



**Clarendon
Executive**

Celebrating 25 years of Finding Leaders

Head of Operations

Candidate Briefing Document
September 2026

Private and Confidential



**wilson's
country**

Welcome Note

It has been my absolute privilege over the years to see Wilson's Country grow from strength to strength. It started off selling a neighbour's fertilizer free spuds as a sideline along with the farm goat's milk out of a small van to shops in Lisburn and Belfast and has now evolved into a business that is unrecognisable from those early days.

That growth and evolution came in the late 80's and early 90's from the unbelievable help and support of my family and then in turn continued to develop because of the many staff who have joined the team and helped to professionalise and firmly establish the business locally with the NI food industry and as a leading brand across Ireland.

We are now moving into a new and exciting phase of the business as the baton is passed to the next generation of leaders who will make their mark on the further evolution of the business.

The new role in the business of "Head of Operations" is a key appointment in this new journey. The successful candidate will join our other senior leaders to cement a very strong and talented team to lead the business forward. The Head of Ops will have a central role in shaping the future development of their team, process, automation and lean working of the business. Thank you for your interest in considering this role.



Angus Wilson
Chair Wilson's Country

About Wilson's Country

Wilson's Country is a leading potato brand in Ireland, with a proud heritage spanning 40 years.

Founded by Angus Wilson from the family farm in the 1980s, the business has grown from strength to strength to become one of the leading operators in the Irish potato industry. A long-term commitment to innovation, quality and marketing has helped establish Wilson's Country as a trusted partner to many of the country's leading food retailers, foodservice providers and food manufacturers.

Today, the business employs more than 130 people across two sites in Craigavon, spanning almost 12 acres. Wilson's supplies customers with a broad portfolio of own-label and branded prepack, peeled and cooked convenience potato products, supported by established relationships with key accounts across the island of Ireland.

At the heart of the business is a strong connection with agriculture and its grower base. Wilson's works with 23 preferred growers across the island of Ireland, who supply a significant proportion of the company's annual potato requirement of more than 40,000 tonnes.



Innovation & Sustainability

Sustainability has become an increasingly important part of the Wilson's Country story. The company has received several awards for its work to reduce its carbon footprint, with a significant element of this progress coming from the utilisation of food waste through its on-site anaerobic digestion plant.

The facility enables food waste generated by the operation to be converted into energy, producing electricity for the factory. Importantly, the business believes there remains considerable potential to develop this initiative further as part of its wider sustainability and operational agenda.

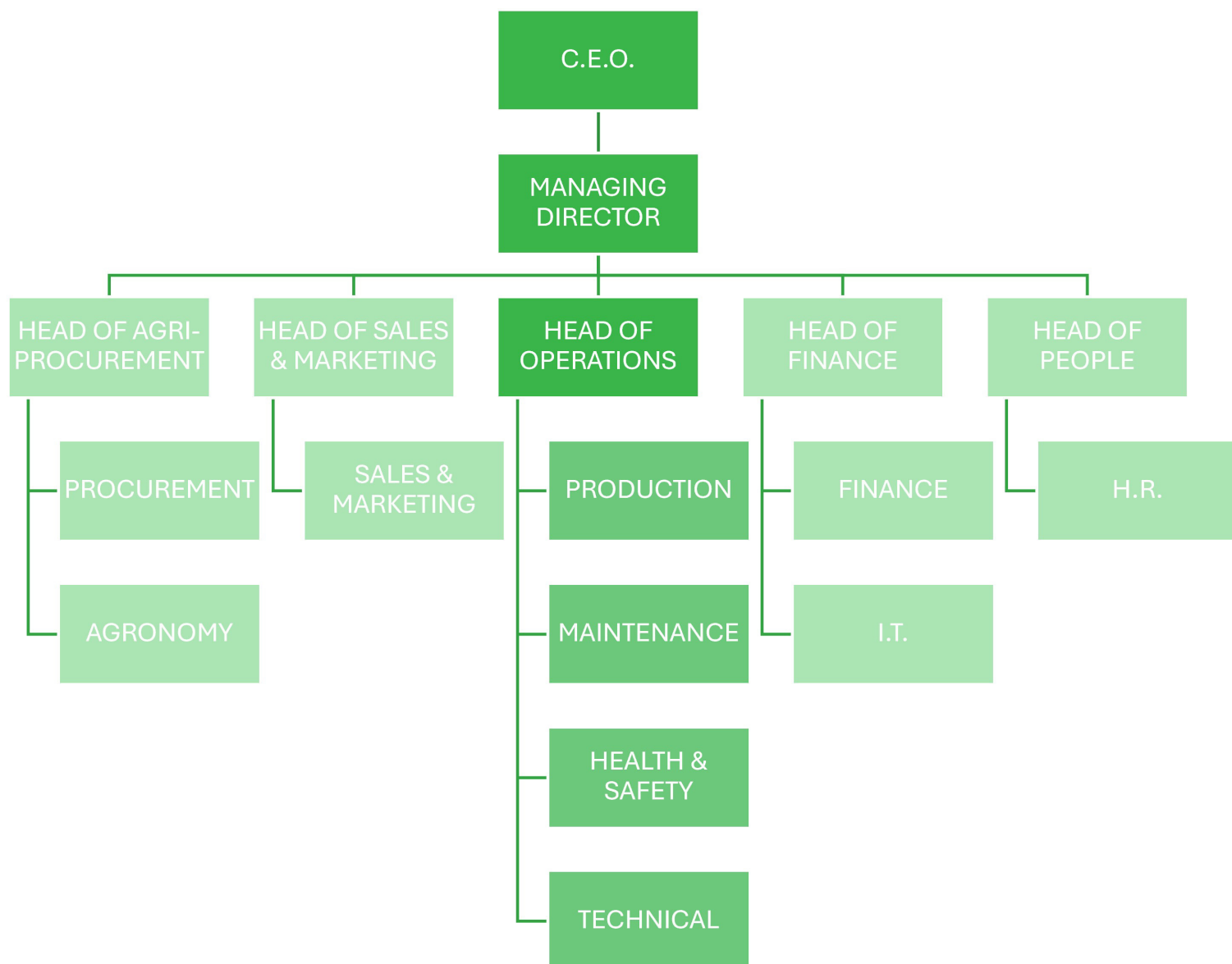
Looking to the Future

Celebrating 40 years in business in 2026, Wilson's Country is entering an exciting period in its development.

Building on the strengths and successes of the past four decades, the business is evolving and strengthening its management team as it prepares for its next chapter. With significant opportunities to further develop its operations and grow the business, this represents an important period of transition for Wilson's Country.

The appointment of a Head of Operations will be central to this journey, providing the operational leadership, structure and capability required to support the organisation's ambitions for continued improvement and sustainable growth.

Organisational Structure



Job Description

Job Title:	Head of Operations
Reporting to:	Managing Director
Direct Reports:	Production, Technical, Engineering, Dispatch team and Stores team
Key Internal Relationships:	Technical, Engineering, Procurement, HR, NPD, Sales & Marketing, Finance, Agronomy

Role Purpose:

The Head of Operations provides strategic and hands on leadership across the production, site operations, engineering, and technical functions to ensure the safe, efficient, and reliable delivery of high quality food products. This role drives continuous improvement by optimising people, processes, and plant performance while maintaining full compliance with food safety and regulatory standards. The Head of Operations will champion a culture of safety, quality, and accountability, ensuring resources are effectively managed to meet current customer demands, support business growth, and achieve operational excellence.



Key Responsibilities

Strategic Responsibilities:

- Develop and deliver the long term operations strategy to support long-term business growth, operational resilience, and customer expectations.
- Translate company objectives into clear operational priorities, ensuring production capability, capacity, efficiency, and performance align with commercial and supply chain requirements.
- Lead strategic planning for people, plant, and processes, including workforce planning, skills development, and succession within the production and engineering teams.
- Contribute to overall business leadership as an active member of the Executive Leadership Team, shaping organisation strategy, culture and long-term direction.
- Provide strategic insight to executive leadership on factory performance, operational risks, emerging challenges, and opportunities for improvement or investment.
- Drive a culture of operational excellence through structured CI programmes, embedding lean methodologies and standardised ways of working across all shifts.
- Lead long term capacity and capability planning, working with Engineering and executive leadership to shape capital investment, automation, and technology adoption.
- Ensure the operations strategy supports the technical, safety, sustainability, and customer vision of the business, integrating operational objectives into wider organisational plans.
- Champion cross functional collaboration to ensure seamless alignment between production, planning, technical, engineering, and supply chain on long term business priorities.
- Monitor industry trends, technology developments, and changes in cost structures to inform operational decision making and safeguard competitive advantage.

Site Operations:

- Ensure optimal and efficient use of all resources such as water and energy across all processes while reducing wastage and maintaining full compliance with environmental and regulatory requirements.
- Oversee all operational activities to ensure they consistently meet applicable legal, industry, and environmental regulations.
- Ensure all site facilities, utilities, and infrastructure are effectively maintained, safe, and fully operational.
- Ensure the site is clean, tidy, and safe through consistent housekeeping standards and regular inspections.
- Oversee packaging processes and logistics operations to ensure efficiency, cost effectiveness, quality standards, and timely delivery of products.

Production Leadership & Daily Operations:

- Lead strategic initiatives to improve productivity, reduce operating costs and strengthen manufacturing capability across the site.
- Oversee all production activities to deliver the agreed daily and weekly production plan.
- Ensure production lines operate efficiently, meeting output, quality, and cost targets.
- Oversee labour planning, shift allocation, and workflow to maximise productivity.
- Maintain real time visibility of performance metrics such as throughput, downtime, and OEE.

Key Responsibilities

Engineering Leadership:

- Provide strategic and operational leadership with overall accountability for the performance, capability, and development of the Engineering team
- Drive engineering and operational performance through effective management of risks, bottlenecks, resources and opportunities for optimisation.
- Lead and embed continuous improvement across the engineering processes, systems and ways of working ensuring alignment with the business objectives.

Food Safety, Quality & Compliance:

- Ensure all production activities comply with HACCP, BRCGS, customer standards, and internal policies.
- Work closely with Technical/QA teams to resolve non conformances and implement corrective actions.
- Maintain high standards of hygiene, allergen control, traceability, and GMP across all areas.
- Support internal and external audits, ensuring readiness at all times.

People Management & Team Development:

- Build a high performing culture with a long-term focus on talent development, succession planning and capability within the operations team.
- Lead, coach, and develop Production Managers and Supervisors
- Conduct performance reviews, manage absence, and support recruitment and onboarding for the operations team.
- Build a culture of accountability, teamwork, and continuous improvement.
- Promote strong communication and engagement across the operations team.

Health, Safety & Environmental:

- Provide strategic leadership for Health & Safety activities in operations, ensuring a safe working environment and full compliance with legal, regulatory, and industry standards.
- Champion a strong safety culture, promoting proactive reporting, visible safety leadership, and accountability at all levels.
- Contribute to risk assessments, safe systems of work, and environmental impact assessments, ensuring controls are effective and regularly reviewed.
- Support sustainability initiatives, integrating environmental considerations into operations to reduce carbon footprint and promote responsible resource use.
- Represent Operations in internal and external HSE audits, ensuring readiness, transparency, and continuous improvement.

Planning, Reporting & Performance Management:

- Provide regular, accurate operational performance reports on KPIs to the Executive Leadership Team, covering production efficiency, yield, throughput, labour, waste levels and downtime metrics
- Present operational insights and recommendations during leadership meetings, ensuring data driven decision making and alignment with business priorities.
- Oversee reporting on continuous improvement initiatives, tracking progress, benefits, and return on investment for operational changes and capital projects.
- Maintain robust forecasting and capacity reporting to support cross functional planning, resource allocation, and long term operational strategy.

Key Responsibilities

Continuous Improvement & Operational Excellence:

- Drive strategic continuous improvement agenda, embedding LEAN, 5S and Operational Excellence principles
- Champion new technologies, automation opportunities, digital tools and data driven decision making to improve performance
- Lead improvement projects focused on throughput, cost reduction, and process reliability..
- Foster a culture of problem solving and innovation within the production team.

Cross Functional Collaboration:

- Work closely with Engineering to ensure proactive maintenance and minimal downtime.
- Collaborate with Executive Leaders across the Commercial, Technical, Purchasing, Finance and HR to ensure operational decision support the wider business objectives.

Risk Management & Governance:

- Ensure robust governance across all operational activities, adhering to organisational policies, industry regulations and ethical standards
- Identify and assess operational risks and implement mitigation strategies



Person Specification

Essential

- Minimum 5 years' experience operating at senior leadership or executive level, contributing to organisational strategy and leading cross-functional transformation initiatives.
- Proven experience in the development and implementation of Continuous Improvement and Lean Manufacturing initiatives.
- Strong track record of developing and delivering operational KPIs, productivity improvements, and business targets.
- Strong financial and commercial acumen with experience developing and managing operational budgets and driving cost control measures.
- Sound knowledge of Health & Safety legislation and safe working practices.
- Sound knowledge of food safety including HACCP and BRCGS.
- Strong leadership, communication, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.
- Ability to analyse operational data and use insights to improve performance.

Desirable

- Degree or professional qualification in Manufacturing, Operations Management, Engineering, Business, Food Science, or a related discipline.
- Lean Manufacturing, Six Sigma, Continuous Improvement, or Project Management qualification.
- IOSH, NEBOSH, or equivalent Health & Safety qualification.
- Proven leadership experience across Production, Engineering, quality and Stores functions.
- Experience delivering large-scale operational improvement or change management projects.
- Experience in workforce planning, succession planning, and talent development.

Remuneration

The competitive remuneration and incentive package will reflect the critical importance of this manufacturing role.

Selection Process

Application is by submission of CV and supporting statement

Clarendon Executive will carry out an initial paper-based shortlist assessment of candidate applications.

Clarendon Executive will then invite short-listed candidates for a preliminary discussion to assess suitability.

Those candidates whose experience is best aligned will be invited to interview with the Wilson's Country recruitment panel. It is anticipated that this will be a two-stage process with the client, with preferred candidates invited to final stage interview and assessment.

Full details of the format of the process will be provided to all candidates in the invitation to each stage.

The outcome of each stage of the process will be communicated to each candidate, individually and where necessary feedback will be available.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Should you have any queries relating to any aspect of this appointment process or the content of this document, or wish to have an informal discussion please contact:

Joanne McAuley at Clarendon Executive on 07834 321139 or by email at joanne.mcauley@clarendonexecutive.com

Clarendon Executive is committed to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion in the workplace.



Clarendon Executive Charter

At Clarendon Executive, we are dedicated to providing a professional and confidential experience for all candidates. Our experienced executive search consultants will work with you to provide clear and honest advice and feedback throughout the interview and assessment process.

Our Candidate Charter outlines our commitment to:

- Professionalism
We aspire to ensure that every interaction with Clarendon Executive will be with the utmost professionalism.
- Confidentiality
Your engagements with us will be kept confidential, and we will respect your privacy throughout the process.
- Experienced Consultants
You will work with experienced executive search consultants who are knowledgeable and dedicated to providing you with the best possible guidance and support.
- Clear Feedback
You will receive clear feedback on your performance throughout the interview and assessment process to help you improve and prepare for future opportunities.
- Prompt Responses
We aim to respond quickly to any questions or queries you may have and will support you through what can at times be a challenging process.

At Clarendon Executive, we are committed to providing a positive and supportive experience for all our candidates. If at any time you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.



**Clarendon
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Finding Leaders

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