, through the prism of sustaining public confidence in the police more generally. In conclusion, I consider that the level of seriousness in this case is high.

16. The former officer's conduct in this matter clearly falls far below the behaviours and standards that the public have every right to expect. He has demonstrably and significantly, breached the standards of professional behaviour. The former officer's behaviour represents a catastrophic misjudgement and a failure to sustain the required personal discipline for a police officer. I will add that the former officer has chosen

not to participate in this hearing in any way. I consider that his conduct in this regard additionally does him no credit at all.

17. I have come to a clear view that any notion of retaining the former officer's services in policing, would be entirely incompatible with the primary objective of these proceedings which is to sustain public confidence in the police. There are no evident exceptional circumstances in this case, and I have accordingly determined that had had former officer A not retired, I would have dismissed him from the service with immediate effect.

18. I order that former officer A's name be added to the College of Policing's Barred List.

19. This concludes today's hearing.



Sir Stephen Watson QPM
Chief Constable